

THE  
**BLACK**  
BOOK OF  
CAPITALISM



J E A N Z I E G L E R

This is the inside of the cover. We could put stuff here.

# The Black Book of Capitalism

Jean Ziegler, 1998

Translated by Based BBOC Anon

Typeset by L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X Anon

Proofread by Proofreading Anon #1  
and Proofreading Anon #2

Front cover by Anonymous

Back cover by Anonymous

November 27, 2022



# Contents

<b>Notes</b>	<b>xv</b>
0.1 Translator’s notes . . . . .	xv
0.2 Typesetter’s notes . . . . .	xv
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>xix</b>
0.3 THE TOTALITARIAN LIBERALISM . . . . .	xix
<b>1 Capitalism’s origin (15th-19th century)</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 “Antediluvian” forms of Capital . . . . .	2
1.2 The “liberation” of the workforce . . . . .	4
1.3 Slavery and mercantile colonization . . . . .	6
1.4 The Black Slave Trade . . . . .	8
1.5 The human drain of the slave trade . . . . .	10
1.6 Slavery in the nineteenth century . . . . .	13
1.7 The Road to India and Asian Colonization . . . . .	14
1.8 What consequences for peoples? . . . . .	15
1.9 Eastern Europe and the “second serfdom” . . . . .	17
1.10 Market capital and financial capital . . . . .	17
<b>2 Servile economy and capitalism</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 The collapse of Africa . . . . .	22
2.2 Servile economy and “primitive accumulation” . . . . .	25
2.3 Bibliography . . . . .	29
<b>3 Shoot, they’re just proles.</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>4 1744-1849, A Lyon’s century</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Exploitation in Lyon in the 18th century . . . . .	41
4.2 1831: The canuts facing capitalism . . . . .	45
4.3 1833/1834 — The Spider’s strategy . . . . .	50

4.4	Order finally reigns in Lyon . . . . .	57
<b>5</b>	<b>1871: Class Betrayal and Bloody Week</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Union Busting</b>	<b>69</b>
6.1	The beginnings of trade unionism . . . . .	70
6.2	On strikes . . . . .	71
6.3	The May Firsts . . . . .	72
6.4	Repression carries on... . . . .	73
6.5	Harsh repression and insidious repression . . . . .	74
6.6	We continue, despite everything! . . . . .	76
6.7	Brief bibliography . . . . .	77
<b>7</b>	<b>The armed gangs of Capital in Rep. France</b>	<b>79</b>
7.1	The sons of workers, best cops of the owners! . . . . .	79
7.2	The slaughter of the Communards . . . . .	81
7.3	The order ruled under Clemenceau! . . . . .	83
7.4	From the unthinkable to the unspeakable . . . . .	84
7.5	Republican police? Wishful thinking! . . . . .	86
7.6	The Fifth Republic, a police society . . . . .	88
<b>8</b>	<b>The Great War: 24,500 casualties per day</b>	<b>93</b>
8.1	The influence of the military-industrial lobby . . . . .	94
8.1.1	The question of Morocco provoked a violent Franco-German conflict (1905-1906). . . . .	94
8.1.2	Austro-Russian antagonism festered in the Balkans (1908-1909). . . . .	95
8.1.3	To settle in Morocco, France had to cede part of the Congo (1911). . . . .	96
8.1.4	From Morocco the crisis spread to Tripolitania and then to the Balkans (1911-1913). . . . .	96
8.1.5	After the Sarajevo bombing, the Austro-Serbian War led to Russian intervention and general war. . . . .	97
8.2	The great butchery . . . . .	100
8.2.1	Germany is trying to overwhelm France and seems on the verge of success. . . . .	100
8.2.2	The German plan failed on the Marne, then on the Yser.101	
8.2.3	Movement warfare is followed by trench warfare . . . .	102
8.2.4	The war continued in 1915 and 1916 without decisive results. . . . .	102

8.2.5	In 1917, submarine warfare and the Russian Revolution jeopardized the Allied cause. . . . .	103
8.2.6	In 1918, the Great Battle of France ended with the defeat of Germany. . . . .	104
8.2.7	A sanctuary of international capital: the Briey-Thionville basin. . . . .	105
8.3	Post-war . . . . .	108
8.3.1	Defeated Germany signs the Treaty of Versailles. . . . .	108
8.3.2	Austria-Hungary and the Turkish Empire are dismembered. . . . .	109
8.4	A few works . . . . .	110
<b>9</b>	<b>Interventions in Russia (1917-1921)</b>	<b>111</b>
9.1	1918 . . . . .	113
9.2	1919 . . . . .	113
9.3	1920 . . . . .	114
<b>10</b>	<b>World war two</b>	<b>115</b>
10.1	1919-1929: the refusal of a collective security . . . . .	116
10.2	1929-1933: "every man for himself" in the face of the crisis . . . . .	117
10.3	1933-1939: the mirage of Hitler's weakness . . . . .	118
10.4	Who is responsible for the German-Soviet Pact? . . . . .	119
10.5	The Phoney War, so aptly named . . . . .	123
10.6	The french fall and general defeatism . . . . .	125
10.7	The Nazi turn against the USSR . . . . .	128
10.8	The American game . . . . .	131
10.9	Pearl Harbor: why and how? . . . . .	134
10.10	Conclusion . . . . .	136
<b>11</b>	<b>Of the origin of wars</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Imperialism, Zionism and Palestine</b>	<b>143</b>
12.1	The end of the Ottoman Empire . . . . .	143
12.2	Promises to Arabs . . . . .	144
12.3	Anglo-French imperialist partition . . . . .	144
12.4	The alliance of British imperialism and Zionism . . . . .	145
12.5	Violation of promises made to Arabs . . . . .	146
12.6	Arab reactions. New british policy . . . . .	147
12.7	Two new imperialisms come into play . . . . .	148

<b>13 The Vietnamese massacre</b>	<b>149</b>
13.1 Field operations . . . . .	149
13.2 Domestic repression . . . . .	150
13.3 The Tools . . . . .	151
13.4 The legal framework . . . . .	152
13.5 Pre-trial detention . . . . .	153
13.6 The Justice . . . . .	154
13.7 Interrogation centers . . . . .	155
13.8 Jails . . . . .	155
13.9 The Tiger cages . . . . .	156
<b>14 Massacres and repression in Iran</b>	<b>161</b>
14.1 The SAVAK . . . . .	166
<b>15 Anticommunist genocide in Indonesia</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>16 Fascist annexion of East Timor</b>	<b>187</b>
16.1 Bibliography . . . . .	199
<b>17 Iraq victim of oil</b>	<b>201</b>
17.1 War with Iran . . . . .	204
17.2 The guet-apens . . . . .	205
17.3 Before embargo: . . . . .	210
17.4 After embargo: . . . . .	211
<b>18 Black Africa under French colonization</b>	<b>213</b>
18.1 The Colonial conquest . . . . .	214
18.2 Methods of warfare . . . . .	215
18.3 The colonial system . . . . .	218
18.4 The exercise of “French authority” . . . . .	222
18.5 From colonial legend to reality . . . . .	224
18.6 Demographic data . . . . .	227
<b>19 Algeria 1830-1998</b>	<b>229</b>
19.1 Emerging capitalisme and colonial conquest . . . . .	230
19.1.1 The share of capital in the decision of the expedition of Algiers. . . . .	230
19.1.2 War on the people, a deliberate policy. 1830-1871. . . . .	232
19.2 The exploitation of “French Algeria” (1871-1954) . . . . .	245
19.2.1 The “calm” of exhaustion. . . . .	245
19.2.2 What does “the work of France” represent? . . . . .	246
19.2.3 Gifts? Yes, not to Algeria, but to Capital. . . . .	249



19.2.4	The massacre opposed to rising political demands. . . .	251
19.3	1954-1962. A war to keep exploiting . . . . .	253
19.3.1	A return to massacres, destructions, destructuring. . . .	253
19.3.2	Adverse impact on France. . . . .	254
19.3.3	The oil interest. The deficit worsened, the profits in- creased. . . . .	255
19.4	1980-1998. Towards structural adjustment through Islamist terrorism . . . . .	256
<b>20</b>	<b>African independencies and “communism”</b>	<b>261</b>
20.1	Capitalism and Africa since the 60s . . . . .	265
20.2	Rough Bibliography . . . . .	272
<b>21</b>	<b>Interventions in Latin America</b>	<b>275</b>
21.1	The carving up of Mexico . . . . .	281
21.2	The Anschluss of New Mexico and California . . . . .	282
21.3	The expedition to Paraguay . . . . .	284
21.4	The Buccaneers . . . . .	286
21.5	Cuba under the U.S. boot . . . . .	289
21.6	The Drago Doctrine and the “Roosevelt Corollaries” of the Monroe Doctrine . . . . .	290
21.7	The secession of Panama . . . . .	291
21.8	Interventionism in the Caribbean . . . . .	294
21.9	Interventions in Veracruz and Tampico . . . . .	295
21.10	Intervention in Haiti . . . . .	296
21.11	The third intervention in Nicaragua . . . . .	297
21.12	The Chaco War: An Expression of Imperialist Rivalries . . . .	299
21.13	The United States and Perón . . . . .	300
21.14	The “guatemalazo” . . . . .	301
21.15	Bay of Pigs . . . . .	302
21.16	Coup in Brazil . . . . .	303
21.17	The intervention in Santo Domingo . . . . .	304
21.18	The Thousand Days of Popular Unity . . . . .	305
21.19	Intervention in Nicaragua . . . . .	307
21.20	The invasion of Granada . . . . .	308
21.21	Operation “Just Cause” . . . . .	309
21.22	Del Tratado Hay-Buneau Varilla, al Tratado Torrijos-Carter .	309
21.23	Humanitarian response in Haiti . . . . .	311

<b>22</b>	<b>The long march of African Americans</b>	<b>313</b>
22.1	A victory called into question . . . . .	314
22.2	A policy of genocide . . . . .	315
22.3	Ghettos: an American-style apartheid . . . . .	316
22.4	Drugs . . . . .	317
22.5	Cocaine babies . . . . .	319
22.6	The genocide . . . . .	319
22.7	Police brutalities . . . . .	321
22.8	Justice and prisons . . . . .	323
22.9	The “Crime Bill” . . . . .	326
22.10	Baseball and Justice . . . . .	326
22.11	Prison conditions . . . . .	327
22.12	Death penalty . . . . .	329
22.13	Executions of minors . . . . .	331
22.14	... of persons suffering from mental disorders . . . . .	333
22.15	Control Units . . . . .	334
22.16	Political prisoners . . . . .	336
22.17	Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt . . . . .	337
22.18	Leonard Peltier . . . . .	338
22.19	Mumia Abu Jamal . . . . .	339
<b>23</b>	<b>Centenary of a genocide in Cuba</b>	<b>343</b>
23.1	A colony on hold . . . . .	345
23.2	The last quarter of an hour . . . . .	347
23.3	A real genocide . . . . .	349
23.4	And the U.S. wins the bet . . . . .	352
<b>24</b>	<b>The Indian Genocide</b>	<b>357</b>
24.1	Brazil . . . . .	358
24.2	Mexico and Guatemala . . . . .	359
24.3	United States . . . . .	360
<b>25</b>	<b>Capitalism to the assault of Asia</b>	<b>363</b>
25.1	Asia colonized by Western capitalism . . . . .	364
25.2	Birth and development of an Asian capitalism . . . . .	367
25.3	Rivalries between capitalisms in Asia . . . . .	368
25.4	Japanese imperialism; end of colonization in Asia . . . . .	372
25.5	The capitalist economies of post-war Asia . . . . .	374
25.6	What is the future of capitalism in Asia? . . . . .	378

<b>26 Migrations in the 19th and 20th century</b>	<b>381</b>
26.1 Colonial migration . . . . .	382
26.2 Economic migration . . . . .	385
26.3 Politically motivated migration . . . . .	388
26.4 The current situation . . . . .	389
<b>27 Capitalism, arms race and arms trade</b>	<b>393</b>
27.1 Rise of capitalism and the first arms race . . . . .	394
27.2 Development of capitalism and armaments . . . . .	396
27.3 Imperialism, arms race and World War I . . . . .	398
27.4 New Arms Race and World War II . . . . .	401
27.5 The Cold War Arms Race . . . . .	404
27.6 End of the Cold War, maintenance of the MIC . . . . .	407
27.7 Capitalism and the arms trade . . . . .	412
<b>28 Globalization's undeads</b>	<b>419</b>
28.1 1945-1990: recolonization, a prelude to globalisation . . . . .	420
28.2 Ecological crisis, private profit and forced rural exodus . . . . .	423
28.3 "Structural adjustment" is waging war on the poor . . . . .	428
28.4 Conclusion: Crime will not always pay . . . . .	433
28.5 Bibliography . . . . .	434
<b>29 Capital's globalization and barbarity</b>	<b>435</b>
29.1 The topicality of the notion of parasitism . . . . .	437
29.2 Accumulation, the priorities of money-capital . . . . .	438
29.3 Features of contemporary rentier capital . . . . .	440
29.4 Industrial capital, rentier accumulation . . . . .	442
29.5 Countries under imperialist domination . . . . .	444
29.6 To conclude . . . . .	447
<b>30 Swiss bankers kill without machine guns</b>	<b>449</b>
30.1 Filipinos . . . . .	450
30.2 Haitians . . . . .	456
30.3 The Zairians, now Congolese . . . . .	457
<b>31 An ad is worth a thousand bombs</b>	<b>463</b>
31.1 Education . . . . .	464
31.2 Culture and media . . . . .	465
31.3 Sport . . . . .	468
31.4 Environment and solidarity . . . . .	469
31.5 Politics . . . . .	470

31.6 Ideology . . . . .	470
31.7 Numbers . . . . .	472
31.8 A crime against spirits . . . . .	472
<b>32 Even if socialism wouldn't be enough</b>	<b>475</b>
<b>33 Black table of slaughters and wars</b>	<b>481</b>
<b>A Les nouveaux mystères de Pearl Harbor</b>	<b>485</b>
A.1 Présentation du manuscrit . . . . .	485
A.2 Introduction . . . . .	486
A.3 Sommaire . . . . .	490
A.4 Conclusion . . . . .	492
<b>Bibliography for the translated version</b>	<b>497</b>

# List of Tables

8.1	Financial situation of the two main belligerents in 1914 . . . . .	99
8.2	Production (million tonnes) in 1914 . . . . .	100
8.3	Human toll of the 14/18 war . . . . .	108
27.1	Annual military expenditure prior to World War I . . . . .	400
27.2	Annual world military expenditure (in billions of constant 1970 US dollars) . . . . .	402
27.3	U.S. Access to New Weapons . . . . .	405
27.4	Annual world military expenditure (in billions of constant 1980 US dollars) . . . . .	407
27.5	The twenty-five largest Western companies producing arma- ments in 1990 and 1995 (Arms sales in millions of US dollars)	410
27.6	Evolution of NATO military expenditure (in billions of US dollars at constant 1990 prices) . . . . .	411
27.7	Exports of major conventional arms by capitalist countries from 1982 to 1990 (in millions of constant US dollars in 1985)	415
27.8	Exports of major conventional arms by capitalist countries from 1991 to 1996 (in millions of US dollars at constant 1990 prices) . . . . .	415



# Notes

## 0.1 Translator's notes

Disclaimer: The following translation of the Black Book of Capitalism have been made from a digital copy from *Les classiques des sciences sociales* CHICOUTIMI, QUÉBEC . /<sup>I</sup>. I noticed a few typos in this text and I suspect some of them come from the *classiques*'s scanning/copying the original paper book. But since I do not possess this original book myself, I cannot check this hypothesis. I tried to correct the most obvious mistakes, Usually there is a footnote to signalize where I found them. Also as a mostly tech illiterate frenchman who learned english mostly trough manga translation and imageboards threads, my mastery of both this language and typesetting is far from perfect. So I'm really thankful for LaTeX Anon and Proofread Anon's help in this project

## 0.2 Typesetter's notes

The numbering of chapters and footnotes are the same as in the original text. Footnotes added by us use roman numerals<sup>II</sup>. Footnote \* in the original text is marked 0 in this translation.

Starts and ends of quotes and placement of punctuation marks are preserved as much as possible. Sometimes it is not clear where quotes begin or end in the original text or whether quotes are nested or not. We have done our best in these cases. For reference, in this text “regular quotes look like this” and “nested quotes look like this, and ‘quotes-within-quotes look like this’”.

Some longer chapter and section/subsection titles have been shortened in the table of contents and in the top of pages, but are otherwise intact.

---

<sup>I</sup><http://classiques.uqac.ca>

<sup>II</sup>Like so





# Foreword

Gilles PERRAULT

Blessed capitalism! It announces nothing and makes no promises. No manifesto or twenty-point declaration programming the turnkey happiness. It may crush you, gut you, enslave you, and torment you; however, does he disappoint you? You have the right to be unhappy but not not disappointed, because disappointment presupposes a betrayed commitment. Those who announce a more just, shining future expose themselves to the accusation of deception when the attempt sinks into an awful cacophony. Capitalism, on the other hand, wisely conducts with the present. It is. The future? It willingly abandons it to dreamers, ideologues, and ecologists. And so its crimes are almost perfect. No written record establishes premeditation. For the Terror of 1793, it is easy for those who do not like revolutions to imagine its culprits: the Enlightenment and the unreasonable will to order society according to reasoning reason. For communism, libraries crumble under the weight of the incriminating works. Not so for capitalism. It is not to it that we can reproach manufacturing misfortune by pretending to bring happiness. It agrees to be judged only on this which has always motivated it: the search for maximal profit in minimal time. The others are interested in man; It only concerns itself with goods. Have we ever seen happy or unhappy goods? The only worthwhile reviews are balance sheets. To speak about crimes is irrelevant. Let us talk about natural disasters. You are told enough: capitalism is the natural state of humanity. Humanity is in capitalism like a fish in the air. It takes the futile arrogance of ideologues to want to change the order of things, with the sad cyclical consequences that we know: revolution, repression, disappointment, contrition. This is the true original sin of man: that perpetual agitation that leads him to shake the yoke, the lyrical illusion of a future freed from exploitation, the claim to change the natural order. Don't move: capitalism moves for you. But hey, just as nature has its disasters, so too does capitalism. Would you look for those responsible for an earthquake, a tidal wave? Furthermore, crime involves criminals. For communism, the anthropometrics cards are easy to establish:

two bearded guys, a goatee, some four-eyes, a moustached man, one that crosses the Yangtze River by swimming, a cigar lover, etc. We can hate these faces. They incarnate. When it comes to capitalism, there are only indexes: Dow Jones, CAC 40, Nikkei, etc. Just try to hate an index. The Evil Empire still has a geographical area, capitals. It is trackable. Capitalism is everywhere and nowhere. To whom should summonses be sent before a possible Nuremberg tribunal?

Capitalism? Cheesy archaism! Get up to date and use the right word: liberalism. The *Littré* defines “liberal” as “that which is worthy of a free man”. Doesn’t that sound good? And *The Petit Robert* gives us a convincing list of antonyms: “stingy, autocrat, dictatorial, dirigiste, fascist, totalitarian”. You may have found excuses to define yourself as anti-capitalist, but admit that it would take vice to proclaim yourself anti-liberal.

So, what is this black book of capitalism all about? Can’t you see the madness in this project’s excesses? The worst mass murderer in history, we grant you, but an assassin without a face or genetic code and who has been operating with impunity since centuries on five continents... We wish you a lot of fun. And what’s the point? Haven’t you heard the final gong announcing at the same time the end of the match and the end of history? It won. It monopolizes in its robust mafia-like version the remains of its enemies. Which credible opponent on the horizon?

Which opponent? The immense people of the civil parties to the trial. The dead and the living. The innumerable crowd of those who were deported from Africa to the Americas, chopped in the trenches of a foolish war, grilled alive by napalm, tortured to death in the jails of capitalism’s watchdogs, shot at the Federated Wall, shot at Fourmies, shot at Setif, massacred by hundreds of thousands in Indonesia, almost eradicated like the American Indians, massively murdered in China to ensure the free circulation of opium... Of all these, the hands of the living have received the torch of revolt of the man whose dignity have been denied. Soon inert hands of those children of the Third World whom malnutrition, every day, kills by tens of thousands, emaciated hands of the peoples condemned to repay the interest on a debt whose capital their puppet leaders have stolen, trembling hands of the excluded ever more numerous to camp on the margins of opulence.

Hands tragically weak, and disunited for now. But they cannot but join one day. And on that day, the torch that they carry will set the world ablaze.

**Gilles Perrault**

# Introduction

## 0.3 THE TOTALITARIAN LIBERALISM

Maurice CURY

The world dominated by capitalism is the free world, capitalism, which is now called only liberalism, is the modern world. It is the only model of society, if not ideal, at least satisfactory. There is and will never be another.

This is the unanimous song sung not only by economic leaders and most politicians, but also intellectuals and journalists with access to the mainstream media: television, press, large publishers, usually in the hands of industrial or financial groups. Dissident thought is not forbidden (liberalism obliges!) but channelled into a quasi-clandestine way. So much for the freedom of expression that the proponents of our liberal system gargle about.

The virtue of capitalism is in its economic efficiency. But for whose benefit and at what cost? In Western countries, which are the showcase of capitalism while the rest of the world is rather its back room, let us look at the facts.

After its great period of expansion in the nineteenth century, due to industrialization and the ferocious exploitation of workers, the movement that has accelerated over the last few decades has led to the virtual disappearance of the small peasantry devoured by large farms, with the consequence of pollution, the destruction of landscapes and the degradation of the quality of products (and this with taxpayer's money as agriculture has not ceased to be subsidized), the virtual disappearance of small local shops, particularly food outlets, in favour of large retailers and hypermarkets, the concentration of industries into large national and then transnational firms which take on such proportions that they sometimes have larger treasuries than those of states and make the law (or claim to do so), taking steps to strengthen their power without control, such as with the Multinational Agreement on Investment (MAI) over states. (United Fruit is the boss of several Latin American states.)

The capitalist leaders could fear that the disappearance of the small peasantry, of the crafts and the industrial and commercial petty bourgeoisie would

strengthen the ranks of the proletariat. But “modernism” has provided them with the parade with automation, miniaturization, computing. After the depopulation of the fields, we are witnessing the depopulation of factories and offices. As capitalism can neither know nor want to share profit and work (we see this with the indecent and hysterical reactions of the bosses on the 35 hours work week, a measure that is nevertheless very meek) we inevitably arrive at unemployment and its cohort of social disasters.

The more unemployed there are, the less compensation is paid and for a shorter time. The fewer workers there are, the more reductions of pensions are planned. This seems logical and inevitable; yes, if solidarity is distributed over wages. But if we take into account the gross national product which has increased by more than 40% in less than twenty years while the wage bill has continued to decrease, it is quite different! But this is not in the capitalist logic!

Nearly twenty million unemployed in Europe, this is the positive result of capitalism!

And the worst is yet to come. Major European and American firms whose profits have never been so prosperous announce layoffs by the hundreds of thousands. It is necessary to “rationalize” production, competition obliges!

The increase in foreign investment in France is applauded. In addition to the dangers to national independence, it is questionable whether it is not the fall in wages that encourages investors.

The French champions of liberalism — of “modernism”! — (See Alain Madelin!) only swear by England and the United States who would be the champions of economic success and the fight against unemployment. If the destruction of social protections, the precariousness of employment, low wages and the short-term non-compensation of the unemployed which makes them disappear from the statistics are Mr Madelin’s ideal, I do not think it is the ideal of the workers of this country.

In the USA, a paradise of capitalism, 30 million inhabitants (more than 10% of the population) live below the poverty line, and among these black people are in the majority.

The supremacy of the United States in the world, the imperialist and standardizing spread of its way of life and culture can only satisfy servile spirits. Europe would do well to be careful and react, as it still has the economic means to do so. But it would also need the political will.

To assist productive investment in industry or services, capitalism has the will to make them competitive in the face of short-term financial and speculative investments. How so? By taxing the latter? Not at all, by<sup>III</sup>lowering

---

<sup>III</sup>in the original, there is *on* which means *we*, but it doesn’t match with the rest of the

salaries and social charges!

It is also a way of making the West competitive with the Third World. In Great Britain, they started to make children work again. Neither the United States's vassal, nor his overlord, has ratified the charter prohibiting child labor.

Caught in the infernal circle of competition, the Third World will have to lower costs and push its inhabitants a little further into misery, then it will be the turn of the West again...

Until the whole world is in the hands of a few transnationals, mostly American, and that we hardly need any more workers, except an elite of technicians... The problem then will be for capitalism to find consumers beyond this elite and its shareholders... and to maintain delinquency born of poverty.

The accumulation of money—which is only an abstraction—prevents the production of capital goods and elementary goods useful to all.

The black book of capitalism is already written before us in its “paradise”. What about his hell, the Third World?<sup>0</sup>

The ravages of colonialism and neo-colonialism in a century and a half are incalculable, nor can the millions of deaths attributable to it be quantified. All the major European countries and the United States are guilty. Slavery, ruthless repression, torture, appropriation, theft of land and natural resources by major Western, American or transnational companies or by local potentates in their pay, creation or artificial carving up of countries, imposition of dictatorships, monoculture replacing traditional food crops, destruction of ancestral ways of life and cultures, deforestation and desertification, ecological disasters, famine, exile of populations to megacities where unemployment and misery await them.

The structures that the international community has set up to regulate the development of industries or trade are entirely in the hands and at the service of capitalism: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Trade Organization. These bodies have only served to indebt the countries of the Third World and to impose on them the liberal creed. If they have allowed the development of insolent local fortunes, they have only increased

---

sentence, so i suspect there is a typo and it's actually *en* which lmeans *by*

<sup>0</sup> In the dictionary of the twentieth century (Fayard), Jacques Attali puts forward the figure of one in four people living in the US below the poverty line. Worldwide, nearly 3 billion people have less than \$2 per day, 13 million die of hunger every year and two-thirds of humans do not benefit from any social protection.

the misery of the populations<sup>1</sup>.

In a few decades, international capitalism will hardly need labor anymore, automation obliges! American laboratories study *in vitro* cultures, which will definitively ruin the agricultural Third World (and perhaps French agriculture, the world's second largest exporter). Instead of sharing the goods, it will be unemployment that workers around the world will definitively share<sup>2</sup>. Yet essential services concerning education, health, environment, culture, mutual assistance will not be provided or will no longer be provided because they do not generate profits and are of no interest to the private sector, because they can only be provided by the States or the community of citizens to whom liberalism wants to remove all power and all means.

What are the means of expansion and accumulation of capitalism? War (or protection, like the mafia), repression, dispossession, exploitation, usury, corruption, propaganda.

The war against non-compliant countries that do not respect Western interests. What was once the prerogative of England and France, Africa and Asia (the last upheavals of colonialism in India, Madagascar, Indochina, Algeria caused millions of deaths), is today that of the USA, a nation that claims to rule the world. To this end, the United States has not ceased to practice a policy of over-armament (which it forbids to others). We have seen this imperialism exercised in all direct or indirect interventions of the United States in Latin America and particularly in Central America. (Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Grenada), Asia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Timor (genocide proportionally greater than that of khmer rouge in Cambodia — nearly two-thirds of the population — genocide perpetrated in indifference — if not with complicity — of the West), Gulf War, etc.<sup>3</sup>.

War is not only fought by arms but can take new forms: for example, the United States did not hesitate to help the Moon sect in Korea to fight against communism, the fascists in post-war Italy, and they have not hesitated to arm or subsidize Islamic fundamentalists like the Muslim Brotherhood or the Taliban in Afghanistan. War can also take the form of embargoes against non-compliant states (Cuba, Libya, Iraq), oh so deadly for the populations (several hundred thousand, even millions of dead in Iraq).

Spoilation is the obvious reason of the use of force. If you want to rob a house where the inhabitants are, it is better to have a weapon.

The practices of capitalism are close to those of the mafia, which is prob-

---

<sup>1</sup>Read Philippe Panure, *Le Village monde et son château* (World village and its castle), le Temps des Cerises, 1995.

<sup>2</sup>Read Jeremy Rifkin, *La fin du travail* (The End of Work), La Découverte, 1996.

<sup>3</sup>Read Noam Chomsky, *Les Dessous de la politique de l'Oncle Sam* (Uncle Sam's policy's backstage), Écosociété, EPO, le Temps des Cerises, 1996.

ably why the latter proliferates so well in its the former's soil.

Like the mafia, capitalism protects docile rulers who shamelessly let their country be exploited by large American and transnational corporations. It thus consolidates — when it does not set them up — dictatorships, which are more effective in protecting corporate assets than democracies.

Its weapons are indifferently democracy or dictatorship, trading or gangsterism, intimidation or murder. Thus, the CIA is arguably the largest criminal organization in the world.

Usury, another mafia process: like the mafia lends to the merchant who can never pay his debt and ends up losing his shop (or life), countries are encouraged to invest, often artificially, and weapons are sold to them to help fight non-compliant states, and they must eternally repay the accumulated interest on the debt, and so this way you become master of their economy.

Repression and exploitation go hand in hand: anti-union repression (which was once legal), now unacknowledged but still practised in companies, repressive surveillance, criminal employers' militias<sup>4</sup>, unions initiated by the bosses (CFT) and repression against any radical workers' protest<sup>5</sup>. This is the price to pay to make exploitation possible. And we know, since Marx, that the exploitation of labor is the engine of capitalism. Western economies benefit from slavery in the Third World and from the serfdom of illegal immigrants in Western countries.

Corruption: Multinationals have such financial or political influence or pressure on all public or private officials that they stifle all resistance in their octopus tentacles.

Propaganda: to impose its creed and justify weapon stockpiling, its criminal acts and its bloody crimes, capitalism always invokes generous ideals: defense of democracy, freedom, struggle against the "communist" dictatorship, defense of the values of the West, while it most often defends only the interests of a propertied class, that it wants to seize raw materials, govern oil production or control strategic locations. This propaganda is propagated by economic and political rulers, a servile press and media. These are the *watchdogs* already denounced by Nizan, the *Betrayal of the clerics* vilified by Julien Benda<sup>6</sup>.

Supporters of liberalism, lauders of the United States, I have not heard your voice speak out against the destruction of Vietnam, the Indonesian genocid, the atrocities perpetrated in the name of liberalism in Latin America, against American aid to Pinochet's coup d'état, which was one of the

---

<sup>4</sup>Read Marcel Caille, *Les Truands du patronat* (Bosses's thugs), Éditions sociales, 1977.

<sup>5</sup>Read Maurice Rajsfus, *La police hors la loi* (The Outlaw Police). Le Cherche-midi, 1996.

<sup>6</sup>Read Serge Halimi, *Les Nouveaux Chiens de garde*, Liber — Raison d'agir, 1997.

bloodiest in history<sup>7</sup>, the killing of Turkish trade unionists; your indignation was somewhat selective, Solidarność but not the Disk, Budapest but not Algeria, Prague but not Santiago, Afghanistan but not Timor, I did not see you indignant when communists or simply those who wanted to give power to the people or defend the poor were killed. For your complicity or silence, I do not hear you asking for forgiveness.

### Maurice Cury

Maurice Cury is a poet, novelist, essayist, screenwriter and television, radio and theatrical author. Latest publications: *Les orgues de Flandres* (The Organs of Flanders) (novel), *La Jungle et le désert* (The Jungle and the Desert) (poems and texts) E. C. Éditions, *Le Libéralisme totalitaire*.

President of the Permanent Council of Writers, Vice-President of the National Union of Authors and Composers.

---

<sup>7</sup>Read Chili, *Le Dossier noir*, (Chile, the black file) Gallimard, 1974.



# Chapter 1

## Capitalism's origin (15th-19th century)

Jean Suret-Canale

It was during the nineteenth century that capitalism, based on wage labour, became the dominant mode of production, first in Western Europe and the United States, then subordinating the whole world, by either indirect or direct forms of domination (colonization).

Its genesis essentially ran its course over the previous three centuries (sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries). This is, to use Adam Smith's terminology, taken up by Marx, the era of "primitive accumulation." (or better, to make Adam Smith's term more accurate, "Previous accumulation"). How will capitalists (who possess the wealth likely to be converted into means of production (machines, raw materials, etc.)) and "proletarians", (devoid of any autonomous means of subsistence and reduced, in order to survive, to become the wage-earners of the previous ones) will end up facing one another?

Bourgeois ideology, which is expressed among political "thinkers" and vulgar economists of the nineteenth century, tells us that originally, society has been divided into two categories: Some are laborious, intelligent, thrifty Some others lazy, squandering. "It goes without saying that some piled treasure on treasure, while the others soon found themselves devoid of everything."<sup>8</sup> Karl Marx cites, among the authors developing this thesis, M. Thiers<sup>9</sup>. In the twentieth century, the good doctor Alexis Carrel, Nobel Prize in medicine and supporter of Pétain, will explain in *L'homme, cet inconnu*

---

<sup>8</sup> *Capital*, book I, tome III, Paris, Éditions sociales, 1950, p. 153.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153. Adolphe Thiers, *De la propriété*, Paris, 1848.

(Man, the unknown)<sup>10</sup> that the former were genetically superior, and the latter, inferior.

And Karl Marx observes: “In the annals of real history, it is conquest, enslavement, the reign of brute force that has always prevailed.”<sup>11</sup> To study this period, which began with the great maritime discoveries at the end of the fifteenth century, we will use two major sources: An old one, the one provided by Karl Marx’s *Capital* in its development on “primitive accumulation” (Book I, VIIIth section)<sup>12</sup>. The other, more recent, certainly richer in information and more “up-to-date”, will be provided by the great work of Fernand Braudel: *Material Civilization, Economy and Capitalism, fifteenth-eighteenth century*<sup>13</sup>.

Braudel’s point of view, like that of Marx, pays particular attention to the socio-economic infrastructure of history, but differs from it because it does not give a central place to the division of society into opposing classes. The confrontation of the two points of view could have been exciting: it is unfortunately absent from the work of Braudel, who obviously had not read Marx (at least that part of *Capital* that covered the same subject)<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.1 The market, and the “antediluvian” forms of Capital

The class societies that preceded capitalism were characterized by a personal bond from the dominant to the dominated (slave, tributary, serf, etc.).

The dominated was, of course, exploited, and often in the most brutal way, but the exploitation was “justified”, at least ideologically, by a certain reciprocity: duty of protection on the part of the dominant, even assistance, often under a patriarchal mask. With capitalism, social relations take on an increasingly abstract, anonymous aspect. And thereby taking on a dehumanized aspect.

Capitalism develops on the basis of commodity production, and presupposes its generalization. Unlike previous modes of production, more or less based on an economy of self-subsistence, capitalist production is turned, from the start, towards the market: the capitalist produces to sell. And the very relationship between the capitalist and the wage-earner is in the form of mar-

---

<sup>10</sup>Dr Alexis Carrel, *Man, the unknown*, Paris, Plon, 1935.

<sup>11</sup>Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup>Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-22.

<sup>13</sup>Paris, Armand Colin, 3 volumes, 544, 600 and 608 p.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. J. Suret-Canale, “*Braudel as seen by Pierre Daix*”, *La Pensée* n° 307, 3rd trimester 1996, pp. 160-161.

ket exchange: the capitalist presents himself as a buyer of labor power, the wage earner as a seller.

The market, the commodity, the commodity production appear very early in the most diverse societies. But they are not the exclusive, let alone initial, forms of exchange: archaic societies present "non-market" forms of exchange, highlighted since Durkheim. Karl Polanyi had the merit of stressing the specificity of these exchanges in relation to market exchange<sup>15</sup>.

In "simple" market production, the agricultural or artisanal producer owns his means of production. It produces in part or in whole, no longer to directly cover its own needs, but to sell, on a market where products are exchanged through monetary equivalents, with producers specializing according to a social division of labor.

With productive capitalism, the capitalist, owner of the means of production (land, machinery, raw materials, etc.) "buys" from the worker the use of his labor power for a wage that roughly corresponds to the amount necessary for the reconstitution and reproduction of this labor power; This amount being less than what's produced by the implementation of this labour power. The supplement thus emerging (Marx' "surplus value" or "surplus value") belongs to the capitalist. The capital advanced and implemented in production by the capitalist is thus at the end of the cycle reproduced and increased by a supplement. The capitalist can use this supplement for personal consumption, but he can also "accumulate" it in order to increase the mass of his capital. This is "expanded" reproduction.

In earlier societies, the product of exploitation (of the slave, the tributary, the feudal dependent — serf or villain) was mainly consumed by the privileged classes and relatively little "reinvested". The productive cycle was repeated more or less on the same scale. "Growth", to the extent that it existed, was very slow and almost imperceptible.

In contemporary (productive) capitalism that is being set up thanks to the industrial revolution, with the widespread use of mechanical energy, advances in labour productivity will allow for "expanded reproduction" on an increasingly broad scale, in short, "growth".

This productive capitalism appeared as early as the Middle Ages, in an embryonic form, in Italian cities in the form of "manufacture" ("Factory" practicing in the same place the manual division of labor, or work at home, the capitalist providing the raw material, for example the thread to the weaver, and buying the manufactured product from him).

But, until the end of the eighteenth century, capital was essentially in

---

<sup>15</sup>Karl Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies*, (Ed. George Dalton) Boston, Beacon Press, 1968.

forms that Marx called “antediluvian”, market capital or finance capital (usurious) forms that had appeared as early as antiquity.

In these forms, there is also accumulation, but not through the creation of wealth: capital here just to take its tithe from existing production.

The advent of productive capitalism, essentially industrial, in addition to the technical conditions already mentioned, presupposes economic and social conditions.

## **1.2 The “liberation” of the workforce: impoverishment and exploitation of the peasantry**

The first condition is the existence of a “free” workforce, that is to say, free from feudal or seigneurial obligations and servitudes; but also devoid of any autonomous means of subsistence (and in particular land). This “liberation” took place in England at the end of the fourteenth century and ended during the first Revolution, that of Cromwell, in the seventeenth century. In France, it will take place with the Revolution of 1789, and, later, in the rest of Europe, under the direct or indirect influence of revolutionary and Napoleonic conquests.

This “liberation” is inseparable from a massive impoverishment and the expropriation of the small peasantry. In England, this phenomenon began during the reign of the Tudors and was amplified in the eighteenth century; it is slower and more limited on the mainland. The peasants thus “liberated” and expropriated constitute a growing mass of wanderers and destitute people, subjected in England to the ferocious legislation on the “Poor laws”, ready-made workforce, when the time comes, for the capitalist industrial enterprise. The rural exodus will feed, in the nineteenth century, urban and industrial growth and emigration to America or to the “temperate” colonies.

Let us return to the English example, studied by Karl Marx. Serfdom disappeared there at the end of the fourteenth century. Most of the peasant population was then made up of small independent, relatively well-off tenants. The end of the “Wars of the Roses” (civil war between feudal clans) and the advent of the Tudor dynasty were accompanied by two phenomena: the dismissal of the feudal “suites” maintained by the nobles (fallen or ruined) threw on the roads a first mass of people without fire or place; on the other hand the parvenus who overtook the place of the old ruined or extinct nobility undertook to “assert” their domains by expelling massively the peasants holding their land to convert it into sheep pastures: the rise of the wool factory of Flanders, of which England had long supplied the raw material,

the resulting rise in the price of wool encouraged this speculation.

In vain, laws of Henry VII (1489) and Henry VIII prohibited the demolition of peasant houses and tried to limit the extension of pastures.

The Reformation and the confiscation of the property of the clergy - including suppressed religious orders - a quarter to a third of the lands of the kingdom, distributed by Henry VIII to favorites, led to an acceleration of the phenomenon: all those parvenus who had become “gentlemen” continued to expel the peasants. The small and medium-sized peasants, the “yeomen”, still provided the bulk of the troops of Cromwell’s English Revolution. But by 1750, the evolution was complete: the small English peasantry was virtually eliminated in favour of the “Landlords”, the large landowners, replaced by capitalist farmers, or, in Ireland, by tenants, precarious, expellable at will.

The creation of the proletariat without fire or place — dismissed from the great feudal lords and farmers victims of violent and repeated expropriations —, was necessarily going faster than its absorption by the nascent factories... So a mass of beggars, thieves, vagrants came out.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, from the end of the fifteenth century, a fierce legislation against the poor.

A law of Henry VIII stipulated that robust vagrants would be condemned to the whip; tied up behind a cart, they would be whipped until blood trickles down from their bodies. After which, they would be imprisoned. A subsequent law of the same king aggravates the penalties by additional clauses: in case of recurrence, the vagrant must be whipped again and have half of the ear cut off; on the second recurrence, he will be hanged.

In 1572, Queen Elizabeth renewed this legislation: “Under the almost maternal reign of *Queen Bess* tramps were hanged in batches, arranged in long lines. Not a year passed that there were not three or four hundred hanging on the gallows in one place or another, says Strype in his Annals. According to him, Somersetshire alone counted in one year forty executed, thirty-five marked with red iron, thirty-seven whipped and one hundred and eighty-three — ‘incorrigible scoundrels’ — released... ‘Thanks to the nonchalance of the justices of the peace and the foolish compassion of the people’, adds the commentator<sup>17</sup>.”

The “law on the poor” of the same queen (1597) made the indigent a burden on the parishes.

---

<sup>16</sup>Karl Marx, op. cit. cit., p. 175.

<sup>17</sup>Ibidem, p. 177

The “assistance” of the parishes consisted in locking up the needy in hospices or “Workhouses”. These are actually prisons where they will be subjected to exhausting work and barely fed. The Law on the Poor was not repealed until 1834... But only because the English bourgeoisie finds it intolerable to have to pay a tax to maintain “slackers”. The destitute will continue to be sent to hospices where they work at least 18 hours a day and where they’re carefully given clothes and food only at a lower level than that of the lowest paid worker!

### 1.3 Slavery and mercantile colonization

Another prerequisite for the advent of capitalism was the extension and generalization of market relations.

They are realized from the sixteenth century with the extension to the whole world of European maritime trade, with the appearance, for the first time in history, of a real world market.

The discovery of America by Christopher Columbus (1492) for the benefit of the crown of Spain, led to the conquest of the continent. The two main states that exist there, the Aztec Empire in Mexico and the Inca Empire in Peru were destroyed in 1519 and 1532 respectively.

The conquerors, who had initially thought they had found India, were looking for spices (they did not find any) and gold. They found some, but in small quantities; after the looting of local treasures, gold panning will give little and its resources will be exhausted before 1550.

But soon the Spaniards discovered and exploited very rich deposits of silver, in Mexico (New Spain) and Peru (present-day Peru and Bolivia).

Trade with America is a royal monopoly. It was subcontracted to a privileged merchant company based in Seville. It is done by a fleet of galleons, grouped for security reasons (they are often attacked and looted by privateers, English in particular). This fleet departs every year from Seville, then Cadiz, to Havana, a fortified place that serves as its first port of call. Then it leaves for the Vera Cruz (to serve New Spain) or for the Isthmus of Panama, where men and products are transshipped on the Pacific shore. There a fleet took them to Callao, serving Peru and the Andean countries. Some ships go to the port of Cartagena, to serve New Granada (Colombia and Venezuela today). This fleet brings from Spain manufactured products and supplies. Any importation by other stakeholders is deemed to be contraband (“interlope” trade). It is through America that Spain communicates with its only Asian possession, the Philippine Islands: every year, a galleon departs from Acapulco, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, to Manila; he brings money there,

and in return takes away the products of China.

America exports little except money.

The Spanish settlers, concerned to make a quick fortune, while living “nobly” (without working with their hands) subjected the Amerindian population to a frenzied exploitation, accompanied by barbaric treatment (torture, mutilation) to rule by terror. The population of the Antilles, the first lands reached by the discoverers, who could not bear slavery and forced labor, was decimated by ill-treatment, sometimes leading to collective suicides, and by diseases introduced by Europeans and to which it was not immune. The population of Hispaniola (Haiti), estimated at half a million in 1492, was reduced to 30,000 in 1514, practically wiped out during the sixteenth century. In general, the population of the Antilles will be the object of an almost complete genocide: in the nineteenth century, the last Caribbean (a few dozen) will be deported to the island of Dominica where they will lose the practice of their traditions and their language.

On the continent, the Amerindian population will not be annihilated, but will be terribly affected for the same reasons: in New Spain (Mexico) the population, estimated at 25 million in 1520, fell to 7 million in 1548, and was reduced to less than one and a half million in 1595-1605, a decrease of 95% in three quarters of a century. In Peru, work in the silver mines of Potosi is fueled by the “mita”, the chore, an institution borrowed from the ancient Inca Empire, but which then leads to a distant deportation, at more than 3,000 meters above sea level, to work underground. The working conditions are such that few come back: the required people, before departure, are invited to follow the Mass of the dead. . . The demographic collapse would have been less in Peru than in New Spain, but would have reached 20 to 30% between 1530 and 1660.

In total, the population of Spanish America, which was of the order of 50 million at the end of the fifteenth century, decreased to 9-10 million in 1570 and to 4 or 5 million in the middle of the seventeenth century. It was not until the end of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century that a slow demographic recovery was achieved.

In North America, a land of temperate colonization, the repression or annihilation of the Indians was from the beginning a condition of European settlement: in 1703 the Puritans of New England granted by decree a bounty of 40 pounds sterling per Indian scalp or for each Redskin taken prisoner. In 1720 the bounty was raised to 100 pounds.

## 1.4 The Black Slave Trade<sup>18</sup>

Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas, was outraged by the treatment to which the Amerindians were subjected. He denounced it in particular in his *Brevissima Relation de la Destrución de las Indias*. In 1542 he obtained the prohibition of the slavery of the Indians (which did not change much to their fate) and proposed to replace them with African slaves. He had to repent of it afterwards. In fact, the employment of black slaves imported from Africa had already started.

During the fifteenth century, the Portuguese had gradually recognized the coasts of Africa to the west of the continent. They will find some gold (gold that was previously exported, by the Saharan way, towards the Arab world). They will also bring back slaves. But this export will only take on its full dimension when it is directed to America.

In fact, the blacks will only replace the Indians in the regions where they have been practically exterminated, the coastal plains of the Gulf of Mexico, the West Indies, and especially the Brazilian Northeast, colonized by the Portuguese. And the development of African slavery will be closely associated with that of the sugar plantation.

The cultivation and processing of sugar cane, which came from India, was introduced in the late Middle Ages to the islands of the Mediterranean, colonized by Venice and Genoa (Chio, Cyprus, Crete) then in Sicily and Andalusia. At the end of the fifteenth century, they were introduced to the Atlantic islands: Madeira, Canary Islands, Saõ Tomé.

The production of cane sugar is from the outset a real agro-industry: planting and cutting cane, crushing in sugar mills, clarification and concentration of sugar in boilers, crystallization, then refining, leaving as a by-product molasses, consumed as such or distilled for the production of alcohol (rums and tafias). It cannot work with artisanal production: it required large numbers and strict discipline of work that only slavery could provide at that time.

Slaves were employed in the Mediterranean plantations. In the early sixteenth century, the cane was introduced to the Spanish West Indies, but its development was limited by the lack of manpower.

It was Portuguese Brazil that first imported African slaves on a large scale: around 1580 it became the first producer of cane sugar.

In the Lesser Antilles, partly abandoned by the Spanish and colonized by

---

<sup>18</sup>For an overview: Serge Daget, *La traite des Noirs* (The Black slave trade), Éditions Ouest-France Université, 1990, 300 p. For details: *De la Traite à l'esclavage* (From Slave trade to slavery) (Actes du colloque international de Nantes, 1985), Paris, 1988, 2 volumes, XXXII-551 and 733 p.



the English, French and Dutch, colonization was primarily the work of Europeans who employed a workforce of “indentured labourers”; those labourers pay for their journey through a “commitment” of work of 3 to 7 years for the benefit of those who recruited them. This system worked poorly; servitude, even temporary, had disappeared from European habits; recruited from among the marginalized, the committed had little aptitude for agriculture, let alone tropical agriculture. During the seventeenth century, they will be replaced by black slaves, and the crops performed so far (tobacco, indigo) will be marginalized in favor of the sugar plantation. During the temporary occupation of Brazil by the Dutch, the latter were introduced to the sugar agribusiness: expelled after the Portuguese reconquest, they will introduce sugar cane in the Lesser Antilles. During the second half of the seventeenth century, the slave population became the majority: thus, in Barbados (British) whites were still in the majority in 1645 (three quarters of the population); in 1667, the proportion was reversed: whites made up only a tenth of the population.

The sugar plantation was from the outset a capitalist enterprise: it required large investments in land development, industrial equipment (mills, boilers, etc.) and the purchase of slaves. Due to the length of the crossings, cash inflows are long-term. The capitalist is here the merchant (often also a shipowner) either by investing directly in the plantations or by financing the planters by advances.

The plantation economy is in complete dependence on foreign trade: almost everything it produces (mainly sugar, incidentally tobacco, indigo, coffee), is intended for export to Europe; almost everything it consumes, tools, clothing, and even food, is imported. The plots allocated to slaves for food crops, for which they are granted a maximum of one day a week, are not enough to support them. Flour and wines from Europe, dried or salted cod from North America, are imported.

The American demand for slaves, linked to the development of the plantation economy, caused the rise of the slave trade; the slave trade takes the form of the “triangular” trade; the slave ship, at first, brings to the coast of Africa “trade goods” (textiles, hardware, bimbelerie, alcohols, then powder and firearms), all products intended for the consumption of privileged layers of African society, organizers and beneficiaries of trafficking. From the coast of Africa, the slave ship left with its cargo of slaves for America, and exchanged its slaves for colonial goods (sugar, tobacco, coffee, etc.). However, since the price of the cargo of a slave ship is equivalent to the loading of four ships in colonial goods, much of the trade is done in “droiture”, tools and goods from Europe against colonial goods. One exception: Portuguese Brazil directly trades its imported slaves for tobacco and rum.

Growing rapidly in the second half of the eighteenth century, the slave trade will become, until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the dominant form of trade between Europe and Africa.

Europeans will quickly give up penetrating the interior of Africa: coastal states specialize in the role of intermediary, providing them with the human commodity, and defending their fruitful monopoly both against the Europeans and against the African populations of the Interior. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that explorations into the interior of the continent began, with the idea of direct access to the African market.

## **1.5    The human drain of the slave trade and the treatment of slaves**

How many Africans were transported across the Atlantic, from the early sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century (the slave trade continued for several decades after its prohibition, in 1815 north of Ecuador, in 1842 for the South Atlantic)?

The most recent estimates put the number of people transported at between 10 and 15 million. But to this demographic bloodletting must be added all the human victims resulting from the hunting of slaves and their transport.

The hunt for slaves had become, for the ruling strata of African states, the most lucrative activity: for a captive taken prisoner, how many deaths were made during the raids on the villages? How many then died along the way, in the convoys leading the prisoners to the coast, sometimes for hundreds of kilometers? How many dead in "repositories" on the coast? How many deaths at sea during transport? Because they were often numerous, especially when an epidemic broke out on board, due to overcrowding, hygiene and food conditions, during a crossing of several weeks. To this should be added, in Africa itself, the consequences of the permanent insecurity resulting from the hunt for slaves: populations reduced to famine by the destruction of their villages and crops, forced to take refuge in areas of difficult access but deprived of resources.

To assess it, it would be necessary to multiply the number of transported by a coefficient of several units, which it is impossible to specify: 50 million? 100 million? In America itself, until the end of the eighteenth century, the demographic evolution of the slave population was negative: in the French part of Saint-Domingue (now the Republic of Haiti), in 1789, 2.2 million slaves had been imported in 50 years: only 500,000 remained.

Fénelon, governor of Martinique, in a 11 April 1764 letter to the minister, was surprised by this negative development and highlighted the causes of this depopulation, which forces the constant import of new slaves: bad food, excess work, imposed even on pregnant women, very frequent diseases of children.

The slave trader Degrandpré, quoted by the R.P. Dieudonné Rinchon acknowledges: “Admittedly, we were speculating about the excess of their work and we were not afraid of making them die of fatigue, if the price we get from their sweat equals the price of their purchase.”<sup>19</sup>

Hilliard d’Auberteuil (quoted by Gaston Martin<sup>20</sup>), who resided twelve years in Saint-Domingue, wrote (in 1776): “One third of the Negroes of Guinea usually die in the first three years of transplantation, and the laborious life of a negro, made in the country, cannot be estimated at more than fifteen years.”

The expression “to work like a nigger” has remained in french language. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the servile population stabilized and began to grow naturally: various factors led to this: the rise in the cost of slaves, the interruption of the slave trade during the Napoleonic Wars, the great fear aroused among the slavers by the revolt in Santo Domingo (Haiti). Slave owners will be interested in maintaining and reproducing their labor.

To maintain the discipline of their slaves, the owners had to impose a regime of discrimination and terror.

The “Black Code” enacted in 1685, during the reign of Louis XIV, collection of regulations concerning the government, the administration of justice, police, discipline and trade of negroes in the French colonies<sup>21</sup> in force until 1848 (with the exception of the colonies where the abolition of slavery decreed by the Convention was applied from 1794 to 1802), laid down the official rules. It punishes with death any assault by a slave against his master or against free persons, as well as the theft of horses or oxen; If a slave is fugitive for more than a month they will have their ears cut off and will be marked with a red iron with a fleur-de-lis on his shoulder; if they reoffends, they will have their shank cut and will be marked with a fleur-de-lis on the other shoulder; the third time he will be punished with death. The tortures

---

<sup>19</sup>R. P. Dieudonné Rinchon: *The slave trade and slavery of the Congolese by the Europeans*, Paris, Vanelche, 1929, pp. 97-98.

<sup>20</sup>Gaston-Martin, *Histoire de l’esclavage dans les colonies françaises*, Paris, P.U.F., 1949, pp. 124-125.

<sup>21</sup>*The Black Code...* In Paris, at Prault, Imprimeur-libraire, 1767. Reproduction in facsimile: Basse-Terre, Société d’histoire de la Guadeloupe; Fort-De-France, Société d’histoire de la Martinique, 1980.

(marks and mutilations) were not abolished until 1833.

Masters have the right to have their slaves chained and whipped “when they believe that the slaves deserved it”. Except in the cases provided, it is in principle forbidden for masters to torture, maim or kill their slaves. But in fact, the masters, whatever they do, are never punished: the courts, in the hands of the settlers, had as their principle that a master could never be convicted on the complaint of a slave, for fear of jeopardizing the authority of the slave regime.

In his report on *the Troubles of Santo Domingo*, the conventional Garran notes that there is no example of a master brought to justice for killing or maiming a slave. An ordinance of 1784 which limited to 50 the number of lashes that a master could inflict on a slave “was recorded with great difficulty” and was not executed<sup>22</sup>.

Marriage and sexual relations between settlers and slaves are in principle prohibited: in fact, the settlers took slave concubines and, very quickly, a layer of mestizos was formed, hierarchized according to their proportion of “white” blood. In 1789, in the French part of Saint-Domingue (now the Republic of Haiti) there were 35,440 whites, 509,642 slaves, and 26,666 freedmen and “colored people”. Freedmen and free men of color could own plantations and slaves but were subject to strict discrimination: in 1789, the settlers denied them political rights.

In a pamphlet published in 1814, Vastey, secretary to King Christophe (Henri 1st, immortalized by Aimé Césaire’s play) lists the tortures inflicted by the settlers on the slaves, especially during their insurrection: slaves burned alive or impaled, limbs sawn, tongue, ears, teeth, lips cut or torn off, hung upside down, drowned, crucified on boards, buried alive, tied on anthills, thrown alive into sugar boilers, thrown down slopes in barrels bristling with nails inside, finally, given alive to be devoured by dogs trained for this purpose<sup>23</sup>. Rochambeau Jr., commander after the death of General Leclerc of the expeditionary force sent by Bonaparte to reconquer Saint-Domingue and re-establish slavery, bought dogs in Cuba specially trained for this purpose.

It goes without saying that the example given here of the French colonies, for the treatment of slaves, can be extended to all the other colonies.

---

<sup>22</sup>*Garran-Coulon report*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, An V, tome 1, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup>Notes to Baron Malouet, Minister of Marine and Colonies... Au Cap Henry, chez P. Roux, imprimeur du Roi, October 1814, pp. 11-12.

## 1.6 The slave trade and slavery in the nineteenth century

The prohibition of the trade, despite the repression of the British squadrons, was not enforced and it was not until around 1860 that the traffic ended.

After a “great fear” of the slavers due to the insurrection of the slaves in the French part of Saint-Domingue, which led in 1804 to the independence of the Black Republic of Haiti, the first half of the nineteenth century saw a new boom in American slave plantations. This time no longer in the context of mercantilism, but of the market dominated by modern, industrial capitalism: the rise in the south of the United States of the slave plantation, to supply raw materials to the English factories of Manchester and its region; the rise of slavery in Cuba (for sugar production) and in Brazil (sugar and cocoa) for European consumption. Slavery was not abolished until 1833 in the English colonies, in 1848 in the French colonies, in 1866 in the United States (after the defeat of the Southerners in the American Civil War), in 1886 in Cuba (Spanish colony) and in 1888 in Brazil.

Forbidden in the Atlantic, the slave trade will experience a new development in the nineteenth century in East Africa, especially in Sudan (dependence on Egypt) and in the Sultanate of Zanzibar. The Sultanate of Zanzibar, created by the Arabs of Oman, controlled from the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba the entire coast of the Indian Ocean, from Somalia to Mozambique<sup>24</sup>.

This “Arab” slave trade was sometimes put forward to try to “excuse” the European slave trade, on the theme “We were not the only ones”. The problem is that this “Arab” slave trade was driven by the demand of the European capitalist market.

Indeed, its main objective was the search for ivory: by the slaughter of elephants, but especially by the looting of the “treasures” in elephant spikes accumulated by the chiefdoms of Central Africa. Parts of the Nile or Zanzibar, looting expeditions destroyed villages, massacred or enslaved the population, the captives being destined to play the role of porters, to transport the ivory. Slavery was a kind of “by-product” of ivory plundering: the slaves who survived were sold to the Middle East where domestic slavery remained, or used as labour in the clove plantations of Zanzibar, the main supplier to the world clove market, controlled by the British.

The European market was indeed demanding ivory, solicited by the con-

---

<sup>24</sup>See Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar. Integration of an East African Business Empire into the World Economy (1770-1873)*, Ohio University Press, 1987, 320 p. and G. Clarence-Smith (Ed.), *The Economies of the Indian Ocean. Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, London: F.Cass, 1989.

sumption of the wealthy classes: billiard balls, piano keys, knife handles for Sheffield cutlery. We can estimate the number of slaves exported to Asia, through the Indian Ocean, in the nineteenth century, at 400,000<sup>25</sup>; The number of slaves “produced” by the Sudanese slave trade can be estimated at 750,000 (plus 10 to 30% of “losses” during transport, and an unevaluable proportion of losses at the time of capture)<sup>26</sup>.

## 1.7 The Road to India and Asian Colonization

While the Spaniards, after believing they were reaching the Indies from the west, colonized America, the Portuguese explored and opened, at about the same time, the eastern route, bypassing the African continent from the south. Vasco da Gama reached India (the real one) in 1498.

The eastern colonization will first be the fact of the Portuguese, following the principle of the royal monopoly, then of the Dutch, the English, the French, who competed with them.

With some exceptions, and at least until the second half of the eighteenth century, the territorial possessions of the colonizers were limited to coastal trading posts. Europeans come to India, incidentally to Indonesia, China and Japan, for luxury goods: spices (pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, etc.) and oriental handicraft products (luxury textiles: muslins, cashmere, and Indian (painted cotton canvases), silks, lacquers and porcelain from China).

Impossible to offer in return European manufactured items: Asians do better and cheaper. We must resign ourselves to paying off purchases in cash. It is American silver that balances the purchases of Asian trade. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, one-third, perhaps even half of the silver provided by America, was absorbed by China<sup>27</sup>. The latter tightly controls its entrances and only the Portuguese have been able to establish a trading post in Macau. Japan, on the other hand, closed itself in 1638 to European trade, with the exception of limited and controlled access to the port of Nagasaki, reserved for the Dutch only.

However, from the seventeenth century, the Dutch, to ensure the monopoly of spices take control, directly or by interposed local sovereigns, of the Moluccas, then Java where they established the capital of their commercial empire,

---

<sup>25</sup>François Renault, *Problems of research on the trans-Saharan and Eastern slave trade in Africa in De la Traite à l'esclavage*, already quoted in footnote 18 on page 8, tome 1, pp. 37-53.

<sup>26</sup>Gérard Prunier, *La traite soudanaise* (The Sudanese Black trade) (1820-1885); *ibid.*, volume 2, pp. 521-535.

<sup>27</sup>F. Braudel, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p. 169.

Batavia (now Jakarta).

During the eighteenth century, French and English undertook to consolidate their trading posts by a territorial hold. Dupleix's French attempt was considered a personal initiative and disavowed by the French East India Company. This attempt was abandoned following the French defeat in the Seven Years' War (1763). The British East India Company took over. Plassey's victory (1757) resulted in the company's takeover of Bengal. The style of colonization and commercial relations will then change radically. To trade, the company adds as a source of profits the fiscal exploitation of the conquered territories. Then begins the "repatriation" of money and other wealth accumulated in India. At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the movement began that would transform India from a supplier of manufactured and luxury goods to a supplier of raw materials for British industry (cotton, jute). This will also transform India into a buyer of manufactured products of English industry, resulting in the ruin of traditional craftsmanship.

For China, it is even later, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that the reversal takes place: to settle the purchases of Chinese products (silks, tea) silver is gradually replaced by opium imported into China by the East India Company. It was around 1820 approximately that the balance reversed to the detriment of China. The "Opium War" (1839-1842) forced China to open five ports, cede Hong Kong, and especially the import of opium that the Chinese government had tried to prohibit. In Braudel's words: "Here is China paid in smoke, and what smoke!"<sup>28</sup>

## 1.8 What consequences for peoples?

For the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) the history of the colonial administration of the Dutch "unfolds a picture of murders, of betrayals, corruption and baseness that will never be equalled"<sup>29</sup>. The author of this judgment is the governor whom the English appointed during their occupation, during the Napoleonic Wars. Looting, enslavement, extortion, all means are good to ensure the Dutch East India Company which exploits Indonesia until the end of the eighteenth century record profits. The state, in the nineteenth century, will do even better: from 1830, Governor Van den Bosch establishes the "system" that bears his name: forced cultures, forced labor. Peasants have to provide one-fifth of their best land, one-fifth of their working time

---

<sup>28</sup>F. Braudel, *ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>29</sup>Thomas Stanford Raffles, *The History of Java and its dependencies*, London, 1818, quoted by Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

to provide free export products. Forced crops and forced labour will often go far beyond official boundaries: we will go so far as to demand a third or even half of the land, and in working time from 66 to 240 days a year<sup>30</sup>. At the same time, the property tax doubles. Later the establishment of plantations (tobacco, rubber trees, oil palms, etc.), will lead to the recruitment of “contractual” labor, actually forced laborers treated worse than slaves.

In India, the English will find the support of certain social strata – in particular merchants and bankers – who will become intermediaries of British trade. In 1793, by a simple regulation, the administration of the East India Company changed the status of the “Zamindars”, who were tax farmers in the Mughal Empire. The “Zamindars” then became large landowners, British-style Landlords, in the territories in which where they were responsible for collecting taxes whereas peasants were reduced to the condition of precarious tenants.

Monopolies of salt, opium, betel, and other products were granted to senior employees of the company, who made quick fortunes.

But the worst was yet to come, with the destruction of handicrafts: India's economic equilibrium was based on the association of agriculture and handicrafts (textiles in particular).

From 1814 to 1835, imports of “Indians” into Britain fell by three-quarters; conversely, imports of British industrial cotton into India are multiplied by 50!

The ruined craftsmen had to retreat to the work of the land, already overloaded. A governor-general of India could thus say that the bones of the weavers whitened the plains of India.

Periodic famines became a feature of India: 18 famines from 1875 to 1900 caused 26 million deaths<sup>31</sup>. There will be others in the twentieth century (that of Bengal, in 1943, will make 3 to 4 million deaths).

For China, the first opium war will be followed by other European military interventions aimed at imposing the law of great capitalist powers, which will be awarded port “concessions”. Since 1842, they have required China to limit customs duties on imported foreign goods to 5%. We will witness a dislocation of the traditional economic circuits, a worsening of misery that will lead to peasant insurrections, the most important of which was that of the Tai-Pings (1851-1864).

We can summarize with Marx: “The discovery of the gold and silver countries of America, the enslavement of the natives, their imprisonment in mines or extermination, the beginnings of conquest and plunder in the East

---

<sup>30</sup>Charles Robequain, *Le monde malais* (The malese world), Paris, Payot, 1946, p. 351.

<sup>31</sup>J. Chesneaux, *L'Asie orientale au XIXe et XXe siècles*, Paris, PUF, 1966, p.189.



Indies, the transformation of Africa into a kind of commercial garenne for the hunt for black skin, these are the idyllic processes of primitive accumulation that signal the capitalist era at its dawn.”<sup>32</sup>

## 1.9 Eastern Europe and the “second serfdom”

Dependency and exploitation through the global market of America, Asia and Africa have also affected the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The Ottoman Empire was gradually penetrated by Western trade. Since the sixteenth century, the French, followed by the English, have benefited for their counters, the “ladders of the Levant”, from exterritoriality.

In Eastern Europe (roughly, east of the Elbe) the local aristocracy, to purchase luxury goods from Western Europe (clothingfurniture, wine, etc.) intensified its exploitation of the peasantry. By taking ownership of the land and generalizing serfdom.

This is what historians call the “second serfdom” that is developing in Eastern Europe (Russia, Poland, Prussia) at the very moment when serfdom is disappearing from Western Europe. It will reach its peak in Russia at the end of the eighteenth century, under the reign of Catherine II, and will take forms close to slavery pure and simple. It will make possible this classified ad in a St. Petersburg newspaper: “For sale, a wig maker and a cow of good breed”. This reinforced exploitation of the peasantry allows the large owners to make money by massively exporting food and raw materials to Western Europe: cereals, flax, wood, etc. The maritime cities of the Hansa (German and Baltic), then the Dutch, finally the English, will be the intermediaries and beneficiaries of this trade.

## 1.10 Market capital and financial capital (usu-rious). From mercantilism to liberalism

The colonial system of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries is based on monopoly: royal monopoly at first for Spain and Portugal, then monopoly of privileged companies such as the various companies of the Indies (Dutch, English, French).

The doctrine of foreign trade is mercantilism, advocated by Colbert: the enrichment of the king (and the kingdom) is considered to be linked to the acquisition of the maximum amount of monetary cash; for which it is neces-

---

<sup>32</sup>Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

sary to import at least as possible and export as much as possible. Hence a protectionist customs policy.

Competition between trading nations will often take on a violent course: piracy (privateering) and abuses of all kinds. It will often lead to wars: in the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, alongside dynastic rivalries, economic motivations took an increasing place: thus, in the war waged by Holland (the "United Provinces") revolted against Spain, in the Anglo-Dutch and Franco-Dutch wars of the seventeenth century, in the War of the Spanish Succession, in the Seven Years' War, in the Anglo-French conflict under the Revolution and the Empire.

The advent of industrial capitalism was accompanied by the promotion of "liberal" ideology. Industrial capitalism comes into conflict with previous institutions: criticism of monopolies, corporate regulations, colonial "Exclusive" (a rule that forbade the colonies to trade with foreign nations, and to produce manufactured goods whose supply was to be reserved for the metropolis), criticism of protectionism, trafficking and slavery.

However, this liberal ideology is of variable geometry: it triumphed in nineteenth-century England with the repeal, in 1846, of the protectionist laws on wheat. These laws responded to the interests of the "landlords", but embarrassed the industrialists by bidding the price of bread and the level of wages. But in contradiction with the principles of "free trade", the same England imposes on India a discriminatory customs policy. It penalizes Indian exports of manufactured goods, and encourages imports of British industrial products. England fought the slave trade through her Atlantic surveillance squadron, but supported the Southerners slave owners, their cotton suppliers, during the American Civil War... The United States and Germany will achieve their industrialization under the aegis of a protectionist policy. The end of the nineteenth century saw the triumph, including in England, of imperial protectionism.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, colonial trade fueled finance capital (usurious): the bank in fact at that time did not practice productive investments, but lent to the States, to the sovereigns. Those who pay are the subjects, subject to tax obligations, that is to say in the final analysis especially the peasants.

The financial centers are successively Genoa which changes the money of the King of Spain into gold coins necessary for the pay of his mercenaries. Genoa will finally be a victim of the bankruptcy of the Spanish state Then, the trade in colonial products was concentrated in Antwerp, which was until 1575 the first financial center in Europe. The insurrection of the Dutch against the King of Spain ruined Antwerp and brought amsterdam to the center of great commerce and finance. In the eighteenth century, this function

passed to London.

In colonial trade, monarchical states and, of course, bourgeois states like the Netherlands, are linked by their interests to the merchant and financial bourgeoisie. Colonial policy was conducted with the means of the State.

This association, sometimes conflictual, is also manifested by the development of public debt and taxation. Public debt and taxation that contribute powerfully to the exploitation and impoverishment of the peasantry, and constitute one of the levers of primitive accumulation.

Sovereigns, to immediately obtain the money they need and save themselves the burdens and delays of collecting taxes, To finance the collection of certain taxes, according to a practice that dates back to antiquity. This is what the “fermiers généraux” will do in France, who immediately provide the king with the money he needs. These tax farmers are remunerated by collecting certain taxes on the sovereign’s behalf. With a profit margin that sometimes reaches 100% and is never less than 30% (notoriously usurious margin). Moreover, governments borrow, first from bankers and then directly from the public.

François 1st launched in 1522 the first public state loan by asking the bourgeois of Paris to lend him 200,000 pounds, for interest. These were the first “rents on the town hall”, guaranteed by the revenues of certain municipal taxes. “Public debt operates as one of the most energetic agents of primitive accumulation.”<sup>33</sup> This method of plundering state resources for the benefit of the rich is flourishing today more than ever. (the Pinay and Giscard borrowings provide the contemporary illustration).

Colonial system, fiscal abuses, public debt, impoverishment and expropriation of peasants are preparing, in various ways, the advent of industrial capitalism.

All these means, however, were not sufficient, at first, to provide the manpower that nascent industrial capitalism needed. It will be provided for in England by the use of the children of the “workhouses”.

Lancashire, for its spinning and weaving, needed “small and agile fingers”.

“Immediately the custom of procuring so-called ‘apprentices’, workhouses belonging to the various parishes of London, Birmingham and elsewhere, was born. Thousands of these poor abandoned children, aged seven to fourteen, were thus sent north. The master (the child thief) was responsible for dressing, feeding and housing his apprentices in an ‘ad hoc’ house near the factory. During the work, they were under the eye of the guards. It was in the interest of these prison warden to make these children work to excess. Because their own pay decreased or increased depending on the quantity of

---

<sup>33</sup>Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

products they knew how to extract from those children. The mistreatment was the natural consequence... In many manufacturing districts, mainly in Lancashire, these innocent beings, without friends or supporters, who had been handed over to the masters of the factory, were subjected to the most horrific tortures. Exhausted by the excess of work... they were whipped, chained, tormented with the most studied refinements. Often, when hunger twisted them the hardest, the whip kept them at work.”<sup>34</sup>

These practices, contemporary “liberalism” has extended them to tens of millions of children, in Brazil, Pakistan, Thailand and elsewhere.

Thus came to the world the triumphant Capital, “sweating blood and mud through all pores”<sup>35</sup>.

### **Jean Suret-Canale**

Jean Suret-Canale, volunteer veteran of the Resistance, interned resistance fighter, clandestine militant of the communist youth from 1939 to 1944, former member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, is an honorary lecturer at the University of Paris VII. A geographer and historian, he is the author of a dozen books on black Africa and the Third World.

---

<sup>34</sup>John Fielden, *The Curse of the Factory System*, London, 1836. Quoted by Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

<sup>35</sup>Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 202

## Chapter 2

# Servile economy and capitalism: a quantifiable overview

**Philippe PARAIRE**

In his 118th Persian Letter, Montesquieu noted in 1721 that Africa's coasts "must have been furiously stripped for two hundred years that little kings or village chiefs sell their subjects to the princes of Europe to carry them to their colonies in America". In a later work, *L'Esprit des Loix* (1748), he ironize on the laziness of the peoples of Europe: "having exterminated the people of of America, had to enslave those of Africa, to use them to clear so much land". In the same place (XV, 5), he draws attention to the economic dimension of the problem: "Sugar would be too expensive, if we did not work the plant that produces it by slaves." Eleven years later, Voltaire explains in *Candide* (chap. XIX), through the mouth of a mutilated slave: "It is at this price that you eat sugar in Europe"...

Everything is said, in a few words: the wealth of the conquering Europe, the cradle of capitalism, was built on the exploitation and extermination of the Amerindians and on that of the coastal peoples of West Africa: The Native American population fell in three centuries from 40 to 20 million people (with in some cases a total extinction, as in the Bahamas and the Greater Antilles, as well as on the east coast of North America) The African population had to suffer a loss of 20 million people (ten million dead and ten million deported) in three centuries of trafficking, that is to say from 1510 to 1850 approximately. The revenues of the servile economy, which for the great European powers accounted for more than half of the export profits in 1800, cost the lives of more than thirty million human beings.

The Americas numbered forty million men at the time of the European invasion: more than five million for North America (Canada and the United

States) the rest, in equal parts, in Central America (mainly Mexico) and in South America, in the Andean regions, equatorial forests and southern pampas.

We remain stunned by the most recent censuses: The United States has less than 2 million Indians! If natural demography could have played a role (for example, as in Europe during the last three centuries), the Native Americans of the United States would have to be at least thirty million. What happened in Peru and Colombia, Chile or Argentina, where Indians, just like Mexico, are only in the majority, whereas they should constitute, if there had been no genocide, 90% of the general population? And this regardless of the miscegenation and other “assimilations” that some believe can use to blur the figures.

The case of the Amerindians therefore boils down to a sinister count: at least twenty million people were sacrificed to God Profit in a direct way, through massacre, misery, deportations and dispossession. Details are missing. The overall picture is, however, terribly edifying: Restive, stubborn, diabolically allergic to the forced labor that the colonists imposed on them, the Amerindians, declared foreigners on their own land, were thrown into nothing by the European emigrants. For its misfortune, Africa was in turn sacrificed on the altar of the “civilizing mission” of European capitalism to “clear so much land”.

## 2.1 The collapse of Africa

Neither Montesquieu nor Voltaire had the ability to attempt it, but this macabre count, we can now do it. We can carry it to the liabilities of an economic system based on the transformation into capital of surplus value extorted from forced laborers, the slaves. Two hundred and fifty years after the humanists of the Enlightenment, we have everything we need to measure the barbarity of nascent capitalism: shipowners’ logbooks, masters’ reports, travellers’ accounts, amounts of marine insurance policies, plans and number of vessels, the statements of account of the enriched slave traders, the books of the freedmen, the liquidation of inheritances, the value of the currencies, the quantified balance sheets of the triangular trade, the statements of the ship’s doctors, the bounties paid to fugitive slave hunters, the accounts of lynchings, the minutes of the trials and the count of executions.

No serious historian disputes this figure anymore. No researcher today seeks to minimize the extent of the catastrophe that was for Africa its encounter with the fledgling capitalism of the metropolises of Europe. This capitalism could only reach maturity thanks to the extraordinary profits gen-

erated by the invasion of one continent (America) developed by populations torn from another, Africa.

Altogether, ten million African deportees reached the New World between 1510 and 1860. More than two million perished during the crossing. Eight million disappeared between the place of their capture in Africa and the coastal trading posts where the survivors of the raids were embarked. This brings us to a minimum of twenty million people taken from African demography.

At the great time of the slave trade, from 1650 to 1850, deportation reached 100,000 Africans per year. Previously, from 1500 to 1650, the rate was lower: from 15,000 to 40,000 people embarked per year. But the most terrible period for Africa coincided with the rise of cotton cultivation in the United States, between 1800 and 1850: up to 120,000 people displaced annually.

It is obvious that we cannot drain a continent without dramatic consequences in this way: First of all, on the statistical level of the strict demographic "shortfall", it is worth noting the steady decline of Africa's weight in the world population: in 1600, it represented 30% of all human beings. The figure fell to 2% in 1800. The fall continued until 1900, when only 10% of humanity lived in Africa. The west coast, from Senegal to Angola, is obviously the most affected. The coastal forests and savannahs are literally raked by African kinglets who with their armies capture and then transport the prisoners to the exchange zones. In these sectors, the male population is declining: between Mauritania and Senegal, 20% of the total population has been deported in three centuries. The demographic deficit on the coasts of Guinea, the Gulf of Benin, Cameroon and Angola is such that, in most regions of the Sahel and even in the forests of Congo, fearsome imbalances are reached: barely 50 men per 100 women in Benin, 70 men per 100 women in Biafra, less than 50 men per 100 women in Congo, Shaba, Angola. Further north, between Central Africa and Mali, in Côte d'Ivoire and as far as Gambia, there are barely six men for every ten women. The continuous decline of the population of West Africa during this period is explained by an annual drain (over three centuries) of three inhabitants out of a thousand on average. This may seem inconsequential, but it must be said that it is 3% over ten years, and 30% over a hundred years! Given regional variations and fluctuations over time, specialists agree on a minimum of 15% of the population deported between 1700 and 1850.

As a result, during the same period, it is not possible to record any increase in the general population of Africa (while at the same time European demography exports its surplus to the New World and is ready to populate the whole world).

The economic impact is incredibly violent: kingdoms beating money are rejected at the tribal stage. Federations of tribes break up into wandering communities. Constituted empires are crumbling, cities are abandoned, fields left fallow for lack of farmers. General insecurity is blocking trade, intracontinental trade is shrinking at the regional level. A long economic stagnation accompanies the demographic fall.

An economy of brigandage and raiding regresses the taste for work. It becomes easier to get rich, or simply survive, by kidnapping your neighbor's son than by cultivating his field. At the same time, the ideological and political consequences aggravate the continent's stagnation: slave kings violently impose personal dictatorships contrary to traditional village democracy. Palaver gives way to allegiance, the payment of tribute in captives replaces diplomacy. In the midst of this collective decadence, the situation of women (made supernumerary by the deportation of men) deteriorated significantly: gigantic harems are being formed, made up of bought women, widows and girls sold, unmarriageable and useless. With the captives too scrawny to be bought by the Europeans and the old men in surplus, an abundant herd intended for human sacrifices is fueled, whose practice is skyrocketing in Africa from the seventeenth century.

Slowly the continent is sinking into a barbarity that it had never really known: the slave trade during the African Middle Ages had never been anything but exceptional, even marginal. Islam in the Sahel had not been able to impose polygamy. Human sacrifices were rare and limited to strictly defined occasions.

At the same time, the "African market" is experiencing a real structural reversal: before the arrival of Europeans, black Africa lived around what was called the "Saharan Sea": the central desert, traversed by caravans like so many ships going from port to port, served as an economic hub: exchange between the west coast and eastern Sudan, trade with the Islamic civilizations of the Maghreb. On the other hand, the ocean, bordered by thick forests, served as a limit, offering no real economic interest.

However, suddenly, the construction of the counters by the European powers turned the African economy inside out like a simple sock. In less than a century the prosperous peoples of the wooded savannahs became a granary of slaves and the warlike kingdoms of the coastal forests took over, creating real empires of "slave economy", whose only activity was the penetration of peaceful areas, raids, captures, transport and sale of prisoners.

The relative prosperity, due to the economic take-off of West Africa (sensitive from the twelfth century), could not survive such shocks. By 1800, the entire continent had regressed by a millennium.



## 2.2 The share of the servile economy in the “primitive accumulation”

It seems inconceivable that twenty million men, women and children have been uprooted from their homes and land to address a productivity problem: given the risks of transatlantic trade, the wage bill had to be reduced to zero in order to obtain a satisfactory profit. Thus, the calculation of the cost of production of coffee, cocoa, sugar and cotton could only be favorable by cancelling wages, in order to extort maximum surplus value; the slave worker, whose total cost was limited to his purchase price and the strict food necessary, thus constituted a kind of living jackpot: Producing between five and ten times the surplus value of a European employee, the slave contributed to the enrichment of the white settlers, slave traders and merchants of the mainland.

In the late seventeenth century, when the servile population in the United States was numerically equal to that of white immigrants, it produced 80% of the gross national product of the American colony. We can thus see that it contributed to the collective wealth (since it did not receive any benefit from it) in such an overwhelming way that when it reached, around 1800, Two-thirds of the general population, white Americans had practically abandoned all productive roles to limit themselves to the highly remunerative tasks of trade to Europe. It was not until the end of the century that white European immigrants flooded the population of African descent in successive waves and for the first time secured a significant and then majority share of gross domestic production (without, however, participating mainly in the sharing of gross domestic income, because of the wage exploitation suffered by the German, Polish, Russian, Italian and Irish newcomers).

Slave traders, simple hidalgos and unscrupulous adventurers at the beginning of the sixteenth century, were only able to transport about ten thousand captives a year, to the British Colony of the North, the French and Spanish West Indies, and Portuguese-occupied Brazil. Remaining marginal until 1650, this rapine trade, although lucrative, was not yet a significant source of income. Easy to buy, with a rather low selling price (between 5 and 10 pounds from 1650 for a healthy man from 15 to 30 years old), slaves died quickly and were just as quickly replaced; one year of life expectancy in Brazil and the West Indies, barely two years in French Louisiana. Five pounds in 1650 accounted for a quarter of the monthly income of an American craftsman on the East Coast. For example, a century later, the same slave traded for a used rifle and four barrels of powder. Not enough to really make a fortune...

For slavery to become the main pillar of nascent European capitalism, and not only the opportunity for subsidiary income for the feudal economies of the Middle Ages, it was necessary the conjunction of several elements:

1. The construction *ex nihilo* of a market based on a demand for products deemed rare, and sold expensive despite a low cost of production.
2. The establishment of a real monetary circulation around the transatlantic slave trade, and for this the rationalization of transport.
3. The joint regulation of the price of slaves and the cost of their maintenance.
4. The establishment of agreed prices for bonded labour products, the organisation of the return to Europe of most of the investment profits without hindering the reinjection, at the local level of colonial economies, of the minimum necessary, in order to avoid unproductive hoarding.

These elements necessary for maximum extortion of the surplus value produced by the slave workers of the New World were all gathered only around 1800. The ensuing economic boom was such that it can be said without hesitation that European capitalism would not have experienced its extraordinary growth in the nineteenth century without the decisive contribution of the labor of the slave labor of the New World.

Appearing under Louis XIV, the fashion of “French breakfast” (coffee with milk, or cocoa with cane sugar) became a universal phenomenon throughout Europe from 1750. Sweet honey teas were suddenly abandoned for the new breakfast, even in the deepest layers of the people, even in the countryside.

The demand was such that the New World increased its import of slaves tenfold and converted to new cultures intended to supply Europe with exotic drinks in fashion: the French Antilles, for example, abandoned the cultivation of spices and embarked on sugar production around 1700, while Brazil converted to coffee and everywhere there was an attempt to acclimatize cocoa, and even tobacco, also made fashionable by the court of France. This first market created, another succeeded it when shortly after 1800 an American engineer found a way to card, spin and weave cotton. Suddenly, the entire southern United States began to cultivate this culture. The demand for slaves skyrocketed in all areas of production: Cuba imported between 1800 and 1850 more than 700,000 additional slaves, attached to the cultivation of cane. The southern United States brought more than 150,000 slaves a year between 1810 and 1830 into the cotton belt. Far from the tinkering of the beginnings, a real “servile capitalist economy” was born.

The resale of coffee and sugar production from America accounted for 50% of France's export earnings in 1750.

With regard to the circulation of money and the transformation into capital of the capital gains produced by the rationalization of the transport of slaves, there are many indications of the extraordinary nature of the profits generated by bonded labour: the boom of port cities engaged in this traffic, the parallel flowering of banking companies living off the trade, the specialization of some shipowners is a tangible sign of the capitalization in Europe of the profits of the exploitation of Africans deported to the New World. It has become common to say that Bordeaux, Nantes or even Lisbon owe their most beautiful areas, their most beautiful monuments to repatriated capital. But what about Liverpool or Amsterdam, not to mention Copenhagen and Stockholm?

For if it is true that England alone transported half of the deportees (it ceased the trade in 1812) and the Portuguese a quarter, small countries like Holland and Sweden owe their economic take-off to the slave windfall (per capita income from the benefits of the slave trade was ten times higher in the Nordic countries than in France, for example). The Dutch had made the transport of captives, like the Danes and Swedes, a profitable specialty: the adaptation of aeration awnings, the cleaning of holds, the systematic showering of prisoners, better food rations and faster vessels had reduced mortality to less than 10% of the captives transported. At the same time, in squalid ships of French, Portuguese and English adventurers, mortality could reach 50%, generally settling around 30% of deaths.

The nascent capitalism's liability when it comes to the ten million deaths of the transatlantic slave trade makes little doubt since this trade had from the beginning the appearance of a fairly organized market, structured by regional and even international agreements, trying to best meet the fluctuating demands of European planters and importers of exotic commodities.

There was never a "Slave Stock Exchange", but a set of completely standardized business practices, which can be known today from many accounting documents. Bought in Africa by a pre-capitalist barter system (one slave for twenty liters of brandy in 1770, or two pieces of cloth, or two hats and a necklace of shells), therefore not very rational and quite dicey, the captives had a fixed price as soon as they arrived in America, according to their age, gender, health and local needs. The transformation of profits into investments, the transfer of capital gains to Europe or the big colonial cities, the state subsidy to slave shipowners (Richelieu in 1635), English taxes (from 1661), the regulation of punishments inflicted on slaves in order to avoid mortality rates contradictory to profitability (Colbert in 1685), all this indicates that from the seventeenth century the servile economy of the New World was as impor-

tant a pillar for primitive capitalist accumulation as the enclosure movement or the founding of the Lombard banks a few centuries earlier.

The King of Spain gave the green light to slave ships by a decree of 12 January 1510. The first African captives were landed in Hispaniola a year later, in 1511. After a century of “tinkering”, during which the elements of servile capitalism were put in place, official stock market ratings of exotic commodities imported into Europe began to reflect the state of the “markets”; more than a hundred shopping counters on African shores having agreed on a floor price for “ebony wood”, the item “acquisition” was limited to that of transport costs. The fifteen or so ports between the Rio de la Plata and New York Bay provided most of the reception of the captives having also agreed, the average selling price of a healthy adult slave fluctuated (in constant pounds) from five to twenty units of account from 1800, or between one and twice the price of a draught animal, ox or horse. The only thing left was to regulate the price of commodities

Given the services rendered by the slave, it was for three centuries an excellent deal for the profitability of investments in both Americas. On the one hand, the importance of the profits of bonded labour can be measured by the particular productivity ratio that characterizes it: the wage bill tending towards zero, the ratio between production (whatever it may be) and this mass gives an infinite value, a mathematical image of the maximum possible extortion of the surplus value produced. On the other hand, the monopoly situation associated with a captive market ensured profits that enabled Europe to establish a solid pre-industrial capitalism. Which enabled Europe to move to a higher stage during the nineteenth century, that of the conquest of the world. After imposing “parisian breakfast”, the servile economy (constituted by the system banks / shipowners of Europe / slave kings of Africa / transporters / planters and exporters of America / importers of Europe) put cotton in fashion. Having constituted the need (after having managed to put out of fashion honey, herbal teas, linen and silk) it first responded to it in a simply mercantile way with taxes and protectionist barriers, then in a more capitalist way in the modern sense, through franchises, cartels, joint-stock companies and competition. After a century, the equilibrium of prices, achieved by supply/demand regulation, literally caused European capitalism to take off.

Just a reminder of the extravagant human cost of this fulfillment: 7 to 8 million Africans killed during the raids or died during the journey to the slave trading posts of Africa. Two million dead during the crossing. Another two million, died of exhaustion in the first year on the plantations. An impossible to specify number of deaths due to ill-treatment, suicides, revolts, repressions, lynchings and outright massacres.

For Africa, all this has led to a historical and cultural regression without example, a demographic collapse sufficient to stagnate the African population, definitive hatreds, economic destructuring, the cancellation of growth and a backwardness that the colonial invasion will only aggravate.

Despite tendentious historians who attribute to African feudalities the initiative of the slave trade or accuse the Arab kings of having perpetuated it, despite the thurifers of liberalism who refuse to quantify the profits of the servile economy and to associate them with the rescue and then the take-off of the European economies, it must be said and not afraid to repeat oneself: a set of indisputable facts shows that the nascent capitalism did not only bleed the peoples of Europe (this calculation can be made elsewhere). It took off on a mass grave as history, which was already bloody, had never seen before: twenty million Amerindians exterminated in three centuries, and twelve million Africans killed on the job at the same time. Two entire continents sacrificed to establish a criminal system without morals and without any law other than that of profit. More than thirty million human beings murdered by capitalism, in a direct and unquestionable way.

**Philippe Paraire**

Author of *Les Noirs Américains, généalogie d'une exclusion*, coll. "Pluriel intervention", Hachette, 1993.

## 2.3 Bibliography

Franz Tardo-Dino, *Le collier de servitude* (The necklace of servitude), Éditions Caribéennes, 1985.

Ibrahim Baba Kaké, *La traite négrière* (The slave trade), Présence Africaine, Larousse Nathan international, 1988.

Jean Meyer, *Esclaves et négriers* (Slaves and Slaves traders), coll. "Découvertes", Gallimard, 1986.

Hubert Deschamps, *Histoire de la traite des Noirs* (History of the slave trade), Fayard, 1972.

Kenneth M. Stamp, *The peculiar institution*, Random House, New York, 1956.

Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the making of America*, Collier Books, New York, 1987.

Partick Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990.



## Chapter 3

# Shoot, they're just proles.

Roger BORDIER

In the days and months following the storming of the Bastille, particularly in August, a very lively workers' agitation, more important and resolute than one might perhaps imagine two centuries later, shook various corporations and in sometimes confused features, certainly, began to draw the true face of a modern class struggle. Already in April, a riot directed against the manufacture of the prestigious paper manufacturer Jean-Baptiste Réveillon had clearly shown that in a certain Parisian population, where destitution faced opulence, tension was running high. The factory employed four hundred people (a quarter of them children) and it is not clear whether they were among the many rioters. The essential, paradoxically, is elsewhere, and first of all in the rumor that spread in a short time to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine: Réveillon would have made remarks that were not very favourable to those who, already so badly paid, were likely to be even less so. True? False? Misery answered by throwing itself into the street, then it paid the price by seeing the dead of a terrible repression fall while demonstrators were hanged the next day, others violently molested, others imprisoned. It was still, as we said, only in April: the wind was blowing against the poor; they had the impression after July 14 that it was finally going to turn in their direction.

For Jaurès, what is remarkable about the storming of the Bastille is that it gave the people a first awareness of its strength. Indeed, this consciousness developed with a staggering magnitude, an uninterrupted impulse that is proper, not to say the very definition of authentic revolutions, in many exploited, overexploited, and not only — since they were, it seems, the most prompt — in shoemakers and wig makers for example, but also among those who were called “the women of the hall”. That said, the most spectacular action, the most passionately symbolic too, was certainly that of the tailor

boys.

What do they want? First a better salary and, in any case, forty cents in any season. Secondly, that second-hand clothes dealers should not be allowed to make new clothes.

We must obviously ask ourselves about this last point: such a requirement is too similar to that of master tailors anxious to eliminate competition so that the relative neutrality of the latter toward their employees does not seem somewhat suspicious. We guess the blackmail: ah! without the second-hand clothes dealers, we could pay you better. It doesn't matter, though: that there was in this sense a conjunction of interests does not detract from the quality of the initiative, the concrete form of a wage demand and the will to organize which were indeed on the side of the workers alone. But what to do? Get together and discuss? They chose lawns facing the Louvre and soon became worried: how to prevent undesirables from crossing the enclosure? To be sure to find themselves between tradespeople, only, and in the number of three thousand since this figure was actually reached?

There was no question of asking for a membership card that we did not even think of yet in this feverish, primitive, embryonic trade unionism. Then, an idea springs up. It was simple: the essentially manual work, heavily daily, damaged the skin to such an extent, pricked it so deeply, so durably from needle strokes to needle strokes all year round that it would be enough, to enter, to show his mutilated fingers.

There, no one could be mistaken, no one could cheat: the observers knew too well what to expect. This physical proof was therefore the first card. For the workers bruises testified. Against the workers murders multiplied .

We will not take stock of it, we will not indulge, like others in other places, in a macabre and maniacal accounting. It would be bad to honor memories that we have learned to respect a lot because they are a part of ourselves, but we will try to make the essentials understood, at least through painful, unforgettable facts, which constitute the long martyrology of the French working class, all too much designated victim of capitalism.

The owners, as we know, were quick to set up the roadblocks in the form of laws, regulations and controls. Under the pretext a little too clever, and of course in the name of freedom, to suppress for both employers and employees a corporatism considered in this case reductive, the Le Chapelier law of 1791 against coalitions and the right to strike actually hit those who, in order to survive, have little to offer but those miserable hands whose tailors had made an identity document. The warning having carried, the bourgeoisie, by structuring itself, integrated it. Still, that was not enough. The Le Chapelier law could not offer, despite appearances, a constantly guaranteed protection. This general measure was aimed at strong, dangerous, but occasional events;



it did not provide the certainty of policing described, so to speak, in the schedule of tasks. This is what the institution of the Worker's Record Book remedied in 1803. On this, it is useless to elaborate at length: it is easy to imagine what the negative assessments of a boss on a booklet which, moreover, can only be issued by the police, can mean for a worker. Without the employer's consent, it is impossible to leave one's employment. So, to do without a booklet? In this case, one is called a vagabond. Six months in prison. Thus, in French society, a single class, a very large social entity that will become more and more so, is placed at all hours under official surveillance. The tone is set, the power says to the workers: I keep an eye on you.

And from the barrel of a gun. It will not stop. Ladies and gentlemen the managing directors of the competent Humanists LLC, docile old schoolchildren of a system that has passed on to you its pedagogies of selective indignation, you who give lessons because you have learned yours too well, it is gladly that you repeat, alluding to the old social hope on which these guns always remain pointed and which persists in us, including as a scar: beware, you are heirs! Let's admit. But so are you.

Therefore, since you like accounts, we have the right to ask you. Why, when 1830 was announced, did you find nothing else to send but bullets to those young Masons of Creuse who, in the capital where they were professionally renowned, cracked at the task for a crump of bread at noon, a broth in the evening and a rotten mattress — when they found one — from cheap-stake landlords? They couldn't take it anymore, the little masons, they left their construction sites. Fire! It's crazy what this brief syllable, image as much as word, contains for you of spontaneous charm; it is the instinctive poetry that justifies your commandment. Fire in Paris, fire in La Ricamarie, fire in Fourmies, fire in Le Havre, and fire, fire, fire! And why in 1834, rue Transnonain, did you have your weapons pointed at the basements in order to shoot directly into the cellars through the sigh? What for? Here we can give you the answer if you do not know it: it is because, in these cellars, most often lived working families. For a vague uprising and some barricades in the Saint-Merri district, the military authorities had deemed it useful to move without delay to reprisals. Transnonain Street, nearby, offered the amenities we have just mentioned. Thus died, without much possibility of escape, let alone defense, between the oozing walls of their sad basement, women, children, old men. Daumier illustrated in a shocking way this beautiful feat of the 35th line regiment under the orders of a general whose name will be trumpeted later in other places: Bugeaud. The barricades of Saint-Merri, however weak they may have been, caused serious trouble because, at the same time, the intractable canuts of Lyon were once again asserting their

rights. Three years after their insurrection of 1831, this new anger was confusing, especially since, as in Paris, it was not unrelated to the action of the Society of Human Rights, scourge of the government and employers. This time, the canuts were protesting against an unfair decision depriving them of a relief allowance and their mutuals.

Fire! How many dead? Two hundred, it is thought. There would have been six hundred in 1831, and since then, that year had reconstituted for some in figures of a superstition. So scary! Masters of the city while the civil and military authorities had withdrawn (prefiguration of the Commune of 1871), installing at the Town Hall a council of sixteen canuts, the insurgents had not, however, initially assigned such goals to their real combativeness. Far from it. They only wanted, and indeed obtained, a minimum tariff. The worst part is that, in this conflict, the first orientation was that of a collaboration of classes. Who broke it? Everyone had signed, including, with the manufacturers and the industrial tribunals, the duly mandated representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the prefect himself. And then it was made known, first by means, then openly, that the signatories had had to give in to the unacceptable pressures of an overexcited mass. Bosses, other bosses, others, the notables reject without precaution the agreement, finally supported by the prefect who goes so far as to make these insane remarks: It is only a commitment of honour. Indeed. He adds: not mandatory. The execution, he explains, and we know the song (still relevant) is a matter of everyone's good will.

The canuts also had their sense of honor, the real one. While workshop leaders are put out of work, to make an example, they understand very well what they have just been taught: that a word given to an employee is worthless. It is difficult to push the contempt so far and it was the explosion. The press got involved, deploying an aggressive zeal. Workers' movements are contagious, wrote *Le Temps*, calling for prompt repression. It was heard. The prosecutor of Lyon welcomed with some cynicism, forgetting in passing his dignity as a magistrate, to note that justice now meets the support of the armed force: it can act. Finally, the President of the Council Casimir-Périer cracked down on the troublemakers: let the workers know well that there are no remedies for them but patience and resignation.

Thoses two words did not fell out of fashion. In these times of massive unemployment, homelessness, "suburban sickness", people on welfare support, regulars of the *Restaus du coeur*<sup>IV</sup>, young people without a job or prospect, even with diplomas in their pockets, what language do we hold by not hold-

---

<sup>IV</sup>Food charity founded by a French humorist, several millions lunches distributed each year.

ing it, because it is the great mystification in fashion? Patience. Resignation. Let us make no mistake about it. Capitalism of the first half of the nineteenth century speaks bluntly. Capitalism in the second half of the twentieth century practices the unspoken. In the meantime, refined intellectuals have enabled this metamorphosis to succeed.

In the meantime we also continued, since the fold was taken, to line up troopers here, policemen there, more and more often the two together. Fire! Fire on the proletarians of June 1848 who it is better not to remember that they were also insurgents of February, not the least numerous, not the least courageous. That said, is it necessary to take such a close look? Is it necessary to maintain the national workshops when we can replace them, even superficially, some occupations that we will think of better defining later, if necessary? But the brave proles are tired of the role of dupes; they reflect, observe, criticize. In short, they are able to analyze situations with more political finesse than previously assumed. They summarize, build synthesis. What are they actually being offered? Enlistments in the army (to shoot their brothers?) or precarious displacements, destructive of family life. Still these dubious compensations are not really assured: after the dedication in February, the destitution in June awaits most. How, under such conditions, would the street and the barricades not have appeared once again as the only recourse? Fire! and one can have the painful impression, certainly, that the revolution is turning against itself. But this is only an aesthetic of the mind carried towards romantic visions: much more prosaically, it is a question of consolidating the absolute power of the ruling class and better basing profit, on misery if necessary. Especially since it is very difficult to do otherwise in a social and cultural organization that itself has injustice as its foundation. When Louis Blanc is offered, for some uncertain ministry of progress, an incredibly derisory sum, he calls out: You are asking me to give hungry people a course on hunger. It was useless, indeed. It is more expeditious, more efficient to simply suppress the hungry. Especially when they have the bad taste to get angry. The real numbers will never be known. Four thousand dead? Five thousand? Rioters were pursued in Montmartre to the great quarries where, colliding of course with the protruding verticals that closed the ground, they became a perfect target. What a beautiful exercise: salvo after salvo, they fell. Not one survived. Think about it, careers! A godsend, this kind of open-air Transnonain street. However, the cellars have an attraction that stems from their natural mystery and it must be believed that a nostalgia remained: elsewhere, other unfortunate people were locked up in an underground where no one ever knew how long their agony lasted. These physical details seemed secondary and three years later Badinguet-Bonaparte carried out his coup.

It remained for him to become emperor, which is family trait, and this glorious atavism acknowledged, to arrange to bring up to date some profession of faith: did he not love the people, was he not the friend of the humble, did he not have concerns of an altruistic and philanthropic nature, had he not spoken out in favour of the extinction of pauperism, even though there was a lot of laughter when talking about "the extinction of pauperism after ten o'clock in the evening"? Unfortunately, it does not appear that his wife shared his views. When the commanding officer of the detachment fired without warning into the crowd at La Ricamarie on June 16, 1869 in order to be able to arrest striking miners, the emotion was so vivid in front of the thirteen dead and the many wounded that people of Saint-Étienne, near Ricamarie, and also of the surroundings, respectfully addressed Empress Eugenie. They asked her, without judgment, only for help for the victims. Very Christian, in short. Here is what the very Christian Empress of the French replied: Rescuing families who were not afraid to offend brave soldiers who only did their duty, would be the most unfortunate example in the eyes of this bad population of Saint-Étienne.

This dispended in advance another bad population, that of Aubin, in the Aveyron, who tried and tested the same things and with one more death a few months later, to present Her Majesty a suffering request in due form.

Such steps are often motivated, at least primarily, by the relentless fate of orphans. Private charity tries to impose itself where the official order cannot act. Or wouldn't want to. It is that it has many other areas to monitor, other human considerations to put forward and that it is already difficult enough for it to control ages, places, schedules and statistics with regard to child labour. Successively, from boondoggle to boondoggle, It will be tried to show through the years, or more precisely the decades, a grumpy understanding that the stiffness of the bosses does not grasp well. However, it is necessary to spare them, those same bosses. Not before eight years, would it suit you? Ten years? Twelve years in the mines, thirteen years for night work for example? The child labour force, like the underpaid female workforce, contributes very effectively to the growing prosperity of the manufacturing world. When the first labour inspectors made an initially timid appearance after 1874 and a little more supported in the early 80s, the companies where children were illegally employed had developed a game of hide and seek since it could not be practiced at school. Be careful, an inspector is there! and the little legs trotted quickly to what was familiar and had been designated in advance, often a carriage with piles of bags that one folded down on oneself. What would we have said to these illiterate puny people? They were accomplices, so as not to be too hungry, of those who exploited them against those who defended them. At least they ate.

Kids? You have long made them martyrs. And real ones. In the demanding sense that your distinguished authors give to the word. During the Bloody Week of May 1871, while the Commune, sublime and disproportionate, bequeathed its message while extinguishing, a real hunt, not only for the too famous “pétroleuses”<sup>V</sup>, but also for children, was carried out in certain neighborhoods. Given that it was sure that this Gavroche like brood, obviously skilled at sneaking everywhere, had lit a lot of fires.

Versailles intended of course not to spare anyone. According to Maurice Dommanget, the reactionary historian Dauban tried in vain, on Rue de la Paix, to rescue a five-year-old girl from death. Four children were shot with their mother who had just obtained oil for lighting. A witness friend of Camille Pelletan later told the latter how other children, obviously very poor, were taken to a barracks to be executed by firing squad. He noticed that one of them, who was sobbing, had barefoot in wooden hooves. Then the heavy doors closed as he cried out to the gunmen: “Killing kids is a shame!” And that brave people roared around him: “On the contrary, let us get rid of it, it’s Scoundrel seed!”

Scoundrel seed! Did he also belong to this fearsome and so low category the little Émile Cornaille who, on May 1, 1891 in Fourmies, in the North, his meager body riddled with bullets, had like a long spasm in front of the tavern the Golden Ring where he tried to take refuge?

He was ten years old and carried with him this mysterious weapon that was found in his pocket at the time of burial: a spinning top.

The shooting of Fourmies has taken on an exceptional character in history while others were as much, if not more deadly. Perhaps it was because it intervened at a time and under conditions when such atrocities seemed less easy to conceive. After all, there had been the influence of the famous “Republic of the Republicans”, the great laws of the 1880s, the authorization finally granted to the workers to form their own unions and even, as such, to take legal action, etc. But there had also been, just a year before, the first of May 1st, that of 1890 which, by announcing itself, caused such fear to the bourgeoisie that Paris was literally put under siege. Several regiments in full reached the capital on a forced march, they brought from Versailles – always Versailles! — imposing artillery batteries and all police stations, from the smallest to the largest, were put on permanent alert. It was so excessive that even the right-wing press showed some annoyance. Chroniclers wrote that France seemed to mobilize more in 1890 against its workers than in 1870 against the Prussians.

It was therefore that Blanqui had not been wrong to say that the slogan

---

<sup>V</sup>Female Communard supporter and fire-raiser

of many bourgeois was: "Rather the King of Prussia than the Republic", interesting premonition of the well-known "Rather Hitler than the Popular Front" of 1936. Moreover, wealthy families had left Paris in 1890 for the countryside, as more than one did in 36 during the occupations of workshops, warehouses and various engine rooms. In the end, this first 1 May took place, despite more or less severe clashes, without very serious confrontation on the whole and a delegation to which Jules Guesde belonged was even protocolarily received in the Chamber of Deputies.

So why Fourmies? We're still wondering, in this regard, about an aberrant disproportion. We can leave aside the ridiculous episode of the local commissioner throwing a fuss, revolver in hand, rather a hoot for the strong guys of the factories, but how not to ask serious questions about the massive presence of all these soldiers, officers and non-commissioned officers, on the way in which a kind of war organization had been prepared against the possible strikers — the mayor Auguste Bernier and the president of the industrial society Charles Belin possibly had something to do with it — on the passion of the sub-prefect, on the rapid arrival of a prosecutor and so on? Fire! Already, in the morning, a rally having taken place in front of the "La Sans-Pareille" spinning mill to encourage those who were there to join the movement, the armed group, under the orders of a lieutenant, was undoubtedly more intervening than it should have been. Several men were arrested and then, in the face of protests from their wives and friends, it was assured that they would be released by noon. This was not the case. Anger began to growl. Here too, as with the canuts sixty years earlier, a promise given to workers was worthless. Naturally, the afternoon parade could only reflect this exasperation, but finally it was not very dense and threatened little. There was even some joy. But it can't be accepted either, joy. Fire! A twenty-year-old girl, Maria Blondeau, walked at the head of the procession, a hawthorn branch in her hand. Fire! Hit in the face, Maria was literally scalped, her long red hair flew away with the hawthorn in the beautiful sunlight of the North. and — hold on, do you want that clarification? — it was never found, her hair. Only parts of brains and bones were found at the corner of the sidewalks.

Enough! Enough, you might say, delicate souls who know how to pray so well for the rises to heaven and the rises in the stock market. Enough. But what do you believe? These details disgust us as much as they do you. To whom do we owe them? Nine were killed. Their names are inscribed on a stele at Fourmies: Louise Hublet, twenty years old; Charles Leroy, twenty-one years old; Gustave Pestiaux, sixteen years old; Émile Segaux, thirty years old; Félicie Tonnelier, seventeen years old; Maria Blondeau, twenty years old; Émile Cornaille, ten years old; Maria Diot, seventeen years old;

Kléber Giloteaux, nineteen years old.

Giloteaux, conscript of the year, flew a tricolor flag above his head. Fire! Maria Blondeau and her hawthorn have entered the legend. As for Commander Chapus, who had twice given the order to shoot, he was later decorated by General Gallifet, another connoisseur. For no investigation was opened, no one responsible was sought, no one was finally prosecuted with the exception of Lafargue, who had the good idea to be among the speakers of a meeting in April, and the Fourmie's trade unionist Culine who, during the parade, wrote an article on a cabaret table. Still, the merit was great: the culprits had been discovered. And not just any of them. On the one hand the directors of companies in the North hated Culine, on the other hand Paul Lafargue, a great representative of socialism in France, also happened to be one of Karl Marx's sons-in-law. Six years in prison for the first, one year in prison for the second. These two leaders had made remarks which, the expectations of the judgment, could only incite a serious subversion. Basically, the nine Fourmiesans shot had been shot by propaganda, not by bullets. In the House, MP Ernest Roche, who had shown parliamentarians a bloodied shirt, was temporarily excluded.

It was in Fourmies that the Lebel rifles, replacing the heavy Chassepot, were for the first time tested on human targets. They were used for others on May 1, then there were other rifles, other men behind the guns, other men still behind the men, some placed at political heights. Brilliant heights, sometimes. The radical Clemenceau before the war of 1914-18, the socialist Jules Moch after the war of 1939-45 were repressive. But should we list? There were deaths in Le Havre in the twenties, in Paris on February 9, 1934 among anti-fascist militants, however. Reminders have something mind-blowing, in the long run. Let's not insist? Maybe. But let us also lose nothing of the tragic thrill that resonates in our memories an echo of ancestral hatred: Shoot, they are only workers.

### **Roger Bordier**

Roger Bordier is a novelist and essayist. Among his titles: *Les blés*, Prix Renaudot, *Un âge d'or*, *le Tour de ville*, *Meeting*, *La Grande vie*, *La Belle de mai*. Last publication: *Chronique de la cité joyeuse*, (Albin Michel, 1996).





## Chapter 4

# 1744-1849, A Lyon's century: The canuts against profit's cannibalism

Maurice MOISSONNIER

Very early, Lyon, in the sixteenth century, began to become a center working with precious fabrics exported throughout Europe, then to the New World, thanks to a developed banking and commercial apparatus, initiated in the Renaissance by transalpine money handlers.

The Rhone city was therefore early a pole of primitive accumulation of capital benefiting from a special circumstance. The extended reproduction was facilitated by a system which placed on craftsmen reduced to wage labour the burden of the amount necessary for the increase in fixed capital. (instruments, equipment, installations).

To live, the salaried “workshop manager” shared with his “companions” the paid part of the collective work while ensuring “independently” (!) the equipment costs for the modernization and maintenance of its looms.

### 4.1 Division of labour and exploitation in Lyon in the eighteenth century

This is the reason why, in this city where more than a third of the population, from the eighteenth century, living meagerly from the production of fabrics as prestigious as expensive, the “wages question” has imposed itself by dominating all social relations.

In his book *On the Silk Worker, monograph of the Lyon weaver*<sup>36</sup>, the radical-socialist deputy Justin Godart, successively Minister of Labour, Resistance fighter and provisional mayor of Lyon in 1944, highlights the role of the 1744 regulation that enshrines the definitive structure of the Lyon's silk factory. He considers that this text set "the state of the master worker in contract and that of the master merchant, manufacturer or having manufactured". And he adds: "The whole history of the factory will be the story of the struggle between (the weavers) and the master merchants. And what will emerge from the study of the regulations is the enslavement of the former. The freedom of labor was only a word, the work of the merchants was only a spoliation".

This regulation of 1744, known in July, already provoked a workers' riot in the city on August 6 and 7, of such importance that the regulation was reported... But at the beginning of 1745, after the irruption in Lyon of the troops commanded by the Count of Lautrec, it was restored while the repression was implemented. On March 30, 1745, Étienne Mariechander, sentenced to make amends with a sign bearing the words "seditious silk worker" was hanged and strangled on Place des Terreaux. Other penalties were distributed inflicting on the culprits a shipment to the galleys between 4 years and life, this after being marked with a red iron.

On the eve of the Revolution, in August 1786, during a wage dispute, the first great workers' militant in Lyon's history emerged: Denis Monnet, inspiration of the "Revolt of the 2 cents" (two cents of increase per woven yardstick). A remarkably organized strike of weaving and hat makers broke out on 6 August. On the 8th, the marshalcy slashed the demonstrators: 2 killed, a dozen wounded. Among the troops gathered to fight this sedition, there is a battalion of the Fère whose second lieutenant is none other than the young Napoleon Bonaparte. However, on August 9, to calm things down, the increase was granted by the city's Consular Corps. But on September 3, 1786, a decision of the king overturned this decision. This is the signal of a new repression: two hat makers and a weaver are hanged, a multitude of prosecutions are opened including that of Denis Monnet arrested and thrown in prison.

But the Revolution is looming. Monnet, provisionally released in 1787, resumed the fight, addressing the Estates General and the King in 1789 in an astonishing memoir that announced the foundations of the modern syndicalist struggle. He denounced the practices of the merchant-manufacturers who imposed after 1786 the return to the "contract by mutual agreement" between the client and the worker:

---

<sup>36</sup> *Justin Godart*, 1899, Lyon-Paris-1st part, p. 92-93

“Between men equal in means and power, who by this reason cannot be subject to the discretion of one or the other, the freedom established by this regulation can only be advantageous to them; but with regard to the silk workers, dismissed by all means, whose subsistence depends entirely on their daily work, this freedom leaves them totally at the mercy of the manufacturer, this freedom leaves them totally at the mercy of the manufacturer, who can, without harm, <suspend his manufacture and thereby reduce the worker to the wage he set as he pleases, knowing that the latter, forced by the imperative law of need, will soon be obliged to submit to the law he wants to impose on him”<sup>37</sup>.

Between 1789 and 1793, thanks to the Revolution, Monnet and his friends managed to impose, through the elected municipalities, a parity negotiation with the merchant manufacturers, to set a piece rate, a real guaranteed minimum wage revisable every year according to the cost of living, anticipation of a sliding scale of wages. In 1792-1793 with the support of signed petitions in popular clubs, the system is applied.

But the Revolution of 1789 was that of a given epoch dominated by a bourgeoisie anxious to set limits to workers’ demands. The Lyon’s one is singularly timid in terms of social innovations. It gets rid of the supporters of Bertrand and Châlier, those “maniacs” who destroy the economic order and threaten its supremacy. In 1793 it made a pact with yesterday’s opponents in a secession that was harshly repressed by the Republican armies. After the reconquest of Lyon, on October 9, 1793, Fouché and Collot d’Herbois, rejecting Couthon’s concern for selective moderation, sent Denis Monnet to the guillotine on November 27, 1793, “guilty” of not having revoked his official duties in his neighborhood!

Beyond the murky personality of Fouché, the servant of all regimes, lies the ambiguity of a power which, on March 17, 1795 (27 ventôse Year III), in an instruction to the authorities of the Rhône department persisted in holding a “social language”: “The Revolution would be a political and social monster if it were intended to ensure the bliss of a few hundred individuals and to consolidate the misery of 24 million citizens (. . .). The bourgeois aristocracy, if it had existed, would soon have produced the financial aristocracy, the latter would have engendered the nobiliary aristocracy, for the rich man soon thought of himself as made from a different dough than other men.”<sup>38</sup>.

Lip service or warning against the possible betrayals of a revolution by those who proclaim themselves its guides?

---

<sup>37</sup>Grievances of the Master Workers addressed to the King and the Assembled Nation – Presentation F. Rude, *Fédérop-Lyon*, 1976 – pp. 5 and 6.

<sup>38</sup>Patrick Kessel, *French proletariat before Marx* – Tome I – Plon, p.480.

What remains is the orientation that will favor the triumph of capital. On the cultural level, there is an economic thought that Turgot and his physiocrats, Adam Smith and Ricardo have laid the foundations: that of a fatalistic liberalism that condemns as a major mistake any regulatory intervention of states. While waiting for the optimists, those who, like John Stuart Mill or J. B. Say, will have absolute confidence in the “invisible hand of the market” to solve in pain – provided they are wise enough – the social disasters of capitalist development...

With, as an adjuvant, the reinforcement of moralizing and necessary reason, such as this speech of the Lyon abbot Mayet held in 1786, in the middle of the “2 cents crisis”:

To ensure and maintain the prosperity of our factories, it is necessary that the worker never gets rich, that he has precisely what he needs to eat well and dress ...

In a certain class of the people, too much affluence makes industry asleep, engenders idleness and all the vices that depend on it. As the worker gets richer, he becomes picky on the choice and wage of labor.

No one is unaware that it is mainly to the low price of labour that the factories of Lyon owe their astonishing prosperity.

If necessity ceases to compel the worker to receive from the occupation whatever wage he is offered, if he manages to free himself from this kind of servitude, if the profits exceed the needs to the point that he can subsist for some time without the help of his hands, he will use that time to form a league.

Knowing that the merchant cannot eternally do without him, he will in turn dare to prescribe laws that will put him out of state to support any competition with foreign manufactures, and from this overthrow to which the well-being of the worker will have given rise, will come the total ruin of the factory.

It is therefore very important for the Manufacturers of Lyon to retain the worker in a need for continuous work, never to forget that the low price of labor is not only advantageous for himself but that it becomes so again by making the worker more laborious, more well-behaved, more submissive to his wills<sup>39</sup>.

Revealing text if there is one and which explains what the historian Maurice Garden writes in his thesis *Lyon and the Lyonnais in the eighteenth*

---

<sup>39</sup>Abbé F. Mayet, *Memory on Lyon's manufactories*, 1786.

*century*: “The more power liberal theories have in the country, the more the sovereignty of the economic laws of supply and demand is asserted, laws which, more than the regulations themselves, push for the enslavement of the workers to those who give them work and pay them a wage.”<sup>40</sup>.

The consequence, Jaurès had seen it well: “The class of the Lyon master workers is in the spirit of resistance and organization or even by the sharpness of certain social formulas ahead of the working class of the eighteenth century.”<sup>41</sup>.

## 4.2 1831: The canuts facing capitalism

The revolt of the “canuts” of November 1831 because of its national and international repercussions is the best known in its broad outline. It has also been the subject of numerous works<sup>42</sup>.

Let us remember the main features. In Lyon as in Paris (where Thiers called for a political strike by printers!), the action of the world of work was decisive, in July 1830, in the final confrontation between the rising bourgeoisie and the aristocracy brought back to power at the Restoration.

In the Rhone city, the “wage question” always arises, revived by the alternation of crisis (the “dead”) and recoveries (the “presses”). The migration of trades on the Croix-Rousse plateau, an independent commune (outside the octrois(\*) barriers of Lyon, where life is cheaper) has tightened the solidarity of weavers. The sycophancy of the press celebrating the role of “our good, our excellent workers” emboldens them. The liberalization of the law on the press allowed them in October 1831 to launch a workers’ newspaper: *L’Écho de la Fabrique*. Born in 1828, an association of master workers, *Le Devoir Mutuel*, skillfully divided into sections of 20 members so as not to contravene the law, created the conditions for developing demands that the weekly publication could popularize. The attitude of the prefect Bouvier du Molart who, with the services rendered to the family of the President of the Council, Perrier, during the Restoration, believed that he could have a latitude of autonomous decisions and claimed to present himself as “the father of the workers”, opened the possibilities of an arbitration favorable to the weavers on their demand for an increase in the rate of wages.

---

<sup>40</sup>Maurice Garden, *Lyon and Lyonnais in the XVIIIth century*, Flammarion, 1975, p. 331.

<sup>41</sup>J. Jaurès, Socialist history of the revolution, 1939 ESI, Tome 1, p. 111.

<sup>42</sup>See F. Rude, *Les Révoltes des Canuts (nov. 1831-avril 1834)* (The canuts revolts), Paris, Maspero 1982 and Maurice Moissonnier, *Les Canuts “Vivre en travail ou mourir en combattant”* (The Canuts: “to live working or die fighting”), Éditions Sociales, 1988.

Let us add that the canuts of 1831 have not forgotten the texts and experiences of Denis Monnet: the discovery in 1973, in an attic of the Croix-Rousse of a notebook of Masson-Sibut, one of the leaders of the *Devoir Mutuel*, proves it. This document contains large excerpts from the 1789 memoir relating to the 1786 struggle for a wage rate demand. Thus was transmitted an experience and a reflection that inspired the approaches of 1831.

On the event level, a few benchmarks will suffice. At the beginning of October 1831, the launch prospectus of the *Écho de la Fabrique* appeared, which announced the constitution of a commission of workshop managers responsible for drawing up a price of wages to be discussed, under the control of the prefect, with the merchant-manufacturers.

On October 12, a first exploratory meeting at the Town Hall, under the chairmanship of Deputy Terme, served only to reveal the deep reluctance of the masters of the Factory.

On 21 October, at the end of a meeting where the prefect was trying to convince the traders, their representatives were strongly questioned by workers' demonstrators. On the 25th, at 10 a.m., the prefect could finally bring together the negotiators elected by both parties. The discussion stalled for a long time against the refusal of the manufacturers, until a huge demonstration invaded the outskirts of the prefecture. According to the account of a manufacturer, in organized groups, without a cry, without provocations, thousands of canuts were present: "It was pity to see the hollow cheeks, the pungent complexions, the malignant and shrunken complexion of most of these unfortunate people. Individually, they inspired only a natural compassion, the energy seemed to have to flee from such weak, undeveloped bodies, but these individuals were reunited, they were organized, they formed a compact body, and the masses have an instinct of their strength, a power of will, which vanishes only as it spreads."<sup>43</sup> "When it was announced that we could no longer contain the gatherings, we had to finish everything, or rather accept everything."<sup>44</sup>

In the evening, a wave of optimism swept over the Croix-Rousse illuminated by improvised balls.

It was trusting too much the delegates of the opposing side. In the city, a petition circulates among the masters of the Silk Factory against the tariff, an illegal decision that they consider an attack on the economic health of the country. The Minister of Commerce and Public Works, d'Argout, supports them in a long letter to the prefect dated November 3. He brushes aside the

---

<sup>43</sup>The Precursor, October 26, 1831.

<sup>44</sup>*Écho de la fabrique*, 13 Nov. 1831.

argument of du Molart, who invoked the precedents of 1789 and 1793 and 1811, when Napoleon had also conceded a tariff of wages for the Silk Factory. He invites him to “enlighten the workers” by making them understand that “what is illegal cannot be profitable” and advises him: “It would be better to drop the tariff than to report it in an express way. It is in order to give you time to achieve this result and not to thwart your efforts that I confine myself to expressing my regret for everything that has been done so far and recommending that you not add anything to it that aggravates or confirms measures that the local authority cannot support and that the higher authority cannot admit.”<sup>45</sup>

Under these conditions, the frontal impact is predictable. On November 20, the commander of the National Guard, General d’Ordonneau was promoted, during a major takeover of arms, Place Bellecour. The Croix-Rousse battalion, which included relatively well-off workshop leaders, was noted for its undisciplined attitude. It is that the latter, when they go looking for work, are told by the clerks of the merchants that they will only get it at prices lower than those of the tariff. A manufacturer named Olivier even receives a solicitor by brandishing two pistols.

On November 21, under the impetus of the companions, a strike movement spread throughout the Croix-Rousse. At morning, national guards and soldiers sent to the barriers of the Croix-Rousse are received by a hail of stones.

During the morning, the weavers decided to renew the demonstration that had succeeded on October 25.

They descend on the city by the thousands by taking the climb of the Grande Côte. As their only weapon they have this black flag on which is inscribed the motto found by the companion Jean-Claude Romand: *Live working or die fighting*.

At the bottom of the climb stands the 1st Battalion of the National Guard formed mainly of merchant manufacturers who have their offices in the neighborhood. Guns against chests, the masters of the Factory shoot. The demonstrators retreated to the plateau, taking away their dead: the insurrection broke out.

In vain in the afternoon the prefect of Molart and General Ordonneau tried a negotiation. During this one, General Roguet throws a hand on the slopes of the Croix-Rousse. The insurgents then held the two plenipotentiaries until the early morning, while the line troops, substituting for the defection of the National Guard, advanced towards the plateau and installed defenses. The General Roguet, of the Town Hall where he sits, issues an

---

<sup>45</sup>Departmental archives of Isère, Fonds Périer, audiffret-Pasquier payment.

optimistic proclamation about the prospects of an inevitable victory. He put artillery in battery in front of the Pont Morand and the Brotteaux to avoid a surprise from workers who fire from the left bank of the Rhône.

However, the night is decisive. Outside the Croix-Rousse, the working-class neighbourhoods took sides. Detachments are formed which, bypassing the city, reinforce the defenders of the plateau. New fighters in solidarity with the canuts gathered at La Guillotière, and in old Lyon, on the right bank of the Saône. A ring of fire gradually forms around the center and the peninsula. The besieged become the besiegers. As Jean-Baptiste Monfalcon, chronicler of the city, ideal caricature of the pro Louis-Phillippe bourgeois, writes, from that moment on, "The aggression of the workers (sic!) got the upper hand. (...) The general insurrection of workers of all classes in the districts of Lyon decided the fight's odds."<sup>46</sup>

On the night of the 22nd to the 23rd, in the early morning, the canuts went on the offensive, forcing the soldiers to a hasty retreat. Not without having (account of the soldier Guillon) finished among the wounded opponents "a little young man who could be ten years old and whose bullet had broken his arm ..."<sup>47</sup> The young man was probably more than ten years old, but the conditions of existence of the canuts were such that their size remained, as noted by the boards of revision, clearly in deficit. This withdrawal left the "law enforcement" side only a quadrilateral put in defense in the peninsula, around the town hall.

The moral state of the troops, the total defection of the National Guard, the growing strengthening of the insurrection left only one possible way out: the evacuation of Lyon. On the morning of the 23rd, the last barracks were occupied after the confused, difficult and expensive retreat of the army, along the left bank of the Rhone, heading north.

Then something happened that stunned honest observers of the time: in collaboration with the prefect of Molard, who remained in the city, and who relied on the workshop leaders of the Devoir mutuel, the order was maintained by the victors. Neither rape nor looting, as feared by the rich of the peninsula. Better: two thieves caught in the act are shot by the insurgents who are responsible for ensuring in the city the safety of people and property (with the exception of one house, that of the manufacturer Auriol transformed into a blockhouse by the army).

Meanwhile, in Paris, the government launched against the city four regiments of line, two regiments of dragoons, three batteries of artillery in ad-

---

<sup>46</sup>*Histoire des insurrections de Lyon en 1831 et 1834* (History of uprisings in Lyon in 1831 and 1834), Lyon 1834, pp. 79-80.

<sup>47</sup>M. Moissonnier, *Les canuts, op. cit.*, p. 188.



dition to the troops driven out of Lyon. All under the command of Marshal Soult, with the guarantee of the Duke of Orleans, son of the king (an iron fist in a velvet glove so to say). The objectives of the expedition were clearly set by Casimir-Perier: dissolution and prohibition of any “corporation of workers” — disarmament — cancellation of the tariff replaced by a mercurial which recorded the wages per piece practiced: “The Government cannot intervene and lend its authority to give a sanction and fixity to stipulations which must not only have the most voluntary and free character, but which, by their nature, can only be variable like the situation of industry”<sup>48</sup>. This praise of wage “flexibility” is not — alas! — considered in 1998 as a cynical old thing! For the learned economists of the “single thought” it is even the recipe for happiness as offered by capitalism. . .

On December 3, 1831, coming from the north and the south, the armies raised against the canuts entered Lyon to restore ORDER!

From 5 to 22 June 1832, at the trial of Riom, brought against a sample of carefully selected “officials”, 22 defendants appeared, including 13 workers accused of rebellion, sedition, call to murder, murder, looting and violence. Among them the “negro” Antoine Stanislas whom Monfalcon describes “the eye on fire, the foaming mouth, the bloodied arms (...) uttering a barbaric cry every time that one of his bullets hit a soldier on the Morand Bridge.” They lacked the flower girl, Antoinette Pascal, acquitted of the prosecution, whom the same had classified in “the wives of workers, real furies, torturing the wounded dragons”<sup>49</sup>. The official chronicler of the bourgeois municipal power, surgeon at the same time as librarian of the city, did not hesitate to translate into a “historical” vision the fantasies of his caste! To these thirteen defendants were added nine honorable citizens (including the lawyer Michelangelo Perrier and some journalists) charged with provoking the revolt and attempting to establish the Republic.

For the honor of the jury and the magistrates of Riom, the trial turned to the confusion of the accusers: all were acquitted, with the exception of Romand convicted of another offence of theft, minor, prior to the events.

The gentle Monfalcon vituperated at the “benevolence of the magistrates”, “the incredible softness of the public prosecutor’ office”, “the public manifestation of doctrines incompatible with the maintenance of any public order”, “the deplorable judgment of the Assize Court of Riom”. And our man concludes: “When jurors, elites of the country, chosen from among the most enlightened and most interested in good order, are seized with such vertigo, all that remains is to veil one’s forehead and wait with resignation for the

---

<sup>48</sup>National Archives 42-AP-22, File 2.

<sup>49</sup>Monfalcon, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

last blows to public order.<sup>50</sup>”

The actual number of victims of these days of rioting is unknown. An estimate by the conservative historian Steyert, reluctant to exaggerate workers' losses, suggests 29 deaths in the army and national guard and 60 among the canuts, 150 wounded in the repressive forces and 100 in the insurgents. False figures for sure as far as the latter are concerned: in the climate of repression, it was inappropriate to go to a doctor or hospital because the police were vigilant. These figures are in any case to be related to the number of forces involved and the reduced effectiveness of the armament of each party.

A real social purge accompanies this violence (provoked, let us not forget, by the platoon fire of the merchants-manufacturers of the 1st legion of the National Guard). The worker's logbook imposed by the Empire, will serve to purify the world of canuts. This document, without which a worker is deemed to be a vagrant and which contains, in addition to civil status data, a list of his employers and their certificates, attesting to his loyalty to his hiring commitments, is renewed by the police commissioners of the neighborhoods where the interested parties reside. The refusal of renewal hits those who have been distinguished and who are thus forced to leave the city. In short, a “social cleansing” operation.

### 4.3 1833/1834 — The Spider's strategy

In the aftermath of the insurrection of the canuts, the authorities discovered all the national and international repercussions. In Joigny, Auxerre, Chalon-sur-Saône, Mâcon, the military columns of repression had provoked demonstrations of solidarity with the insurgents. The event was in itself unheard of: the second French city, for 12 days, had fallen into the hands of its workers. On the night of 25 to 26 November, calls had been posted in the suburbs of Paris to imitate the canuts of Lyon. Metternich himself, who inspired the absolutist reaction in Europe, declared: “I regard the Lyon affair as very serious.”

It was indeed a historical event according to historian Pierre Vilar's definition: a sign, that of the entry into a new period, a product, that of an incubation more than forty years linked to the social results of the evolution of a developed economic center, a factor in the European development of social contradictions. Finally, the moment when the structural effect modifies the conjuncture by marking, producing, integrating into a significant historical “move”. On December 13, 1831, under the pen of Saint-Marc Girardin, the *Journal des Débats* announced the maturation of a new situation: “The

---

<sup>50</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 118 à 122.

barbarians who threaten society are not in the steppes of Tartary, they are in the suburbs of our manufacturing cities (...) Proletarian democracy and the Republic are two very different things. Republicans, monarchists of the middle class (the bourgeoisie-M.M.), whatever the diversity of opinion on the best form of government, there is only one voice yet, I imagine, for the maintenance of society. However, it is going against the maintenance of society to give political rights and national weapons to those who have nothing to defend and everything to take.”

On March 14, 1832, Casimir Périer, whom cholera was to wipe out of the world of the living three months later, outlined Gasparin's future task: “You still have associations to dissolve, but you will rightly prefer to operate in detail instead of hitting the masses and provoking discontent and resistance. This judicious way promises good results.<sup>51</sup>”

This is the strategy of the spider that throws its sons at its prey, paralyzes it in its web before hitting it to death.

Périer gone, it will be Adolphe Thiers who will become the direct and assiduous correspondent of Gasparin as evidenced by the rich collection deposited in the municipal archives of Lyon.

The secret funds of corruption flow in pactole towards the Rhone prefecture<sup>52</sup>. To stimulate the zeal of the political police, the prefect proposes to pay the commissioners remuneration modulated according to the volume of the working population of their home neighborhood. Participants in the insurgency are spied on in all their movements and observed in all their relationships. The maneuvers, in the hope of rallying a Michelangelo Perrier or Lachapelle and Lacombe fail, but Pierre Charnier does not resist it who ends up entering the secret police.

Other methods were implemented because, in addition to the *Devoir mutuel* of carefully supervised workshop leaders, on the second Sunday of February 1832, the companions founded their own organization: *Les compagnons ferrandiniers du Devoir* who cover, under the old clothes of the classic but declining companionship, a protest group that allies itself with the *Devoir mutuel*.

The prefect, henceforth, chaperones the manufacturers, reveals to them the threats resulting from the union of the employees, in particular with regard to the affairs of the first labour court of France which was installed in Lyon. The “men in the golden chest” — as the *Echo de la Fabrique* which survived the turmoil call them — do not pay enough attention to this “family council” that Napoleon I instituted in Lyon on March 18, 1806. In

---

<sup>51</sup>Municipal Archives of Lyon (AML), Doc. Gasparin, Volume II,

<sup>52</sup>M. Moissomnier, *Les Canuts, op. cit.*, p. 130.

this city and in this Silk Factory, where conflicts are periodic, the emperor's goal was to create a conciliation body where the "merchants-manufacturers" would remain in the majority and would have the presidency. However, the 15 Jan. 1832 Louis-Philippe had signed an ordinance reorganizing these prud'hommes and, appearing to take into account the wishes of the canuts, he had increased the number of elected officials to 9 manufacturers and 8 workshop managers while removing the distinction between incumbents and substitutes. The canuts had taken the opportunity to propose in the *Echo de la Fabrique* the admission to the proceedings of a lawyer or a qualified attorney (taking up a request put forward in 1830 and supported by a petition with 5031 signatures).

At the same time, the questions brought before the council often deviated on the interpretation of the market prices board that the workers' representatives wanted at least to transform into a compulsory scale. These skilful proposals and the exploitation of the failures of the masters of the Fabrique were likely to transform the primitive character of the council and to allow, at the limit, the presidency to go to a master worker. This is what alarmed Thiers, promoted to Minister of Commerce and Public Works, who became the new mentor of Prefect Gasparin.

On 11 Jan. 1833 he told him of his apprehensions<sup>53</sup>: "Instead of an arbitration tribunal, circumstances have made it a compact body and you know better than I do what the factional spirit wanted to do with it. You know that they are now asking for the abolition of the voice that is given to manufacturers and therefore the presidency reserved for them, that they want to try to distort the institution of fraternal conciliation by involving lawyers, that the price rate is kept under the name of market price board, that at least this is the opinion of the workers and the claim they attach to it (...). You have also seen, in the anarchic meetings whose minutes are printed, the most hostile speeches in the mouths of speakers, workshop leaders, who do not neglect to adorn themselves with the title of member of the labour court."

In agreement with Gasparin, Thiers seized the Council of State by instructing a master of requests (director of his ministry!) to conduct the case smoothly. The latter carries out his task. On 24 May, he informed the Minister that the Council of State agreed "to facilitate the enjoyment of the majority by manufacturers (...) and that an amendment has been proposed to maintain, whatever happens, this enjoyment: an absent labour court would be replaced by an alternate of his class even when the presence of that alternate would not be necessary to complete the legal number of two-

---

<sup>53</sup>AML, Doc. Gasparin, Volume I.

thirds of the Council". On May 30, in the minutes following the Council's judgment, the master of petitions scribbled to Thiers information as laconic as it was triumphant: "the case is won at the Council of State". This says a lot about the serene independence of this institution...

On June 21, 1833, a new ordinance signed in Neuilly by Louis-Philippe specified that the elected representatives of the labor courts would be divided into incumbents and substitutes (articles 1 and 2). "that in the event of the absence or incapacity of a titular industrial tribunal, an alternate of the same factory or class shall always be called upon to sit regardless of the number of members present".

But beyond the legal-administrative adventures, the "wrong spirit" is re-born. In February 1833, the *Precursor* published a text that the prefect called a "manifesto of the heads of workshops on workers' coalitions" and Thiers agreed with Gasparin to describe it as "a system dictated by the enemies of our industry and the country." In this case (and for the moment), believes the minister, it is necessary "not to take any active role in the debates that exist in order to escape any reproach, such seems to me the role of the administration". But saving appearances does not mean remaining inert. "We must as much as possible prevent the manufacturers from giving in to the coalition because that would be weakness and not caution to avoid blood." And Thiers is reassuring: "The coalition does not have enough unity to last 8 days. The workers have their arms, the entrepreneurs their capital. If the workers abuse their strength (sic!), they give the entrepreneurs the right to use theirs, that is, to keep their money and to deny subsistence to those who refuse work. The entrepreneur can wait since he has the capital."<sup>54</sup>

It is therefore necessary to let things rot by staying the course.

This attitude is difficult to hold because, after the skirmishes of February, a latent strike movement rebounds in July! Thiers, this time is alarmed by "the weakness of the manufacturers who has made triumph the pretensions of the workers or rather the actions of those who push them (sic)" and to conclude that manufacturers must be given "the courage to wait": "It is now up to the government to give them the means, because its duty is to protect all those who do not know how to protect themselves, because it is instituted to protect the weak." In short, between February and July 1833 (800 to 1,000 looms stopped), the "strength" of capital needed the help of the state apparatus !... Especially since the republican opposition seems to be strengthening in the city and democratic societies are launching petitions in favor of press freedom attacked by the "middle ground" in power.

A new step was taken in a letter from Thiers dated 6 Aug. 1833. What

---

<sup>54</sup>*ibid.*, 27 February 1833.

he recommends in a document he writes directly at home, without going through the editors of the ministry, is outright “to direct them, to stimulate them so that they resist by a wise union the tyranny of coalitions. But the very uncertain means itself does not seem to me, as much as to you, the only way to use. And we still need to go further: ‘I ask here for all your zeal, all your attention. A careful police force can seize many facts deemed implausible. Didn’t a happy coincidence make you meet and seize mutualists who were going to ban looms?’<sup>55</sup> (...) I think that we must rely a lot on the time that will divide the leaders and that will distract them a lot too, but we must absolutely not give up the legal channels, we must watch with great activity to the search for the facts deliverable to the courts, unless we use them with the appropriate caution!”

The goal is clearly set: “To have on hand some prisoners who are very significantly guilty” to sue them together in a great trial where they would appear as seditious, “I hope we will not be reduced to this necessity, I hope we will never be exposed to it!”

Style clause! To go this direction is already to settle there.

On February 12, 1834, a meeting of mutual workshop leaders consulted its base on the strike. A majority opts for the struggle, the watchword of suspension of work is launched for the 14th. On this date, 20,000 looms stopped. The burial of a weaver will give the opportunity for a show of force of the organizations of master workers and companions. Tension rises for 8 days, carefully controlled by the police who arrest six mutualists on charges of being “the leaders of the coalition”. That’s it, the workers “very noticeably guilty” desired by Thiers. Their trial is set for April 5.

A few days before this one, the announcement of the discussion in parliament of a law banning associations is received as a provocation.

Interesting detail that shows to what extent the situation in Lyon influenced the behavior of the bourgeois monarchy: it was the prefect Gasparin who, obsessed with the republican and workers’ plot, had proposed on May 2, 1833, the introduction of legislation banning all associations, even if they are made up of less than 20 members (in the case of *Devoir mutuel*)<sup>56</sup>.

In a few days, 2,557 signatures are gathered on a petition that ends as follows: “The mutualists protest against the liberticidal law of associations and declare that they will never bow their heads under a stultifying yoke, that their meetings will not be suspended, and, relying on the most inviolable right, that of living by work, they will be able to resist, with all the energy

---

<sup>55</sup>*ibid.*, Thiers à Gasparin, 1833.

<sup>56</sup>National Archives BB-21 -407- The bill tabled on February 24, 1834 is voted on March 25, 1834.

that characterizes free men, any brutal attempt, and will not shrink from any sacrifice in defense of a right that no human power can take away from them.” It was in 1834, fifty years, to the nearest month, before the law of 1884 legalized trade union organizations! A reminder that sheds light on the value of the fiddly judgment that the indispensable champion of the triumphant bourgeoisie, J. B Monfalcon, formulated in this regard: “Workers who had made use of their intellectual faculties only to push their shuttle equally from left to right and from right to left, discussed, slandered the work of the three powers and decreed revolt (. . .) The terrible consequences of the mental aberration of the workers cannot make us ignore the ridiculousness of the recitals of their protest.”<sup>57</sup>.

This hateful aggressiveness is a real document on the atmosphere that prevailed then in the distinguished circles! Atmosphere maintained, built, one could say. . .

The opening of the trial on Saturday, April 5 causes a huge crowd around the criminal court. It is marked by many incidents when the decision to postpone the case to the following Wednesday, the 9th, and to judge behind closed doors, is made.

On Sunday, April 6, the funeral of a mutual workshop leader followed by 8,000 mutualist master workers and ferrandinier companions takes place, accompanied by cries against the “middle ground” and the “tyrants”.

Never was a confrontation so predictable and prepared.

On April 9, a large number of manufacturers packed his goods and left the city<sup>58</sup>. One thousand five hundred men are gathered in 15 battalions and 2 infantry companies, flanked by 2 squadrons of cavalry and an artillery regiment with 10 batteries. All this force, gibernes filled, backpacks, with food for two days is distributed at the strategic points of the city leaving perfectly free the surroundings of the court where a workers’ demonstration took place. The crowd who feared the provocation decided to evacuate the completely exposed place Saint-Jean and retreated into the adjacent streets, improvising to protect themselves, barricades with some planks and other materials seized on the spot.

It is about 10 o’clock when an incident occurs. Gendarmes and a platoon of the 7th Light begin to clear the rue Saint-Jean, the workers retreat behind their protections. At this moment a shot leaves. Monfalcon, himself, points it out as follows: “A police officer, Faivre, mortally wounded by a soldier, at the moment when he was rushing on the barricade is brought to the concierge

---

<sup>57</sup>Monfalcon, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>58</sup>According to Monfalcon, pp. 221-223.

of the hotel de Chevenièrès"<sup>59</sup>.

Half-confession of the provocation confirmed by two sources. First the story of J. L. Philippe, columnist of the Association des compagnons fer-randiniers, a document available at the Maison des canuts, rue d'Ivry: "An agent provocateur fired a pistol shot. The doors of Saint Jean opened and a discharge was made. By a providential effect a man was killed. Who? The agent provocateur! The struggle began on all points of the city and its suburbs". Second testimony, the confidences made by the prosecutor Chegaray to Joseph Benoit author of the Confessions of a proletarian<sup>60</sup>. The first, elected as the second to the Constituent Assembly, confirmed this fact to the second in the euphoria of the short "spring of the peoples" of that year!

The struggle will continue from Wednesday 9 to Monday 14, on the right bank of the Saône, in the peninsula, at Guillotière and Croix-Rousse. A part of the troops, who returned from Algeria, was distinguished by their ferocity in all sectors of the popular Lyon fallen into the trap. The peak of violence is reached on Saturday 12, rue Projetée in Vaise. Monfalcon, though well disposed towards the forces of "order", gives a description: "They rush to the houses, break the doors, get their hands on everything that is offered to their fury. (...) Any man found with his hands and lips blackened by the powder was shot. Forty-seven corpses attest to revenge: 26 are those of insurgents taken up with arms in hand, 21 (how terrible the civil war is!) does not belong to the party that fought: we see children, impotent old men hit in their homes by projectiles"<sup>61</sup>.

The violence of this carefully prepared repression aims not only to hit the world of work (the canuts but also the workers of the other suburbs) but to oppose the dangerous alliance of republicans and employees of industry and crafts, sealed against the law prohibiting associations.

Is it necessary to give another proof of this? Three days after the massacre of Vaise, on April 15, in Paris, rue Transnonain, against the republican workers who are fighting for the same cause, another massacre occurs that Daumier will illustrate with a shocking and symbolic lithograph!

When Thiers sent Gasparin a telegram of approval, asking for clarification, he wrote: "French blood has flowed, it was inevitable"...

Inevitable or programmed? "Six hundred men on both sides were put out of action, of which nearly 300 perished on the battlefield or in the bed of pain" Monfalcon wrote. And Steyert puts forward the estimate of 57 military deaths and 220 civilians, 267 military wounded and 180 civilians. These

---

<sup>59</sup>*idem.*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>60</sup>Presentation M. Moissonnier, Éditions Sociales, 1968, p. 54.

<sup>61</sup>Monfalcon, p. 261.



figures really make one think: they suggest that one side (which the reader will easily guess) had a certain propensity to finish off the wounded... But Claude Latta<sup>62</sup>, counted 131 dead in combat and 192 wounded, 190 killed in the civilian population and 122 wounded. It reproduces a testimony of Abbé Pavy, vicar of Saint-Bonaventure, a church located in the center of the peninsula: a 16-year-old child hit by 8 bullets “had hidden under the corpse of an insurgent who covered him entirely (...) two others aged 18 to 20 had just been discovered behind a confessional in the chapel of Saint Luc (...). We urge the leaders and urge them to postpone the execution of these unfortunate people out of pity! Everything was useless: ‘They were caught red-handed with arms in their hands, justice must have its course, withdraw’, and ten shots hit them almost at point-blank range; the confessional is flooded with their blood”... In June 1834, Monfalcon, an aesthete of history, ended his account with these words: “The insurrection of Lyon will always be one of the most original episodes of our long Revolution, so fruitful in extraordinary events, and will henceforth occupy some of the most beautiful pages of the annals of our city, and of the history so remarkable of the French of the nineteenth century”.

He was wrong. It wasn't over. June 1849 would bring him other satisfactions...

#### 4.4 1849-1851 — Order finally reigns in Lyon

A good bloodletting but also a trial-spectacle of the Chamber of Peers sitting in the High Court, this is the remedy administered to the population of the city of Lyon and the kingdom. Despite the protest of the Lyonnais expressed by Eugène Baune, a republican professor at the business school, the case of the 60 Lyonnais was disjointed from the 163 indicted at the national level. On August 13, 1835, the verdict divided the sentences as follows: Deported for life outside the national territory: 7; Detention in a fortress (Doullens) for 20 years: 2; for 15 years: 3; for 10 years: 9; for 7 years: 4; five years in prison: 19; three years in prison: 4; one year in prison: 2; acquitted: 9; one accused had died during the trial. That's 312 years in prison or detention (more than 9 years on average) not counting the duration of the deportation. However, three years later, an amnesty was proclaimed on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of Orleans: Louis-Philippe was attempting a rallying

---

<sup>62</sup> *Repressions and political prisons in France and Europe in the nineteenth century, Société d'histoire de la révolution de 1848 et des Révolutions du XIXe siècle, Presentation P. H. Vigier. Claude Latta: the victims of the repression of the second revolt of the Canuts,* pp. 27 to 30

operation to the regime.

This time it was a workers' and republican insurrection, even more obvious than that of 1834, and in the hope of dividing this common front, the members of the Society for Human Rights were hit harder than those of the workers' organizations of the Silk Factory.

Once again, miscalculation: Eugène Baune was not wrong who had told his judges on July 10, 1835: "Do you believe that the fight that was fought is the last? Our presence before you only attests to a vanguard defeat."

In fact the regime had gained 14 years of relative tranquility that could give Guizot the illusion of the durability of the censitary suffrage, he who opposed any reform calling for the lowering of the income threshold necessary to access the "democratic" ballot box, the magic slogan of the time: "Get rich!"

In 1848, the conjunction of an economic crisis at the same time agricultural, banking and industrial, with scandals that reached the high spheres of society and with a reformist agitation that, politically reaching the country, led to an explosive situation. It is then the weight of the working class that is decisive on the event level.

In Paris the proletarian irruption turns into a revolution what was only "reasonable" manifestations easily contained.

In Lyon, on February 25, the emergence around and in the town hall of the secret societies of the Croix-Rousse in the middle of the courteous negotiations between republicans "of the day before" and republicans "of the next day" put an end to the delaying speeches. As the neo-babouvist weaver Joseph Benoit reports: "a strong column that descended from the Croix-Rousse thwarted all their plans and convinced them of the uselessness of their resistance. In the evening the people commanded masterly at the Town Hall and organized a revolutionary committee."<sup>63</sup>

Without delay, the secret society of the Voraces (which hid in the form of a company of Free Drinkers) planned to undertake the destruction of the forts built since 1831 on the plateau at the sites visited by Souk, shortly after the reconquest of the city and whose arrowslits were oriented towards the rebel suburb. The Commissioner of the Republic, Emmanuel Arago, who arrived in Lyon on 28 February, was coldly welcomed when he suggested the cessation of their business: in the afternoon of 5 March, he had to accept the idea of the destruction of "these fortified walls built by the monarchy between Lyon and Croix-Rousse at the time when the monarchy premeditated to annihilate

---

<sup>63</sup> *Confessions of a Proletarian, op. cit.*

the republican workers”<sup>64</sup>.

In a city that the historian G. Perreux does not hesitate to describe at that time as “the first republican city of France”<sup>65</sup>, the return of the Republic found in the vanguard the neo-Babouvist militants of Lyon who, with their clandestine “Flower Society” linked with the former Parisian Society of Families became “Society of Equals”<sup>66</sup> dreamed of establishing “the community of goods at the same time as the Republic”.

The Lyon events of the spring of 1848 offer a particular tone. The multiple tree plantations of Liberty adopt an original ceremonial. After the ceremony, a procession drove the young girls crowned with flowers who opened the march to their homes. At their side a “man of the people” wearing a red cap, carrying a ammunition rifle, installed on a stretcher supported by 4 men is seen as “deification of the Revolt”, as Monfalcon notes, acerbic.

On April 9, an expiatory funeral ceremony is held in honor of the victims of the anti-republican repression. It takes place in the center of the city, arena of the intense fighting of 1834. Five thousand people participated and Monfalcon saw there “the awful reminiscence of 93”.

On the 16th, another demonstration is organized. No longer by the authorities but by the “mountain” clubs. It aimed to install in Perrache, Place de la Liberté, a statue of the Sovereign People due to J. P. Lepind. It depicted a worker, chest uncovered, standing on a barricade, rifle in hand. Immediately it was baptized by the popular voice *The Man of the People*. Followed by the long procession of a crowd, it was walked all around the peninsula, the place of residence of the local bourgeoisie and aristocracy. A subscription was launched to offer a bronze replica of the monument to the “Brothers of Paris as a pledge of admiration and unity”.

In June 1848, however, Lyon did not move. The government has thought of parrying the blow. It placed a massive order for silk flags that occupied the looms and while he crushed the revolt of the workers of the Parisian national shipyards, he deployed in Lyon a spectacular security device, which delighted and reassured the “men of the golden chest”.

Here, Martin Bernard noted on the eve of the Parisian tragedy, “the bourgeois element and the popular element are continually in the presence (...) with the only difference that the devoted instincts of the people always bring them back to the principles of the Revolution, while the narrow, selfish calculations of the bourgeoisie always keep them away from them”<sup>67</sup>.

---

<sup>64</sup> *Journal d'un bourgeois de Lyon en 1848*, Présentation Justin Godart, PUF, 1924, p. 41.

<sup>65</sup> *Republican propaganda at the beginning of the July Monarchy, 1930*, p.99.

<sup>66</sup> With Barbes, Martin Bernard and Blanqui.

<sup>67</sup> *Lyon's history review*, XII, 1913, p. 179.

The defeat of the Parisians did not, however, affect the determination of the Lyon workers, on the contrary!

In the elections of May 1849, for the Legislative, after the disarmament of the Croix-Rousse, then of the entire National Guard of the city, the irreducibility of the workers is confirmed spectacularly: the eleven candidates on the "red list" were elected with votes between 72,569 and 69,323, ahead of the moderate candidates (50,343 votes).

The reshuffled government after June 1848 had sent as commander of the military place, Marshal Bugeaud who had earned in Algeria – already! — its reputation as an expert in "pacification". In plain language of military rudeness he expressed in a letter to Thiers his fury: "What raw and ferocious beasts! How can God allow mothers to make this kind ! Ah! these are the real enemies and not the Russians and Austrians."<sup>68</sup>

Without letting himself be stopped by his theological questions, he hastened to prepare a good and decisive bringing this rebellious people to heel. The plan outlined was not carried out by him. Through cholera, "God" recalled Thomas Robert Bugeaud, Marquis de la Piconnerie and Duke of Isly (Algeria) on June 10, 1849. Faced with the provocative behavior of the civil and military authority, on June 4, 1849, The Republican threatened. The solution, it wrote: "It is the dictatorship of the proletariat destroying the bourgeoisie, as the bourgeoisie drove out the aristocracy, as royalty buried feudalism."

... Which goes to show, the notion of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was initiated neither by Marx nor by Lenin, but by the military terrorism of the bourgeoisie refusing social democracy!

From 15 to 16 June 1849, Bugeaud's mortal blow was dealt by General Gémeau. On the 14th, a false news of a victorious Parisian insurrection circulated in the city, when in reality the demonstration organized by the deputies of the Mountain came to a sudden end. As Karl Marx explained: "It was only in Lyon that a stubborn, bloody conflict was reached. In this city where the bourgeoisie and the industrial proletariat are directly face to face, where the workers' movement is not as in Paris enveloped and determined by the general movement."<sup>69</sup>

Things unfolded as in the exercise against the canuts of the Croix-Rousse quickly isolated from the rest of the city held under surveillance. In forty-

---

<sup>68</sup>Maréchal Bugeaud, *Unpublished letters*, Lyon, 1849.

<sup>69</sup>K. Marx, *The Class Struggle in France*, 1850. We can consult on this whole episode in *The nineteenth century and the French Revolution* (Société d'histoire de la Révolution de 1848 et des Révolutions du XIXe siècle, Créaphis, 1992), the contribution M. Moissonnier: Les images de la République dans le monde et le mouvement ouvrier lyonnais (Republic's pictures in the world and the Lyon's worker's movement), pp. 173-189.

eight hours, with the use of cannon, the last insurrection of the silk plateau was suppressed. The barricades of the slopes were swept away, then those of the Grande Rue and the rue du Mail. 150 corpses of insurgents were officially recorded, cabarets were closed, opposition newspapers were suppressed, peddling of printed matter was banned, 1,500 arrests resulted in 1,200 cases dealt with by the councils of war.

The state of siege precluded the maneuvers that led to the opening of the way for the imperial dictatorship.

Let us refer to the confession of the good J. B. Monfalcon, editor of the official historical directories of the city.

Commenting in the one written for the year 1852 (before the coup d'état of December 2, 1851, the text was already ready), he writes about 1849<sup>70</sup>: "There is no doubt that if the riot had held it would have received powerful reinforcements from socialists in the vicinity, the obstacles of all kinds encountered by the troops marching on Lyon are proof of the spirit of the neighboring populations. Lyon was obviously chosen for the center of a socialist peasant revolt and how to calculate the chances if the National Guard had existed? It would have provided at least 10,000 men to the insurgency."

It is obvious that this is an echo of the panic campaign in preparation for the coup d'état and aimed at presenting the year 1852, that of the legislative elections, as a scarecrow concealing the threat directed against the right to property.

Then take the yearbook of 1853, when the bourgeoisie agreed to "lose its crown to save its purse" (Marx). Monfalcon "blesses a revolution coming this time from above and no longer from the fange of the cobblestones like all the others" because without the coup d'état, "the division was settled in advance, to each his abilities, to each capacity according to his works, to this one such ministry, to this other such fund, to the valets the habit of their master, to the maneuver the house he has built, to the peasant the farm he exploits, to the vicious the honest woman (...) to the ignorant the public education, to the atheist the cults, to the murderer justice"<sup>71</sup>.

And no doubt in Monfalcon the palm of the apocalyptic description! Which is not certain, because the propaganda writings of the time surpass themselves. And the Second Empire, as we know, was the signal of the "festival of profits", opening to the joyful leap of French capitalism.

What remains in the city that the tourist travels, of these tragedies of the first hundred years of the birth of French capitalism?

He will gladly be shown, at the fabric museum, the admirable fabrics

---

<sup>70</sup>pp. 87-88, Dépôt Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

<sup>71</sup>*idem*, pp. 93-94

produced by an elite workforce: the "façonné" that required science and know-how. The only place where one seeks to show the men who made the wealth of the Factory, Cooptiss, the House of Canuts, rue d'Ivry, has not until now obtained the public aid that it would be normal for it to benefit.

Of the canuts, the advertisement presents a falsified image produced by a distorting folklore, from which the struggles for a long time were banned. It's all about jumping songs, good words and gastronomic recipes from poor people washed down with Beaujolais! It was not until the early 1950s that an artery of the Croix-Rousse, responding to the Lyon name "express way", takes the name of boulevard des canuts, and the arrival in the prefectural administration of the historian Fernand Rude to be affixed, on the borough town hall, a plaque evoking the battles of 1831 and 1834.

Apart from that, the streets of the city are silent on this past and that of the Revolution of 1789, whenever it comes to workers' militants or revolutionaries: neither Denis Monnet, nor Bertrand, the Jacobin mayor, nor Joseph Châlier. On the other hand, the open opponents of the canuts are honored: Prunelle deputy mayor (1831-1835), proclaiming the responsibility of the Saint-Simonians in the revolt of 1831, the deputy Fulchiron "Fichu-rond" for the canuts he accused of opulence, the unnoticed Christophe Martin, 1835-1840, and Terme, 1840-1847, continuing the same discourse, Bugeaud, the inevitable, and Gasparin whose street leads in the center to Place Bellecour... which was, quite naturally, the place of arms. On the other hand, Bouvier du Molard is unknown for reasons of abusive tolerance, but compensated by Vaïsse, prefect with a grip of the Empire and Haussmann, Lyonnais, friend of the bankers. All associated with 81 street names bearing the names of saints.

The street signs celebrate order, finally restored by iron and blood in the city of wonderful silks.

**Maurice Moissonnier**

Maurice Moissonnier is an historian.

## Chapter 5

# 1871: Class Betrayal and Bloody Week

Claude WILLARD

First milestone: the bankruptcy of the political and military leadership teams. On July 19, 1870, the Second Empire, “with a light heart”, declared war on Prussia, a heart all the lighter because, according to the Minister of War, the army “did not lack a single gaiter button”. Six weeks later, Napoleon III capitulated pitifully at Sedan and, on September 4, the Republic was proclaimed. The new government, known as “National Defence”, in fact “national defection”, is made up of moderate Republicans “extremely finicky on the question of order and property”<sup>72</sup>. Presiding over this government and military governor of Paris, General Trochu, “past participle of the verb trop choir”<sup>VI</sup>, ironize Victor Hugo.

Surrounded by the Prussians since September 19, Paris, despite the extreme rigors of the siege, “chose the side of overly struggle” (Lissagaray). The popular Paris in arms (including cannons, bought by popular subscription) is organized.

From then on, the fear of the “dangerous classes” resurfaced with more force than ever. As early as September 19, 1870, Francisque Sarcey — a very reactionary journalist — observed with cynicism and lucidity: “The bourgeoisie saw itself, not without a certain melancholy, between the Prussians who set foot on its throat, and

---

<sup>72</sup>J. P. Azéma and M. Winock, *Les Communards (The communards)*, Seuil, 1970, p. 22.

<sup>VI</sup>French pun: Trochu is pronounced the same as trop chu which is past tense of trop choir which means too much fail

those it called the reds, and that it saw only armed with daggers. I don't know which one scared her the most: she hated foreigners more, but she feared the Bellevillois more." . . .

That same September 19, Jules Favre secretly met Bismarck at Ferrières to inquire about the conditions of an armistice. . . . However, Trochu's confidence to his friend the conservative writer Maxime du Camp: "The National Guard will only consent to peace if it loses 10,000 men."<sup>73</sup> No problem: the exit of Buzenval, on January 19, 1871, resulted in the death of 4,000 soldiers and officers.

This combined fear and phobia leads to betrayal. The choice between Prussians and Bellevillois is quickly made. Gustave Flaubert wrote to George Sand on April 30, 1871: "'Ah! Thank God the Prussians are here!' is the universal cry of the bourgeoisie". Words confirmed by Francisque Sarcey: "You cannot imagine the way this *ia*<sup>VII</sup> had been said, this *ia* deeper than a mug from Germany: 'Yes, poor Frenchman, we are here, fear nothing more. . . . You were born in a free land, *ia*, on a friendly land, *ia*, under the protection of the Bavarian bayonets, *ia*, *ia*.' I couldn't help but repeat this *ia* in my turn while trying to catch the intonation."<sup>74</sup> The armistice, signed on 28 January, delivered Alsace and part of Lorraine to Prussia.

As soon as January 3, 1871, *Le Figaro* sounded the hallali: "Army of good versus army of evil. . . . order against anarchy, the fight will be neither long nor difficult! It will be more of the fight than the battle. . . . A crusade of civilization against barbarism." On March 18, Thiers executed: he sent the army, in the early morning, to seize the guns of the National Guard. This provocative wick explode the powder keg. The Central Committee of the National Guard proclaims on March 21: "The proletarians of the capital, in the midst of the failures and betrayals of the ruling classes, understood that the time had come for them to save the situation by taking over the direction of public affairs. Does not the bourgeoisie, their eldest, which achieved its emancipation more than three quarters of a century ago, which preceded them in the path of revolution, understand today that the turn of the emancipation of the proletariat has arrived?"

By its birth, by its brief existence (72 days) and especially by its abundant work, the Commune, the first world workers' revolution, commits a

---

<sup>73</sup>Maxime du Camp, *Les convulsions de Paris* (Paris's seizures), Hachette, 1897, vol. I, p. 11. *State of mind corroborated by the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Insurrection of 18 March*, vol. I. p. 399 and vol. III, p. 13.

<sup>VII</sup>Francophone of the German *ja*.

<sup>74</sup>In the newspaper named — irony of history — *Le Drapeau tricolore* (The three-colored flag), May 20, 1871.



crime of lèse-majesté, lèse-capitalism and lèse-moral order: a government of the people by the people and for the people, elected representatives on imperative and revocable mandates, a real citizen mobilization, the premises of self-management (restarted by the associated workers of the workshops deserted by their bosses), the first steps towards female emancipation, the role of foreigners (a Hungarian Jewish immigrant, Leo Frankel, Minister of Labour)...

During the Bloody Week (21-28 May 1871), the Versailles army had a field day. This army, and especially its senior officers, had made its hand during the conquest of Algeria (the massacres of Dahra cave in 1845), in Mexico ("les blancs blancs" de Galliffet) and against the strikers (27 killed in Aubin and La Ricamarie). Long at the head of this army, General Vinoy defines himself as "a man who has always regarded order as the first duty of any society."<sup>75</sup> This army was enlarged by Bismarck, who freed the prisoners of war. Class internationalism.

To the extent of hatred and fear, Paris is transformed into slaughterhouses. Among the many witnesses, Henri Dunant, founder of the Red Cross: "This relentless repression... ended with appalling scenes of slaughter that turned Paris into a human mass grave. We killed to kill... A real war of extermination with all its horrors, let us say it well, because it is the truth; and those who have ordained him boast and praise themselves: they thought they were fulfilling a sacred duty; all those who belonged to the Commune, or were sympathetic to it, were to be shot." Extra judicial killings are innumerable: barracks, prisons (1,900 shootings at La Roquette on 28 May), gardens and squares (Luxembourg, Parc Monceau, Jardin des Plantes), cemeteries (Père-Lachaise, Montparnasse) are all mass graves; the casemates of fortifications, full of corpses, serve as incineration furnaces. The height of cruelty: Communards are buried alive, especially in the Square Saint-Jacques. According to the British newspaper *Evening Standard*, "It is doubtful that we can ever know the exact figure of the butchery that is prolonged. Even for the perpetrators of these executions, it must be quite impossible to say how many corpses they made." Between 20,000 and 30,000.

These atrocities elicit enthusiastic applause. *Le Gaulois* of May 31: "Insane people of this kind and in such large numbers and getting along together constitute such an appalling danger for the society to which they belong that there is no other possible penalty than a radical suppression." A few days later, *Le Figaro* added: "Mr. Thiers still has an important task to do: that of purging Paris... Never such an opportunity will arise to cure Paris of the

---

<sup>75</sup>Communication by Jean-Claude Freiermuth, in *Maintien de l'ordre et polices*, Créaphis, 1987, pp. 41-51.

moral gangrene that has been eating away at it for twenty years. . . Today, clemency would be dementia. . . What is a Republican? A ferocious beast. . . Come on, honest people! A helping hand to put an end to democratic and social vermin.” Alexandre Dumas fils, author of *La Dame aux camélias*, lowers himself to write: “We won’t say anything about their females out of respect for all the women they look like when they die.”

The fear of epidemics stops the slaughter. An author of best-selling plays, Émile de Girardin, advocates that mass burials be carried out in the suburbs: “There, nothing to fear from the cadaveric emanations, an impure blood will water and fertilize the furrow of the ploughman.” The White Terror — “the cold orgy of violence” says Louise Michel — follows the bloodbath. 43,522 prisoners were taken to the cellars of the Palace of Versailles, to the Satory camp or, like the convicts, to the pontoons of the ports (Brest, Cherbourg. . .). Their long march is described by the Versailles journalist Léonce Dupont as follows: “Passes before our eyes a human flock emaciated, tattered, all in rags, a mixture of robust men, old men still firm, poor devils folded in half and dragging painfully leaning on the neighbors. Some have shoes, others savates, others are barefoot. . . The crowd that sees these prisoners parade before it does not know how to moderate itself. . . It would like to rush at them and tear them to pieces. I have seen ladies of very soft appearance, at the height of exasperation, forget themselves until they strike poor devils with their umbrella.”<sup>76</sup> Ladies of the world and the half-world. The great photographer and writer Nadar makes a similar account<sup>77</sup>.

The councils of war sat for five years. The Versailles “justice” pronounces 13,440 convictions (including 3,313 in absentia): death sentences (9,323 executed), deportation, prison. Many Communards were sent to prison in New Caledonia. One of them, Jean Allemane, recounts the brutality of the reception, then the inhuman discipline, the corporal punishment inflicted with sadism, hunger, isolation, despair, suicides. . .<sup>78</sup>.

After this terrible bloodletting, Thiers plays the prophets: “We no longer talk about socialism and that’s a good thing. We are rid of socialism.” Oracle quickly denied. As Pottier sings:

“On l’a tuée à coup d’chassepot	Dans la terre argileuse
À coup de mitrailleuse	Et la tourbe des bourreaux gras
Et roulée dans son drapeau	Se croyait la plus forte

<sup>76</sup>Léonce Dupont, *Souvenirs de Versailles pendant la Commune* (Memories of Versailles during the Commune), 1881.

<sup>77</sup>Nadar, 1871. *Enquête sur la Commune* (Inquiry on the Commune), Paris, 1897.

<sup>78</sup>Jean Allemane, *Mémoires d’un Communard. Des barricades au bagne* (Memories of a Communard, from barricades to prison), Paris, 1910.

Tout ça n'empêch'pas	“She was killed with a <i>Chassepot</i> <sup>VIII</sup> With a <i>mitrailleuse</i> <sup>IX</sup> And rolled in her flag In clay soil
Nicolas	And the peat of fat executioners She believed herself to be the strongest Not everything prevents Nicolas
Qu'la Commune n'est pas morte!”	That the Commune is not dead!”

**Claude Willard**

Claude Willard is a historian, professor emeritus of the University of Paris VIII and president of the association of friends of the Commune.

---

<sup>VIII</sup>A type of breachloading rifle

<sup>IX</sup>A type of volley gun



# Chapter 6

## Union Busting

André DEVRIENDT

“Prison and forced labour are the only possible solution to the social question. It is to be hoped that the use will become general.”

---

*Chicago Times* (May 1886).

As soon as the freedom to form trade unions was legalized in 1884, the repression against their activities began! Often brutal, sometimes insidious.

Certainly, the repression against the workers has always been when they revolted against the conditions that were made to them by those who lived from their work. The companions of old supported epic struggles, suffered the repression of royal, imperial or republican “forces of order”, often with the blessing of the Church. Let us mention only the great strike of the companion printers in Lyon in 1539. But there have been many others over the centuries!

Later, members of the International Workers’ Association (the First International) were also persecuted. Then, the workers, deprived of the right to assemble, to form defense organizations, used only authorized associations: mutual benefit societies, transformed into resistance societies, illegal, of course. It was under the cover of mutual societies that major strikes and riots were prepared and conducted in 1830 in Nantes, in 1831 in Paris and Limoges, as well as the revolts of the canuts, fiercely repressed, in Lyon in 1831 and 1834.

## 6.1 The beginnings of trade unionism

“... My opponent was, remains and will remain the opponent of my class, the one who starves it and then, when it screams, shoots it...”

---

Panaït Istrati, *Vers l'autre flamme* (Towards the Other Flame)

It was therefore in 1884 that the young French republic, third of the name, allowed the creation of trade unions. Quite quickly, connections are made between the organizations that are formed. The Federation of Trade Unions and the Federation of Labour Exchanges were born. They met in 1895, thus giving birth to the Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Labour, C.G.T.). The workers' movement is organizing, developing; it is preparing to wage great struggles, not only for demands but also for the abolition of wage labour in order to build a society in which the exploitation of man by man is abolished and in which social justice reigns.

Capitalism, too, is organizing; the employers will respond — with the help of the governments — with very harsh blows to the workers' claims to refuse their lives of misery. The trade unionists, the workers will pay a high price, sometimes with their freedom and their lives, for their commitment to the struggles against the exploitation of which they are the victims.

In 1885, the famous Comité des forges (forges comitee) was transformed into a professional (employers') union; the Coal Committee was set up in 1886, then the employers' chambers of metallurgy became the Union of Metallurgical and Mining Industries, Mechanical, Electrical and Metallic Engineering and Related Industries. Fearsome war machine against the workers still scattered in several trade union organizations. Unfortunately, it has been found that employers are much more quickly linked up against workers than they do against their bosses.

The CGT would therefore continue the fight of the exploited against their exploiters. Trade unionists will experience victories over the years, many defeats too, due not only to their “natural” enemies, employers and government, but sometimes also, unfortunately, to their own divisions. The war of 1914-1918, the “Great War”, capitalist butchery, could not be prevented despite the commitments of the trade unions and the European socialist parties. The planned general strike could not be called; the slogan: “The proletarian has no homeland” gave way to the Sacred Union...

## 6.2 On strikes

In 1900, strike in Saint-Étienne in January, in Martinique in February (9 workers are killed, 14 are wounded). In June, 3 workers were killed in Chalon-sur-Saône. We could write if we were not afraid to trivialize these events: etc.!

The rising cost of living and rents force workers to live in slums; the very low wages, the methods of intensifying work in the factories, all this causes strong movements. Strikes between 1902 and 1913. Metallurgists, miners, dockers, construction workers, textile workers, agricultural workers, taxi drivers...

The repression is extremely violent. Clemenceau and Briand (former vigorous defenders of the working class who became ministers) are at the head of the anti-working class reaction. In Draveil, on June 2, 1908, the gendarmes shot at the demonstrators: 2 killed, 9 wounded. On July 30, in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, the army killed 7 workers and wounded 200 others. The union leaders are arrested. Everywhere the army is sent against the strikers, a quantity of whom are arrested, dismissed by their bosses, defamed. Thus the secretary of the coal miners of Le Havre, Jules Durand, is sentenced to death for moral participation in a strike! His sentence was commuted to seven years' imprisonment and after an intense campaign in the country, he was released before his trial was reviewed. But the trials had been too strong for Durand, who lost his mind. He was exonerated in 1918!

In fact Durand had been accused of a crime following a machination by big business and politicians. Thus, the sad Briand did not hesitate to declare: "If, to maintain security, I had not had the necessary weapons, if it had been necessary to resort to illegality, I would not have hesitated." He didn't hesitate... There were many politicians, policemen, employers, who also did not hesitate to plot plots against trade union activists who were too active in all countries, under all regimes. The government denied the railway workers the right to unionize, so they in turn entered the battle.

Their strike committee and 15,000 railway workers received a general mobilization order, which made Jean Jaurès say: "They turned the cessation of work into a military offence."

Previously, the postal workers had, in 1909, crossed their arms. Bullying, sanctions, dismissals rain down on the strikers. Another renegade of socialism, Labour Minister Viviani, proposed to the government the dissolution of the CGT. This did not happen, but the Paris Labour Exchange was closed.

The CGT leads the struggles, supports the strikers. It will engage with almost all the unions that compose it in the demand for the eight hours: eight hours of work, eight hours of rest, eight hours of leisure. The claim,

launched in 1906, did not succeed until 1919. At the same time, the Confederation carried out intense antimilitarist propaganda, advocating the idea of launching a general strike in the event of war.

### 6.3 The May Firsts

“May 1st is an act that must not degenerate  
to the point of becoming a parody of bourgeois festivities  
or a sunny November 11.”

---

Georges Dumoulin (may 1937)

It was from 1905 that the CGT organized strikes and parades on May 1st. The motive is to get the eight-hour workday. The watchword is: “From May 1, 1906, the workers will only work eight hours!”

On May 1, 1905, Paris was put under siege. 60,000 troops crisscross the city; there were many fights and 800 arrests, hundreds of wounded in hospitals, and two deaths. The bourgeoisie experienced panic fear. In the provinces too, work stoppages, demonstrations, incidents have taken place, particularly in Nice, Grenoble, Montpellier, Saint-Étienne, Lyon, Rochefort. . .

The idea of making May 1 a day of demands came from the United States. In Chicago, a huge strike took place on May 1, 1886, and continued on May 3 and 4. These days ended in tragedy. The police fired on the crowd, killing five and wounding several others, and then a bomb exploded among the policemen, probably thrown by provocateurs. Anarchist workers were arrested, convicted without evidence and executed.

These eight hours were seen as “a down payment by the bourgeoisie on the immense debt it owed to the working class”, as Clara Zetkin wrote. This explains the impact of this claim.

Some May 1st were impressive, either by the number of strikers and demonstrators, or by the violence exercised by the so-called police forces, or by what they symbolized. Thus May 1, 1919, after the war, was grandiose and marked by violent incidents, in France, in the United States, in Argentina. . . The one in 1920 was the largest in terms of the number of participants in France. In 1934, it was the surge against fascism, in 1936, that of trade union reunification, a prelude to the great strikes of June.

In Spain, there was a formidable demonstration of popular forces. But they were not going to suffer ordinary repression, so to speak, but a civil war unleashed against the Frente Popular by all that Spain had of power-hungry military, fascists, Catholic fundamentalists and, of course, big landowners,



masters of the economy. Trade union confederations: the General Union of Labour, socializing, and the National Confederation of Labour, anarcho-syndicalist, were at the forefront of the fight, especially the C.N.T. which, in addition to the fight against fascism, laid the foundations, wherever it could, of a new society.

Abandoned by the democracies, Great Britain and France, the Spanish Republic succumbed to the blows of the Francoists supported by Fascist Italy and Hitler's Germany, with the blessing of the Pope. The French government, on the other hand, welcomed as criminals, even enemies, the republican fighters who were able to take refuge with us in 1939.

Becoming Labor Day, May 1, a few bursts aside, gradually lost its symbol of class struggle. In countries of dictatorship, it had already been diverted into military parades; elsewhere, it has become the lily-of-the-valley festival. It will certainly take time for it to become a day of international demand again.

## 6.4 Repression carries on...

1936 was the year of the great workers' victory. The sacrosanct right of property was flouted — even if temporarily — by the occupation of factories, the right to paid rest has been recognized, as well as the right to union representation. No other victory has achieved such fundamental gains as these.

However, as early as 1937, the repression began. It is often the employers, by their actions, who provoke strikes. Yellow "trade union" organizations are created, such as the French Professional Unions. In March, in Clichy, the police shot at workers; Toll: 5 dead, hundreds wounded. In 1938, the CGT called for a strike against the decree-laws for November 30 because the decree-laws suspended a large part of the gains of 1936. The strike is ill-prepared. Employers and government are leading the response together; activists are arrested, lockouts decided. The police occupy "nerve centres", railway workers and public service agents are requisitioned. In this atmosphere of civil war, the strike is a failure (except in Nantes, Saint-Nazaire, Toulouse, Clermont-Ferrand). The repression is widespread: 500 activists are sentenced to prison terms, 350,000 civil servants are subjected to disciplinary sanctions. The Popular Front has lived...

## 6.5 Harsh repression and insidious repression

To break a strike, a workers' struggle, repression can be bloody; to weaken a powerful trade union organization, it can be insidious, effective in the medium term; splitting is one of the ways. It should also be noted that splits are not necessarily caused by forces hostile to trade unionism, they are sometimes, too often, caused by the unions themselves.

On November 9, 1940, the CGT was dissolved by the Vichy government, trade unions were banned. Defectors from the CGT, the Belin, Dumoulin, Million, Froideval, etc., rallied to the Popular Rally and the Petainist Labour Charter which planned to create corporate professional organizations, as in fascist Italy, which would bring together bosses and employees. It is the collaboration of organized classes; strike action is prohibited.

The CGT is reconstituted in the Resistance. Its militants suffered the fate of the other resistance fighters when they were arrested either by the occupier or by the police or the Vichy militia. A member of the National Council of the Resistance, the CGT established its program for the post-war period.

In the meantime, strikes are breaking out, demonstrations are happening despite the risks. Demonstrations on May 1, 1943 and 1944. Strikes in factories and at miners in Grenoble, Lyon, Marseille, in the mines of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, at railway workers... After the Liberation, the CGT contributed to the reconstruction of the country, it restored the social laws of 1936, a struggle for the buying power of the workers. The employers, because of their "collaborationist" behavior with the occupier, cannot react effectively. But in 1947, he reopened hostilities. Runaway inflation is lowering the standard of living of employees, already much lower than it was in 1938. Powerful strikes broke out: Renault, railways, press. The police intervene frequently, in short, the usual cycle. For many, C.G.T. is too powerful. It must be weakened. The beginning of the Cold War helping, a heterogeneous conspiracy will cause a split supported by the American Federation of Labor, the American trade union federation. The ground is ready, Force Ouvrière (Worker's strength F.O) is born.

Four trade union federations exist: the C.G.T., F.O., the C.F.T.C. (french acronym for French confederation of Christian workers), the Fédération de l'éducation national (Federation of National Education) (F.E.N.). A little later, the General Confederation of Independent Trade Unions was added.

Meanwhile, the employers strengthened themselves by creating the National Council of French Employers (C.N.P.F.).

1948 was a year of powerful strike movements and, consequently, serious repressions. Strikes are long, hard. In the mines of the North, a socialist min-

ister, Jules Moch, sent companies of mobile gendarmes, tanks, and put the region under siege. As a result, 4 miners were killed, 2,000 were imprisoned, hundreds were injured.

That year, there were 6,561,176 strikers and 13,133,313 strike days!

While France is to be rebuilt, the governments of the Fourth Republic, which succeed each other at an accelerated pace, do not hesitate to engage in a colonialist, ruinous and bloody war in Vietnam, and to exercise violent repression in Madagascar and Algeria. In 1953, military spending represented 40% of France's budget! The impoverishment of the working class is well underway, corporate profits are at record highs.

The unions are leading the struggle on all fronts, against the war in Vietnam, for the improvement of the purchasing power of employees. Repression strikes at arm's length, it is the case to say it! Workers killed by the police or the thugs of the R.P.F. (Rally of the French People, Gaullist), arbitrary dismissals. At the XXVIII Congress of the CGT in 1951, it was noted that 3,500 workers had been prosecuted before the courts. that 1,200 have been sentenced to prison terms, that thousands of grassroots activists, staff delegates have been dismissed. . .

In June-July 1953, the Laniel government claimed to take measures aimed at the rights of employees: social security, increase in rents, raising the retirement age for civil servants, etc. At the beginning of August a formidable strike movement was launched in which, at the call of the CGT, many members of Force Ouvrière and the C.F.T.C., and non-union members participated. The P.T.T.(french acronym for mails, phones and telegraphs), the railways, the public services, the production of gas and electricity, the Parisian transport are paralyzed. Banks, dockers, naval officers, construction and metallurgy guys are also getting into it. 4 million strikers; requisition orders remain without effect.

Brutal repression could not be appropriate in the face of the magnitude of such a movement. It was by methods of division that this movement was weakened by using the leaders of the F.O. and the C.F.T.C. who called for the resumption of work, following secret negotiations with the government.

The Algerian war sounded the death knell for the Fourth Republic. We were very close to the civil war. The CGT fought against the war. The coal and iron miners had the luxury of tell de Gaulle off, who had requisitioned them. General or not, they were not willing to obey with a curtsy and a bow. !

Then came May 1968. "Ten years is enough!" But ten million strikers did not achieve mirabolous results on the social level. . .

## 6.6 We continue, despite everything!

“What is the producer? Nothing.  
 What should he be? Everything.  
 What is the capitalist? Everything.  
 What should he be? Nothing.”

---

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

Trade union action and its repression were the two constant aspects of the workers' struggle against their exploitation. We saw it in this summary of their struggles. And again, here, we have mainly talked only about our country. Elsewhere it was, often, alas, even worse.

Yet, if we compare the living conditions of workers until recently, in France, to what were those of their ancestors in the last century, we see that their actions have not been in vain.

In this incomplete summary of workers' struggles and their repression, we have cited only dates and events as examples. We can remember that the repression of governments and employers was always extremely harsh, even ferocious, against the people: June 1830, 1848, the Commune, to speak only of the most well-known crimes. However, it is by tens of thousands that the actions against social injustice are counted, it is every day that workers, employees, employees fight, and it is every day that they are repressed in companies, in offices. Dark work, stubborn, without glory, but how necessary and courageous!

Liberal capitalism, ultraliberal totalitarian, relying on the rapid progress of the technical means of production, on the extraordinary computerization of communication, has been able to create unemployment of such a magnitude that it can afford to dismantle without great difficulty large parts of the social conquests acquired with great difficulty by the workers. The globalization of the economy is presented by capitalism and its zealous servants as the ultimate phase of history, thus as the unqualified superiority of this system over all other possible systems.

This idea has penetrated into many minds even that of some of those whose profession of faith is the defense of the working class. The trade union movement is in tatters, all confederations are being taxed by splits, the number of organisations is constantly increasing, although the number of union members is constantly decreasing! Trade unionism has taken severe blows, it has also fallen, misguided, but it is not dead. To rebuild a powerful force, one must have in mind what Pierre-Joseph Proudhon said in *Philosophie de la misère* (Philosophy of misery): “Whoever, in order to organize labor,

appeals to power and capital, has lied, for the organization of labor must be the decay of capital and power.”

**André Devriendt**

André Devriendt is editor of the *Monde Libertaire*. He has held many trade union positions (secretary of the C.G.T. proofreaders' union, member of the national council and the board of the Federal Union of Book and Paper Industry Pensioners C.G.T., General Secretary and Vice-President of the National Press and Book Mutual, etc.).

## 6.7 Brief bibliography

Jean Bruhat et Marc Piolot, *Esquisse d'une histoire de la C.G.T.* (Sketch of a history of the CGT), Éditions de la C.G.T., 1966.

Maurice Dommange, *Histoire du Premier Mai* (History of the First of May), *Éditions Archives et documents*, 1972.

Fernand Rude, *Les Révoltes des canuts, 1831-1834* (The canuts revolts, 1831-1834), Petite Collection Maspero.

*Institut C.G.T. d'histoire sociale* (C.G.T. Institute of Social History), C.G.T. Approches historiques.

Émile Pouget, *La Confédération générale du travail et Le Parti du travail* (The General Confederation of Labour and the Labour Party), Éditions C.N.T., 33, rue des Vignoles, Paris XXe, 1997.

Georges Lefranc, *Juin 36, l'Explosion populaire* (June 36, the grassroot explosion), Éditions Julliard, 1966.

Gérard Adam, *Histoire des grèves* (History of strikes), Éditions Bordas, collection “Voir l'histoire” , 1981.

Jean-Pierre Rioux, *Révolutionnaires du Front populaire* (Revolutionaries of the Popular Front), collection 10/18, 1973.

Thierry Laurent, *La Mutualité française et le monde du travail* (The French Mutuality and the world of work), Éditions Coopérative d'information et d'édition mutualiste, 1973.

*Luttes ouvrières* (Worker struggles), Éditions Floréal, 1977.

Jean Maitron (sous la dir. de), *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français* (Biographical Dictionary of the French Workers' Movement), Éditions ouvrières.

Marcel Caille, *Les Truands du patronat* (The Mobsters of the bosses), Éditions Sociales, 1977.



## Chapter 7

# The armed gangs of Capital in Republican France

Maurice RAJSFUS

Capitalism is naturally black. Like this coal that helped to enrich the coal companies as soon as the nineteenth century. Black as the misery organized at the same time, by the forge masters. It is impossible to forget that capitalist systems – national back then – were already taking their marks for expansion on a global scale, through colonialism. This was the time when the big bosses explained that the economies of the industrialized countries would face the greatest dangers if it were forbidden to make children under the age of twelve work and if one worked less than sixty hours a week. At paltry salaries, of course.

### 7.1 The sons of workers, best cops of the owners!

This nascent capitalist society could only rely on the men in black who had the task of defending it. It is a fact that, for more than one hundred and fifty years, the police have rarely been used for the “protection of people and property”, its initial mission, but much more to ensure the security of capital. We must not close our eyes on the long series of bloody repressive actions carried out by these armed gangs recruited from among the children of the working class and the poor peasantry.

After the fall of royalty in February 1848 and the failure of the national workshops, the ruling bourgeoisie encouraged young workers to enlist in the newly created mobile guard to maintain order in Paris — at a wage five times

higher. A few weeks later, during the June 1848 uprising of the Parisian workers, it was these sons of the working class who were launched against the insurgents, alongside regiments returning from the war of conquest in Algeria. These new types of police officers will not fail in their duty, as they say: "... Atrocious massacres by the mobile guard of the army or the national guard have taken place... (June 26) They shoot at the Conciergerie, at the town hall. Forty-eight hours after the victory, wounded and unarmed prisoners were shot... Horror, horror, horror!"<sup>79</sup>. More precise information will soon be provided after five days of ruthless repression: "We know that the bourgeoisie compensated itself for its deadly trances with unprecedented brutality and massacred more than 3,000 prisoners"<sup>80</sup>. To which must be added the hundreds of killed on the barricades. Not to mention the approximately 12,000 workers arrested and, for the most part, "transported" to Algeria or shipped to prison. In fact, the government of the Second Republic treated Parisians in the same way as Algerians who refused to suffer the colonial yoke<sup>81</sup>.

A few months later, General Changarnier, project manager of this repression, with other generals from Africa, such as Lamoricière, under the orders of the infamous General Cavaignac, head of the executive power, could declare with the greatest cynicism: "Modern armies have less the function to fight against enemies from the outside than the defense of order against rioters." Quickly, these great republicans will bring to power Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, during the presidential elections of December 1848.

In 1849, in a book *Les Partageux* (the Sharers), a certain Henri Wallon, historian at the orders of this bloody bourgeoisie, described the worker, "the red", as the hereditary enemy: "... A red is not a man, it is a red... He is a fallen and degenerate being... A dumb physiognomy,... dull eyes, fleeing like those of the pig... the insignificant and mute mouth like that of the donkey..."<sup>82</sup>

The insurgents of June 1848, like those of July 1830, were still nostalgic for the ideals of 1789. Subsequently, the need to defend oneself collectively, and then to try to counter the industrial society that was developing by repressing the working class, led the most lucid to constitute the 1st Inter-

---

<sup>79</sup>*Dans les Cahiers*, de Proudhon, quoted by Édouard Dolléans in his *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier* (History of the worker movement), Armand Collin, 1967, t. I, p. 241.

<sup>80</sup>Karl Marx, *La lutte des classes en France* (Class struggle in France) Éditions Sociales, 1946, p. 89.

<sup>81</sup>On 1848's revolution, refer more particularly to Maurice Aghulon's book, *Les Quarante-huitards* (the forty-eightards), Folio-Histoire, 1992.

<sup>82</sup>Quoted by René Arnaud in December 2, Hachette, *L'Histoire par l'image* (History by picture), 1967, pp. 22 et 26.



national, in 1864. It was clear, however, that the repression would be even harsher because the bourgeoisie, now an unavoidable economic power, could not accept the conclusion of this Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Engels, in 1847: “May the ruling classes tremble at the idea of a communist revolution! The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win!”

## 7.2 The slaughter of the Communards

Following the violent reaction of the Parisian workers in June 1848, the worried bourgeoisie would perfect its repressive means when the Paris Commune was crushed in May 1871. Once again, the Republican politicians prove their will to ensure the tranquility of the economic agents. Even at the cost of killing those workers who ensured capitalist prosperity. The army and police who worked to assassinate the Paris Commune were effectively waging war on the Parisians. (This war they didn’t really want to wage against the Prussians.) The destructive rage became more and more deadly in the last days, even when the last barricades had fallen: “... People were shot everywhere, on street corners, in the alleys of houses, in demolition sites, wherever there was a wall to push the victims. The lower banks of the Seine witnessed fierce massacres. At the bottom of the Pont Neuf, they shot for more than eight days.”<sup>83</sup>

Beyond a victory already assured for Thiers and the Versaillais, there was the will to kill because if, in war, we do not shoot the prisoners, it is not the same with the internal enemy for whom there is no quarter given, says Maxime Wuillaume. “As they advanced, the Versaillais installed, from place to place, these sinister military provosts whose whole task was to kill — the judgment did not count!”<sup>84</sup> Louise Michel is not to be outdone and, in her memories, she describes the entry of the Versaillais into Paris as days of nightmare: “They cut throats in ambulances... Machine guns mold in barracks. They kill like hunting. It is an inhuman butchery. Those who, badly killed, remain standing, or run against the walls, are shot at will.”<sup>85</sup>

While the military courts sit unabated (more than 10,000 condemned to deportation), Killings continue for the sake of killing. Without further justification. This is what the historian of the Commune, C. Talés, puts

---

<sup>83</sup>Maxime Wuillaume, *La Semaine sanglante* (The bloody week), La Palatine, 1964, p. 249.

<sup>84</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>85</sup>Louise Michel, *La Commune, Histoires et souvenirs* (The commune, history and memories), Maspero, 1970, t. II, p. 58.

it well: “It was necessary to massacre, to be safe, for a long time!”<sup>86</sup> This revenge on insurgent Paris is celebrated as it should be and the *Journal des débats*, evoking the recent defeats of Napoleon III spreads its satisfaction: “What an honor! Our army avenged its disasters with an invaluable victory!” And again: “Long live order, long live the army which is its only support!”<sup>87</sup> The general staff of this army had chosen unlimited repression: “Those who unleashed on Paris the blind force of terror ensured that the carnage was as great as possible.”<sup>88</sup> Refinement was not absent from the concerns, as evidenced by the slow advance of the troop: “They wanted it to last, in order to kill longer.”<sup>89</sup>

On June 15, 1871, they were still shooting at the Bois de Boulogne. “They stopped killing only when they feared being poisoned by the corpses.”<sup>90</sup> At the Madeleine church, 300 federated were shot, 700 to 800 on the Place du Panthéon, etc. Many weeks later, the episode of the little Savoyards, usual chimney sweepers of Paris, shot because they had black hands — supposedly black with powder — was told. There was also this legend, tenacious, of these pétroleuses setting fire to Paris: “From then on, any suspicious woman is searched; woe to her if we discover a cellar rat, matches, if she brings back a bottle: olive oil, bleach, become oil; booed, brutalized by the crowd, the oiler is shot like the women taken with weapons in their hands. Hundreds of women were murdered.”<sup>91</sup>

In the midst of this coldly decided repression, xenophobia held a prominent place: “Republicans are being shot because the Commune was republican. It was cosmopolitan, foreigners were massacred. The fame of Dombrowski<sup>92</sup> causes the death of many Poles... All those who were Italians, Poles, Dutch, Germans, were shot, said an officer who played an active role in the repression.”<sup>93</sup>

Those who read the British press of the time, such as P. O. Lissagaray<sup>94</sup>, were able to pick up details forgotten by French chroniclers. Thus, on May 28, 1871, General Galiffet, chief rifleman, addressed a group of communards

<sup>86</sup>C. Talés, *La Commune de 1871* (The commune of 1871), Spartacus, 1971, p. 120.

<sup>87</sup>Quoted by Jean-Pierre Azéma et Michel Winock in *Les Communards* (The communards), Le Seuil, Le Temps qui court, 1964, p. 165.

<sup>88</sup>C. Talés, *La Commune de 1871* (The commune of 1871), p. 130.

<sup>89</sup>*Idem.*, p. 142.

<sup>90</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>91</sup>*Idem.*, p. 145.

<sup>92</sup>One of Paris Commune military chiefs, just like the Cipriani brothers, Italians, or the Pole Wroblewski.

<sup>93</sup>C. Talés, *La Commune de 1871* (The commune of 1871), p. 145.

<sup>94</sup>Auteur de *Histoire de la Commune de Paris* (History of the Paris Commune), Maspero, 1967.

prisoners: “Let those with gray hair come out of the ranks. You have seen June 1848, you are more guilty than the others! And he rolled the corpses in the ditches of the fortifications.”<sup>95</sup> The massacre over, Adolphe Thiers, head of the executive power, telegraphed to the prefects: “The ground is littered with their corpses, this awful spectacle will serve as a lesson.”<sup>96</sup>

The assessment drawn up by Lissagaray in his *Histoire de la commune* (History of the Commune) is most precise: 20,000 Parisians killed during the battle, including women and children; 3,000 dead in new Caledonia’s depots, pontoons, prisons and exile; 13,700 prison sentences, 70,000 women, children and the elderly deprived of their natural support. Following the Bloody Week, there were some 400,000 denunciations. For his part, Jacques Rougerie, who was able to strip the historical archives of the Vincennes’s Fort, notes that of the 36,909 Communards arrested, more than two-thirds were manual workers, but is it possible to separate them from the employees and servants who had opposed the Versaillais?<sup>97</sup>

### 7.3 The order ruled under Clemenceau!

Twenty years after the Paris Commune, the blood of the workers will flow in Fourmies (North). On May 1, 1891, side by side, police, gendarmes and soldiers of the 145th line fired on the crowd. There were ten dead, including several children, and many injured. The following May 1st, although less bloody, will take place for a long time under the sign of repression: violent charges of the gendarmes in the provinces and the police in Paris, as in 1893. The numerous arrests and dismissals that follow these days demonstrate that the police and employers are in sync<sup>98</sup>.

Having become Minister of the Interior, Georges Clemenceau immediately took the nickname of “top cop of France”. On May 1, 1906, he put Paris under siege after having concentrated some 50,000 troops there in mid-April. At dawn, hundreds of preventive arrests have already been made. On the Place de la République, cuirassiers on horseback rub shoulders with plainclothes policemen. The provocations of the police and the soldier quickly did their work and barricades were erected in this popular district. As if the police were just waiting for this signal, the police start banging randomly, also targeting

---

<sup>95</sup>Édouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier* (History of the worker movement), t. I, p. 386.

<sup>96</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>97</sup>Jacques Rougerie, *Paris ville libre* (Paris free city), Le Seuil, 1971, pp. 259-261.

<sup>98</sup>Refer to à Maurice Dommanget, *Histoire du 1er mai* (History of May First), Société universitaire d’édition, 1953, pp. 136-154.

passers-by. The day ended in 800 arrests, 173 of which were maintained. Wounded people are cluttering hospitals in large numbers. There were also reportedly two deaths. “The liberated from the Château-d’Eau left, in the evening, by bending their backs under the blows of the agents ‘lining the bridge’.”<sup>99</sup>

In these times, which some call “Belle Époque” (good old days), it was enough for a business leader to report to the police commissioner of the neighborhood that his workers were on strike or simply challenged his authority for a squad of *kepis* to arrive immediately, with their batons risen. To oppose his boss was already to put public order in danger. Among other bloody episodes, Clemenceau will have to his credit many anti-worker shootings:

- On June 19, 1907, the army fired on the winegrowers in revolt in Narbonne. There are five dead and about twenty wounded.
- On July 26, 1907, in Raon-L’Étape, in the Vosges, the textile strikers were facing the army: three dead and thirty wounded.
- On June 2, 1908, in Draveil (Seine et Oise), the striking workers, who threw stones at the gendarmes who had come to dislodge them, saw two of their comrades killed and ten others seriously wounded.
- On July 30, 1908, in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, the troop fired salvo at strikers and passers-by, while cavalrymen charged swords in the clear: four dead and many wounded.

Paradoxically, the republican constitution of 1875, the secular school of Jules Ferry, the laws on the press and the right of association, the separation of Church and State, etc. have in no way changed the harshness of the vigilantes in power. It is enough to recall how, after crushing the fascist riot of February 6, 1934, in Paris, in front of the Chamber of Deputies, the republican government launched its police against the workers who demonstrated, on February 9, in support of the democratic institutions: six dead, shot almost at point-blank range<sup>100</sup>.

## 7.4 From the unthinkable to the unspeakable

It is impossible to write off the role played by the police and gendarmerie as prison warden against the Spanish republicans and the fighters of the

---

<sup>99</sup>*Idem*, p. 221.

<sup>100</sup>Sur cette soirée du 9 février 1934, refer to the debriefing pages published in *L’Humanité* (The Humanity) du 10 février 1934.

international brigades, as early as February 1939, after Franco's victory. Just as we must not forget the fate reserved for the anti-fascists and German Jews who fled Nazism and who found themselves, in October 1939 and May 1940, in 110 concentration camps, under the vigilant guard of the same servants of the order who, as at the Camp des Milles, explained to the internees, during the debacle of the French armies, that they were going to be handed over to the Nazis by them<sup>101</sup>.

Soon followed the most despicable episode of the French police forces: their role under the Nazi occupation, in the northern zone and in the Vichy France, in the so-called "free" zone. For four years, police and gendarmes, GMR, and even customs officers in many circumstances, will unconditionally put themselves at the service of the Gestapo. With little misgivings at the task they are asked to accomplish, these 200,000 men, often recruited at the time of the Popular Front, will indulge without qualms in the hunt for Jews, Gaullists, Communists, Freemasons, etc. No matter who gives the order, the main thing is to fulfill the mission with maximum zeal. When liberation comes, it will be never meant to judge, both the men and the institutions that engaged in criminal activities from the summer of 1940 to the summer of 1944. It is true that General de Gaulle, back in France, preferred to use these men than the forces of the Resistance and the maquis. The calculation was consistent: just as for the magistrates, the prefectural administration and the high civil service, the man of London knew that these men would be all the more loyal to him because they had failed despicably during the past four years<sup>102</sup>.

It is worth noting that if, in 1945, some 4,000 police officers were "dismissed", momentarily — those having been a little more collaborator than the others — these officials were reinstated by the prefect of police Baylot, in the early 1950s<sup>103</sup>. As these men had lost a few years, they were counted a copious catch-up of salary, while a rapid advancement — faster than for their colleagues — immediately placed them in the leading spheres of the Paris police.

---

<sup>101</sup>On these inglorious episodes of the French police and gendarmerie, refer essentially to *La lie de la Terre* (Scum of the Earth), by Arthur Koestler (Calmann-Lévy, 1947); *Les camps en Provence*, collective work (Ex, 1984); *Le Diable en France*, by Lion Feuchtwanger (Jean-Cyrille Godefroy, 1985); *Zones d'ombre*, collective work (Alinéa, 1990); *Exils en France*, collective work (Maspero, 1982); *Les Bannis de Hitler*, collective work (EDI, 1982); *Le camp de Gurs*, by Claude Laharie (chez l'auteur, 1985); *Vivre à Gurs*, by Hanna Schram and Barbara Vormeier (Maspero, 1979).

<sup>102</sup>Refer to *La Police de Vichy* (Vichy's police), by Maurice Rajsfus, Le Cherche midi éditeur, 1995.

<sup>103</sup>Auguste Lecœur, *Le Partisan* (The partisan), Flammarion, 1963.

## 7.5 Republican police? Wishful thinking!

Although on a completely different scale, the Fourth Republic, born from the Resistance, did not escape the repressive temptation. As early as 1945 these Republican Security Companies (RS) were formed, which would be illustrated in a very sinister way. Curiously shaped, by a strange amalgam between these GMRs<sup>X</sup> who had served Vichy and the Gestapo and FFI (Forces Françaises de l'intérieur/ Inside French forces) and FTP (Francs Tireurs et Partisans/Mavericks and partisans) fighters from the maquis or urban guerrillas, the CRS (Companies Républicaines de Sécurité/Republican security companies) were the perfect illustration of this short memory that concerned as much deep France as the new authorities. From the end of 1947, three years after the liberation of France from the Nazi yoke and the Vichy regime, the CRS, new soldiers of the order, did not hesitate to shoot at striking workers. There will be three dead in Valence and one in Marseille, as well as many wounded. Faced with the first major wave of strikes since the Liberation, the government, still composed of politicians from the Resistance, had the National Assembly pass a law called "republican defense". This meant the provision to the Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch, of a force of 80,000 men, responsible for "enforcing the freedom of work"<sup>104</sup>. At the same time, a parliamentary assembly, also composed mainly of former resistance fighters, voted on texts that wanted to jeopardize the right to strike (recognized in the 1946 constitution), the right to organize, individual freedoms, and freedom of the press. (The old class conflicts were reviving and the police were acting as arbiters in these circumstances.)

In October 1948, a major strike movement was launched by the miners, rapidly extending from Nord-Pas-de-Calais to the Basins of the Loire and the South-East. Immediately, the Republican power sent the troops, the mobile gendarmes and policemen in large numbers, on the mine tiles and in the coronas. In all, several thousand men were released against these miners, presented two years earlier as heroes of work. This real army launched against the "black mugs" had tanks, machine guns, chenillettes, radio cars, transport and reconnaissance planes. It was war. At the head of this repressive force was Jules Moch, supported by the young Raymond Marcellin<sup>105</sup>.

Following the pitched battles that are sure to erupt, there will be three dead, many wounded and thousands of arrests. In the face of this ferocious repression, the American miners' union leader, John Lewis, remarked: "The French government would rather send American bullets into their bodies

---

<sup>X</sup>stands for Groupe Mobile de Réserve/mobile reserve group

<sup>104</sup>*Idem.*, p. 234.

<sup>105</sup>*Idem.*, p. 238.

(miners) than put bread in their shrunken stomachs.”<sup>106</sup> On 12 November, more than a thousand miners were arrested for violating the freedom to work and three hundred of them sentenced to prison terms. 1,800 miners will be dismissed for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais mining basin alone.

The memory of the terrible years of the Occupation was barely dispelled, but the social dialogue could only take place under the shelter of the batons and guns of the CRS. Admittedly, it is not possible to compare this repression to that experienced by the Forty-Eighters and the Communards. Yet, just as in June 1848, and in a certain way in May 1871, the members of the forces of order were mainly from the working classes and, what is more, for some, fighters of the Resistance...

Facing the deep country, the strikers of 1947 and 1948 were alone. The keeping of order can therefore be ensured without too much fuss. Freed from the weight of the Nazi occupation, the population of this country had returned to its usual indifferent, even selfish behavior. Who, then, advised to shout their indignation, after May 8, 1945, when the French navy had bombed Sétif and some cities in eastern Algeria, when the army and the police, accompanied by the settlers – all tendencies combined – shot Algerian militants in the streets? Who wanted to know that there had been tens of thousands of Algerian deaths on a land still reputed to be French while the good citizens rejoiced, on the same day, at the defeat of Nazi Germany? This was followed by the Indochina war, with the desire to make the Vietnamese understand that democratic freedoms were reserved – sometimes – only for the French of France, then a terrible repression in Madagascar, in 1947.

After opening fire on French workers in 1947 and 1948, the police had no difficulty shooting at Algerian workers who had the audacity to join the parade of July 14, 1953, in the midst of Parisians: “This is certainly not the first time that Algerians have been killed in demonstrations, but never before has it happened so openly, in the heart of Paris.”<sup>107</sup> Quickly, the spiral of colonial wars no longer offending a population that thought above all of its own well-being, the Algerian conflict, from the autumn of 1954, could be modestly referred to as a law enforcement operation, with hundreds of thousands of deaths at stake; prelude to the collapse of this Fourth Republic born of the struggle against the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupier.

---

<sup>106</sup> *Idem.*, pp. 238 et 239.

<sup>107</sup> Claude Angeli and Paul Gillet, *La Police dans la politique* (Police in politics), Grasset, 1967.

## 7.6 The Fifth Republic, a police society

As early as May 13, 1958, it seemed obvious that the French police were in communion of spirit with the perpetrators of the Algiers coup that would lead de Gaulle to power. Once again Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch is no longer the idol of the police who have their eye fixed on the events in Algeria: “The police? He has known since May 13 that there is no need to rely on her. That evening, leaving the Palais-Bourbon, he saw the agents and inspectors marching by, booing the deputies. He heard the cries of ‘Death to the Jews’. The majority of Paris’ 20,000 peacekeepers are won over to Commissioner Dides’<sup>108</sup> movement for an authoritarian regime.”<sup>109</sup>.

Quickly, after the arrival of De Gaulle in “business”, it is not appropriate to invoke human rights, especially those of Algerians. In the autumn of 1960, the first major demonstrations for the independence of Algeria were brutally repressed. With all the more ease that hundreds of thousands of young French people now do their military service in the Aurès, where their officers teach them to “break” these “trunks of fig trees” insensitive to civilization ...

To better control the fighting desires of Algerians of France, the prefect of police Papon decided to establish an unfair curfew, penalizing this population, already weakened, from October 5, 1961. This is a well-studied provocation. Indeed, from January 1 to August 31, 1961, more than 450 Algerians were shot, in fact coldly murdered. In this climate, the application of the curfew can only provoke a response. On 17 October 1961, the leaders of the FLN<sup>XI</sup> Federation of France call on Algerians to hold a peaceful demonstration in Paris. During this evening, in front of tens of thousands of Algerians, in Sunday clothes, who came to protest “with dignity” against a scoundrel decision, the police are unleashed with a murderous savagery. Twelve thousand people were arrested and crammed into the sports park of the Porte de Versailles, in the grounds of the Palais des Expositions, at the Vincennes sorting centre, in the very courtyard of the police prefecture where, under the gaze of the prefect Papon, murders happened. In the streets of Paris, a huge *ratonnade* takes place and, from the bridges, dozens of Algerians are thrown into the Seine, in the icy cold of night<sup>110</sup>. This massacre,

---

<sup>108</sup>Jean Dides, police commissioner, dismissed in 1954, then rallied to Poujadism. Previously in charge of an anti-Jewish service at the Paris police prefecture from 1942 to 1944.

<sup>109</sup>Serge et Merry Bromberger, *Les 13 complots du 13 mai* (The 13 conspiracies of May 13), Fayard, 1959, p.82.

<sup>XI</sup>Front de libération Nationale, the algerian national liberation movement

<sup>110</sup>Refer to the testimonies quoted by Jean-Luc Einaudi in *La Bataille de Paris* (The battle of Paris) Le Seuil, 1991.



denied by the prefect Papon and the Minister of the Interior, Roger Frey, before the municipal and parliamentary assemblies, is obvious.

The IGS<sup>XII</sup> investigates, and discreetly suggests that there were 140 deaths. For its part, the FLN France Federation lists more than 250 dead and some 400 missing. This repression is hardly known to the Parisian population because many media are discreet to say the least. Few witnesses dare to evoke the event. Fortunately, a courageous photographer, Élie Kagan, criss-crossed Paris during this infernal night, then providing implacable documents that the press would hardly use, apart from *Libération*, *L'Humanité*, *France-Observateur* and *Témoignage Chrétien*<sup>111</sup>. Oblivion does the rest and public opinion will remember only the death of the eight communist militants, who died murdered during the demonstration of February 8, 1962, at the Charonne metro station. All French, it is true.

A police society, the Fifth Republic naturally developed parallel police forces such as the SAC, where mobsters frequented the men of the Gaullist networks. In the sinister Ben Barka case in 1965, the active agents of the SDEC (tl:Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage, french intelligence agency from 1945 to 1982) will work in partnership with men in the field, as if it were a long habit<sup>112</sup>. In the shadow of these mobsters, there were former members of the Carlingue (French Gestapo where some policemen met in the company of mobsters) and even the prefect Papon who, like others, “covered up” this abominable operation.

It was really in May and June 1968 that the French police and gendarmerie gave the full measure of their talent. From May 3, 1968, after the entry of the CRS at the Sorbonne, the police will go wild, attacking the students as if they were real enemies. For six weeks, over the course of the demonstrations, thousands of Parisians – and it will be the same in many provincial cities – will be ruthlessly bludgeoned, assaulted with combat gas. Who can know how many of them have suffered such sequelae that they have never fully recovered. Police bludgeoned in the streets, beat boys and girls who fell to the ground, bludgeoned and sometimes tortured in police stations. It was war<sup>113</sup>!

From June 1968 to March 1974, under the senior direction of Raymond Marcellin, France was under almost permanent siege. During this period,

---

<sup>XII</sup>Inspection générale des Services, the police policing the police

<sup>111</sup>The photos taken that evening by Elie Kagan were collected by the Anne-Marie Métaillé editions, as well as in *Le silence du fleuve* (Silence of the river), by Anne Tristan, Au nom de la mémoire, 1991.

<sup>112</sup>On the Ben Barka case, refer to Daniel Guérin's book, *Ben Barka, ses assassins* (Ben Barka, his murderers), Pion, 1981.

<sup>113</sup>Report to *La Police hors la loi*, by Maurice Rajsfus, Le Cherche midi éditeur, 1996.

the real center of power was in the Ministry of the Interior. Everything that constitutes the driving forces of the France of human rights is suspected of a spirit of protest, and necessarily repressed with the greatest rigor. One can no longer write, express oneself publicly, publish, make films, stage plays, or even paint, sometimes, only under the vigilant control of Raymond Marcellin. The police, and the justice at its service, watch for the slightest rustle in high schools, as at the University<sup>114</sup>.

A police society, France is in great danger of abuse. The police state is waiting for us, even when the majority changes sides. France is one of the democratic countries with the largest law enforcement agencies. We have:

- More than 120,000 police officers (Ministry of the Interior) including some 18,000 CRS
- 95,000 gendarmes, of which about 15 000 mobile gendarmes (Ministry of the Armed Forces)
- 20,000 customs officers (Ministry of Finance) who occasionally behave like CRS or mobile gendarmes.

To these traditional law enforcement agencies must be added about 12,000 municipal police officers. In large cities such as Paris, hundreds of highly repressive public transport controllers are assisted by the men of the Network Protection and Security Group (GPRS) equipped with batons and tear gas. Nor should we forget: private security companies, often in liaison with the police, building guards, and the many indicators, paid or volunteer, that it is not possible to quantify. In a few years with the disappearance of conscription, the government will have a professionalized army of some 250,000 men, ready to carry out all the missions of repression. So, once again, France is not a police state, not yet, but our society is more sensitive to security ideology than to numerous violations of human rights. Without any illusions about the capacity of the police to suppress, we must first note the inconsistencies in the recruitment and training of police officers. Similarly, the selection criteria implemented are equally questionable. That said, it is certain that, for the past fifteen years, it is in order not to fall into unemployment that one chooses to repress one's contemporaries. Until about 1950, police training lasted less than a month and the level of recruitment was at the level of the certificate of studies. The police were not too rough outside of repressive missions. Nowadays, the police academy lasts a year, and the new police

---

<sup>114</sup>Report to *Mai 68, sous les pavés, la répression* (May 68, under the cobblestones, repression), by Maurice Rajsfus, Le Cherche midi éditeur, 1998.

officers, all at the baccalaureate level or bac plus two, have never been so racist, so sexist, so violent. The policeman has turned into a vigilante, which is not his function, but Justice is a good mother with deviant police officers...

### Maurice Rajsfus

Maurice Rajsfus is the author of twenty-two books, mainly devoted to repressive systems. Last publications: *Mai 68, sous les pavés, la répression* (May 68, under the cobblestones, repression) (Le Cherche midi éditeur, 1998) et *En gros et en détail, Le Pen au quotidien* (In bulk and in detail, Le Pen on a daily basis) (Paris-Méditerranée, 1998). He chairs the Observatory of Civil Liberties, which publishes the monthly bulletin *Que fait la police?* (What does the police do?) He is one of the founders of the network Ras l'Front<sup>XIII</sup>.

---

<sup>XIII</sup> Antifascist network, *Ras l'* stands for Ras le bol, fed up with; Front for *Front National*, main French far right party



## Chapter 8

# The Great War: 11,500 dead and 13,000 wounded per day for three and a half years

Jean-Pierre FLÉCHARD

*“C’est le tango des joyeux militaires  
Des gais vainqueurs de partout et d’ailleurs  
C’est le tango des fameux va-t-en-guerre  
C’est le tango de tous les fossoyeurs”*

“This is the tango of the merry soldiers  
Happy winners from everywhere and elsewhere  
This is the tango of the famous warmongers  
This is the tango of all gravedigger!”

**Boris Vian**

*“Celle, mon colon, que j’voudrais faire  
C’est la guerre de 14-18”*

“The one, my man, that I would like to do  
It’s the war of 14-18”

**Georges Brassens**

*“Armons-nous et partez”*

“Let’s arm ourselves and you leave”

**Anonymous**

Two French municipalities stand out: one is the only one not to have erected on its main square a monument to the dead of the war of 1914-1918,

because its 15 mobilized all returned alive from the front, the other, Gentioux, in the Creuse, has a monument to the dead that has never been officially inaugurated, in fact, it represents a schoolboy pointing to the inscription “Cursed be war!”, all the others have a war memorial, which reveals better than the dryness of figures the scale of the massacre. In this field, the plaque dedicated to the dead of the 1914-1918 war, in the hall of the town hall of Bezons, bears the inscription “war to war, hatred to hatred”. No French commune, with one exception, has escaped the gigantic butchery, which, out of 7.8 million mobilized for more than four years, or nearly 30% of the French working population, has left 1.4 million dead on the battlefield and sent back to their homes more than a million invalids.

## 8.1 The influence of the military-industrial lobby, the international powder cartel

From 1904, antagonisms were entrenched, national passions were exacerbated, crises multiplied and worsened, either over Morocco or over the Balkans, until 1914 when the Sarajevo attack unleashed the dreaded catastrophe, the European war.

The general situation and the balance of power were altered in Europe, not only by the Franco-British entente, but by the defeats that Russia, at that very moment (1904-1905) was suffering in the Far East. Wilhelm II and his Chancellor Bülow tried to take advantage of the weakening of Russia to break the Entente Cordiale.

### 8.1.1 The question of Morocco provoked a violent Franco-German conflict (1905-1906).

Despite the continued development of German force, Wilhelm II, like Bismarck, was haunted by the fear of encirclement. The agreement of France and England, coupled with an alliance with Russia, agreements with Italy and Spain, seemed to him to be a threat to German expansion plans. Pushed by his advisers, Bülow and Holstein, he undertook a major diplomatic offensive, targeting both France and Russia.

On France, Germany exercised a brutal action, bellicose in appearance, by opposing like a veto to its Moroccan policy: the kaiser’s speech in Tangier, then the resignation of Delcassé had the effect on French opinion of a new Fachoda, a national humiliation. Conversely, William II lavished friendly words on the tsar, who was angered by defeat and revolution; he thus led

him to the Björkoe meeting, where a secret pact of German-Russian alliance was signed, a prelude to a great continental league of which Germany would be the head.

This policy did not produce the expected results. The Pact of Björkoe, incompatible with the French alliance, remained a dead letter. The Algerias Conference (1906), convened at the request of Germany to settle the Moroccan question, rejected most of the German proposals, entrusted France and Spain with the police of the Moroccan ports. The Entente Cordiale, far from being broken, became narrower; much more, it expanded into the Triple Entente, after England and Russia had, by the agreement of 1907, settled all their Asian disputes. In Germany the haunting of encirclement grew, the European atmosphere became stormy. A second peace conference in The Hague (1907) failed to stop the arms race, on sea and land.

### **8.1.2 Austro-Russian antagonism festered in the Balkans (1908-1909).**

The political or national questions that arose in the Balkans or Central Europe were even more serious than colonial disputes, because they put at stake the existence of the Turkish Empire, the existence of Austria-Hungary itself, and in turn the foundations of European balance.

Of these issues, the most serious were the question of Macedonia, a still Turkish province but of mixed population and coveted by Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia; the question of Bosnia, Turkish province ruled by the Austrians, but populated by Serbs, and where the Serbian nationalism was beginning to spread; the question of the Straits — Bosphorus and Dardanelles — that Russia, locked in the Black Sea, wanted to open to its war fleet. After its failures in the Far-east, Russian politics, under the leadership of Minister Isvolsky, returned to its traditional objectives in the Balkans.

However, in 1908, a Balkan crisis broke out, provoked by the Turkish Revolution: the Young Turk National Party seized power and forced Abd-ul-Hamid to accept a constitution (the sultan, having tried to recapture power, was deposed the following year). To put an end to the Yugoslav agitation, Austria, led by a bold minister d'Arenthal, decreed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bulgaria also took advantage of the crisis to proclaim itself independent. As for Isvolsky, despite all his efforts, he could not obtain from the powers the opening of the straits.

The annexation of Bosnia — a violation of the statute established in Berlin in 1878 — resulted in a European crisis. War almost broke out between Austria and Serbia, whose national aspirations were aimed at the annexed

provinces. Russia, dissatisfied with its failure, supported the Serbs, until the day when the threatening intervention of Germany forced it to yield and Serbia, and to recognize the *fait accompli* (1909). Nothing seemed to be able to resist the German force.

### 8.1.3 To settle in Morocco, France had to cede part of the Congo (1911).

In Morocco, after new incidents (about Germans deserting the Foreign Legion), Germany had concluded with France an economic agreement (1909). But this agreement worked badly. When, to unblock the sultan and the Europeans besieged by rebels, French troops entered Fez (1911), Germany declared the status of Algeciras violated and, to obtain compensation, sent a warship to Agadir (southern coast of Morocco).

This time it encountered strong resistance. England vetoed any establishment of Germany in Morocco. But the French government (Caillaux) was in favour of a peaceful solution; the Franco-German negotiations, although interspersed with drums of war, resulted in an agreement: in exchange for freedom of action in Morocco, France ceded part of the French Congo to Germany (1911).

Instead of producing appeasement, this agreement only exacerbated Franco-German passions and antagonism. Germany, in order to intimidate its opponents, increased its armaments. In France, after so many alerts, we no longer wanted to be intimidated: Minister Poincaré, a supporter of a policy of firmness, strengthened, through new agreements, France's ties with Russia and England (1912).

### 8.1.4 From Morocco the crisis spread to Tripolitania and then to the Balkans (1911-1913).

From 1911 to 1914, crises followed one another and Europe, as if caught in a fatal spiral, was blindly heading towards catastrophe.

The immediate consequence of the establishment of France and Spain in Morocco was the establishment of Italy in Tripolitania (1911). But the Tripoli expedition spawned an Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912), during which the Italians occupied Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands.

In turn, the Italo-Turkish War spawned a war in the Balkans. A Balkan league — Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro — had been formed under the aegis of Russia. Weakened Turkey was attacked by the coalition and defeated everywhere; the Bulgarians were stopped only 30 kilometers from



Constantinople, in front of the lines of Chataldja (1912)

The collapse of Turkey finally revived all European and Balkan rivalries. Austria, master of Bosnia, did not want at any price a Greater Serbia, to which its Serb subjects would necessarily be attracted. To remove Serbia from the Adriatic, it created a principality of Albania. On the other hand, the partition of Macedonia gave rise to a second Balkan war (1913): the Bulgarians, by a sudden attack, tried to crush the Serbs; they failed and were themselves defeated by a Serbia-Greece-Romania coalition. The Treaty of Bucharest gave Silistria to the Romanians, Thessaloniki to the Greeks, Monastir with much of Macedonia to the Serbs. The Turks kept in Europe only Constantinople and Adrianople.

This pacification was not sustainable. No agreement was possible between Austrian policy and Serbian national demands. Russia's relations with Austria and Germany continued to worsen. All the powers, worried, intensified their armaments (military laws of 1913 in Germany and France). We had reached the point where each of the antagonistic groups, confident in its strengths, was determined not to back down from the other.

### **8.1.5 After the Sarajevo bombing, the Austro-Serbian War led to Russian intervention and general war.**

On June 28, 1914, in Sarajevo, Bosnia, the Archduke, heir to Austria and his wife were murdered. The murderer was a Bosnian, but the attack had been prepared in Belgrade. (It was later known that at the head of the plot was an officer of the Serbian General Staff, the colonel Dmitrievich, leader of a powerful secret society, the Black Hand.)

Long eager to attack Serbia, Austria had hitherto retained by Germany. This time it obtained its support. In secret meetings, in Potsdam (5-6 July), in a Council in Vienna (7 July), the risk of a European war was weighed and accepted. William II, it is true, considered war unlikely (the tsar would not support regicides) and expected the neutrality of England with which he was about to conclude a colonial agreement.

Suddenly, on 23 July, Austria presented an ultimatum to Serbia, whose demands were deliberately unacceptable. Despite a very conciliatory response (and a call for arbitration), there was a Austrian-Serb break-up on July 25, and declaration of war on Serbia on 28 July.

But already the location of the conflict, demanded by Germany, proved impossible. Russia, determined not to let Serbia be crushed, began its military preparations. In vain the English government, very peaceful, multiplied the offers of mediation. Germany rejected them at first, and then only an-

swered them when English neutrality began to appear doubtful (29-30 July). Too late. Austrian intransigence played into the hands of the military staffs eager to act. Russia decided on July 29 the partial mobilization, on July 30 the general mobilization. Germany retaliated on July 31 with a double ultimatum, to Russia and France, followed on August 1 by a declaration of war on Russia, then on August 3 by a declaration of war on France.

As soon as the conflict began, the Triple Alliance broke up while the Triple Entente asserted itself. Italy invoked the purely defensive character of the Triplice to remain neutral. The English government, very divided and hesitant, initially undertook only to defend the French coast of the English Channel (2 August). The violation of Belgian neutrality by German troops decided it to break up with Germany (4 August) and to commit itself thoroughly: "Just for a piece of paper!" cried German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg (alluding to the treaties that guaranteed Belgian neutrality).

In parallel with the great politico-military maneuvers, the great European industry has not failed to organize itself to make governments and peoples bear the weight of its expansion. There, nationalism and patriotism are no longer in order, only the cash drawer counts. A true internationale is thus organized, extending its ramifications to all future belligerent countries.

Two examples will suffice:

The International Organization of Powder, Explosives and Ammunition Manufacturers:

– Nobel Trust (Great Britain), subsidiaries:

England 7

Germany 5

Japan 1

– Rhein-Siegener (Germany), 3 factories

– Köln Hottweiler powder factory (Germany)

– Various German arms and ammunition factories

– French Dynamite Society (France)

– Société Générale pour la fabrication de la dynamite (France)

– Franco-Russian Dynamite Company (France)

The steel industry:

UNITED HARVEY STEEL COMPANY

Vickers & Armstrong (Great Britain)

Krupp & Stumm (Germany)

Table 8.1: Financial situation of the two main belligerents in 1914

	GERMANY	FRANCE
Population	67 million	39.6 million
National wealth	400 billion	325 billion
National revenues	52.5 billion	36.5 billion
Average national wealth per capita	5,970 F	8,207 F
Average national income per capita	783 F	946 F

Schneider-Le Creusot (France)

Societa degli alti forni Fondiere Acciane di Terni (Italy)

Participations through Krupp and Schneider in participation

Skoda & Pilsen (Austria)

Poutiloff (Russia) (share, complementary to Voss)

Trade agreements to limit competition:

Le Creusot – Krupp

Armstrong — Krupp

They obviously maintain links with arms manufacturers, in particular:

Deutsche Waffen-und-Munitions Fabriken in Berlin

Waffenfabrik

Doellingen Workshops

Subsidiaries:

1) Germany: Mauser: 1,985,000 M

Düren (metallurgy): 1,000,000 M

2) Belgium: National Factory of Weapons of War of Herstal: 3,000,000 shares

3) France: French company for the manufacture of ball bearings: total capital

Thanks to these two internationals, which are only the most obvious example, imitated as they were by the suppliers of the stewards, the vehicle manufacturers, the manufacturers of clothing, etc., the war would prove to be an excellent deal for big international industry, which would use its influence to make it last as long as possible, stirring up nationalist passions through a press financed by them openly or covertly.

Table 8.2: Production (million tonnes) in 1914

	COAL	STEEL	CAST IRON
Germany	191	18	12
Austria-Hungary	15	5	4
France	41	4	9
Great Britain	35	4	5
Russia	292	9	11

## 8.2 The great butchery

The European war has taken on the proportions of an immense cataclysm. It has spread to the whole world; but it was in France that it reached its maximum intensity and caused the most devastation; and it was in France that the German force finally had to capitulate.

The coalition of the Central Empires (strengthened in October 1914 from Turkey) seemed far inferior to a coalition that encompassed France, the Russian and British empires, Belgium, Serbia (and even Japan). But England had only a small army; the Russian army, very numerous, was poorly organized; everything depended on the resistance that France would offer to the powerful German army.

### 8.2.1 Germany is trying to overwhelm France and seems on the verge of success.

Germany's plan was to throw itself into France with almost all its strength, quickly put it out of action, and then turn against Russia. Undoubtedly, it did not have as in 1870 a great numerical superiority, but it counted on the superiority of its technical preparation, its reserve formations, its heavy field artillery, its siege artillery (guns of 420), finally on the surprise effect that its maneuver in Belgium would produce. The French army possessed a superior equipment of light artillery, the 75; but it lacked almost completely heavy artillery; his infantrymen in red trousers were target; they had been trained in a reckless tactic of excessive bayonet offensive.

The first major battle, known as the Battle of the Borders, took place from 20 to 23 August. Both opponents had taken the offensive. The German General Staff, commanded by de Moltke, wanted to turn the eastern fortifications and overflow the left wing of the French army: for this purpose he forced the fortified camp of Liège and threw 5 armies out of 7 into Bel-

gium. The French General Staff, commanded by Joffre, wanted to paralyze the enemy maneuver with a lightning attack in Lorraine and the Ardennes. But the French offensive, which ventured into difficult terrain, was broken at Morhange in Lorraine (20 August), in the Ardennes (22 August). The Franco-English left wing, attacked at Charleroi and Mons and threatened with envelopment, managed to evade and retreat (23 August).

The German victory resulted in the loss of Belgium and the invasion of France. The Germans, haunted by the fear of the snipers, took terrible repressive measures (sack of Leuven and Dinant).

### 8.2.2 The German plan failed on the Marne, then on the Yser.

However, the goal, the annihilation of the French forces, was not achieved. By a rapid advance, the Germans endeavour to wrap the opponent's wings, or to corner him on the Swiss border. But in Lorraine, from 29 August, they were held in check; the other French armies retreated methodically, until the day when the reckless advance of the German right (von Kluck) provided the governor of Paris, Gallieni, with the opportunity for a flank attack (5 September).

At Joffre's call, all the French and English armies then resumed the offensive (6 September). After several days of struggle, the Germans, threatened to see their right wing broken and cut in two, retreated to the Aisne where they retreated. The victory of the Marne resulted not only in the withdrawal of the Germans, but in the collapse of their initial plan; it also had great moral significance and restored to France confidence in itself.

Seeking to outflank each other on the western side, the two adversaries eventually extended their lines to the sea. After the capture of Antwerp (9 October), the Germans again attempted to strike a decisive blow by seizing Calais; but all their assaults were repulsed before Ypres and the Yser by the Allied forces, placed under the direction of Foch (October-November). Thus, contrary to predictions, the 1914 campaign ended in the west without decisive results.

It was the same on all fronts. In the east, the Russians, who had invaded East Prussia to release France, suffered a disaster at Tannenberg (29 August), but they defeated the Austrians at Lemberg in Galicia (September). Bloody battles without result took place in Poland around Warsaw (November-December). At sea, the Germans did not dare to risk great naval battles; they were limited to commerce raiding, then to submarine warfare. Finally, if they could not prevent the Allies from conquering their colonies,

the Turkish alliance allowed them to ambush in the straits and threaten Egypt.

### 8.2.3 Movement warfare is followed by trench warfare

Both exhausted, the armies came to a standstill face to face, in improvised entrenchments that formed a continuous line — 780 kilometers from the North Sea to the Swiss border. Thus the war turned into trench warfare.

On both sides, work was made to constantly strengthen defensive organizations. — networks of barbed wire, shelters dug underground or concreted, succession of lines at depth, barrages, flanking machine guns. Weapons suitable for close combat, grenades and bomb launchers, defensive weapons abandoned since the Middle Ages, steel helmets, were put back into use. But on both sides they also worked to perfect the offensive means to pierce the opposing lines: heavy artillery especially and aviation developed in colossal proportions. We worked hard to find new machines, capable of producing a lightning surprise effect: the Germans made use in 1915 of flaming liquids and asphyxiating gases, the French and the English built from 1916 tanks or tanks, mounted on steel tracks. To manufacture this enormous war material, it was necessary to multiply the war industries: the war took more and more a scientific and industrial character.

As a result, it also became an economic war. England, master of the seas, blocked German ports and hindered German supplies (especially food products). Germany retaliated by inaugurating the blockade by submarines (torpedo of the large English liner *Lusitania*, May 7, 1915, more than 1100 victims).

### 8.2.4 The war continued in 1915 and 1916 without decisive results.

From year to year, the war continued, expanded, intensified without leading to more decisive results than in 1914. The Allies had the superiority of the population, but, for lack of preparation, method and especially for lack of a single direction, they could not take advantage of it at first (England did not establish compulsory service until 1916).

The year 1915 was marked by the entry into the war of Italy against Austria, Bulgaria against Serbia and the Allies. It was above all the year of eastern setbacks: while the Anglo-French failed in their attempts to force the Dardanelles by sea and land, the Austro-Germans managed to break through the Russian front of Galicia, to push back the Russian armies, to occupy

all of Poland, Lithuania and Courland; then, reinforced by the Bulgarians, they crushed the Serbian army and conquered Serbia (October-December); an Allied relief expedition landed too late at Thessaloniki, but remained there despite the opposition of King Constantine and rallied the remnants of the Serbian army. On the Western Front, the multiple French offensives (Vauquois, Les Éperges, Battles of Champagne and Artois) only resulted in decimating the numbers (400,000 men killed or prisoners). The Italian army came to rest in the lines of Trisonzo, on the road to Trieste.

The year 1916 was marked by the entry into the war of Portugal and Romania on the side of the Allies. It was especially the year of Verdun, the greatest battle of the war by its duration and its relentlessness: Returning to their 1914 plan, the Germans (Falkenhayn) wanted to strike a decisive blow on their main opponent, the French army; they attacked in front of Verdun (21 February), but their furious efforts, prolonged for five months, broke against the stubborn resistance of the French, commanded by General Pétain. Military supremacy appeared to be on the verge of passing to the Allies, who in turn took the offensive on the Somme and Galicia. Germany in distress handed over the supreme command to the victors of the Russians, Hindenburg and his deputy Ludendorff. They managed to stop the Allied offensive and conquer almost all of Romania.

At sea, the British and German fleets clashed at the Great Battle of Jutland without decisive results (31 May 1916).

### **8.2.5 In 1917, submarine warfare and the Russian Revolution jeopardized the Allied cause.**

Despite its conquests, Germany was exhausted by the blockade. To impose peace on the Allies, it resorted to desperate means, such as excessive submarine warfare (January 1917). The new submarine war, depriving the neutrals of the right of free navigation, had an almost immediate effect: the entry into the war of the United States against Germany, at the call of President Wilson (April 6, 1917). But the United States had only a small army, and its intervention in Europe seemed difficult, if not impossible.

Moreover, Germany thought itself saved by the Russian Revolution. The misconduct of the war had ended up discrediting tsarism. Suddenly the revolt broke out on March 11, 1917, and Nicholas II had to abdicate (March 15). The Russian Revolution soon took on the character of a social revolution: Supported by the soviets, committees of delegates of the workers and soldiers, the Bolsheviks, Lenin and Trotsky, seized power and maintained it (November 7). All of Eastern Europe was plunged into anarchy. After

unsuccessfully proposing a general armistice, the Bolsheviks concluded the Brest-Litovsk Armistice with Germany (December) and began peace negotiations. Germany seemed to have won the game in the east.

In the west, the German army, initially cautiously held on the defensive, had been brought back by Hindenburg to strong positions against which a new French offensive, even more reckless than the previous ones, broke (Battle of the Aisne, 16 April). With troops brought back from the east, the Austro-Germans were able to break the Italian front at Caporetto (October) and invade Veneto as far as Piave.

Signs of weariness were manifested in all the belligerents (secret negotiations, mutinies, defeatism). But in France, the coming to power of Clemenceau revived energies and put an end to any policy of compromise. The new head of the army, Pétain, knew how to inspire trust and avoid unnecessary killings.

### **8.2.6 In 1918, the Great Battle of France ended with the defeat of Germany.**

In March 1918, Germany imposed the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk on Russia and Bucharest on Romania. Then, for the third time, it resolved to concentrate all its forces in the west and strike a decisive blow on the Allies before the Americans entered the line.

The German offensive that began on March 21 lasted until July 18. Led by Ludendorff, it resulted in great tactical successes, but not a decisive victory. Thanks to a new method — absolute secrecy of preparations, intensive and brief artillery preparation, massive use of toxic shells — Ludendorff had solved the problem of breakthrough. On three occasions, in Picardy (21 March), Flanders (9 April), and the Aisne (27 May), the English and French fronts were broken. The Germans approached Amiens, Calais, Paris, which they bombarded without truce by planes and long-range guns (120 km).

The situation was critical for the Allies. They finally decided to entrust the single command to the French General Foch (26 March). The United States hastened its troop shipments (nearly 10,000 men a day in June). Pétain developed new offensive and defensive methods (attack without artillery preparation, mass use of light tanks and aircraft). In June, a fourth German offensive on Compiègne was quickly halted.

The reversal of the battle took place from 15 to 18 July: it was the second victory of the Marne, a decisive event of the war. Stopped in their offensive in Champagne, then suddenly attacked from the flank, the Germans, as in 1914, had to retreat from the Marne to the Aisne. The victory of



the Marne marked the beginning of a great Allied offensive. Foch did not give the bewildered enemy time to pull himself together and replenish his reserves. By a methodical widening of the battle, he multiplied his attacks on all points of the front; the Germans were constantly forced to retreat under threat of envelopment. Successively, all their defensive positions, the formidable Hindenburg Line itself, were forced (September-October). The Allies returned to Saint-Quentin, Laon, Lille.

At the same time, in Macedonia (15 September) and Palestine (18 September), decisive victories forced Bulgaria (29 September) and Turkey (30 October) to lay down their arms. Austria-Hungary broke up and, defeated by the Italians at Vittorio-Veneto (27-30 October), abandoned the struggle (3 November). To avoid a total disaster, Germany, in the midst of a revolution, accepted all the conditions imposed by the armistice of 11 November; by the 9th, William II had fled to Holland.

This is only the visible part of the operations, the appetite for conquest, the thirst for profit, the secret war goals and behind-the-scenes maneuvers have been its characteristics. But under the great patriotic impulses hides a more sordid reality, that of the fierce defense of special interests.

Only one example among others illustrates the sordid reality: the fate of the Briey-Thionville basin.

### **8.2.7 A sanctuary of international capital: the Briey-Thionville basin.**

The cannon merchants, the main ones being Schneider in France and Krupp in Germany, were closely united in a kind of international trust whose secret purpose was to increase the immense fortune of its members by increasing war production on both sides of the border. To this end, they had powerful means to sow panic among the population of both countries, in order to persuade each that the other had only one goal: to attack it. Many journalists, parliamentarians, were paid handsomely by them to fill this role. Moreover, an important French munitionnaire, de Wendel, a deputy moreover, had as a cousin another German munitionnaire, Von Wendel, sitting in the Reichstag. They were in the front row, in every country, to buy consciences and make their patriotic cries of alarm heard.

All this fine team – cannon dealers, journalists, parliamentarians – easily managed to launch the two peoples into a crazy arms race that nothing had to stop, until war.

Their respective heads of state, far from holding them back, encouraged them. And in particular our President of the Republic, Raymond Poincaré,

a Lorrain, raised in the idea of revenge and ready to any lie, to any package, to reconquer Alsace and Lorraine.

It was for these different reasons that the German and French soldiers would cut each other's throats.

They had been taught to hate each other, while the ammo makers and the staffs, fraternally united, followed with satisfaction, in the rear, the unfolding of the drama they had jointly unleashed.

To deepen this immense deception and show that patriotism and the defense of the territory are only empty words used to cover the most abominable fiddling, it is necessary to tell the story of the Briey basin, because it is characteristic, symptomatic and, on its own, should disgust the peoples to take up arms.

The iron mines of Briey-Thionville straddled the borders of Luxembourg, France and Germany. The Franco-German family Wendel owned them.

This basin was of paramount importance for the course of the war. Mr. Engerand, in a speech delivered to the Chamber of Deputies after the conflict on January 31, 1919, said: "In 1914, the Briey region alone accounted for 90% of all our iron ore production."

Poincaré himself once wrote: "The occupation of the Briey basin by the Germans would be nothing less than a disaster since it would put in their hands incomparable metallurgical and mining wealth whose usefulness can be immense for that of the belligerents who will hold them."

However, an extraordinary fact happened: as early as August 6, 1914, the basin was occupied by the Germans without any resistance.

Even more extraordinary: the major general in charge of the defense of this region, General Verraux, later revealed that his instruction (contained in an envelope to be opened in case of mobilization) formally ordered him to abandon Briey without a fight.

The truth, known long after, was the following: an agreement had been made between some members of the General Staff and French munitionnaires to leave the basin in the hands of the Germans so that the war would be prolonged (the Germans would not have been able to continue it without the iron ore) and the profits of the gun merchants would be increased.

And long live the self-defense in the name of which we were gutted everywhere on the battlefields!

But this story — how edifying! — is not over.

During the whole conflict, there was not a single French offensive against Briey! However, it was not for lack of warnings.

Indeed, in the midst of the war, the Director of Mines sent the following note to Senator Bérenger: "If the region of Thionville (Briey) were occupied by our troops, Germany would be reduced to the approximately 7 million

tons of poor minerals it derives from Prussia and various other states: All its manufactures would be stopped. It therefore seems that it can be said that the occupation of the Thionville region would immediately end the war, because it would deprive Germany of almost all the metal it needs for its armaments.”

The French General Staff and the President of the Republic were warned a lot of these facts. Complete files on this case were even supplied to Poincaré by the deputy Engerand.

Poincaré refused to intervene. The General Staff refused any offensive on Briey’s side.

In the absence of an offensive, of retaking the ground, we could have bombed Briey to make the facilities unusable. On the contrary, secret agreements were made between the French and German general staffs so that trains filled with ore heading to Germany would not be bombed under any circumstances.

By the way, let’s say that, of course, these same staffs had also decided not to destroy their respective headquarters... These two gangs of mobsters “played fair”.

French airmen, however, disobeyed the orders received and dropped a few bombs on Briey’s facilities. They were severely punished.

Through what means did the bombing bans had been given? By a certain Lieutenant Lejeune — all-powerful, although a simple lieutenant — who, in civilian life, before the war, was engineer attached to the mines of Joeuf and employee of M. de Wendel.

*Galtier-Boissière:*

“So as not to harm very powerful private interests, and to avoid to violate the secret agreements concluded between French and german metallurgists, were sacrificed, in ineffective military enterprises, hundreds of thousands of human lives, except on one point: Briey-Thionville, from which, for four years, Germany in peace drew the means to continue the struggle.”

But Wendel’s Franco-German family was making a profit!

This is just one example, among many, of the collusion of ammo makers and governments of countries at war.

And yet, the human toll has been very heavy:

These figures are self-explanatory. That’s more than 5,000 deaths per day on all fronts throughout the war

Table 8.3: Human toll of the 14/18 war

Mobilized	62,110,000
Deaths	8,345,000
Injured	20,000,000
Civilian deaths	10,000,000

	Mobilized	Dead
Russia	12,000,000	1,700,000
France	8,400,000	1,350,000
British Empire	8,900,000	900,000
Italy	5,600,000	650,000
USA	4,350,000	115,000

## 8.3 Post-war

### 8.3.1 Defeated Germany signs the Treaty of Versailles.

The armistice of 11 November was tantamount to a capitulation of Germany. It forced it to give its fleet, part of its equipment of war and to evacuate the left bank of the Rhine that the Allies occupied. The French received an enthusiastic welcome in Alsace-Lorraine.

Peace was settled by the inter-allied conference in Paris that opened in January 18, 1919 under the presidency of Clemenceau. 27 States were represented. Actually all the important decisions were taken in small committee by the President of the United States Wilson, the British First Minister Lloyd George and Clemenceau. As soon as 8 January 1918, President Wilson had formulated in 14 points his programme for peace; this programme, which served as a basis for the work of the conference, aimed at the establishment of a new international order, founded on the right of peoples to self-determination and through organization of a general society of nations. But if the masses were enthusiastic for such a program, leaders and diplomats were skeptical. For Clemenceau, the main problem was to break the German force.

After difficult negotiations, the Treaty of Versailles, imposed on Germany, was signed on June 28, 1919. The Treaty established a Society of nations, first open to the Allies and neutrals and responsible for resettle disputes through arbitration. Germany was to return Alsace-Lorraine to France, Posnania to

Poland (with a corridor giving to access to the Baltic) and accept that the fate of Schleswig, the Polish Prussia, upper Silesia was settled by plebiscite. Besides it renounced all its colonies; it undertook to repair all damage to France and its allies. France, whose territory had been ravaged, received, in compensation for its mines destroyed in the North, the property of the saar mines (the territory itself was placed for fifteen years under international control). As guarantees against Germany, it obtained: 1. the reduction of the army German to 100,000 men; 2. the temporary occupation of the left bank of the Rhine by Allied forces for a period of five to fifteen years; 3. a promise of Anglo-American assistance in case aggression (promise cancelled as a result of opposition from the American Senate).

Back in the United States, President Wilson was unable to obtain the ratification of the treaty. The United States refused to join the Society of Nations and concluded a separate treaty with Germany (1921).

### **8.3.2 Austria-Hungary and the Turkish Empire are dismembered.**

The Treaty of Versailles was supplemented by the Treaties of Saint-Germain with Austria, Neuilly with Bulgaria, Trianon with Hungary, Sèvres with Turkey. These treaties enshrined the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary and the Turkish Empire and considerably altered the territorial status of Central and Levant Europe.

Austria and Hungary, separated from each other, became small states, one reduced to its German provinces, the other to territories of Magyar population. Their Slavic provinces were divided between resurrected Poland, the new state of Czechoslovakia, and Serbia transformed into a United Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes — or Yugoslavia. Transylvania was given to Romania which became a large state of 500,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Italy received Istria with Trieste and Trentino; it disputed with the Yugoslavs the possession of Fiume and the Dalmatian coast.

Bulgaria was losing all access to the sea. Greece received Thrace with Adrianople, and, in Asia, the port of Smyrna. Turkey was reduced to the territory of Constantinople in Europe and Asia Minor or Anatolia. The straits came under international control, Egypt under the English protectorate; the other Turkish provinces in Asia were to be organized into free states and placed provisionally under the tutelage of a mandatory power of the League of Nations.

All these treaties were difficult to implement, especially with regard to the demarcation of the new borders. One could foresee that pacification would

be long, painful, interrupted by new crisis. But the world was putting its hope in the League of Nations. We know what happened to it.

**Jean-Pierre Fléhard**

## 8.4 A few works

ALLARD Paul, *Les dessous de la guerre révélés par les comités secrets* (The backstage of the war revealed by the secret committees), Paris, 1932

DELAISI Francis, *Le Patriotisme des plaques blindées* (The Patriotism of Armored Plates). Taken separately from the paper *La Paix par le droit*, Nîmes, 1913

FERRO Marc, *La Grande Guerre* (The Great War), Paris, 1968

GAMBIEZ, SUIRE, *Histoire de la Première Guerre mondiale* (History of world war one), Paris, 1968

GIRARDET Raoul, *La Société militaire dans la France contemporaine* (The military Society in contemporary France), Paris, 1953

JOLY Bertrand, The De Wendel Family Archives

MAYER A., *Politics and Diplomacy of Peace Making. Containment and Conterrevolution at Versailles*, New York, 1967

MEYER, DUCASSE, FERREUX, *Vie et mort des Français* (Life and death of the French), Pans, 1959

OLPHE-GALLLARD G, *Histoire économique et financière de la guerre 1914-1918* (Economic and financial history of the 1914-1918 war), Paris, 1925

RENOUVIN Pierre, *La Crise européenne et la Première Guerre mondiale* (The european crisis and World War One), Paris, 1962

RENOUVIN Pierre, *La Première Guerre mondiale* (World War one), Paris, 1965

TANNERY, Finance and national defense, *Revue des questions de Défense nationale* (National Defence Issues Review), may 1939

TOUTALN J., *La Question du bassin de Briey* (The Question of the Briey Basin), Taken separately from the paper *L'Aide morale*, no date (1916?)

VALLUY, DUFOURCQ, *La Première Guerre mondiale* (World war one), Paris 1968

## Chapter 9

# Counter-revolution and foreign interventions in Russia (1917-1921)

Pierre DURAND

On May 31, 1920, Marcel Cachin, accompanied by Frossard, left for Russia. He will stay there seventy-one days, traveling thousands of kilometers through cities and countryside. He is haunted by the memories of Year II. He will write:

“For three years, the workers and peasants were the masters of the country. In the aftermath of their seizure of power, they had intended to devote themselves to the work of reconstruction; but they had been prevented by the counter-revolution and the civil and foreign wars that the Allied powers had been waging on Russian soil since the end of 1917.

The ruin of three years of civil war imposed on the revolutionary nation had been added to that of the imperialist war itself. It was easy to imagine what state the nation’s economy was in after six years of fighting.”<sup>115</sup>.

Marcel Cachin speaks elsewhere about the volunteer soldiers he saw and spoke to: “They were really the sons and brothers of those of Year II, Valmy and Marseillaise.”<sup>116</sup> It is probably always arbitrary to compare situations that are very far apart by geography and history, but the fact remains that the Russian revolutionaries knew Koblenz and the Vendées, which they had to confront, if not coalition kings, at least states set against the new order

---

<sup>115</sup>Marcel Cachin, *Écrits et portraits* (Writings and portraits), collected by Marcelle Herzog-Cachin, E.F.R., 1964.

<sup>116</sup>Marcel Cachin, *Écrits et portraits* (Writings and portraits), collected by Marcelle Herzog-Cachin, E.F.R., 1964.

they wanted to establish. To the white terror unleashed against them, they responded with red terror. And they did it in a country that Lenin said there was nowhere comparable in terms of cultural deficit in Europe. This backwardness must of course be taken into account.

The First World War had cost Russia two and a half million deaths. Civil war and foreign intervention caused an additional million and a half casualties. Nine million people have been killed, injured or disappeared as a result of famine and epidemics. Industrial production in 1921 was equivalent to 15% of that of 1913. Half as much wheat was produced as on the eve of the war.

But who is to blame, if not capitalism?

Lenin believed in a peaceful development of the Revolution. He was wrong. A few days before the capture of the Winter Palace, on October 9, 1917, he declared: "Once power is in their hands, the Soviets could now still — and this is probably their last chance — ensure the peaceful development of the revolution, the peaceful election of the people's deputies, the peaceful struggle of the parties within the Soviets, the testing of a programme of the different parties by practice, the peaceful transfer of power from one party to another."<sup>117</sup>

The capture of the Winter Palace will cause only six deaths and the salvos of the cruiser *Aurore* will be fired blank. On 26 October (8 November), the Second Congress of Soviets abolished the death penalty. Officer cadets who tried to seize the Petrograd telephone exchange from revolutionaries were released against a promise to stay quiet. They didn't hold their end of the bargain and went to join the white insurgents in the south of the country. General Krasnov swore that he would no longer fight against the Bolsheviks. He later led a counter-revolutionary Cossack army. By the end of November, the new power was established almost everywhere and generally accepted. Around mid-February 1918, the Revolution could move to what Marcel Cachin called "the work of reconstitution". But it was counting without the relentlessness of the dispossessed classes and without the support they were going to receive from abroad.

John Reed, in *Ten Days That Shook the World*, reports what the Russian "Rockefeller" Rodzianko told him: "Revolution is a disease. Sooner or later, foreign powers will have to intervene, as one would intervene to heal a sick child and teach him to walk." Another Russian billionaire, Ryabushinsky, claimed that the only solution was "to take the false friends of the people, the Soviets and Democratic Committees, and hang them." The head of the British Intelligence Service, Sir Samuel Hoare, who had returned to London

---

<sup>117</sup>Lenin, *Œuvres* (Works), t. 26, pp. 61-62



even before the capture of the Winter Palace, advocated the establishment of a military dictatorship in Russia, either under Admiral Kolchak or under General Kornilov. The choice of London fell on the latter and Paris followed. On September 8, Kornilov marched on Petrograd, but he was defeated and the Bolsheviks won because the people, as a whole, supported them.

The simple chronology of the following events shows that the origin of what the Bolsheviks themselves called the Red Terror (in the same way as the French revolutionaries of the late eighteenth century spoke of Terror) shows that it was a chain of events whose origin was the counter-revolution aided by the foreigner.

## 9.1 1918

On March 11, the Soviet government moved to Moscow. At the same time, Anglo-Franco-American troops landed in the North. On April 4, Japanese troops landed in Vladivostok while Ataman Semyonov led an uprising in Transbaikalia. On April 29, the Germans installed the Skoropansky dictatorship in Ukraine. In May, the Czechoslovak army corps rose up along the Trans-Siberian Railway. On the Volga, the Urals, Siberia and the Don region, Denikin, Kornilov, Alexeiyeu unleashed terrorist insurgencies while the British prepared in Iran to attack Baku with troops of White Cossacks. Turkey is threatening in the same region. By the end of May, three-quarters of Soviet territory was in the hands of the counter-revolution and interventionists.

On August 3, new British troops landed at Vladivostok along with Japanese reinforcements. On 30 August, Lenin was seriously wounded in the attack perpetrated by F. Kaplan. On September 2, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets proclaimed the Red Terror against the counter-revolution. In August and September the Soviet counter-offensive began on all fronts. On September 20, the whites under the orders of the British executed the 26 commissioners of Baku. In October, the revolutionaries acquired a real army.

## 9.2 1919

March 2: French revolutionary Jeanne Labourbe is assassinated in Odessa by French interventionists and white guards. On April 28, the offensive against Admiral Kolchak in the Urals began. On the same day, the French completed their evacuation from Odessa, but returned on August 23 to support

Denikin. In the same month, Kolchak was definitively defeated. On October 24, Denikin was defeated at Voronezh and Tsaritsyn (Stalingrad).

### 9.3 1920

Between January and March, Soviet troops win everywhere. Kolchak was beaten in Siberia, fled, arrested in Irkutsk and shot. Denikin was forced to evacuate Odessa, where the French intervention ceased. The ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk are liberated.

The Soviet power, which has just set up the Goelro plan for the electrification of Russia, believes it can finally breathe. But on April 25, the Poles helped by the White armies of General Wrangel, supported in particular by France, rushed into the Red Army. General Boudionny's 1st Cavalry Army went on the counter-offensive on 5 June and prevailed in November. Wrangel, cornered in Crimea, is definitively defeated. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan come to power from the revolutionaries. The struggle continued only in the Far East against the bands of Semionov and Baron Von Ungern, supported by the Japanese. However, it was not until October 1922 that there were no more foreign interventionists in the territory of what became, on 30 December, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

It is probably not bad to remember these few historical and undisputed facts when we want to talk about crimes in this part of the world and at that time.

**Pierre Durand**

Pierre Durand, chairman of the Buchenwald-Dora alumni committee, is a journalist and historian specializing in the Second World War. He is the author of *Les Sans-culottes du bout du monde, — 1917-1921 — Contre-révolution et intervention étrangère en Russie* (The sans culotte from the end of the world, 1917-1921, counter-revolution and foreign intervention in Russia), Éditions du Progrès, 1977 (NDLR) and at le Temps des Cerises, *Jeunes pour la Liberté* (Youths for freedom); *Louise Michel*; *Joseph et les hommes de l'Ombre* (Joseph and the men from the Shadows).

# Chapter 10

## World war two

**François Delpla**

The massacre of the First World War indicted capitalism, in the eyes of many men. Both by the role of financial interests in the genesis of the conflict, and by the eagerness of industry to provide murder with exponentially increasing means. The radical contestation of capitalism known as communism is one of the main fruits of this confrontation; initially, it was largely nourished by the horror it created.

As for the Second, the picture is, on the surface, more complicated. Instead of an economic-political regime bringing two blocs of power face to face, we find at the origin of the cataclysm an aggressor country, Germany. Its Nazi regime is certainly capitalist, but of a very particular type. It is related to other regimes, with which he was linked in the war, at least at times, those of Italy, Japan, Hungary, Spain: the whole is readily grouped under the concept of fascism. But these countries have in common a visceral hostility to communism, from which they have eradicated sometimes important seeds in themselves, and whose armed forces they confront in war, whether in the USSR or China. Not to mention the national resistance, often led by communist parties, in the occupied countries. But fascism is hardly less opposed, in theory, to liberal democracy, that is, to non-fascist capitalism. However, the latter appears to be its main winner, by the extent and wealth of the fascist territories occupied in 1944-1945. Capitalism therefore seems, in a democratic leap, to have redeemed itself from the sins of the First War, and this one is seen as an accident of course. The second would be the fact only of excited extremists, who would have been left too long free of their movements. Communism would have a share of responsibility, having pre-existed fascism and aroused it, as a self-defense of countries that felt threatened by the USSR or by its ideas. We also embroider on the “kin-

ship” of the two systems and on the collusion that partially associated them within the framework of the German-Soviet pact, between August 23, 1939 and June 22, 1941. Didn’t they both dream, deep down, of conquering the planet through war, and didn’t they consider, for a long time and seriously, to unite their destinies in this effort?

The study that we will read synthesizes classical considerations on the imperfection of the treaties of 1919 and recent research concerning Nazism and the beginnings of the Second World War. It shows that Hitler, from 1933 to 1940, cleverly charted his path, making each power believe that Germany would strengthen itself without harming their interests. We are therefore far from the account by accusing liberal democracies of candor or cowardice, and very unfair if we attribute to the USSR alone a tendency to use Germanic aggressiveness against its own opponents. And if we admit that in 1914 capitalism showed, by throwing peoples against each other, the limits of its civilizing capacity, it becomes difficult to believe that in the interwar period this form of economic organization contributed all united to peace between nations.

## 10.1 1919-1929: the refusal of a collective security

According to the habits and customs of the nineteenth century, two powers should have benefited from the victory of 1918, France and England. They had gambled their fortune on the elimination of the German competitor from the world stage and, quite logically, shared his colonial remains. But the twentieth century brought a novelty: the divorce between political power and economic power. English and French woollen stockings would not have been enough to defeat Germany, and the young America, hitherto marginal on the world stage, had weighed all its weight in the financing of the war effort, becoming a creditor of the two Euro-Western powers. It was therefore very annoyed to their rapacious behavior at the peace conference, knowing full well that the expansion of their already vast colonial empires at the expense of Germany and its Turkish ally would put new obstacles in the way of U.S. trade. Moreover, Germany understood this well, which, on November 11, 1918, had signed the armistice on the basis of President Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”: these, invoking freedom of trade and the right of peoples, resembled a manifesto of the weak in the face of the demands of the Franco-British ogres. Germany could only rally to it, in desperation, and so, already, a collusion was emerging between it and the United States. These limited the

territorial amputations of the vanquished and allowed it in particular to keep the Rhineland, whose France demanded the removal for security reasons.

German-American collusion became even better when Wilson, proud of having circumscribed the Franco-English triumph, was badly received by his compatriots and the United States rejected the treaties. By disavowing their president and his Democratic Party, they denied the very legitimacy of their entry into the 1917 war, which their opinion was invited, by exception to the cult of capitalism, to blame on the "cannon merchants". Since it was the American intervention that tipped the scales, what better encouragement could the German spirit of revenge have hoped for?

When it comes to France, however, if its fear of a Germanic backlash was all too well founded, research has confirmed the greed of its bosses, who have indeed sought to take advantage of the circumstances to dominate their German rivals on the European market, particularly in the steel sector<sup>118</sup>.

The League of Nations, of which Wilson had been the principal apostle and which, if it had brought together all those nations, could have weighed effectively in favour of peace, was found by the American rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, as well as by the revolution which had ostracized Russia, reduced to a Franco-English club. Paris and London, which were far from agreeing, fought hard, which ended the paralysis. Major issues continued to be settled, as in past centuries, by ad hoc congresses, taking decisions in a matter of days whose implementation was not monitored by any permanent body.

## 10.2 1929-1933: "every man for himself" in the face of the crisis

It is not certain that the current crisis helps to understand the so-called "1929 crisis" that raged in the early thirties. The main common point is unemployment. But today, international trade continues to grow, whereas in 1933 it had fallen by two-thirds compared to 1929. Countries with colonial empires appeared outrageously favored, because they could more easily than others retain their outlets. Germany and the United States had the highest unemployment rates among the great powers. This may not have been due primarily to their lack of colonies, but in any case their opinion believed it. Hence a growing resentment, across the Atlantic, against France and England. Franklin Roosevelt, elected to try to end the crisis, was not left out.

---

<sup>118</sup>cf. Jacques Bariéty, *Les relations franco-allemandes après la Première Guerre mondiale* (Franco-German relations after the World War One), Paris, Pedone, 1977.

A former undersecretary of the Navy during Wilson's presidency, he never did anything to combat the idea, hammered by his Republican predecessors, that the country's participation in the Great War had been a mistake. The United States, asked by London and Paris to engage in a common economic and financial policy in the face of the crisis, opposed a straight refusal to the London Conference in July 1933.

### 10.3 1933-1939: the mirage of Hitler's weakness

On January 30, 1933, Hitler took over a country with a weakened economy and non-existent external support. His program, expressed in *Mein Kampf* eight years earlier, should hardly help him find allies, as it designates powerful and diverse enemies: Marxism but also Christian charity, communism as well as capitalism, the French and the Russians, freedoms of all kinds and, brooching on the whole, the Jews, guilty of all evils at once. But he will use a strangely effective recipe, which is based on two principles: playing with his weaknesses, opposing his rivals. For starters, he is not taking power alone, but within a government numerically dominated by the conservative right. Its most prominent leader, Franz von Papen, seemed, for a year and a half, able to eliminate him at any time, until that "night of the long knives" (June 30, 1934) when the Führer had Papen's closest collaborators killed with impunity. But then, under the pretext that he also sent some leaders of the *Sturmabteilungen* (SA) who, it is said, threatened the army, it passes for the real winner of the episode. Thus, until the middle of the war, Hitler will cultivate the appearance of a dictator on probation, weakened by powerful internal oppositions, and also by the division of his entourage – which must have triggered some laughter with his lieutenants, to whom he distributed the roles.

This game is far from having been properly perceived. Even today, the historian Hans Mommsen, when he speaks of a "weak dictator", is certainly not unanimous, but he manages to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, the truth progresses and leads to a question: why, at the time, almost no one made the assumption that Hitler was perhaps a very fine strategist?

The answer brings us back to the subject of this book: because no one had an interest in it, at least from the angle from which Hitler showed them their interest. Many thought they were manipulating him (while they themselves were manipulated by him): therefore they needed to believe that man was fragile and that once he had helped them achieve a goal they could, if he

became cumbersome, eliminate him.

If in the eyes of world opinion, and until today, one country is cheaply getting away with its role during the thirties, it is England. Yet its role was most detrimental to peace and democracy. The one who was since 1933 one of the main inspirations, and became from 1937 the first responsible for its policy of appeasement against Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, passes for a brave man overwhelmed by the cruelty of the political universe, while he knew what he wanted and that it was not angelic. Above all, he wanted to prevent France from taking initiatives inspired by his anti-German atavism, and he did so admirably. He had only decent relations with Hitler, but on the other hand, he cultivated, through the Foreign Office, a certain intimacy with the German conservatives. What he was aiming for, therefore, was not the division drawn in *Mein Kampf* — to England the seas, to Germany Eastern Europe, Ukraine included — but some fair deal with German capital, satisfying the most reasonable of its aspirations to the east. Hence his sense of triumph at the time of Munich — by sacrificing the Sudetenland, he believes he has channeled Germany's Eastern ambitions, with the help of his generals who had made no secret of their fear of war against England. Hence, also, his cry from the heart in the aftermath of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, on March 15, 1939, in violation of the Munich Agreements: "Mr. Hitler is not a gentleman" does not mean that he had taken it for such, but that he believed he had corseted it in the Bavarian Treaty<sup>119</sup>.

Chamberlain may never have hurt a fly. His crime is above all intellectual: he believes he has trapped Hitler and narrowed down Germany's ambitions, and he acts as if this were a certainty, while this goal continues to slip away. Meanwhile, opportunities to stop Nazism are lost and potential allies find themselves absorbed into the Reich, or move away.

## 10.4 Who is responsible for the German-Soviet Pact?

It is strange to read sometimes, that before 1939 Stalin hoped to get along with Hitler. Admittedly, as the following suggests, ideological scruples did not stifle him any more on this chapter than on the others. But to get married you have to be two, and Hitler's attitude did not allow much hope. Not that he was aggressive: until the end of 1938 he cultivated his image as a man of peace, seeking only the greatness of Germany in its borders of the

---

<sup>119</sup>cf. F. Delpla, *Churchill et les Français (1939-40)* (Churchill and the Frenchs (1939-1940)), Paris, Plon, 1993, ch. 1.

moment, even if it meant incorporating from time to time some contiguous lands of Germanic settlement. But if he left Russia alone, on the one hand he did not miss an opportunity to wither communism, on the other hand he traced in small touches a path to the east that would have worried any heir of the tsars.

It all began in January 1939, when, receiving the wishes of the diplomatic corps, Hitler shook hands with the Soviet ambassador with conspicuous warmth. Discreet trade negotiations ensued. However, Stalin, who in the absence of any other choice has conscientiously cultivated the friendship of the Westerners, does not let go of the prey for the shadow. It was certainly scalded by the Munich agreements. But as soon as the invasion of Czechoslovakia put them away, he resumed the posture and proposed a defensive “grand alliance” against Germany to the countries around it. Once again, England will react coldly, and prevent France from advancing more than her.

A geographical factor complicates the negotiations. Germany has no common border with the USSR and the USSR, in order to participate in a war against it, would have to go through Lithuania, Poland or Romania, and preferably through all three together. Litvinov, the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and then Molotov, who succeeded him on 3 May, intended that the Treaty should contain specific provisions in this regard. It is a game for British diplomacy to prolong the discussions, as it will be, for Franco-English propaganda, to say later that after each point of agreement the Soviets presented “new demands” — which means that they had long since chosen to agree with Hitler. This brings us to the month of August. Molotov, in order to force everyone to play their game, demanded and finally obtained that a military convention be discussed, saying who would do what, where and with which troops. Western soldiers come to Moscow... and clashed, without instructions from their governments in this area, with the preliminary ruling of the Soviet military leader, Voroshilov, since Poland was threatened with a German attack, the Russians asked to take a preventive position on part of its border with Germany.

Stalin still gave French and British military delegations time to contact their governments, and for them to come to an agreement with the Warsaw government. But France alone seemed like to takes advantage of this delay. Neither its president of the council Daladier, nor his ambassador to Warsaw Léon Noël, did anything to force the Poles, who would like to call the Red Army only after being invaded, to take better account of strategic needs. Only the French negotiator in Moscow, General Doumenc, took initiatives to unblock the situation: he went so far as to delegate a member of his mission to Warsaw. Daladier, for his part, went so far as to correct his own



archives in 1946 to make it appear that, receiving the Polish ambassador on 21 August, he threatened him with a “revision of the alliance” if his country did not accept the Soviet request: in fact it was the 23rd, and even then no threat had been issued<sup>120</sup>.

It is that on the evening of the 21st a dispatch fell, saying that a trade treaty had just been signed between Germany and the USSR and, above all, that the German Minister Ribbentrop was going to go to Moscow to sign a non-aggression pact.

The documents now known seem to indicate that Germany was very worried about these military negotiations by Moscow, and urged the Soviet side to sign an agreement, multiplying concessions. Stalin’s choice was not made, or at least became apparent, until a few days before the signing. In the absence of an agreement with Germany, the USSR would have suffered the shock of its armored divisions in the wake of their conquest of Poland, and the immobility of the “Phoney War” augurs how little the Westerners would have done to fix German forces on their side. Who would argue in good faith that Stalin had nothing to fear from the anti-Soviet governments in Paris and London, unchanged since Munich, and that it was pure paranoia on his part to fear a peace negotiated on his back after a sham war?

In this start of a conflict that will kill fifty million people, and in the initial advantage that Germany will enjoy, in particular thanks to this German-Soviet pact, Chamberlain’s responsibility is total, that of Daladier not much less. However, Stalin’s is not zero.

The problem can be posed in Trotsky’s way: by making Russia a frequentable power, by curbing struggles everywhere and especially in France of the Popular Front, Stalin would have weakened the revolutionary edge that alone could make fascism retreat. Perhaps! In any case, this could be achieved through a classic understanding between States, encircling and discouraging the potential aggressor. That is what Churchill was aiming for, and he cannot be denied any relevance in this regard. It is obvious that the French Communists tirelessly made a velvet paw, until the end of August 1939, and reacted as softly as possible, defying their own voters when Daladier attacked the social gains of the Popular Front, so as not to hinder the national mobilization, nor the diplomatic efforts of the Soviet big brother.

Stalin’s responsibility, I would rather situate it... in Stalinism. The great purges, and in particular that of 1937 against the cadres of the army, made doubt in the West that the USSR remained an important military factor.

---

<sup>120</sup>ibid., pp. 141-153 (with references from Daladier’s corrected archives), and, similarly, *Les papiers secrets du général Doumenc* (The secret papers of general Doumenc), Paris, Orban, 1992.

In the French army, the debate had been lively since 1933 about the Soviet alliance and a large number of cadres, reacting more professionally than politically, were inclined to seek it. However, when in 1935 Gamelin had succeeded Weygand, political considerations had taken over, Gamelin being, on this question, very close to the anti-Soviet Daladier (of whom it should be recalled that before being president of the council in 1938 he had been Minister of War and remained so continuously from June 1936 to May 1940). The murder of Tukhachevsky and several hundred generals in 1937 gave pride of place to the Daladierizing or fascistic french officers who refused in principle a joint action with the USSR and were probably still a minority before. Public opinion, in France as in England, was also less inclined, after the purge of 1937, to wish, in the face of Hitler's challenge, for Soviet reinforcements. Nevertheless, General Doumenc's account shows that Daladier, in explaining his mission to him, justified it by the expectation of the public, which would not have understood that the ways of an agreement with the USSR were not being explored to the end. He also recounts demonstrations that, when embarking the mission, confirmed such an expectation. What strength would they have taken, if the image of the USSR had not been tarnished by the purges!

All in all, to know whether the first deaths of the Second World War, on September 1, 1939, and all those whose death will induce, because of the power that Germany was allowed to acquire, are or not "dead of capitalism" we must take into account, above all, anti-communism and the way in which Nazism was able to play with it. By implying that all his ambitions were directed towards Eastern Europe and that their satisfaction would free the planet from an undesirable regime, he attracted much sympathy in the ruling circles of the great Western powers. However, they would not have so easily opened a boulevard to the expansion of the German competitor if the latter had not managed to persuade them that it was weak, divided and unable to profit much from a victory against the evil empire. The career that these countries left to Germany and the unprecedented growth of its power between 1939 and 1941 are therefore not pure products of the hatred of the bosses against the workers' movement. They are also effects of naivety, in front of a particularly talented staging. The leaders of the great capitalist powers other than Germany have allowed themselves to believe what their class interests would lead them to believe, even against the evidence: that Hitler was, not a high-flying politician, but a messy adventurer, disposable after use.

## 10.5 The Phoney War, so aptly named

If the literature on Munich is relatively abundant and of quality, the Phoney War remains the poor relation of the history of the twentieth century, and yet there is no more decisive period. But above all: anyone interested in Munich should be passionate about the Phoney War, which sees the great liberal democracies tearing up their principles even better than when they sold the Sudetenland to Germany for a mess of pottage. But here it is: war, now, is declared, and we prefer to say that we did it badly (by feeding illusions about the effectiveness of the blockade of Germany and the possibility of defeating it with attrition), rather than admit that we did the opposite of war, that is to say peace, or at least that we assiduously sought it.

This is where the United States comes in. Because, of this peace, they are the main brokers, even if they hid well from it afterwards. Certainly, Roosevelt, when at the beginning of September he proclaimed the neutrality of his country, specified with an air of understanding that “thoughts are not neutral”, which amounts to a condemnation, really minimal, of the German aggressor. This is clarified in November, by the “cash and carry” amendment to the neutrality law voted a few years earlier by Congress with the blessing of the president: by way of derogation from this law, which prohibits the sale of war material to belligerents, it will be possible to sell it to those who will pay for it and transport it, which favours Germany’s adversaries, masters of the seas. Anti-Nazism? Maybe. Capitalism, for sure. American industry, once again affected by unemployment, cannot deprive itself of selling to people who want to buy. Nor does US imperialism miss another opportunity to financially weaken its rivals.

But at the same time, strange emissaries crisscross Europe. Kennedy, Joseph, the father of John Fitzgerald who accompanied him, was ambassador to London, and gladly visited the continent; he is an avowed admirer of Nazi effectiveness. Sumner Welles, undersecretary of state and close to the president, spent several weeks commuting between Paris, Rome, London and Berlin. We also cite contacts made by bosses, general motors in particular<sup>121</sup>.

Welles’ mission began as the war raged, since November 30, 1939, between

---

<sup>121</sup>The Welles mission remains poorly known and the memoirs of the traveler, published in New York in 1944 under the title *The Time for Decision*, allow themselves from the state of war to tell the interviews selectively. However, as early as 1959, the U.S. State Department published, in a manner that presents itself as exhaustive, Welles’ accounts to his government: *Diplomatic Papers, 1940*, vol. 1. Very partial use of these documents in *Churchill et les français* (Churchill and the Frenchs), op. cit. cit., pp. 337 sq. and 394 sq. On the other conversations of American emissaries, cf. John Costello, *les Dix Jours qui ont sauvé l’Occident* (The Ten Days That Saved the West), Paris, Oliver Orban, 1991, ch. 3 *Les éclaireurs de la paix* (Scouts of peace).

the Soviet aggressor and his Finnish victim. Stalinist brutality, which was still exercised only within the framework of the former borders of the Tsarist empire and initially aimed only at taking a border pledge, easily passed for an unlimited appetite for conquest, a relative of that attributed to Hitler. It feeds around the world, in countless newspapers, the idea that helping Finland militarily is tantamount to waging war on Germany. If Welles brought back peace and harmony, or if the results of his mission allowed a spectacular initiative by the president, it would be a very bad sign for the USSR, the only power not visited by the undersecretary. It is true that, in the face of the Soviet-Finnish war, the president is not neutral, even in words.

This brings us to the massacre, perpetrated by the Soviets, of the Polish elites who fell into their power, most often referred to by the name of the mass grave where some of the victims were found in 1943, that of Katyn. Stalin's order to kill 20,000 Poles, mainly officers, revealed by Boris Yeltsin in 1992, is dated March 5, 1940 — whereas these people had been interned the previous September. Since no one has recorded the date and tried to explain it, I thought I had to do so in passing, in a book from 1993, and to my knowledge nothing else has been proposed<sup>122</sup>. On March 5, Finland has just asked for peace, and Stalin is preparing to receive his negotiators. It is therefore necessary to ask whether he does not fear from this peace effects such that his Polish prisoners, and in particular the officers, would become dangerous. This could be the case if the Soviet-Finnish peace led to a reconciliation of the capitalist powers, that is, a peace between Germany and its neighbors. To save face, Hitler would have to tolerate the resurrection of a piece of the Polish state, divided in September 1939 between himself and Stalin. One of the first gestures of this rump state would probably be to claim its prisoners of war. It would then be difficult to kill them, and dangerous to liberate them, because the new Poland, having recovered lands occupied by Germany, would be tempted to do the same on the Soviet side, and by war if necessary. Let us add that Sumner Welles is in Berlin from 1 to 6 March: he is therefore there at the time when Stalin signs the fatal order, and he is dwelling on it, in a way that is probably very distressing for the Soviet government.

Today, after new research focusing in particular on the premises of the German-Soviet clash in 1941 (see below), I ask a new question: Was this

---

<sup>122</sup>Churchill and the French, op. cit. Cit. pp. 371-373. In *The Black Book of communism* (Paris, Laffont, 1997, p. 234), Nicolas Werth cites, dated the same 5 March, another text, more detailed, signed by Béria, in the middle of a very general passage on the abuses committed in the territories occupied by the USSR in 1939-40. Still no reflection on the date, and no discussion of my attempt at an explanation of 1993. This tends to confirm the reproach frequently made to this book, to be richer in balance sheets than in reflections.

massacre, assuming that it had been revealed to Hitler or that it was proposed to do so, not intended to convince him that the Soviets were definitely on his side and had broken all ties with the Westerners, so as to dissuade him from reconciling with them? In this case, the murderous gesture was aimed less at strengthening the defense of the country with a view to a possible Soviet-Polish war, induced by a Polish-German peace, than at all costs at this perilous situation, by definitively linking its fate to that of Nazism<sup>123</sup>. There remains, even if these considerations proved to be inaccurate, a double observation: on the one hand, Stalin panicked (he could have moved the prisoners to the east, to wait for the turn of events; he mistakenly believed that he did not have the time); on the other hand, it is indeed a crime against humanity. Women and children, and even the poor, have certainly been spared. But this massacre of a nation through its elites has the character of genocide.

Officially, the contacts made in Europe by American emissaries during the Funny War are exploratory. The United States does not broker, it only inquires about each other's intentions. But isn't that what they say when brokerage failed? In this case, it is in Berlin that Welles' welcome is the freshest. It is that Hitler has chosen: peace, he no longer wants it, he wants to launch his offensive in the West, to strike a decisive blow to the morale of his opponents, as well as to the French army and its prestige.

Thus, in this pseudo-war, especially funny because it is full of pacifist gestures of all kinds, the underestimation of Hitler's abilities becomes particularly criminal. It blinds to lightning that he accumulates slowly, calculating its effects to the millimeter, and triggers suddenly, on May 10<sup>124</sup>.

## 10.6 The french fall and general defeatism

At a time when the German armies are shaking westward, at this spring dawn, the British Prime Minister is called Chamberlain. Four days earlier, Goering told Dahlerus, an unofficial Swedish diplomat with his entrances in London, that Germany would soon make a "generous" peace offer when its troops had "reached Calais." Dahlerus was then acting in close liaison with Raoul Nordling, Swedish Consul General in Paris and well introduced to French

---

<sup>123</sup>In the part of Poland it occupied, Germany had banned all education other than primary education and had troubled the elites, particularly religious ones, in every possible way: cf. for example No. 40 (October 1960) of the *Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*.

<sup>124</sup>On German military preparations during the Phoney War, cf. F.Delpla, *La ruse nazie/Dunkerque, 24 Mai 1940* (The Nazi cunning/Dunkerque, 24 May 1940), Paris, France-Empire, 1997.

government circles. Halifax and Reynaud, The British and French Foreign Ministers — Reynaud was also head of government — had to take it first of all for a boast, even for one of those innumerable signs of weakness that Nazi Germany had seemed to show since its beginnings: the Germans in front of Calais, it was an unfortunate but by no means catastrophic eventuality. This would only mean that the Allied armies, which had entered Belgium to meet them, would not have succeeded in stopping them and would have retreated in good order to the French border: not enough to rush to sign the peace on German terms.

However, after three days, the main axis of the offensive turned out not to be in the Belgian plains but in France, in the Sedan sector, where the defense was pulverized by the bulk of the armored divisions. Very quickly it was realized that the French territory was open to invasion, then it was realized that Paris was temporarily spared and that the attack remained confined to the north of the Somme. It finally appeared that Calais was indeed targeted but from the south and not from the north, and encircling in the process the entire Professional French and British army.

Soon Lord Gort, who commanded Her Majesty's expeditionary force, opted for a retreat to ports followed by embarkation, and found complacent ears in London, particularly those at Halifax. But the Prime Minister, since the 10th, had changed, and his name was Churchill. He soon had only one thought: to maintain the state of war, by any expedient. To begin with, he made Gort refuse the withdrawal, which would have looked too much like the prelude to an armistice and which the French disapproved. They wanted to fight... or sign the armistice, but in no case embark. We therefore lived on the illusion and ambiguities of a "Weygand plan" — the latter had taken over the head of the army from Gamelin, sacked — consisting in trying to break through the German armored column from the north and south... consisting above all in not deciding anything.

And then Hitler stopped from May 24 to 27, at the gates of Dunkirk, the last port available for boarding. A false enigma. To solve it, just take Goering's prediction seriously: Hitler stops because he wants his "generous" peace, leaving France and England their territories and colonies, taking away only their modern weapons seized in Belgium, their combativeness and their reputation. It is understandable that the decision takes a little time, so we stop, to allow Paris and London to bring together their responsible bodies. In Paris, the war committee of 25 May envisaged no other outcome than an armistice followed by a peace treaty. But Reynaud did not spread out, in front of this rather numerous and diverse assembly, the offer transmitted by Nordling. The most important decision of this committee, inspired by Weygand, was to send Reynaud to London the next day, to, as the minutes

modestly put it, “expose our difficulties”. Churchill translated, at the opening of the session of the war cabinet on the morning of the 26th, as “He comes to announce to us that France will capitulate”.

But let us not anticipate. In England too defeatism was in full swing, from the 25th. In the morning, Halifax reported to the cabinet conversations, initiated by second-rate British and Italian diplomats, on concessions that might deter Italy from entering the war. He obtains permission to continue these contacts. In the afternoon, infinitely exceeding this mandate, he himself received Ambassador Bastianini, a close friend of Mussolini, and asked him that the Duce enter each other to promote a “general European settlement leading to a lasting peace”. All in the name of the government, that is, Churchill, without ever mentioning him. This is less a lie than an anticipation: Convinced that Winston was just a buffoon whose adventurism had gone bankrupt, Halifax considered him negligible and was already acting as prime minister.

The most astonishing thing is that the next day he reports to the cabinet on the conversation sincerely or almost (he blames Bastianini for the opening concerning a “general settlement”), and that Churchill does not protest. The latter, when he then sees Reynaud face to face, first speaks of Italy, then suddenly asks him if he has received any peace proposals. Reynaud replies that no, but that the French “know that they can receive an offer if they wish”. But then, Churchill manages to divert the conversation, and Reynaud’s visit, by directing the discussions on the preparation of a boarding at Dunkirk. He had indeed rallied to this solution the day before and, although the French still do not agree, it makes an excellent opportunity to talk about action and battle, rather than ceasefires and negotiations.

Peace did not occur in Dunkirk, so Hitler resumed the fight without much sadness. He would have liked this immediate and bloodless peace, which would have allowed him to soon claim Ukraine from Stalin, but he had envisaged a failure and reluctantly reversed the order of the program: since France, madly espousing Churchillian obstinacy, offers itself defenseless to his blows, he takes the opportunity to crush it. He certainly does not plan to make it sign a simple armistice and occupy it for four years. He no doubt makes the calculation that such a crush will complete the maturation of discouragement across the Channel, and precipitate the fall of Churchill. In late June and early July, in any case, he will revive tempting peace offers through all sorts of channels, and Halifax will again be very close to taking power<sup>125</sup>.

---

<sup>125</sup>Period studied by John Costello, *op. cit.*, ch. 12. A surprising blackout persists eight years after the ephemeral revelation, by *Le Figaro* of July 13, 1990, of the work of a

## 10.7 The Nazi turn against the USSR

The criminal foolishness of underestimating Hitler does not cease, alas, with his brilliant victories of the spring of 1940. From this point of view, the henchmen of French capitalism and their new hero, Pétain, are not only responsible for having facilitated, long in advance, the collection of the Jews, by the statute promulgated on October 18<sup>126</sup>. By endeavouring as soon as they took office, with a dexterity worthy of a better cause, to attribute the defeat to the strikers of 1936 who thought more of "enjoying" than of having children and had pushed betrayal to the point of granting themselves two weeks of annual rest, these people are once again missing the opportunity to analyze Nazism as a poison administered in small doses by a genius madman. On the contrary, they obey him with on hand and feet, long before writing in large letters, in the autumn, the word "collaboration" on the pediment of their policy. Defeat is accepted, in a jiffy, as that of democracy and human rights, assimilated to a messy *laissez-faire*<sup>127</sup>. So-called men of order not only deny the one that the Republic had made reign after the upheavals of the nineteenth century and which had allowed a Pétain, son of small peasants, to become a marshal, but they are blind to the disorder that a foreign and moreover Nazi presence cannot fail to generate. They see Hitler as nothing but a dictatorship maniac, who will soften if his regime is copied. They have no question about its objectives. Their policy is based not on an analysis, but on a bet, lost in advance. As soon as the English aggression of Mers el-Kébir (July 3), they proposed a military collaboration and if it did not materialize, the cause was in Berlin, not in Vichy.

But alas, few people disputed the terrain for them, except de Gaulle and his handful of initial supporters. Falling back into the mistakes of their German comrades of 1933 who saw above all in Nazism the timely destruction of the old dominations, the French communists practice a wait-and-see attitude that can go, especially at the beginning, to the search for peaceful coexistence with the occupier -one could even speak of desires for collaboration, if the word were not so loaded, if it did not irresistibly evoke the hunt for

---

small team of Sarthian scholars, reinforced by Philippe Cusin and Jean-Christophe Averty, on the variations of the text of the call pronounced on 18 June by General de Gaulle. They most likely refer to the struggle between Churchill and Halifax over the continuation of the war: cf. *Churchill et les Français* (Churchill and the Frenchs), op. cit., pp. 717-727. Similarly, on the role of Jean Monnet, press conference of 16 June 1994, at the author's home.

<sup>126</sup>And not the 3rd, as it is printed almost everywhere: cf. F. Delpla, *Montoire*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1996, p. 220-225.

<sup>127</sup>cf. Marc-Olivier Baruch, *Servir l'État français* (Serve the French State), Paris, Fayard, 1997, ch. 1.



Jews and resistance fighters practiced later by Vichy. The PCF does not go beyond a demand for the legal reappearance of L'Humanité and a very reckless reappearance of elected officials in the town halls of the occupied zone, which will lead, in autumn, to stupid arrests.

The Communists were certainly opposed to Pétain from the outset, which would allow them, by sorting through the archives, to exhume early combative quotations. But, by stigmatizing the French slave in preference to the German master, they seem to offer the latter their services. Apart from lowering themselves to the same moral level, they show no intellectual superiority. They give just as much in the game of Hitler, who does not want any of the proposed or suggested collaborations: it seeks only to divide the French into rival fractions and to keep each in suspense with promises

It should be pointed out, in the light of the latest research<sup>128</sup>, that, on the side of the French Communists, although the wait-and-see attitude persisted for several months, the desire for agreement lasted only a few weeks and that they resulted, as far as can be judged, from initiatives by Jacques Duclos. Its leader Maurice Thorez had made known from Moscow, as soon as he could, his disapproval and that of the Komintern. On the other hand, the communists present in France were far from unanimous and no one disputes the immediate acts of resistance carried out, on behalf of the party, by a Charles Tillon. But it was Indeed Duclos who commanded and, if he ceased in August all negotiations with the occupier, it is necessary to see in the previous contacts the effect of a Stalinist opportunism far from any anti-fascist or national rigor, generated in a leading leader, whose biography is full of traits of patriotism, by the directives coming from Moscow in September 1939: consider the war, like the previous one, as an "imperialist war" in which the communists do not have to take sides.

Hitler's great year is, if you think about it, the one that goes from June 22, 1940, armistice with France, to June 22, 1941, invasion of the USSR. While disturbing his plans, the obstinacy of Churchill, who succeeds at the same time in the challenge of keeping his country alone at war, among the great powers, against a Germany that has neutralized all the others gives the German champion the opportunity to deploy all his talent. He had little lured France, making it seem that he wanted to invade Belgium alone. Now he is sumptuously deceiving the planet, pretending to attack England, then looking for a fight in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, when this is only a turning movement, allowing him to present himself, armed from head to toe, on the three thousand kilometers of the Soviet border.

---

<sup>128</sup>well summarized in the book *Eugen Fried* d'Annie Kriegel et Stéphane Courtois (Paris, Seuil, 1997), pp. 356 à 362.

Here, we must examine Stalin's responsibility, because the defense of his country will be completely taken by surprise, hence the deaths in combat that a little vigilance would have avoided and, above all, the millions of prisoners doomed to death by undernourishment: as Hitler was a racist, among others, anti-Slavic, the infinitely higher mortality of his Russian, Serbian or Polish prisoners, compared to the French or the English, was not unpredictable. We have recently seen a curious thesis flourish: Stalin would have stripped his defense like a foosball player, to better attack. His plans were only offensive, and Hitler would have preceded him<sup>129</sup>. Let us leave this rehash of the Nazi justifications of the time, and see the facts.

In October 1940, Hitler led his largest diplomatic offensive, probably aimed primarily at American voters called to the polls on November 5: it is a question of showing them that the Führer has the situation well in hand and that it is better to vote for Willkie than for Roosevelt, who by supporting Churchill seeks quarrel in pure loss to the indisputable winner of the European war. He met Pétain, Franco and Mussolini. It turns out that Molotov was invited to Berlin in the same period, and that, dragging his feet, he arrived only on November 12, spoiling in part the effects of the German leader: who knows what would have happened, not only in the American joust, but in the persistent match between Churchill and the British pacifists, if Hitler had been able, after his meetings at Montoire, Hendaye and Florence, also to display Stalin behind his triumphal chariot?

He proposed to the USSR an alliance against England, and a zone of expansion in India. Molotov refused. The minutes of the conversations are cruel to capitalist dictators: the people's commissar is infinitely more dignified than Pétain and Franco. However, dignity is not an insurance against homicides caused by stupidity. Did Molotov understand better than the others? No! This is evidenced by the confidences made in his old age to Felix Chuev. He believed that Hitler really wanted to invade England and therefore, by refusing his alliance, the USSR gained time, even as it gave assets to its own conqueror: to justify the assault, he could always say that he had proposed an agreement and that he had been denied it. But anyway the trap was perfect: if he had accepted a treaty, Stalin would have reactivated the

---

<sup>129</sup>Victor Suvorov, *Le brise-glace* (The Ice Breaker), Paris, Orban, 1989. This prose, one of the last saplings of the Cold War (the author, who moved to the West in the early 1980s, had been taken in charge by the Intelligence Service), is not, however, devoid of interest. Calling for a precise study, hitherto non-existent, of the Soviet order of battle, it makes it possible to sense in Stalin, not a suicidal desire to attack Hitler at the height of his power, but certain projects for the future: cf. Paul Gaujac, *Barbarossa: L'Armée Rouge, agresseur ou agressée?* (Barbarossa: the Red Army aggressor or attacked?), conference at the Institute for the History of Contemporary Conflicts, 26/2/1998.

discredit brought to his country by the German-Soviet pact and embarrassed anyone who wanted to help him during the inevitable attack<sup>130</sup>.

In the first half of 1941, the cat continued to amuse the mouse. Stalin understood that there were plans to attack him. When he neglects Churchill's warnings on this point, like those of Richard Sorge, it is not, for once, out of foolishness. It is that he sets himself a very modest goal: that the attack does not take place this year. He will therefore play who loses wins and surpasses himself in unpreparedness on his borders, to show Hitler that he risks nothing to push his pawns against England. He will accentuate this attitude day by day<sup>131</sup>, and until after the beginning of the attack. Goebbels, to better deceive everyone, had made run at the beginning of June, both the rumor of an upcoming German landing in England, and that of an upcoming trip of Stalin to Berlin, which Tass had denied. And now, on the evening of the 21st, Stalin brutally let Berlin know that he agrees to come! The next day again, when the invasion began, he gave the order not to oppose it, probably hoping that these were initiatives of some of the German generals, to force the hand of their government: now it was he who, in desperation, rallied to the theory of "Hitler, weak dictator"<sup>132</sup>.

In all this, communists can only find one consolation: the fact that the USSR is reeling from the shock and remaining standing owes everything to the reflexes of the masses, and nothing to their leaders.

## 10.8 The American game

The United States, surprised by the fall of France, has given itself in record time the means to face new responsibilities, both global and capitalist. It is time to put an end to the ridiculous bickering where some say that the Soviets did most of the work against Hitler and others that they held only thanks to American supplies. In fact, the two Great Powers have well deserved their appellation, by complementary qualities. Human and economic mobilization of a people struggling for its survival under iron rule, on the one hand, conquering dynamism of a nation in formation, at the forefront of technology, on the other, crushed Hitler who, without being completely surprised, had underestimated both phenomena and hoped, above all, to be able to liquidate

---

<sup>130</sup>On all these meetings of the autumn of 1940, cf. F. Delpla, *Montoire, op. cit.*

<sup>131</sup>with one exception: on May 5th, probably to show Hitler that he can also react if he is attacked, and perhaps not to let the combativeness of his troops go to waste, he publicly says that "it is necessary to move from defense to attack": cf. Gaël Moullec, "1941: how Hitler manipulated Stalin", *L'Histoire*, March 1998.

<sup>132</sup>cf. *La ruse nazie* (the Nazi cunning), *op. cit.*, ch. 12.

one before fully facing the other.

Having stressed the weight of anti-communism in the decisions that led to Hitler leaving the field open for so long, I would now like to show that the Western victors turned the tide by ignoring, not without merit, their revulsion towards the USSR.

This is obvious and fairly well known in the case of Churchill. The man whom Lenin had decorated with the title of “greatest opponent of the Russian Revolution” put water in his wine as early as 1935, beginning to say that Hitler’s danger was more threatening than the communist peril, and has, since 1938, pushed his country to seek the Moscow alliance — a hope that no German-Soviet collusion has ever made him renounce. It is therefore without forcing his naturalness that on the day of June 22 he writes, and in the evening pronounces, an extraordinary speech where, without denying his past prejudices, he welcomes with open arms in the fight the ally that Hitler handed him on a plate.

The phenomenon, in Roosevelt, is more discreet. He was silent, on the contrary, on 22 June and the following days. This pragmatist probably thinks that encouragement will not change anything in the immediate future and if the USSR collapses like a house of cards, it would be a shame to have compromised himself in words.

However, it is acting, and, since few Americans and few Soviets have welcomed this action, perhaps because of reciprocal ideological prejudices, it is time to highlight it.

Apart from the United States, there remains only one great power outside the war: Japan. Very clever who could say if it will enter it. . . for it does not know it itself. And above all, it does not know against whom. More than fascism, the Japanese regime is an imperialism with a large place for the army. Having taken off in the 1890s, a little after that of the United States, it arrived everywhere with a long delay on it, as well as in the Philippines or the Hawaiian Islands. With rage he had to give in to it, time and time again. However, its leaders are too well informed to think that the time for a frontal impact has come. They prefer to target smaller adversaries and in particular the European powers, already defeated by Germany such as France, vulnerable in Indochina, or Holland, struggling to defend the Dutch East Indies. He also planned to attack Britain, which was stripping its defenses of Hong Kong or Singapore in order to concentrate its forces against the Reich. Another option is possible: to expand into Siberia, at the expense of the USSR. This option was very much in favor in the thirties, making it possible to give coherence to Japanese companies against the eastern provinces of China, officially to stop the progression of communism. The cold shower had come from the German-Soviet Pact, concluded at the precise moment

when the Japanese and Soviet armies were experiencing border battles. Disappointed by Berlin, Tokyo came to sign a non-aggression pact with Moscow in April 1941. Hitler, who was preparing his aggression against the USSR this time, had done everything to dissuade the Japanese from making this gesture: Japan, in addition to taking revenge for the Nazis' contempt for its interests in 1939, hoped to return them to the west and encourage Berlin to liquidate its war against England before starting a new one. It is likely that Matsuoka, the Japanese foreign minister who visited Moscow, Berlin and Rome in March-April 1941 at the same time, thought himself clever enough to push Hitler to invade Britain, which would have allowed Japan to occupy its Asian colonies without too much trouble.

It remained to convince the United States to let it happen, playing on its lack of taste for European colonial empires. Success was random, and Matsuoka knew it. Also, as soon as June 22, 1941 he saw the ruin of his efforts and the irreversible choice, by Hitler, of an expansion at the expense of the USSR<sup>133</sup>, he changed his tune and pleaded, within his cabinet, for an attack on Siberia. It was here that Roosevelt intervened. He informed the Japanese government on July 4 that the United States would be extremely angry if Japan attacked the USSR. However, they had ample means of exerting pressure. They had embarked for two years, against the Asian encroachments of Japan, in a policy of graduated economic sanctions, which did not yet affect oil. Did Prime Minister Konoye fear an embargo on this strategic commodity? Still, he sacrificed Matsuoka and any idea of anti-Soviet aggression on July 16. The calm on the Siberian border, which Sorge's messages allowed to be expected to last, allowed Stalin to recall Zhukov, the general revealed by the border battles of 1939, with his best regiments. They were hard at work in the Moscow region at the same time as the Germans, to compete victoriously for the field the following December. Roosevelt had been instrumental in saving Stalin and, in doing so, drew lightning upon himself. For, to please the hardliners of his cabinet, Konoye had to take an initiative and it was the invasion, at the end of July, of southern Indochina, which led to the oil embargo and consequently the obligation, for Japan, to act quickly, if it wanted to act. And that was Pearl Harbor.

---

<sup>133</sup>cf. *Paix et guerre / La politique étrangère des États-Unis 1931-1941* (Peace and war / The foreign policy of the United States 1931-1941), Washington, Department of State, 1943, p. 135-136.

## 10.9 Pearl Harbor: why and how?

A deluge of bombs and torpedoes fell on December 7, 1941 on a sleeping base. At the time, it killed more than two thousand people, then lit a fire in the Pacific that caused millions, and ended with a double nuclear fire.

If we stick to a traditional view, these deaths would be due less to capitalism than to feudalism, or even to primitive savagery. It was samurai Japan, using modern industry only as a means to serve a centuries-old appetite for domination, that would have treacherously attacked Pearl Harbor<sup>134</sup>.

A closer analysis of the phenomenon obliges, as noted above, to return to the birth, in the nineteenth century, of Japanese imperialism, and its late insertion into the game of powers. The gifted student not only assimilated the technical lessons of capitalism but also, and also quickly, its geopolitical lessons. He tried to build a colonial domain, first at the expense of China, taking advantage of the remoteness of the European powers and playing on their rivalries.

Its ruling circles were, from the beginning, divided on the balance to be observed between modernity and tradition. But the divide also passes in the heads. Like all non-European leaders who are not pure creatures of the West, the Japanese elites are constantly and anxiously wondering where to draw the line between the import of Western values, necessary for development as well as for mere existence, and the preservation of national particularities. Hence a cleavage, with unclear contours, between modernist bourgeois, anxious to preserve peace with the great powers and especially with the United States, and other bourgeois, developing a xenophobic nationalism.

In 1941, Prime Minister Konoye, rather aggressive around 1937, settled down, and tried to keep the country out of the world war. As Japan is already engaged in a local war, in China, it must liquidate it as soon as possible, by a compromise that would be endorsed by Washington. Konoye is confronted within his own cabinet with a warmongering tendency toward a military solution that deprives China of its external support, which comes from both Soviet Siberia and British Burma — hence, these warmongers believe, the need for a war against at least one of the two powers. Hoping, this is the general wish, that the United States will not get involved. The political divide intersects with a division of military leaders: the army is reluctant to evacuate Chinese territories, while the navy, more aware of the state of

---

<sup>134</sup>cf. F. Delpla, *Les nouveaux mystères de Pearl Harbor* (The new mysteries of Pearl Harbor), unpublished. Extracts on the Internet: <http://www.amgot.org/fr.hist.htm><sup>XIV</sup>.

<sup>XIV</sup>Dead link. For an archived copy of what might be the text see appendix A on page 485.

mind as well as the resources of North America, remains skeptical about the possibility of a war against England or Russia, without intervention of the United States.

But an unusual poker game began at the beginning of this year 1941. The most prestigious of the admirals, Yamamoto, argued that it was impossible to keep the United States out of a war and that, if Japan's interests demanded one, it should begin with a surprise attack on the Pearl Harbor fleet, the destruction of which alone could give free rein to a Japanese offensive. To his probable astonishment, he was ordered to study the plans for such an attack. This has been known for a long time. But Yamamoto is presented as a man torn between his pacifist convictions and his passion for fighting. However, recently published Japanese documents suggest that he only agreed to pilot the operation to sabotage it. Witness the last orders transmitted to the attack fleet: this squadron, the strongest in naval history, had to turn back, without even consulting the general staff, if it was spotted, during its eleven-day journey between the Kurils and Hawaii, more than 24 hours before the attack, and fight if not. But it was difficult to imagine that no aerial reconnaissance would signal such an armada in ten days, not to mention the chance encounters of ships or planes. The warmongers accepted a fool's bargain, and the pacifists a seemingly risk-free game.

In the surprising lack of aerial reconnaissance from Hawaii, does the United States have a share of responsibility, or should we blame bad luck alone? The answer is less simple than some of Roosevelt's opponents believe, who believe that the president was tracking the progress of the aggressor boats and let them act, to subject his still pacifist public opinion to an electroshock. The truth is pretty much the opposite. He would have given dearly to know what was going on. The identification of an attack force, traveling clandestinely while the mission of Nomura and Kuruusu, ambassadors extraordinary, continued in Washington, would have allowed him to raise his voice vis-à-vis Japan and to obtain the formation, in Tokyo, of a resolutely pacifist government: his objective was basically the same as that of Yamamoto.

The Pearl Harbor base, like all those of the United States in the Pacific, was indeed put on alert by the supreme chief of the armies, General Marshall, but at the wrong time: in October, the day after Konoye's resignation and his replacement by General Tojo, presumed to be a warmonger; then on November 27, the day after a breakup, which seemed definitive, of the talks with Nomura. However, on these two occasions, nothing happened. The first time, the Japanese returned to the negotiating table with new proposals. Roosevelt therefore, after fearing an attack at the end of November, regained hope at the beginning of December, and re-established some contacts himself. What he did not know was precisely that the second time Japan, determined

to attack or rather to play, on the sea route of Hawaii, the game of chance that was said, needed a delay of eleven days to bring its forces. Moreover, in a period of such high international tension, no one imagined a surprise attack on an objective as far from Japan as Hawaii, at least with significant resources. Rather, it was expected in the Philippines. And precisely, the American army was in the process of transferring equipment from one to the other archipelago... this explains the concentration, between the two, of aerial reconnaissance means based in Hawaii.

The American responsibility for the Pearl Harbor coup can therefore be summed up in one word: racism. Certainly the American leaders do not feel it, vis-à-vis their Japanese counterparts, in the manner of Hitler vis-à-vis the Jews. It is a simple feeling of superiority, whether moral, intellectual or technical. The White House did not imagine that this belatedly developed country was capable of so much audacity and know-how. Roosevelt and Marshall believed they held and subdued it, both militarily and diplomatically. The deciphering, by the "Purple" machine, of the most secret exchanges between Tojo and Nomura added to the feeling of superiority... and security<sup>135</sup>.

## 10.10 Conclusion

The genesis of the Second World War, and the formation of the camps during its first two years, show both that capitalism had not miraculously lost, in 1919, its polemical potentialities, and that it retained enough resources to correct itself and erase, with the help of its Soviet negation, its hideous Nazi variant. Great power rivalries, fraught with economic ulterior motives, first ruined the ideal of collective security, before Hitler wielded communism like a bullfighter's cloak, at the very moment when the USSR, diplomatically assailed and indulged in terrible internal repression, no longer seemed so threatening. The German aggressiveness is therefore beyond doubt, and could not take the pretext, in the thirties, of the slightest expansionism of the Soviet Union in Europe.

However, Hitler was able, by playing on the hatred of the bourgeoisies towards this country, and then temporarily approaching it, to prevent the conjunction of his potential enemies, to attack them separately. At the critical moment of May-June 1940, everything rested in the hands of one

---

<sup>135</sup>Let us add, for the exclusive use of the less sectarian minds, that American passivity, in the days before the attack and even after its beginning, both in the Philippines and in Hawaii, resembles that of Stalin the previous June and may well have the same motive: in order to encourage pacifist tendencies in the aggressor, one shows oneself to be peaceful.



individual, Churchill. Having recently come to power by taking advantage of rivalries over the leadership of the Conservative Party, he was able, by a mixture of will and cunning, to thwart the logic of British capitalism, which led to resigning itself to Hitler's triumph and to reconverting the activities of the City according to him. Churchill was also able to gradually give Roosevelt confidence and bring him to put at the service of the anti-Nazi fight the resources of a continent convalescent from the crisis of 1929, and boosted by the profits generated by the confrontation.

This is a clear picture of how risky it is to attribute the victims of conflict to one of the systems involved, and that some deaths are preferable to lives of submission. Without Churchill, there would have been far fewer deaths between 1940 and 1945 because Hitler would have consolidated his power for a long time and, no doubt, destroyed communism, in its Stalinist version, well before 1991 (and perhaps even without war, because Stalin could have resigned himself to ceding Ukraine by virtue of the balance of forces, as Lenin had done in Brest-Litovsk). He would not even have killed, at that time, so many Jews since, as recent studies have shown<sup>136</sup>, he decided his "final solution" only because of the slow progress of his advance in the USSR in 1941, which made him glimpse the possibility of his defeat. A triumphant Germany, obtaining the resignation of the other powers before a comfortable extension of its borders to the east, would have let its slaves live reduced to servitude and finished expelling the Jews from its "space" – with a brutality undoubtedly fatal to many, but without systematic genocide.

The leaders of the great capitalist powers, blinded by anti-communist motives, have given a career to a racist, most criminal enterprise. As for Stalinist communism, it knew only a clumsy attempt to preserve the interests of the workers' movement identified with those of the Soviet state, itself very naïve at times about Hitler's intentions towards it. The endemic permanence of the war since 1945, on the periphery of the developed world, after and before the erasure of the USSR, shows that the lesson has only partially served. While the recurrence of conflicts between great powers could be avoided, only the vanquished of the Second World War refrained from using force in their relations with the underdeveloped countries. From Indochina to Chechnya via Suez, Afghanistan, the Falklands and Iraq, the "big four" victors of the Axis have happily made the powder speak... while willingly Nazifying in their propaganda the opposing leaders, even when they belonged to ethnic groups that the author of *Mein Kampf* moderately appreciated. Yesterday Nasser, today Saddam are new Hitlers with whom any agreement would be Munich... President Clinton easily blows this trumpet, and if his

---

<sup>136</sup>cf. Philippe Burrin, *Hitler et les Juifs* (Hitler and the Jews), Paris, Seuil, 1989.

partners in the Security Council have recently brought him to his senses, it was by virtue of the motive of the war he wanted to make, and not by the principle that every State, however powerful it may be, must submit to a common rule. At the end of this century, capitalism is still struggling to establish, in terms of relations between nations, the peaceful order that it makes reign in its rule of law states.

### **François Delpla**

François Delpla is an historian, specialist of world war two, author amongst other works of *Aubrac, les faits et la calomnie* (Aubrac, facts and slander), Le Temps des Cerises éditeurs, 1997.

# Chapter 11

## Of the origin of wars and a paroxysmal form of capitalism

**Pierre Durand**

We like to forget, nowadays, to quote Jean Jaurès who affirmed that capitalism carries within it war as the cloud carries the storm. And one might add that this truth is even more blatant when capitalism took the political form of fascism. To stick to the Second World War and its prodromes, it is indisputable that fascist capitalism was the origin. Mussolini attacked Ethiopia and Albania, Hitler seized Austria and Czechoslovakia, militarist Japan attacked China and the Soviet Union, Franco, aided by Germany and Italy, established his power against the Republic. In a final stage, Hitler started the world war by attacking Poland.

We will probably never know with mathematical precision how many deaths the world killing caused. In all likelihood fifty million or so from Asia to Europe and Africa, about twenty million of them belonging, civilian or military, to the Soviet Union that can hardly be accused, in this case, of being responsible.

It was in the general context of this world war that the crudest and most exterminating expression of capitalist exploitation appeared: that to which the concentration camp workforce in the Nazi camps was subjected. Hitler's "KZ" originally aimed to remove from the rest of the German population political opponents who were treated so harshly that a very large number of them died between 1933 and 1940. Subsequently, the SS, who were the guards of the camps, used their prisoners to earn some money by making them work in companies belonging to them, mostly quarries.

From 1942 onwards, the major German war industry trusts demanded that the excessive mobilization of the traditional labour force be compensated

for by an intensive use of concentration camp labour. Various arms factories appeared inside the camps themselves, and outside in “kommandos” where the way of life and death did not yield in any way to that of the “KZ” on which they depended — sometimes it was even worse — companies dependent on all branches of big industry: aviation, chemicals, metallurgy, mining, etc. The inmates worked there day and night. They were slaves who could be worked at will. Their lives belonged to the SS, without restriction or limit.

However, as one historian has written, “We must not fall into the trap. The Nazi ‘KZ’ and their ‘kommandos’ did not resurrect the ancient economy. The manufacturers of V2s, rifles and aircraft, which employed the inmates by the hundreds of thousands, did not belong to a world alien to capital movements, the stock exchange and consolidated balance sheets.”<sup>137</sup>.

The grand master of the industrial exploitation of the KZ detainees was a direct deputy to Himmler, head of the SS and all the police, SS General Oswald Pohl, head of the Supreme SS Office of Economic Administration, the WVHA, which he created on 1 February 1942. It was from Pohl’s directives that will be organized what Hitler’s minister of justice, Otto Thierak, called “extermination through labor”.

The principle is relatively simple. The concentration camp workforce must provide such added value that it covers the costs of its maintenance by the SS and ensures the greatest possible profits for the operating firms, which range from the largest (Krupp, Siemens, IG-Farben Industrie, Messerschmidt, etc.), to the smallest — even artisanal type. To satisfy the demands of the industry, the SS rented prisoners to it at a wage price much lower than that of free labor. To remain a beneficiary itself, it must therefore reduce as much as possible the maintenance costs of detainees (food, clothing, housing). Pohl puts his experts to work. They discover that the break-even point corresponds to an average life span of inmates of about eight months. It is then enough to replace them with the living, the number of which is not lacking in the conquered countries, under various pretexts<sup>138</sup>.

It is interesting to compare these theoretical calculations to reality. We then see that between 1942 and 1945 — a relatively short period — the average length of life of concentration camp inmates was about 8 to 9 months<sup>139</sup>.

We will not dwell on the question of Nazi gold stolen from the Jews of Europe and transiting, in particular, through Switzerland, to be “laundered”

---

<sup>137</sup>Dominique Decèze, *L’esclavage concentrationnaire* (Concentrationary slavery), FNDIRP, 1979.

<sup>138</sup>The activity of Pohl and his services was brought to light at the Nuremberg Trials.

<sup>139</sup>The extermination of Jews and Gypsies in the gas chambers is a different logic. It should be noted, however, that a number of people belonging to these categories were also used as labour at Auschwitz and other such camps from the end of 1942.

and used to buy war material for the Wehrmacht. Here too, it is a traffic carried out according to the strictest capitalist rules.

Less well known is the participation of firms, considered estimable, in the German economy during the war. The British newspaper *The Guardian* published in December 1997 a study by a researcher specializing in the study of the genocide of the Jews. His name is David Cesarani. Studying what happened in Hungary during the war, he is led to evoke the name of Wallenberg. It is known that Raoul Wallenberg managed to save many Hungarian Jews from death and that he mysteriously disappeared, in the USSR, it seems, after the war.

Cesarani refers to the work of a group of Dutch researchers who studied the Wallenberg case. They made some interesting discoveries. The Wallenberg brothers were Swedish bankers and industrialists who had set up between the two wars with German industrialists a cartel that controlled 80% of the European market for ball bearings supplied by the firm SKF. Brothers Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg's bank, ENSKILDA BANK of Stockholm, worked closely with SKF, which continued to trade with Nazi Germany throughout the war. By 1943, SKF had even increased its exports to Germany by 300%. In 1944, SKF supplied 70% of all bearings needed for the Reich war industry. General Spaatz, who was responsible for the bombing, complained that "all our aerial action (against the German factories) was becoming useless".

Swedish banks are said to have, at the same time, "laundered" \$26 million worth of gold looted by the Nazis. The ENSKILDA bank is said to have bought from Germany between 5 and 10% of a total of 350 to 500 million guilden of securities stolen from Dutch Jews. This collaboration with Hitler's Germany was brought to light in the aftermath of the war and the Wallenbergs saw their property in the United States frozen. SKF, still linked to the Wallenbergs, then turned to the USSR, which had great needs for ball bearings, and granted it significant credits. As the "Cold War" developed, the US stopped all aid to the Soviets and threatened to make public the collaboration of Swedish banks and industry with the Nazis. Cesarani concludes that Raoul Wallenberg was undoubtedly a victim of these dark intrigues which, by providing Hitler with strategic equipment, caused blood to flow between 1939 and 1945.

### **Pierre Durand**

Pierre Durand, former Deportée-Resistant to Buchenwald, is a specialist in deportation, author, in particular, of *La Résistance des Français à Buchenwald et à Dora* (Resistance of French people in Buchenwald and in Dora), 2nd edition, 1991, in sale in au Temps des Cerises.



## Chapter 12

# Imperialism, Zionism and Palestine

**Maurice BUTTIN**

In contemporary history, the fate of the Palestinian people represents a veritable anachronism at a time when almost all peoples have won their independence.

To understand this situation, knowledge of a number of basic geo-historical-political data, inherent in the Near Eastern region, is required.

The role of Western and Russian-Soviet imperialisms, that of Zionism before the creation of the State of Israel, will be essentially analyzed, within the limited framework of this article.

### 12.1 The end of the Ottoman Empire

August 1914. The First World War broke out. The Ottoman Empire is already very sick. Most of its European possessions were liberated. North Africa is colonized by the Western powers. Only its integrity has remained, for four centuries, in the Middle East, maintained *de facto*, by the strategic interests of England. Master of the Suez Canal and Egypt itself since 1882, it refuses to see any other imperialist power compete with it on the land route to India.

October 1914. The Sultan's Turkey enters the war on the side of the Central Empires. This will be his last act!

England fears a Turkish-German push towards the Suez Canal... It changed its tune and envisaged, at first, an "Arab" solution under British control that would replace Ottoman domination.

## 12.2 Promises to Arabs

From July 1915 to early 1916, England continued secret talks with Sharif Hussein, governor of Muslim holy sites, later known as the “Hussein-Mac Mahon Correspondence” — the new British resident in Cairo. In exchange for the promise of a liberated “Arab kingdom”, the Sharif proposed the uprising of the Arab tribes against the Turkish occupier.

This hope of independence of the “Fertile Crescent”, which at the time was only one Turkish province – Syria – is not new.

Arab nationalism appeared as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, first through a revival of the Arab language and culture, the *Nahda* — the work of Muslim and Christian personalities from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, in struggle against cultural imperialism, then political imperialism of the Ottoman Turk.

## 12.3 Anglo-French imperialist partition

But England is not alone in the war against Turkey, allied with the Central Powers. So are France and Tsarist Russia. These two countries will ask for their share of the cake, France in the first place. Hasn't its influence been preponderant in the Holy Land for ages? Wasn't she acknowledged by the Sultan as protector of all Christians in the Ottoman Empire in 1673? Didn't it intervene in 1860 to save the Lebanese Maronites from the massacre?

As early as 1916, secret conversations began in London between diplomats Mr. Sykes and Mr. Picot. They lead to a “memorandum of agreement”, to the division of the region into zones of influence of the two imperialist powers – in total ignorance of the Arab national aspirations and the promises made to them by the British!

To France, the territory of Lebanon and Syria decreased. To England, Mesopotamia (Iraq), southeastern Syria, part of Palestine (St. John of Acre). For her, it is a question of maintaining for its benefit the “road of the Indies” from the Suez Canal to the Arab-Persian Gulf.

A large part of Palestine is reserved for an “international administration whose form will have to be decided after consultation with Russia...”

It should be noted that this decision, intended to reconcile the competing Anglo-Franco-Russian demands, drawing arguments from the Christian Holy Places, is unrelated to the aspirations of the Zionists, who advance their pawns elsewhere...



## 12.4 The alliance of British imperialism and Zionism

The year 1917, dramatic on the Western Front, will somewhat modify the Anglo-French plans in the Middle East. Three major events are to be noted for this turn of the century:

The entry of the United States into the war in April, with now a decisive influence of this country both on the outcome of the conflict and on the development of liberal-capitalist doctrines in the world.

The Russian Revolution followed by the bolshevik seizure of power in October with triumphant Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The “Balfour Declaration” in November, or the official recognition by the British government of Zionist ambitions. These were not born from the day before.

While religious Zionism — “The Call of Zion”, the name of a Jerusalem hill — has never ceased to haunt pious Jews since Titus’ destruction of the Temple in 70, political Zionism for its part began to manifest itself twenty years earlier.

It was in August 1897, in fact, that the founding charter of the Zionist movement, proclaimed at the first World Zionist Congress, held in Basel, dates back. An Austrian journalist, a perfectly assimilated Jew, Th. Herzl is the soul of this new nationalism — born of the ideas of the time throughout Europe, but above all of the observation of the permanence of pogroms against the Jews in Russia and Poland, and the unleashing of virulent anti-Semitism in France, in 1894, with the Dreyfus affair.

Its program is formulated as follows: “Zionism aims at the creation in Palestine, for the Jewish people, of a homeland guaranteed by public law”.

It should be noted that from the Basel Congress to the Biltmore Congress in New York in 1942, the Zionists and their friends never evoked the term “state”. A simple euphemism to avoid too much opposition in some Western circles, including the most hostile assimilated Jews at the time.

Hadn’t Herzl written in 1896 a book that would mark history, *Der Judenstaat* — The Jewish State? He himself noted in his diary at the end of the Basel Congress: “There I founded the Jewish state. If I were to proclaim it today, everyone would laugh at me. In five years perhaps, in fifty years certainly, it will no longer escape anyone.”

What a premonition!

Herzl died in 1905. A Russian Jew, soon naturalized English, takes up the torch. For Chaïm Weizmann, unlike this one, the “Jewish homeland” is not conceived outside Palestine. A brilliant research scientist, he seriously helped

the English war effort by successfully synthesizing acetone. This opened many doors for him, including that of Lloyd George, future Prime Minister. He was already a friend of Arthur Balfour, the future Minister of Foreign Affairs. He proposed to them the creation of a Jewish buffer state in Palestine under British protection, the best way to ensure the defense of the Suez Canal...

The British will retain this idea all the more because they fear being overtaken by German Jews favorable to the cause of this country out of hatred of the Russians, and that it must also allow them to avoid the internationalization of Palestine.

The entry into the war of the United States, the Russian Revolution, the pledges that must be given to American Jews to participate in the war effort, and to the many Russian revolutionary Jews, no longer make them hesitate. Balfour asked Weizmann and Lord Rothschild — a rare Jewish aristocrat who had followed the Zionist path — to propose a draft declaration concerning Palestine. This, as amended, will form the basis of the letter sent by the British Foreign Secretary to Lord W. Rothschild on 2 November 1917, according to which: “His Majesty’s Government favourably contemplates the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use all its efforts to facilitate the attainment of this objective...”

## 12.5 Violation of promises made to Arabs

As early as the end of 1917, arab leaders heard from the Bolshevik government of the “Sykes-Picot Agreement”. They learn a few months after the “Balfour Declaration”, that is to say the installation on the ground, beyond the colonies that have already been created for thirty years, of a new imperialism allied to British imperialism!

To calm their concerns, the English and French governments — which, like the U.S. government, approved the “Declaration” — are renewing their promises. On the very eve of the armistice of November 11, 1918, they recognized the “right to self-determination” of the peoples liberated from Ottoman power — dear to US President Wilson...

The “desert revolt” was, in fact, very useful to the Allies. After liberating the Hejaz, the Bedouin tribes under the leadership of Emir Faisal, son of Sharif Hussein, took Aqaba, moved up east of Amman and rallied all the tribes to the Euphrates. Although Allenby’s British army occupied Jerusalem on December 9, 1917, Faisal — the friend of the famous Colonel Lawrence — and Allenby entered Damascus together on October 1, 1918.

In July 1919, a general congress of Arab nationalists was held in Damas-

cus. It votes various resolutions condemning Western projects and in particular the installation of a Jewish national home in Palestine...

This did not disturb the meeting of the High Council of the Allies on April 25, 1920 in San-Rémo: the Arab territory between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean was divided into English and French protectorates, which were confirmed in the form of “mandates” by the new League of Nations in 1922.

Greater Syria is divided into 4 pieces: to England, Palestine and the territory east of the Jordan River – which became Transjordan in 1921 – ; France, Lebanon and Syria. To make matters worse for the Arabs, the Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the terms of the British Mandate!

The promises made to the Arabs are totally “forgotten”, the very principles of the League of Nations charter violated! From then on, the year 1920 will remain forever engraved, in Arabic texts, as “The Year of The Catastrophe” (Am Al Naqba).

## 12.6 Arab reactions. New british policy

In the spring of 1920, bloody Arab demonstrations broke out in Palestine. They were renewed in 1929 and in 1936 combined with the first general insurrection against British forces and their Zionist allies – who organized a secret army, the Haganah. The English repression was very harsh: more than 5,000 dead.

But the war is approaching, the British are this time afraid of an understanding between Germany and the Arab countries. In the spring of 1939, they published a White Paper which stated that it was in no way their intention to create a Jewish state. Palestine must gain independence within ten years and become a binational state. Jewish immigration is limited.

The Zionist leaders then settled in the United States and at the Biltmore Conference (1942) no longer hesitated to demand the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, throughout the territory of the Mandate!

In the face of British opposition, the hardest Zionist organizations are embarking on a major campaign of terrorism against, they say, the “British occupier”.

In the United States, President Roosevelt leans more towards Arab leaders. But his brutal disappearance features Vice President Truman, who for his election in 1948 needs the Jewish electorate.<sup>XV</sup> He asks the British govern-

---

<sup>XV</sup>The original text has “[...] a besoin de l'électorat juif II demande au gouvernement anglais [...]” here, the “II” seemingly a typo

ment to immediately let 100,000 Jewish refugees, survivors of the Holocaust, into Palestine. It is a refusal.

On the spot, acts of terrorism redoubled and on July 22, 1946, the Q.-G. British at the King David Hotel is dynamited. More than 90 dead, dozens wounded!

In February 1947, faced with the unbearable situation, the British government decided to submit the Palestinian case to the UN.

## 12.7 Two new imperialisms come into play

In March 1947, President Truman announced that the United States would take over England's obligations in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. They will not let them go anymore...

In turn, in May 1947, the representative of the USSR to the UN, Mr Gromyko, admitted the need for the "partition of Palestine into two independent states"! Disappointment on the side of the Arab nationalists. The "Soviet Balfour Declaration" is then evoked.

A special commission of inquiry is appointed by the United Nations. His report, published in August 1947, recommended dividing the country into three independent parts: a Jewish state, an Arab state, an international status for the Christian Holy Places, from Jerusalem to Bethlehem — the "Corpus separatum".

The UN General Assembly adopted this proposal on 29 November 1947. 33 countries voted "for" (including socialist countries that will greatly help Jewish forces in the first Arab-Israeli war that will follow in 1948-1949).

The Jewish population, which represents only a third of the country's inhabitants, (600,000 out of 1,800,000) receives 55% of the territory of the British Mandate.

What follows next... everyone knows it!

**Maurice Buttin Esq.<sup>XVI</sup>**

Maurice Buttin is a lawyer, president of the association France-Palestine

---

<sup>XVI</sup>M<sup>e</sup> or *maître* in the original text

## Chapter 13

# War and repression: the Vietnamese massacre

**François DERIVERY**

Although the significant and most spectacular events of the Vietnam Colonial War between 1965 and 1975 are well known, the general public is still largely unaware of the living conditions of the populations of the South during this period. First under the direct rule of the occupier and then, during the so-called “Vietnamization” period inaugurated by Nixon in 1969, through his puppet Thieu who, supported by American logistics, will prove to be one of the bloodiest jailers in this region of the world, which was not lacking. Thieu who, after Nixon’s resignation in 1974, had to flee in April 1975 before the decisive and victorious advance of the FNL.

### 13.1 Field operations

In 1963, Thieu, supported by Eisenhower, took Diem’s place as head of South Vietnam following a military coup. The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (FNL), supported by the north of Ho Chi Minh, was born at the same time. The United States, with Kennedy and then Johnson, massively engaged their country in the war. Thieu was finally supported by Nixon, who was elected President of the United States in 1968. He replaced Johnson in early 1969.

The increase in American involvement in the conflict, both in terms of men and equipment, is significant. July 1965: 125,000 men on the ground. December of the same year: 185,000. December 1966: 390,000 (plus 64,000 Australian, Korean and Thai allies). December 1968: 580,000.

To these forces are added the 700,000 regulars and 200,000 militiamen of the Southern Army.

There were then 3,500 American helicopters. Bombing beyond the 17th parallel began in 1965, intensively, from airports in Thailand and Guam. In three years of shelling, from February 1965 to April 1968, the Americans will have dropped 500,000 tons of bombs on the North and 200,000 tons on the South. In six months (1972) the impressive total of 400,000 tons of bombs dropped will have been reached. On the ground, the “cleansing” operations are no less deadly, punctuated by particularly bloody events, such as the massacre of 500 peasants in My Lai in 1971, during which the section of Lieutenant Calley, invested with the interests of Uncle Sam, was no less illustrious, and in the same register, than had done on June 10, 1944 the Das Reich division in Oradour-sur-Glane.

After the episode of the replacement of Westmoreland by Abrams, the Paris Conference opened in January 1969. Strongly contested at home, Nixon began his policy of “Vietnamization” which consisted of withdrawing US ground forces while intensifying air operations and strengthening South Vietnamese units with equipment and logistical and police assistance, in order to transfer to them the most dangerous operations. In 1972, the Army of the South thus grew to 120,000 regulars and 600,000 militiamen, often recruited by pressure, as we shall see. As for the air force, it has grown to more than 2,000 aircraft.

Under the pretext of controlling fuel supply tracks, Americans and South Vietnamese intervened in Cambodia in 1970. As for the bombings on the North, they resumed massively in 1972, especially on Haiphong (port of arrival of boats from China and the USSR). The Paris Accords were finally signed in January 1973. From the resignation of Nixon (1974), and in the face of the growing protest of American opinion against the war, the United States abandoned Thieu, butcher of its own people, who could only rely on himself. He fled on April 21, 1975, to enjoy a golden retirement with his protectors. On April 30, FNL entered Saigon.

## 13.2 Domestic repression

An official U.S. death toll, which is very underestimated, shows that some 500,000 civilians and 200,000 South Vietnamese soldiers were killed between 1964 and 1973, and 55,000 U.S. killed. These figures, which relate to war operations on the ground, do not take into account a much larger number of wounded and maimed for life on both sides and of course in North Vietnam. The number of people killed in the Ranks of vietcong and North Vietnam

was at least 725,000 between 1964 and 1973. Moreover, U.S. estimates say nothing about the victims of domestic repression and summary executions in the South. Under the rule of Thieu, supported by American logistics, this repression was particularly fierce and bloodthirsty. To the bombs, napalm, phosphorus, we must therefore add all the deadly panoply of prisons, torture, abuse and psychological pressure measures.

This apparatus of repression and its methods shall be more precisely studied here.

In 1969, Nixon renounced to reconquer the liberated rural and mountainous areas. He ordered the systematic and uninterrupted bombardment of these regions, forcing millions of peasants to retreat to the cities. On this population concentrated by force, and in particular in order to accelerate the recruitment of mercenaries, Nixon and Thieu reigned a regime of terror.

It is a matter of paralyzing all patriotic activity by liquidating militants and suspects, by incarcerating any real or presumed opponent; to terrorize the population, to force them to accept the administration that Washington imposes on them. Physical and psychological pressure even intends, as is customary in dictatorial regimes, to force nationalists and resistance fighters to renounce their convictions in order to put them in the service of the occupier.

To this end, a whole apparatus of repression is put in place. A whole network of prisons, prisons, detention camps, a whole system of physical and moral torture has been set up, “modernized” by the care of experts and massive financial and technical assistance from Washington. The French and English colonial experience – notably with Robert Thompson, promoted to Nixon’s supreme adviser – was put to good use and “improved” by the specialized American services.

### 13.3 The Tools

A repressive and invasive police network operates at all levels of South Vietnamese society. More than a dozen military and civilian services are authorized to make arrests. In 1971, the police were detached from the civilian services to form a separate military command. Its leader, an army officer, reports directly to President Thieu. This combination of civilian police and military functions reflects the views of Robert Thompson, President Nixon’s top adviser on counterinsurgency repression.

The strength of the national police increased from 16,000 in 1963 to 120,000 at the end of 1972. Its responsibilities range from the constitution of files for residents over 15 years of age to the interrogation of apprehended

persons. It has an anti-Vietcong paramilitary branch (tanks and artillery) of 25,000 men.

The special police, a branch of the previous one, is responsible for the elimination of FNL cadres and the repression of pacifist and neutralist movements. It routinely practices torture of those arrested. It had to its credit a wave of mass arrests in 1972.

The police receive direct orders from the Presidency, the CIA, the Chiefs of Staff of the Saigon Army and the US Special Forces. It has under its command 20 provincial services that employ from 80 to 120 people, have 300 offices and an army of indicators.

A military security office is located in each unit of the army and its sphere of intervention extends around the military installations.

The secret services report directly to President Thieu. They carry out arrests and especially summary executions on the person of notorious opponents, often using the services of hitmen.

The police are not the only ones carrying out a task of surveillance and repression, all decentralized authorities are called upon to cooperate, willingly or by force. This is the case for the village authorities, because the entire administration, up to the level of the municipality, is designated by Saigon. A people's militia is recruited in the cities mainly among idle children between the ages of 12 and 16, to whom automatic weapons are distributed. They are responsible for suppressing student protests and rallies.

The army, on the other hand, has all the rights, especially outside the cities. Any soldier can stop and interrogate whoever he wants. All pressure is possible to make the peasants confess that they belong to the FNL or that they collect funds for it. A large number of ordinary citizens are incarcerated in "shelters" during "Search and Destroy" operations conducted jointly by the U.S. military and the government military. Others were rounded up during the pacification campaigns called "Phoenix" or "Swan", as suspects of sympathy for the FNL.

The Civil Guards (Van De) are even more feared volunteers than the soldiers. Poorly paid (half of a soldier's salary), they live on the exploitation and looting of rural populations. They work under the orders of a provincial chief (a soldier) and have their own prisons and torture rooms.

## 13.4 The legal framework

The laws that are supposed to regulate the procedures of repression are only intended to give a semblance of legal cover to arbitrariness. It is terror on a daily basis for the population.



Thus, according to article 1 of the new penal code, “Any individual, party, league or association guilty of any act in any form aimed directly or indirectly at promoting communist or pro-communist neutralism shall be outlawed.”

Or (article 17 of the Law on Administrative Internment): “Any person who commits any act aimed at undermining the anti-communist spirit of the nation or harming the struggle of the people and the armed forces shall be punished with forced labour.”

To compensate for the lack of evidence, a decree-law known as the “an tri” law (administrative internment) allows incarceration without trial and without appeal. Article 19 of this decree-law (004/66) stipulates that any person “considered dangerous for national defence and public security” may be interned for a period of up to two years. This sentence is renewable.

Hoang Due Nha, personal advisor to President Thieu, could proudly boast, on November 9, 1972, the effectiveness of a police force equipped with these emergency laws, capable of arresting more than 40,000 people in two weeks.

In June 1972, several thousand people were arrested and directed to the island of Con Son — the new name of Poulo Condor, the prison of sinister memory. In most cases they were only parents, wives and children of political suspects, as reported by several American newspapers (*Boston Globe*, 24 June 1972, *New York Post*, 28 June 1972).

At the same time, pressure is exerted on intellectuals; in 1972, most of the leaders of the universities of Hue and Saigon were arrested (*Time*, July 10, 1972).

Parallel to the heavy fighting in the spring of 1972, along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, an unprecedented wave of civilian arrests took place: roundups in student circles, hostage-taking in the families of well-known political activists, arrest of nationalist or religious groups hostile to the war and the American occupation. The reason for these arrests, always the same, “sympathy with the communists”, is interpreted in the broadest way.

## 13.5 Pre-trial detention

Arrest is only the beginning of a journey that often leads to death. As long as his file has been lost, a prisoner can spend years in prison awaiting trial. Before the latter, the prisoner is likely to be taken to an interrogation centre, which will extract from him — by the worst means if necessary — the signed confession necessary for his conviction. The method is proven.

A woman testifies to her internment in a Saigon police detention centre:

“During your interrogation you could hear the piercing cries of those who were being tortured. Sometimes you were made to witness the tortures to intimidate you and force you to confess what you wanted.

Two women in my cell were pregnant. One was beaten violently, the other was hit in the knees which later became infected.

A student tried to kill herself by smashing both wrists against the metal faucet in the laundry room, but she failed. She was then tortured by wrapping a thick strip of rubber around her head to compress her. Her eyes were bulging and she was suffering from excruciating headaches...” (*New York Times*, 13.08.72)

“If they say no beat them until they say yes.” This was the rule known in the Saigon police.

## 13.6 The Justice

Judgments are no more impartial than the proceedings that precede them. The accused of political crime is defenseless (and moreover without a lawyer) before the omnipotence of government and his conviction is almost certain. Depending on the outcome of the interrogations and the content of the intelligence service reports, the detainee may be brought before a military court or sent to a provincial security committee.

Sentences to hard labour, life imprisonment and the death penalty are most commonly imposed. Decisions are quick and without appeal.

The CPS (provincial security committees) are known for their arbitrariness. If it seems “clear” to them that “the suspect poses a threat to national security”, depending on their perception of the situation and the balance of power, they can impose his administrative detention without having to justify it legally.

As two American experts wrote: “The legal form, rarely observed during the recent period of South Vietnam, has been completely abandoned since the beginning of the enemy’s offensive. Although the government has not proclaimed anything, the normal laws governing the rights of the accused are virtually suspended.” (Holmes Brown and Don Luce, *Hostages of War*, 1972)

## 13.7 Interrogation centers

Phoenix prisoners are sent to provincial interrogation centers (PICs). In these centers torture is as “administratively” applied as the “question” once was in French royal prisons.

Stories have filtered into the American press, such as these, laconic:

“Nguyen Thi Yen was beaten until he fainted with a log. When she regained consciousness she was forced to stand naked in front of ten torturers who burned her breasts with cigarettes.” “Vo Thi Bach Tuyet was beaten and suspended by his feet under a dazzling light. Then she was locked in a cramped cell half flooded, mice and insects climbed on her body.” (*New York Times*, August 13, 1973).

Testimonials confirmed by others. According to the Dispatch News Service International of July 6, 1972, “More than 90% of those arrested have been subjected to violent interrogations that include caning, electric shocks, nail pulling, ingesting soapy water.”

An American doctor, Dr. Nelson, certified before the House subcommittee on July 17, 1970, that he had examined tortured prisoners. The president of the National Association of Students of South Vietnam, Huynh Tan Mâm, is crippled, becomes deaf and blind as a result of the abuse he suffers. Similarly, the president of the Association of Secondary School Students, Le Van Nuôi, lost the use of his legs after several serious beatings.

Americans participate in the “anti-subversive” activities of ICPs. According to journalist Theodore Jacqueney, “ICPs have relationships with their CIA counterparts and often with AID police advisers.” (*Aid to Thieu*, 1972)

## 13.8 Jails

The policy of systematic terror pursued by the South Vietnamese government and its American ally is all the more violent as it fails to win the support or even neutrality of the population. The great weapon used is mass deportation. A real parking and a grid of the population is led by the regime of Thieu. Overloaded boats lead women children and old men to Con Son, without judgment. 1,500 during the month of April 1972 alone (according to *Le Monde* of 10 January 1973). Intellectuals, Buddhists, students of Hue join them.

Nothing is generally known about missing persons. No “service” is competent to provide information. In reality, secrecy is the rule and covers a

sprawling system of sidelining and eliminating opponents and widespread repression.

Thus, far from the romantico-nihilistic fantasies of *Apocalypse Now*, a grinding machine works in the shadows, which is reminiscent in many ways of the Nazi death industry.

In 1970, according to official American sources, there were some 100,000 prisoners in South Vietnamese prisons (congressional session, July-August 1970). During the same year, according to *Le Monde* (November 10, 1971), there were 153,000 arrests.

The doubling of the US budget devoted to prisons in 1972 suggests that the number of prisoners has also doubled. In 1973, thousands of new prisoners joined the jails of Thieu. The US figures appear to be largely underestimated. The GRP announced in 1973 that there were about 400,000 inmates in the entire South Vietnamese prison system. According to Amnesty International they are “at least 200,000” (November 1972).

There are more than a thousand official and secret places of detention in South Vietnam. They are found in every city, every province, every district. The largest and best known are the prisons of Con Son or Con Dao (ex-Poulo Condor), Chi Hoa, in the suburbs of Saigon, Thu Duc, Tan Hiep and Cay Dua (on the island of Phu Quoc, near the Cambodian border).

The way prisoners are treated, known to Americans — especially since army officers work in prisons in close collaboration with South Vietnamese — evokes Nazi procedures. Prisoners experience malnutrition, promiscuity and systematic physical and moral degradation.

### 13.9 The Tiger cages

“The Con Son National Correction Center,” as the South Vietnamese authorities put it advantageously, is located on a paradise island in the South China Sea some 220 km from Saigon. It was built by the French in 1862 to serve as a penal colony. It has long been known as “Devil’s Island”. The “tiger cages” of camp n<sup>c</sup>4<sup>XVII</sup> are one of the jewels. Their existence has long been denied by both American and Vietnamese authorities, but we owe an edifying description to the American journalist Don Luce, already quoted, who published his report in several American newspapers.

In a secluded area of the camp, hidden from official visitors, there are small ceilingless cells that the guards watch from above, through an opening protected by a gate. In each of these small stone compartments of about

---

<sup>XVII</sup>Might be a typo and supposed to be "n<sup>o</sup>4", we are not sure.

2.50 meters by barely 1.50 meters, three or four prisoners are piled up. A hygienic wooden bucket is emptied once a day. The detainees bear marks of beatings, injuries, have lost fingers, they are in a state of exhaustion that prevents them from standing.

A bucket of lime, above each cell, allows the guard to “calm” the protests of prisoners who ask for food, they are sprayed with quicklime that still litters the ground. With such treatment, prisoners spit blood and are afflicted with tuberculosis, eye and skin diseases.

An adjacent building houses identical tiger cages for women. There are five of them per compartment. The youngest inmate is fifteen years old, the oldest, blind, seventy.

The kapos reign terror, relentlessly attack the weakest at the slightest complaint. Apart from official visits, prisoners remain chained to bars that cross the walls, twenty-four hours a day, even during meals, sleep and bathing, with prohibition to sit. The dilapidated tile roof lets water through when it rains, the uneven ground is littered with garbage.

The irons used at Con Son are manufactured by Smith and Wesson of Springfield, Massachusetts. They are not molded and smooth (like those of French colonialism), they are made of F.8 iron, building material. They have sharp veins that cut the flesh of the feet and cause a real torment.

About 500 inmates languish for many months, many years, in tiger cages. On the whole camp there are more than 10,000.

When they are not in the tiger cages, the detainees can benefit from the hospitality of the “ox cages”, set up in former stables of the French administration. They differ from the former only in their size and the number of residents who pile up there, about twenty, subject to the same regime as before.

In addition to the general regime, which is already unbearable, there are other practices to prevent prisoners from eating: they have three minutes to eat, gravel is mixed with rice, the fish is damaged. There is a complete shortage of vegetables. The famine is such that the prisoners feed on insects, termites, ducklings, the only source of protein.

On the side of the jailers – more than 100 in Poulo Condor – a complacent leadership allows opiomania, orgies (the administration regularly brings from the coast convoys of prostitutes), gambling, rape and murder freely perpetrated. It goes without saying that prisoners are also stripped of their money along with their clothes when they arrive. Some kapos settle scores within the camp to appropriate the accumulated Jackpots, some amass nest eggs of 400,000 to 500,000 piastres<sup>XVIII</sup>. As in the Nazi camps, ordinary prisoners

---

<sup>XVIII</sup>The piastre indochinoise refers to the currency from colonial times

are willingly used as extra torturers.

The situation in Chi Hoa, near Saigon, is not much better. On July 16, 1968, while the director was Nguyen Van Ve, the head of the “specialists” of the prison administration Lo Van Khuong (or Chin Khuong) ordered the transfer of 120 sick, tuberculosis, paralyzed or amputated prisoners to the “buffalo cages”. The buffalo cage area will now be called the “convalescent camp”. Far from being treated, as they had hoped, the 120 prisoners are crammed into cells 12 by 8 meters. To lie down, each has less than one square meter. After refusing forced labor, the prisoners were left to eat only rice and nuoc mam (sour sauce). In two months, 50% of the prisoners are affected by beriberi due to lack of fresh vegetables (Debris and Menras, *Rescapés des bagnes de Saïgon* (Survivors of the prisons of Saigo)).

In Thu Duc, a women’s prison, they are tortured, electrocuted, tortured with water, beaten to death by drunk thugs. The victim is hung by the wrists on a beam, he is then beaten with a club until fainting by six or seven policemen (this is called “plane trip”). Many lose the use of their legs after this treatment. Particular attention is paid to female students and girls, who are gang-raped (Higher School of Pedagogy of Saigon, 4 July 1970).

In Tan Hiep there are some 1,500 permanent detainees to whom... there is nothing to complain about, except that they were rounded up by American troops during an operation. They are essentially peasants, who sometimes languish for years without being tried, moving from one prison to another, and unaware of the reasons for their incarceration. Police officers often cut off detainees’ fingers and ears with machetes.

In Cay Dua, Dr. Tran Trong Chau is tortured with electrodes until he loses consciousness. “I was locked in a dark dungeon of barely 3 square meters where I ate and relieved myself. When it rained, the water flowed in and my feces floated everywhere. I had to stand with my back to the wall without being able to lie down to sleep.” (1971)

The considerable number of deaths victims of the Thieu prison regime and americans in South Vietnam is difficult to assess. Some figures have arrived. In 1971, 147 prisoners died in Phu Quoc camp as a result of ill-treatment; 125 also, between January and May 1972, for lack of care. From 15 September 1971 special orders authorized the military police to shoot prisoners without notice. 200 dead and wounded immediately resulted. Several prisoners commit suicide by opening their bellies. (*News from Vietnam*, March 1, 1973, Canada)

Towards the end of 1972, the Thieu regime, in view of the progress of the Paris Conference, undertook a campaign of extermination in the camps. Indeed, if he wants to hope to survive politically after the ceasefire, he must make disappear all those who lived in his prisons and who could tell what they

saw. The signing of the Paris Agreements in January 1973 partly hampered these projects. Nevertheless, the Saigon administration made thousands of detainees in Con Dao disappear; they are often presented as having been “released”. Of course, nothing is known about their fate. “That of some 200,000 prisoners in the Thieu jails is being played out at the moment.” (Nguyen Dinh Thi, Paris, 21 March 1973)

U.S. assistance to the police has been a key part of the U.S. system in South Vietnam. It consisted of financing without counting the repressive apparatus of the Saigon regime, of maintaining its specialized staff, of directing its operations through a corps of omnipresent “advisers”.

As is customary, colonialism delegates the dirty work to the most corrupt elements of the occupied country, preferring to remain in the shadows to pull the strings and thus not attract the too direct disapproval of human rights defenders.

Nevertheless, evidence of U.S. involvement in the most sinister campaigns of torture, detention and extermination abounds. Not content with pounding North Vietnam for years, setting the majority of South Vietnam on fire and bloodshed, burning tens of thousands of innocent people with napalm, destroying the country’s crops and starving millions of peasants during the surface war, American neocolonialism waged another sneaky and bloodthirsty war against the national and political resistance of an entire persecuted people.

As a spokesperson for the Agency for International Development (AID) acknowledged: “The AID supported the public security program in Vietnam from 1955 - The task of the IDA was to assist the national police in recruiting, training and organizing a force for the maintenance of law and order. In all, more than 7,000 Americans worked for the ‘Public Safety’ program in South Vietnam.” (*Hearing on US Assistance*)

From 1968 to 1971, more than \$100 million was spent, divided between the CIA, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the AID. The Vietnamese police system has been completely renewed in a few years. Of the 300,000 Vietnamese in charge of “maintaining order” in 1972, only 122,000 were allocated to Saigon’s budget. The others are appointed by Uncle Sam. There are also a large number of secret agents of the political police, reporting directly to the CIA. (*Liberation News Service*, December 6, 1972).

In requesting a \$33 million credit for fiscal year 1972 for the National Police (including \$22 million from Pentagon funds), the IDA stated in 1971: “The Vietnamese National Police, one aspect of Vietnamization, is called upon to gradually take on a heavier burden: share with the South Vietnamese armed forces the burden of counter-revolutionary struggle and ensure daily peace and order in the cities and countryside. Its current strength (100,000)

will be increased to 124,000 in the fiscal year to enable it to assume a heavier responsibility in the future. Proportionate US aid is planned.” (Michael T. Klare, *War Without End*, 1972).

Despite these figures, the U.S. government has consistently claimed that the treatment of prisoners is an internal matter in South Vietnam. And yet, as journalists Holmes Brown and Don Luce wrote: “We created the Diem government and deposed it; we bombed without permission and ‘defoliated’ their country, however out of respect for their independence we allow them to mistreat their prisoners.”

After two American observers revealed the existence of the “tiger cages”, the Government of Saigon began the construction of new solitary confinement cells, with prisoners to be used as forced labour. Faced with the latter’s refusal, the AID is obliged to enter into a \$400,000 contract with an American company, RMK-BRJ (*Hearings on US Assistance*).

It must also be recognized that americans are masters in the art of interrogation and torture. “American-run interrogation centers are notorious for their ‘refined’ way of torturing.” (Ngo Cong Duc, *Le Monde*, January 3, 1973)

After the Paris Accords, the Americans will continue to finance the Thieu police. The IDA has asked Congress for \$18 million and the Department of Defense about double. (*Washington Post*, February 2, 1973) “Only U.S. aid in men and dollars allows Thieu to continue the arrests, detention, torture and massacre of political prisoners.” (*Saigon’s prisoners*, USA, 1973) The American press acknowledged the existence of the maintenance of “20,000 ‘civilian advisers’ after the withdrawal of uniformed troops” after the signing of the agreements, and that “Operation Phoenix — soon replaced by the ‘F6 program’ which pursues the same objectives — a program sponsored by the CIA to eliminate Thieu’s adversaries and suspects, was still in full swing.” (*Liberation News Service*, December 6, 1972)

Let us leave the conclusion to an American journalist, Michael Klare (*Watching the Tricontinental Empire*, n°21, 1972): “The assistance and direction of the Public Safety Division is so well developed that in reality the national police could very well be seen as a mercenary force of the United States rather than an indigenous institution.”

### François Derivery

François Derivery is a painter (DDP group). Author of numerous articles on aesthetics and criticism. Secretary of the journal *Esthétique Cahiers* (1988-1997). Currently Associate Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Intervention*.



## Chapter 14

# Massacres and repression in Iran

**François DERIVERY**

*(to my friends — where are they today? — from the Tudeh Party of Iran)*

Iran — Persia — an ancestral country, the cradle of humanity, whose millennial history and high culture fall on your shoulders, with the sweltering heat, as soon as you set foot on the tarmak of Mehrabad airport in Tehran.

In the spring of 1975, it took long half hours to cross the various airlocks, full of SAVAK spies and armed soldiers, and reach the exit. Foreigners were treated much better than nationals, especially and meticulously controlled.

Previously, everyone had had plenty of time to contemplate, parked in a reserved area of the airport, the American military jumbo jets, painted in khaki, which did not bother to hide. We did not fail to notice also, a little later and in this register, the Coca-Cola factory installed in the city center.

The immediate impression was that of a country under siege and a bubbling of multifaceted life badly gridded by a police force yet omnipresent.

Despite the mistrust and surveillance of conversations (Iranians go so far as to say — in private — that one in five people met in public places is directly or indirectly linked to SAVAK, one in three in universities) and although some names are taboo, no one has forgotten the 1953 coup, led by the CIA, which ended dr. Mossadegh's national independence government and put the country back under the control of Anglo-American oil companies.

In addition to its essential strategic position on the borders of the USSR ("first line of defense of the Western world"), Iran also has a substantial interest: its oil.

The beginnings of the war for oil date back to 1870. The country has long been under foreign influence, especially English and Russian. The Anglo-Persian Company grants Iran 16% of its oil revenues. Russia (Georgian Oil Company), then the USSR will occupy for a long time militarily the

northwest of the country.

If Persian culture is millennial and refined, its history certainly does not lack bloody events. It is a long litany of wars, assassinations, repression and violence. Often, in this country almost always ruled by potentates with little concern for human rights, physical elimination appears to be the simplest and fastest way to settle disputes, especially political ones.

The conjunction of these two factors: a background of ancestral violence on the basis of despotism and the oil war stoked by the plots and interventions of Anglo-Saxon capitalism, will give birth to the Shah's regime, a sinister machine to oppress, murder and exploit an entire people. No less than six successive presidents of the United States will have watched over the fate of the sovereign as much as the good profitability of their investments, which rested on the shoulders of a characterful individual who became a megalomaniac dictator.

Mohamad Reza Pahlavi comes from good stock. His father, Reza Khan, modestly nicknamed "the Great", had deposed the last Qajar in a military coup at the head of a Cossack regiment. Proclaimed king in December 1925, he was crowned by his troops on April 24, 1926 and founded the Pahlavi dynasty. Born in a poor neighborhood in the south of Tehran, he is a military man and an energizer, able to defenestrate a recalcitrant minister with his own hands during a council. To establish his power, he did not hesitate to launch punitive expeditions against active minorities whom he massacred mercilessly: Bakhtyanis, Kurds, Kashgais.

In 1933 he obtained the renegotiation of the oil agreements with the Anglo-Persian which became the Anglo-Iranian. Iran's share of oil revenues rises to 25

At the beginning of the Second World War, he did not hide his sympathy for the Germans, like Atatürk, his model. A Nazi propaganda center opened in Tehran in 1940. The Allies then occupied the country to reduce German influence and establish an oil supply route from the Gulf via the USSR. They forced Reza Shah, who complied on September 16, 1941, to abdicate in favor of his son Mohamad Reza.

The Americans will not leave. Roosevelt made the decision at the end of 1942. At the Tehran Conference in 1943, it was mainly weapons and military advisers who were sent, under the guise of rebuilding the country.

The first difficulties of the new regime took place at the end of 1944, with the communist uprising in Azerbaijan, supported by the USSR. The repression is fierce and causes 200 deaths a day. The monster demonstrations in support of Azerbaijan that take place in Isfahan and Tehran in front of the parliament, at the initiative of the Tudeh party, are repressed no less savagely.

In 1946, these were the attempts to secede several regions of the “Russian zone” bordering the Caspian: Guilan, Khorassan, Mazandaran, and the attempt at an independent republic in Kurdistan. The bloodshed continued and the Americans flocked in 1947. These conflicts allow the United States to get what it has been looking for for a long time: Iran’s withdrawal from the USSR.

In June 1947, they granted a credit of \$26 million in aid to Iranian troops. George Allen is the new ambassador of the United States. General Vernon Evans is appointed head of the military mission. General Schwartzkopf is delegated to the reorganization of the gendarmerie.

That same year, in 1947, Truman created the CIA.

In February 1949, on the 2nd, the Shah was the target of an assassination attempt in Tehran. This event will mark the spirit of the sovereign, especially vis-à-vis the one he will always consider as his main enemy, and against whom he will wage a ruthless war: the Marxist-Leninist Tudeh party of Iran. Although the responsibility of the Tudeh has not been clearly established – especially because of the immediate lynching of the aggressor, the photographer Fakhr Araï – the Shah will never give up his intimate conviction. Communist ideology is also a permanent reproach to the satrap’s life that he leads, in view of the too conspicuous misery of the population. The bourgeoisie barely exists, in Iran, it will know its rise only in the 1970s, with the massive arrival of oil revenues. But the Shah is a follower of expeditious judgments and methods. He proved this in February 1948 by having the journalist Massoud, director of the weekly *Marde Emrouz* (“The Man of the Day”), murdered with a revolver in front of the door of his newspaper. The latter threatened to make revelations about the way of life of the royal family. There are already rumor in town that the Shah maintains a troop of seids to expeditiously liquidate the most agitated opponents.

At the beginning of 1951, foreign interventions and the stranglehold of the Anglo-American oil companies sparked a nationalist revival and ensured the popular success of Dr. Mossadegh’s National Front party.

Mohamad Hedayat, known as Mossadegh (“the Valiant”) was born in 1881. Fine politician, he studied in Paris and was a financial inspector at the age of 15. Since Shah Razmara’s Prime Minister (who is accused of boiling prisoners alive!) was assassinated in the Tehran bazaar by Khalid Taharassebi (March 7, 1951), Ayatollah El Kachani publicly supported Mossadegh’s candidacy. The Shah, however, appointed Hossein Ala, his ambassador to Washington, to the vacant post. This is a unanimous protest of the population. The Bazaar rises up against the Shah. On 13 March, he had to give in and appoint Mossadegh as prime minister.

He immediately pursued a resolutely anti-British policy and obtained

from Parliament, on April 30, 1951, the law of nationalization of Iranian oils, which withdrew from the Anglo-Iranian the immense oil fields of which it held the concession.

This is the incredulous stupor on the London and New York Stock Exchanges. Both claim to be “scandalized”. Mossadegh is called “crazy”. It must be said that the Anglo-Iranian, as it should be, watered a good part of the deputies...

On June 10, 1951, the Iranian flag flew at the headquarters of the Anglo-Iranian in Khoramshahr. A victory of the people, they are rare. Ambassador U.S. Harriman having supported the British too openly, his car was stopped in Tehran by demonstrators.

The Shah’s compromises with the Anglo-Saxons, his hostility to Mossadegh, were particularly badly perceived by the population. Mossadegh was re-elected in 1952. On February 26, 1953, apparently defeated, the Shah resolved to exile, in secret, towards Rome, in a small private plane. His tragicomic stopover at Baghdad airport will give Soraya the opportunity to flaunt her unconsciousness and lightness: she is only interested in her suitcases and jewelry. A constant in her behavior.

It is the CIA’s intervention that will save the Shah — and will save Iran from the international opprobrium of a left-wing government. The operation will be carried out by two friends: the American Kim Roosevelt, cia envoy, who provides logistical support, and the renegade Zahedi, a former mossadegh supporter whom the British will be able to “return” following an incredible kidnapping. In August 1953 he obtained the support of troops still favorable to the Shah to overthrow Mossadegh.

Zahedi, during the Second World War, did not hide his pro-Nazi sympathies. A dubious character, corrupted by gambling and obsessed with sex (he boasts of holding the addresses of all the prostitutes in Isfahan), it is he who, as a reward for his betrayal, will succeed Mossadegh as Prime Minister.

On August 13, 1953, the Shah, who had returned from exile, dismissed Mossadegh by a “firman” worn by Nassiri, the future boss of SAVAK.

On August 19, Mossadegh was on the run. He will be recaptured, surrounded in his small brick house in Tehran, imprisoned, tried on November 8, 1953, sentenced to death, then pardoned by the Shah (who does not want to make him a martyr) and finally sentenced to three years in prison.

The funds needed for the coup were provided by the United States to the tune of \$400,000 and by Iran’s Melli Bank. In addition to the two main protagonists, other characters participated in the plot, such as General Nassiri. But it was Allen Dulles who oversaw the affair and pulled the strings, along with his deputy Richard Helms, who would become U.S. ambassador to Tehran in 1974.

The coup of August 19, 1953 – an exceptional fact in the history of Iran – caused only 200 deaths!

And it is immediately the return of oil companies.

On August 5, 1954, an agreement was signed with an international oil consortium including English, French, Dutch and Americans. The National Oil Company of Iran is established. The consortium will have to return part of the 260,000 km<sup>2</sup> of oil fields it controlled.

Meanwhile, an intriguing and dubious individual continues his journey to power: General Teymour Bakhtiar, the governor of Tehran. Initially a supporter of Mossadegh, he betrayed him to pursue his own game. He ordered the massacre of Tudeh supporters — 800 arrests — in the courtyard of Gharz prison. With the help of Attorney General Azmoudeh, who was responsible for giving these purges legal cover, he also made “disappear” more than 3,000 Mossadegh supporters in summary executions (*Le Monde*, 13-14 November 1955).

It was this executioner who created the SAVAK, the political police of the Shah of sinister reputation, a real police state within the state, in 1956, with the technical and financial assistance of the United States and the Israeli Mossad. Bakhtiar’s excessive ambition will be at the origin of his loss. After trying to compete with the Shah, he was assassinated in Iraq by the Shah’s agents (1959).

These various events have resulted in strengthening the power of the Shah who becomes an absolute despot and concentrates all the powers, while the Americans, firmly established, use Iran in their policy of encircling the USSR, through the overarming of CENTO, the pro-American pact that unites Iran, Turkey and Pakistan. Invested with the role of gendarme of the region, north and south on the Gulf, militarized Iran works closely with US forces and logistics.

Oil money is starting to flow. The fortune of the Shah and his entourage swelled. Western newspapers complacently echoed the splendor of the palaces of Golestan or Niavaran, on the heights of the city, the escapades of Ashraf, the shah’s sister, able to spend millions of dollars in Monte Carlo overnight. Because the whole court travels, for pleasure but also to conduct juicy negotiations and conclude sumptuous contracts with large international companies, to which the country is delivered. Corruption spreads, but newspapers are muzzled, any protest is repressed. In The European newspapers there is only talk of the multiple female adventures of the Shah – a sexual “collector” – and the anxieties of Farah Diba. The Shah spent the winter in St. Moritz, traveling to Mexico, was received by Giscard-d’Estaing, the Queen of England and all of Gotha. He regularly consults Kissinger. Previously, the symbolic summit of this period of splendor and media success, the Shah had wanted

to crown himself in a luxury deployment, during the celebration of the 2,500 years of Persepolis, in front of an audience of statesmen and crowned heads honored by his invitation (October 26, 1967)<sup>140</sup>.

Yet, while Ashraf is building a palace with a golden leafy roof, a modernist *look*<sup>XIX</sup>, surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers, in the middle of the desert, the misery of the population has never been so unbearable. However, with the rise in oil prices, the annual per capita income, previously one of the poorest in the world, amounted in 1972 to 870 dollars (8 times higher than that of Pakistan). But the great mass of Iranians see nothing of this money, except continuous inflation and the unbearable cost of living. Driven by hunger and necessity, they demonstrate regularly, as they can, and are just as regularly massacred in the street — because both the police and the troops do not do detail. Between 1960 and 1979 thousands of deaths accompanied the multiple movements of crowds and protests.

In 1961, for example, it was the strike of the bricklayers of Tehran, 30,000 people, victims of a ferocious exploitation. They are paid 35 rials (25 F) to make 1,000 bricks that bring 3,500 rials to the contractor. The police engage in a massacre. It reoffended shortly afterwards by suppressing a student demonstration on January 21, 1961 (100 dead). On April 4, 1963, Ayatollah Khomeini, who had publicly criticized the Shah, was arrested in Qom on the 6th. During the huge demonstration of protest that followed, more than 1,000 people were killed (*Le Monde*, February 20, 1964).

## 14.1 The SAVAK<sup>141</sup>

As we can see, the shooting in the crowd and the almost daily massacres that marked the end of the Shah's regime in 1979 had antecedents. The Shah has never led, with regards to the population and despite propaganda gestures (the "White Revolution" of 1963) and high-sounding declarations ("his deep union with his people"), but a policy of systematic repression, in blood, of all criticism and any contestation. For him, it was not only a question of reigning as an absolute despot, but also of holding the country, in accordance with the strategic and political agreements concluded with the American ally and mentor who, without more scruples in Iran than elsewhere, wielded his bloody puppet behind the scenes. As a reciprocity, however, according to the American journalist Jack Anderson (who lit up the Watergate affair),

<sup>140</sup>De Gaulle delegated Pompidou there.

<sup>XIX</sup>Word in English in the original

<sup>141</sup>Sāzmān-e Ettlā'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar: *Information and security organization of the country.*

the Shah, with the help of Richard Helms his CIA adviser, helped Nixon to be re-elected, thanks to a gift of several million dollars that would have passed through Mexico to be opportunely “laundered”.

It would have been difficult to talk about SAVAK, the political police, without a historical reminder that situates its field of appearance and the field of action. The SAVAK is just the most terrifying element of a complex device. It is also the basis, the foundation, both of the Shah’s personal power and of his organization and effectiveness. Savak is in every way the reflection of the Shah. He made it his personal tool as soon as he managed to get rid of Bakhtiar, its creator. Subsequently, General Pakravan in June 1961, then General Nassiri in 1966 (“An intellectual replaced by a man with a fist”) will ensure the direction.

In 1975, the Iranian army officially had 400,000 men, the gendarmerie 80,000, SAVAK at least 100,000.

A “Super SAVAK” controls the organization, it is the Imperial Inspectorate Organization (IIO), which is under the direction of General Yasdanpanah and then Hossein Fardous. This organization has some 200 senior officers. Finally, a special office is composed of about fifteen handpicked officers. It oversees the building and drastically controls the activities of the entire system. It is accountable only to the Shah.

This secret police, an organization of infiltration, infiltration and close surveillance of the population, is everywhere. Any Iranian can feel spied on at any time, and monitors his words accordingly. This permanent psychosis owes nothing to the imagination. In Iran, there is no such thing as freedom of expression. Any criticism of the regime, let alone of the Shah or his family, is a crime punishable by immediate imprisonment. The name of the secret organization is also taboo. In each household the portrait of the Shah or his son must appear. As soon as a stranger approaches in the street the tone drops, the conversation stops. How many innocent passers-by or genuine patriots have not been wrongly suspected of belonging to the feared police, and how many others have rightly been? Public places, mosques, the Bazaar (which will remain, along with the universities, the main focus of popular resistance) but also factories, shops, and of course international hotels (the Intercontinental, the Royal Tehran Hilton), where employees are often intelligence agents, are constantly monitored. Microphones and cameras are hidden in hotel rooms. We spy on everything. Ordinary connections are open, including mail to foreign countries. Politicians, activists, students living in Europe, the United States or the USSR are under constant surveillance — there are also, of course, SAVAK agents who try to infiltrate opposition circles abroad — and their families or friends are put on file for all intents and purposes and sometimes arrested.

Civil servants and politicians do not escape suspicion, any personality of the regime is doubled by a security officer. SAVAK's offices are numerous in Tehran, its headquarters are located near Chemirand, at the crossroads of Saadabad. The "Committee", rightly feared, is a huge building with thick walls, clad in antennas. Individuals suspected of a crime — which can range from a simple crime of opinion to suspicion of membership of a banned political organization such as the Tudeh — real or supposed, are arrested and taken to interrogation centers or prisons. This is the beginning of an uncertain adventure, and often horror, because torture is practiced regularly. The conditions of detention of prisoners are an ordeal and, under the impetus of American and Israeli advisers familiar with the latest refinements of "psychological torture", blackmail, imprisonment and torture of relatives are also practiced. In addition to judgments behind closed doors, which are the responsibility of a military court with decisions never justified, summary executions and deaths by torture, other usual practices are more expensive in abjection, such as these almost daily television broadcasts of confessions and self-criticism of prisoners, which everyone knows were obtained by torture and blackmail, so much, obviously, the "repentants" were made up, their wounds poorly concealed for the occasion.

Many Iranian intellectuals and artists were sent to the Shah's jails, many died there. On the sidelines of the splendour of Persepolis, the regime seemed to want to absolutely decapitate its people of its democratic elites. The Western press and international bodies have ended up giving timid echoes of these systematic violations of human rights. But when a journalist dares to ask the Shah — who has always denied torture — what he thinks, he gets the following answer: "Amnesty International? What is that? We don't know!" (Actuel 2, 24 June 1974)

In 1971, the trial of the "Group of Eighteen" took place in Tehran. They confessed under torture to being communists, then retracted. A French observer, Me Mignon, who can attend two court hearings (prosecution and "defense" are provided by soldiers) reports that several of the detainees have shown scars and sequelae of torture. One accused, Chokrollah Paknejad, said: "I was taken after my arrest to the SAVAK cellars in Khoramshahr where I was stripped naked with my fists. I was beaten during 20 hours of interrogation. Then I spent a week in the toilets. from Abadan prison, without clothes. I was then transferred to Evin (a prison in northern Tehran) where I was again tortured, whipped and beaten. Then I was applied the weight 'handcuffs' (the prisoner's hands are tied behind his neck, they hang heavier and heavier weights) and beaten." Another defendant, Nasser Kakhsar, will tell how he saw engineer Nikadvoudi die under torture in Ghezal-Galeh prison from a spinal cord injury. His crime was to "read books". Ayatollah



Saidi also died in Ghezel-Galeh.

Nouri Albala and Libertalis of the International Federation of Democratic Jurists also attended some trials of Iranian opponents detained in Evin. Between 28 January and 6 February 1972, six defendants were sentenced to death. Others are accused of attacks on banks, police stations... Despite the law, hearings are held in camera. Prisoners are tortured in indefinite police custody. Some tell. Sadegh was hit with a revolver butt on his head resulting in internal bleeding and then a coma. Others were tied to a white-heated metal table. It is at the time of arrest, in general, that the abuse is most extensive. "The defendant passes into the hands of karate and judo specialists, he then falls into a coma. Usually the hands, feet or nose are broken. Upon waking up, the prisoner must sign a confession stating that he has not been subjected to any torture."

"SAVAK agents forced Mr. Asghar Badizadegan to sit on an electric chair to burn him for four hours. He fell into a coma. The burn had reached the spine and it spread such a smell that no one approached our cell. He did not die but had to do three surgeries. Today he has to use his hands to walk."

As for Mehdi Savalani "he can no longer walk, he had both legs broken. Torture by electric shock is the most common, it leaves no trace but produces general paralysis. They also inject drugs such as cardiazol which panics the heart rate, and they tear off the nails, they subject the prisoners to ultrasound, shocks on the head"; "I also saw a prisoner who was unable to urinate because weights had been hung on his sex."

Description of Evin Prison: "The dungeons are dark and so wet that the sugar melts on its own, they measure 1.20 by 2 meters by 2 meters high, with a small mesh opening of 40 cm. No other light. The three of us lived there."

During the last years of the Shah's regime, the bloodiest, colloquia and assemblies met throughout America and Europe, especially in universities, to denounce torture and demand freedom of expression in Iran. The Shah was scolded by the crowd in Switzerland, but SAVAK was strongly established in universities (the estimated figure in 1975 was 4,000 agents abroad) to the point of physically intervening to oppose the Tudeh and ransack its stands during demonstrations of support (Cité Universitaire, Paris, 1977). It is the war: that of the opponents to obtain the fall of the dictator, that of the regime for its survival. And in Iran it is the daily massacre of a people who revolt.

As for the press, newspapers such as *Le Monde* and also the *Sunday Times* and even the *Financial Times* publish reports on cases of torture in Iran. In 1975, the Parisian lawyer Yves Baudelot investigates in Iran the disappearance of three political prisoners, Dr. Simin Salehi, Loftollah Meysamie and Hosseyn Djaveri. General Azizi, director of the prison administration,

said he knew nothing about the detainees, who, according to testimonies, had been tortured. It was Amnesty International that was to reveal that Salehi had died under torture, eight months pregnant. The conditions of detention, according to Baudelot, are considered by the jailers as “conducive to confessions”, confessions that are denied to them as much as they can by the prisoners. According to the lawyer, torture of relatives of the family is usually practiced. A woman is raped in front of her husband, her children, including young children, are tortured to make him confess.

The Sunday Times of 19 January 1975 published a testimony by journalist Philip Jacobson. He claims that his newspaper’s investigations establish without any possible dispute the reality of torture in Iran. According to him, tortured prisoners fall into three categories: those who are suspected of belonging to left-wing political organizations or of having participated in guerrilla actions; religious hostile to the Shah; middle-class intellectuals and common people who have criticized the regime in some way in public. Several testimonies collected attest to the presence of the boss of SAVAK, Nemet-Ollah Nassiri, in the torture chambers. “Some prisoners — Jacobson adds — are prepared for their own execution by a refinement of psychological torture.”

SAVAK frequently uses an innovation in torture, a variant of the electric chair dear to Uncle Sam: the “hot table” or the “grill” or the “roast board”. Jacobson describes this instrument as “an iron lattice resembling a box spring, in which flows an electric current as in a rotisserie. The tortured are tied up on this chassis until they start grilling.” As for women, they are preferably beaten savagely after being raped.

In the United States, petitions were sent, notably from the University of Berkeley in 1975, to obtain information on the fate of disappeared such as Dr. Ali Shariati, theologian, Mrs. Hadjebi Tabrizi, Dr. Gholamhossein Sa’edi, writer, S. Sol- tanpour, writer... The petitioners (more than 2,000) are received on the steps of the embassy by an employee who refuses to say his name. They are invited to send a letter by mail to Tehran. American authors and artists such as Noam Chomsky, Laurence Ferlinghetti, Kay Boyle, Joan Baez participate in these actions.

It can be estimated in 1975 that some 137,000 prisoners passed through the SAVAK Committee — the headquarters, particularly hated. To this must be added an equal number of people directed to Gashr or Evin and who were tortured there. On seven men arrested, on average, only one escaped torture. The Association of Iranian Democratic Youth and Students (ODYSI, Toudeh) estimated in 1977 that some 300,000 people were tortured, men and women, in SAVAK prisons during the 20 years of its existence.

In the interrogation rooms, the panoply of instruments of torture hangs

on the walls, as in the sado-maso dens now fashionable, where the bourgeois fantasy of civilized violence is expressed. But here, the rest is otherwise sinister, torment can lead to death. Metal whips hang from nails, electric sticks are aligned on stools, nail puller pliers are exposed prominently. Not to mention the easel and the roasting board. But other tortures are practiced, such as the introduction of boiling water into the intestine by clysterium, electrocution of the genitals, which “make the victims, men and women, howl like wolves”. Or burning irons are introduced into the mouths of the tortured (*Cairfi Newsletter*, New York, March 1975).

There would be no end to detailing the list of victims. The total, like the methods, are overwhelming. Not just for the Shah, a megalomaniac maniac who would have been nothing but a failed despot without the support given to him by the CIA, in 1953 to regain his lost throne, overthrowing Mossadegh. The latter remains the national hero of Iran, for every Iranian, despite the undeniable charisma of Khomeini, who, in his own way, continued his fight. Whatever is said in the West (where American propaganda is the rule), Iran is not only a great country — it has always been — but it is also a modern and evolved country where, since the fall of the Shah, enormous progress has been made in the social field.

On the other hand, the CIA coup of 1953, and the ensuing US hegemonic policy, as well as the unconditional support given to the satrap of another age, Reza Pahlavi, condemned Iran to 25 years of stagnation, causing a liability of a few million deaths and an unprecedented amount of suffering.

It can also be argued that the United States, through this act of unacceptable intrusion into the internal affairs of another country, was primarily responsible for the failure of an attempt at a secular and democratic government in Iran. Just as they are directly responsible for the advent of an Islamic republic with which, to say the least, they do not have an ounce of credit. The United States, moreover, has not forgiven Iran for having been ousted since, like Cuba, Libya and now Iraq, it subjects it to a severe blockade, even going so far as to threaten any country that trades with it with retaliatory measures. Capitalist freedom keeps its logic.

**François Derivery**



## Chapter 15

# Anticommunist genocide in Indonesia

**Jacques JURQUET**

With about three thousand islands, Indonesia had a population of about two hundred million in 1998, making it the most populous country in South-east Asia. Its capital Jakarta has about 10 million inhabitants.

The most important islands are Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan (or Borneo), the archipelagos of Celebes and Moluccas, and finally the western part of New Guinea named Irian.

In the latitudinal extension of Java, the possession of the east of the island of Timor, a former Portuguese colony, has remained for decades the stakes of a war of annexation waged by the Indonesian army against Fretilin, an indigenous organization that founded an independent state, recognized and supported by the entire local population. (See the specific text on this issue in this book.)

The name Indonesia is of relatively recent creation, dating from the eve of the First World War. In reality, the whole territory, populated by 90% of peasants, has been occupied and plundered by Dutch colonialism since the very beginning of the seventeenth century.

As early as 1602, the Netherlands had set up a trading company called the “Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie”, which was to become in the mid-seventeenth century the “Dutch Company”, exercising its monopoly on all local agricultural productions: rice, maize, tea, coffee, cassava, copra, etc.

Then in 1799, the Dutch state itself supplanted this company, establishing the “Dutch East Indies”. It took direct control of their colonial management, defending Dutch interests against other colonialists.

Tobacco factories were just ahead of the exploitation of oil deposits.

The populations inhabiting these islands, belonging to several ethnic groups, have been mostly converted to Islam and in minority to Christianity. For three centuries, they were subjected to a classical colonial exploitation involving periods of conquest and criminal repression. In 1740, for example, a general revolt of the Chinese inhabiting these islands was crushed in blood, causing thousands of victims that are no longer talked about today.

From 1830 to 1877, the colonial surplus was estimated at 800 million guilders. From 1900 until 1910, in the capitalist countries there was official talk of the Dutch colonial empire. The world was then divided between the great colonial empires dominated by Western states that competed with each other like those of France and Great Britain, knowing how to unite when necessary on the backs of the enslaved and plundered populations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Indonesian nationalism emerged in 1908 and developed over the following decades.

At the same time, the ideas of communism manifested themselves from the creation in 1920 of the first Communist Party in Asia, the Communist Party of Indonesia (or P.K.I.), even before the birth of the Chinese Communist Party or that of the Vietnam Workers' Party. But the following year, in 1921, a split confirmed the rupture between Muslim and secular militants. Then, following an insurrection in Java and Sumatra, it was banned by the colonial authorities in 1927. Thousands of people were deported to the inhospitable Irian mountains and the communist leaders were all incarcerated in special camps.

The anti-colonialist nationalist current developed more slowly. The organization "Perhimpunan Indonesia", to which many intellectuals adhered, multiplied the think tanks. Within that of Bandung appeared a young engineer of exceptional popular eloquence, who dreamed of unifying nationalism, Islam and Marxism. Born in 1901 to a father who was a teacher and then a student in Bandung, this nationalist activist was none other than the future "father of Indonesian independence", Achmed Sukarno. In 1927 he founded the "Persikatan Nasional Indonesia", "Indonesian National Party" and formulated in October 1928 the fundamental slogan of a "youth oath": "one homeland, one nation, one language". But the Dutch colonialists arrested him in 1929. In front of the court where he appeared, he launched the slogan "Indonesia accuses". The P.N.I. was dissolved at the same time.

The economic crisis of 1929 had severe consequences in Indonesia.

The collapse of world prices for exportable products led to a considerable increase in unemployment and caused appalling misery among the most disadvantaged strata of the population.

The simultaneous developments of the nationalist movement and the com-

unist movement, sometimes convergent, other times in disagreement, then experienced multiple vicissitudes, marked by a very harsh colonial repression, imprisonments and capital executions. The essential disagreement between Sukarno's ideas and those of the Communists was over the principle of the "class struggle."

The banned P.N.I. was replaced by the Partindo. Its leader Sukarno was arrested by the colonialists a second time in 1933.

Then a more anti-fascist than anti-colonialist organization was born in 1937, the Gerindo, and, in 1939, was created the G.A.P.I., Antifascist Nationalist Group. The latter adopted unitary demands, such as the Indonesian language, the red and white flag and the national anthem. In 1941 he established a National Council of the Indonesian People. But, although taking refuge in London after the occupation of its country by the Germans, the Dutch government rejected all these initiatives. Queen Wilhelmina wanted to continue the war against Nazi Germany based on what she called "the Dutch East Indies". Position of a capitalism in struggle with the Nazis eager to rely on its own colonialism.

The situation in Indonesia was turned upside down after the landing of Japanese military forces in 1942 and the occupation they imposed instead of the colonialism of the Netherlands. The Dutch tercentenary power collapsed, which was not without generating some illusions among the Indonesian populations towards the Japanese, especially in the most privileged social classes, in a comprador bourgeoisie already constituted and operational. The new occupiers sought to win the support of Sukarno and his nationalist friends, who agreed to "play the game" at least temporarily. But one of them, named Sjahrir, a militant of the Socialist Party, nevertheless organized resistance networks. An even more active leader, Amir Sjarifuddin, was arrested and tortured by the Japanese services and several of his companions.

Thus, succeeding Dutch colonialism, Japanese imperialism, also based on the capitalist system, resorted to the same methods of violence and crimes as its predecessor against the Indonesian people.

When the popular illusions were destroyed by the brutal attitude of the new occupiers, a new political force was formed in Java, the PUTERA, or "Center of the People's Forces", whose initiators and animators were still Sukarno and his friends Hatta, Ki Hadjar, Dewandro. The Japanese tolerated it while trying in vain to gain control. Their attitude was the result of their already anxiety about their own future.

Thus, the occupying authorities went so far as to accept that in October 1943 PETA ("Volunteers Defenders of the Fatherland") was created, which was to become the future Indonesian army. Several future Senior Officers and Indonesian Generals began their first weapons alongside the Japanese

military in this formation. Such was the case of Suharto, the future fascist dictator.

In September 1944, at a time when Tokyo's rulers felt their defeat was coming with the end of World War II, their government finally promised independence to the Indonesians.

From then on, Sukarno was able to intervene more effectively and, on June 1, 1945, he formulated the "Pantja Sila", the five principles: nationalism, internationalism, democracy, social justice and belief in God. He relied on the "gotong royong", or mutual understanding. Two days after the collapse of Japan, pressed by young Indonesian nationalist activists, Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945. The sovereignty of the islands, still under Western pressure, was expressed under the name of the "United States of Indonesia".

But the social difficulties of the people were not solved and discontent was becoming more and more acute both in the cities and in the countryside.

Did the Communists attempt an insurrection in Madiun, or were they wrongly accused of having wanted to take power in September 1948, this is a point of history that remains confused. Still, they were chased and quickly crushed by the Siliwangi division of Colonel Nasution, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian army. Thirty thousand of their own were killed along with their main leaders: Amir Sjarifuddin and Musso, who had just returned from the USSR the previous August. This event can be considered to have had a premonitory aspect compared to the massacres of much greater magnitude that were to be unleashed seventeen years later.

The Dutch colonialists wanted to take advantage of the situation and captured Sukarno and his government by surprise. However, the United States, reassured by the victory of the anti-communist military action and also very worried by the coming to power of Mao Zedong in China, imposed on the Netherlands the agreements of the Round Table signed in The Hague in November 1949. For the American imperialists, nothing should be done that could throw the Indonesians into the camp of the Communists. At the time, on the capitalist side, the domino theory, a concrete threat to the whole of Asia, was readily mentioned.

The "United States of Indonesia" then gave way to the "United Republic of Indonesia" whose president was immediately Achmed Sukarno. A parliamentary system was established, although the president was more in favour of a single party. This tumultuous regime wore off six governments in seven years.

During this period, the Indonesian state granted Anglo-American monopolies the exploitation of Indonesian oil wells. Shell, Standard Oil, and Caltex managed the rich deposits of the former Dutch colony on behalf of



the Western imperialist economies, mainly American and British. The comprador bourgeoisie and the Indonesian bureaucratic capitalist elements then experienced an impetuous development on the basis of international corruption.

Senior army officers represented these privileged social strata, while communists relied on the poorest classes in the cities and, to a lesser extent, in the countryside. Sukarno remained the living symbol of independence and tried to iron out the antagonistic contradictions between the two.

On October 17, 1950, Colonel Nasution, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Army, unleashed an armed putsch to seize power. But the president, then supported by some of the officers and the army still influenced by his nationalist past, managed to repel this attempt. He dismissed Nasution, but did not impose any severe sanctions on him. Sukarno was actively supported by the party he had created, the P.N.I., which represented above all the anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie. The Communists also supported him.

Further attempts by the military occurred, notably on October 17, 1952, to force the president to dissolve Parliament, but each time the putschists, in disagreement with each other, failed.

From that time on, Sukarno changed his foreign policy by strengthening his friendly relations with the USSR and the People's Republic of China. He understood that the United States was supporting the Indonesian army against the majority of the people. From July 1953 to July 1955, Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo concretized the rapprochement with these socialist countries.

In April 1955 a statute was adopted concerning Chinese living in Indonesia. This measure had the merit of attacking an already long-standing racism head-on, but did not succeed in eliminating it. The comprador bourgeoisie was subject to commercial competition from some very rich Chinese, themselves in business relations with Western countries, hence a rivalry that easily turned to racism.

Then, during the same period, the famous Afro-Asian conference in Bandung was held, whose worldwide impact was considerable: 29 Afro-Asian states participated, confirming the awakening of the Third World. International personalities such as Pandit Nehru or Prime Minister Chou En lai occupied important places. President Sukarno gained prestige compared to the states of the countries of Africa and Asia, but the success of this global gathering worried both the United States, the countries of Western Europe and the Soviet Union, which had played no role in the circumstance.

In November 1956, the Indonesian President made a long trip to the USSR first and then to the People's Republic of China.

Generals resumed their sedition actions. Sukarno agreed to hand over the

duties of Chief of Staff of the Army to General Nasution. The civil war that threatened to break out was brought under control by this officer, still loyal to Sukarno, while the rebellious soldiers were supported, almost openly, by the Americans.

In February 1957, the Head of State decided to abandon the path of Western-style democracy and replace it with a conception he had always nurtured, "directed democracy", a concrete manifestation of a vast populist current. This was in fact the result of a momentary rapprochement between him and the Chief of Staff, General Nasution. But it was not until 1959 that he decreed the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, which had been in place since 1956. The question of whether Indonesia would be a state based on Islam or on the principles of the Pantja Sila was still not settled.

By doing so Sukarno had taken over the political initiative. He banned political parties that had supported the military rebellion. He then advocated Nasakom, a union of the three great ideological currents present among the popular strata: nationalism, religion and communism.

By 1961, with three million adherents, the Indonesian Communist Party became quantitatively a considerable force, more politically influential than the army, but without any armament in the face of a reactionary army that found itself significantly strengthened by Soviet arms deliveries. At that time, Sukarno replaced General Nasution with another officer, General Yani.

When Indonesia decided to recover its territory from West Irian still occupied by the Dutch colonialists, the USSR supported it. So, for fear of seeing it fall into the socialist camp, the United States forced the Netherlands to accept a negotiated solution. Agreements were signed in August 1962. At the same time, the US imperialists offered economic support to Indonesia.

But in December 1962, the situation in Malaysia again destabilized the entire Kalimantan region. England and the United States on the one hand, and Indonesia on the other, supported opposing camps. Sukarno and the Indonesian army, although already infiltrated by American agents, supported the national struggles of the peoples of Northern Borneo. Eventually, the Americans, engaged in the Vietnam operations, considered it more prudent to withdraw from the Malaysian operation.

As early as 1964, Sukarno apostrophized Washington by proclaiming bluntly "To hell with your help!".

His political line of "Indonesian-style socialism" accelerated. He moved closer to the People's Republic of China. He even came to withdraw Indonesia from the United Nations and to propose the replacement of the UN by an organization of the New Rising Forces (N.E.F.O.S.). Naturally, Beijing, which still did not have China's seat at the international organization, wholeheartedly supported Sukarno's proposal.

For its part, the P.K.I. took a stand in favor of the Chinese Communist Party in the ideological and political controversy that pitted the latter against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He simultaneously launched a propaganda campaign against the Indonesian bureaucratic capitalists.

But the country's internal situation experienced renewed tension. Violent struggles pitted landless peasants against landowners, especially on the island of Java. The unitary Nasakom association founded by Sukarno was on the verge of disintegrating, with the Communists opposing the landowners and entire factions of the Indonesian Nationalist Party backed by the military.

Feeling in an unfavorable position, the P.K.I. decided to stop the actions of the poor peasants, while obtaining from the head of state the prohibition of notorious anti-communist movements, such as the Manikebu and the Murba. Cooperation between Sukarno and the Communists continued without a major hitch. The president observed an attitude aimed at reconciling all social forces with the army. In reality, this was a dream that could only be explained by his fierce desire to deny the principle of the class struggle. Suffice to say that he believed in squaring the circle.

So the year 1965 opened in a period of multiple and very sharp tensions. The situation vis-à-vis Malaysia did not diminish despite the at least apparent withdrawal of the Americans. The army, again commanded by General Nasution, sent paratrooper commandos to the area. The officers of the General Staff categorically rejected the proposal of the P.K.I. to arm the workers and peasants to constitute a complementary force.

The actions of the landless peasants had helped to bring together all the anti-communist forces, worried about the rise of the P.K.I. and Sukarno's foreign policy.

The United States was concerned about the relations of Sukarno, well aware of his prestige, with the People's Republic of China.

In international circles, diplomats were now talking about a Jakarta-Beijing axis, relying on Pyongyang, Hanoi and Phnom Penh.

What the reactionary generals had been plotting for years ended up happening towards the end of the year.

On the night of September 30, 1965, a colonel named Untung had six generals of the Army High Command arrested and executed. Among them was the former chief of staff, General Ahmad Yani. For his part, General A. H. Nasution managed to escape narrowly.

The media version accepted in the following days blamed these murderous attacks on an organization called the "September 30 Movement" led by "progressive officers" who are said to belong to the Air Force. They would have managed to seize some key points of the capital to save President Sukarno by thwarting a coup d'état prepared by generals supported by the Americans

and in connection with the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA.

From then on the situation was quite confused. Officers favorable to Sukarno formed a “council of the Revolution”.

The P.K.I., surprised, would nevertheless have published a statement of support in their favor, but taking care to emphasize that it was only an “internal action of the army”. He denied any participation or responsibility in the operation concerned. As for Sukarno himself, he was careful not to express his approval to the generals who had claimed to support him against a military plot about to break out.

In these circumstances, it was with extreme speed that a general head of strategic reserve, General Suharto, born in 1921, from a family of traders and a Muslim religious leader father, took over the situation, against the will of the president, proclaimed himself head of the Army, secured in twenty-four hours control of the capital, then of the air base where the officers of the “September 30 movement” were entrenched.

The ruling army immediately accused the Communists of being responsible for the attempted coup that claimed the lives of six generals.

Blind and criminal repression spread throughout Indonesia against the Communists. Anti-Chinese racism also fostered countless massacres of entire families, which most of the time had absolutely nothing to do with the communists, or even with the progressives.

According to the sources, the number of victims of the massacres ordered by General Suharto varies from five hundred thousand to one million people (cf. *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, 1988 edition, Corpus 9, page 1049). All the leaders of the P.K.I. present in the country were executed without trial, hundreds of thousands of families suspected of communist sympathy were exterminated either with conventional weapons or in fires in their homes lit by the military.

Other Indonesian citizens were thrown into prisons and concentration camps by the hundreds of thousands. In its 1971 report, the organization “Amnesty International” provides the number of two hundred thousand imprisoned still detained.

The days and years following the event of September 30, 1965 allow, in the light of history, to designate the social, political and economic forces that profited from the seizure of power by General Suharto and the Indonesian fascist army. It is here that the “Black Book of Capitalism” contributes to revealing in an undeniable way the tragic weight of the crimes committed under the regime concerned.

But it turns out that at the time of this coup, an international conference, which Sukarno had initiated, was to open and hold its meeting in Jakarta. Foreign delegates, invited on this occasion, immediately became the involun-

tary witnesses of the terror unleashed by the army.

Two Frenchmen arrived in Jakarta on the very day of the fascist putsch, to participate in the conference convened by President Sukarno. Régis Bergeron was a well-known journalist who collaborated with the weekly “Les Lettres françaises” as editorial secretary and took responsibility for the cultural page of the daily newspaper *L’Humanité*, before leaving for The People’s Republic of China as a French teacher and proofreader for the journal *Littérature chinoise*. Christian Maillet, a committed painter, had been active in his youth in the Communist Party of Morocco, then, after having fought in the Resistance in France within the F.T.P., had belonged to the French Communist Party until 1964, taking a position at that time in favor of Chinese theses against Soviet theses. Here is the testimony about Suharto’s fascist coup d’état of one of these two seasoned French communists. Christian Maillet recalls:

“Comrade Régis Bergeron and I arrived at Jakarta airport on October 1, 1965 at about ten o’clock in the morning. We were delegated by the MCF (ml) to represent it at the ‘International Conference for the Liquidation of imperialist bases in the world (KIAPMA)’ convened in Jakarta.

As soon as we arrived, we noticed that the putschist army had the situation well in hand. The tarmac was completely cordoned off by tanks, armoured cars and other military vehicles well equipped with men and war material.

The army immediately picked us up and took us to a hotel northeast of Jakarta. During the day we had the right to circulate in the city: the streets were almost empty, the shops open as a whole, but practically without buyers. The army occupied all strategic points and administrative buildings. In the evening, the curfew prevented any exit from the buildings. We then climbed to the terrace from where we had a panoramic view of the entire city. We could see the military vehicles, headlights on, although the streets were illuminated as in broad daylight, which were idling, at the tail leu leu, spaced only about twenty meters apart. Regularly and from all points of the city burst bursts of automatic weapons and fires glowed in different districts of Jakarta.

We could hear the strafing and see these fires for three nights... after which we were brought by the army, to the hotel ‘Indonesia’, huge luxury hotel, located in the center of Jakarta, in which all the delegates to KIAPMA had been concentrated. The military let us know that we should not leave the hotel, ‘for our safety’! We no longer had the opportunity to know what was happening in the city.

Several times a day army trucks filled with Indonesians in civilian clothes, their foreheads surrounded by white headbands on which were written slo-

gans illegible to us, parked for a long time in front of the hotel... Indonesians crammed into the trucks chanted tirelessly ‘Communists gantoung!’, which means, according to the hotel staff, ‘hang the communists!’. This was intended to impress the delegates.

The hotel had an inner courtyard in which we went to escape a little from the confined and conditioned atmosphere of the buildings... and chat more freely with each other because it was obvious that we were surrounded by prying ears. Hostiles people were throwing empty beer bottles at us from the top of the windows on the upper floors. We were able to spot one of the windows from which the projectiles were leaving. After strongly protesting to hotel officials, these attacks stopped. We were told that they came from rooms occupied by Americans!

At that time the target of the military was limited to communists only. The international conference could be held later once the Indonesian communists and pro-communists have been eliminated.

To make the delegates wait, we were taken by Air Force cargo plane to the island of Bali. We were received there by the governor surrounded by the authorities of the island. An official reception was held in the governor’s palace. We learned a few days later, in Beijing, that the fake military had locked up all these administrative or political officials and their families in the palace and set it on fire! They were all accused of being communists and were all annihilated.”

For his part, Régis Bergeron presented in 1975 a pamphlet entitled “For a free and democratic Indonesia” publishing in French a speech by Jusuf Adjitorop, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia, who, being abroad at the time of the coup, was one of the few survivors of the leadership of this party. Reading this preface, we discover that the fascist murderous repression had not ceased ten years later:

“... For the third time in its history, after 1926 and 1948, the leadership (of the P.K.I.) was almost completely exterminated. Repression still hits it today and on 28 August 1975, for example, Asep Suryaman, arrested in 1971 in Bandung, was sentenced to death. Its militants also fell in battle, such as Said Ahmed Sofyan, first secretary of the Party for West Kalimantan (formerly Borneo), assassinated during a sweep on January 12, 1974.”<sup>XX</sup>

“There are countless dead or prisoners. Indonesia has become a vast concentration camp where, according to the most recent estimates, some one hundred thousand political prisoners are still suf-

---

<sup>XX</sup>Every quote in this block is unterminated in the original text

fering and in even worse conditions, it seems, whether in Salemba prison (Jakarta) where three of them died of starvation in 1974 or on the sinister island of Buru and many other places of torture and death, Mabarawa, Kalisotok, Koblen, etc....”

“... That the Indonesian Communist Party was not involved in the ‘coup’ that served as a pretext for the fascist generals to take power, no one doubts it today...”

“... It is proven that the seizure of power by the military was facilitated by the CIA, this all-purpose body of American imperialism that would soon make a comeback in Indonesia...”

“... Sukarno’s widow, in October 1974, denounced the role that Japan, for her part, later played in consolidating the power of the generals. When the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to former Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, she revealed that he had ‘played a major role in helping the military and professional students who, after the 1966 coup (i.e. sukarno’s final ouster), massacred a million people accused of being communists, but who were only Sukarno’s supporters.’”<sup>XXI</sup>

Today, imperialism masters the Indonesian economy and, in so doing, its politics.

The “New Order” regime derives its glory from having largely opened the country to foreign investment... Money flows into Suharto’s coffers in the form of loans, aid, etc. granted by many international organizations (American and Japanese)...<sup>XXII</sup> (Cf. “*Pour une Indonésie libre et démocratique (For a free and democratic Indonesia)*” by Jusuf Adjitorop, Editions du Centenaire, collection “*Le Tiers-Monde en lutte (The Third World in Struggle)*”, 4th Trim. 1975, the text of the Indonesian leader dates from May 23, 1975, the day of the 55th anniversary of the foundation of the P.K.I.)

To Bergeron’s precise indications are those that were also published in 1975 by the Indonesia-France Committee under the title “The Indonesia of the Generals... ten years of fascism”:

“... Prisoners are divided into four categories: A, B, C and X. For the A, the government claims to have formal proof of their participation in the coup d’état of October 1965 (there are five thousand); the B’s will never be tried for lack of evidence according to official statements, but they present a danger to the

<sup>XXI</sup>Original text has two opening quotes but only one closing quote.

<sup>XXII</sup>Original text has a stray end quote here.

country, being ‘pure communists’; in category C, the government classifies those who have been arrested ‘legitimately’, but who will be released later when the situation allows. No evidence is held against them...

... The International Labour Organization (Geneva) has asked the Indonesian government for a report on forced labor imposed on political prisoners (referred to as ‘tapol’, according to an abbreviation of Indonesian ‘tahanan politik’). On this subject, it was declared in Jakarta in October 1974 that since 1973 no ‘tapol’ had been performing forced labour... (which was at least the recognition that such forced labor had been practiced until 1973, eight years after the coup)...”

On March 11, 1966, the fascist Suharto seized full powers, which he had assumed *de facto* since the first day of his coup. He immediately decreed the banning of the Indonesian Communist Party, of which he had already annihilated almost all the living forces. He arrested fifteen ministers, accused of being communists, we do not know if they really were and think that they could only be friends of President Sukarno. Then he authoritatively grouped the political parties into two distinct forces, but equally subject to his decisions. He held new formal elections and was appointed president in March 1968. Sukarno could not or would not do anything decisive to oppose the cynical and violent maneuvers of this general who gradually distanced him from all political activity. Locked up at home, the “father of Indonesian independence” finally died in June 1970. The fascist “New Order” was in place. The new head of state had without the slightest reservation a political grouping founded on his initiative, the Golkar.

In January 1974 student demonstrations were brutally repressed, there were again hundreds of arrests and imprisonments. Ten newspapers were banned. And similar events happened again in 1978.

The ties between the American rulers and Suharto continued to grow. U.S. Presidents Nixon and Ford visited Indonesia in 1969 and again in 1975. It should be noted in passing that twelve hours after this last visit, the Indonesian army launched a most deadly aggression against the independent State of East Timor.

Conversely, Suharto went to the United States in 1970, 1975, and 1982.

US imperialism was now sure of its Indonesian accomplice or agent. One only has to look at the successive amounts of U.S. military aid to Indonesia to become aware of this. For example, the figure of \$34 million allocated in 1979 had already risen in 1983 to \$53 million (an increase of 64%). Let us also note, in passing, the information provided in 1975 by the brochure already



cited published by the Indonesia-France Committee: "... President of the I.G.G.I. (International Consortium for Aid to Indonesia, of which France has been a member since its creation in 1967), Dutch Minister Pronk visited Indonesia in November 1973. To the Indonesian authorities, with whom he was discussing the amount and modalities of I.G.G.I. aid to Indonesia for 1974, he expressed his Government's concern about Indonesian political prisoners. At the I.G.G.I. Conference in Amsterdam in May 1974, the issue was put on the agenda to the great embarrassment of the Jakarta delegation, which did not prevent Indonesia from obtaining its 850 million dollars annually...".

Naturally, it would be easy to add to all these characterized elements a veritable encyclopedia of the crimes and other barbaric acts of Indonesian fascism whose establishment was supported by Western capitalists. But it is now obvious that General Suharto undertook the genocide of the communists of his own country, without sparing all those who, progressive or simply anti-imperialist nationalists, were also the victims of his ferocity.

It was with the active support of US imperialism, the capitalist countries of the West and Japan that it was able to impose its "new order", a fascist order that continues today.

The Golkar, Indonesia's ruling party, reaffirmed in early January 1998 that it stood by its decision to nominate this executioner of its people as a candidate for his own succession for a seventh term as President of the Republic of Indonesia. Despite the economic crisis that had led the country to bankruptcy and had led to six million unemployed, on 15 January 1998 the International Monetary Fund signed an agreement with General-President Suharto, who did not conceal his full satisfaction or that of his multi-billionaire family.

Thus the proof is well established that capitalism, when it is in its interests, does not hesitate for a moment to support a war criminal against humanity.

### **Jacques Jurquet**

Jacques Jurquet is a writer, anti-colonialist, communist militant since the Resistance. After Suharto's fascist putsch, he met several times, both in Beijing and in Europe, with surviving leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party.



## Chapter 16

# Fascist annexion of East Timor

**Jacques JURQUET**

The island of Timor is part of the Sunda Islands archipelago.

Its eastern part is located 350 kilometers from Indonesia and 500 kilometers north of Australia.

The indigenous population, about 600,000 inhabitants in 1975, 90% peasant, was strongly marked by the Portuguese colonization that lasted for a little more than four and a half centuries. Thus, unlike the Islamic populations living in the western part, the East Timorese have switched from animist practices to Christianity. The Catholic clergy still retains an already long-standing popular influence.

In 1975, illiteracy was widespread. The sanitary conditions were very bad: infant mortality rate of 40% very high, tuberculosis and malaria widespread, for the whole country only twenty doctors all residing in the capital. There were only thirty kilometers of paved road, which made it practically impossible to provide care in the countryside.

During World War II, the Japanese landed in East Timor and took their place by arms against the Portuguese. Their violent occupation cost the lives of some 50,000 Timorese, but both then and after the war, these victims remained ignored by the Western world. Their percentage of the total population of East Timor was, however, the highest of all those concerning the massacres perpetrated against the other peoples of Asia.

Thus, in 1945, after the defeat of the Japanese, East Timor appeared more than ever as a strategic issue that had long been awaited by distant Britain and near Australia.

In addition, the Indonesian rulers, freed from Dutch colonialism, considered this country to be part of their own and, at the very time when Sukarno still ruled without very strong opposition, hostile actions to the Portuguese

colonialists were developed by some far-right activists. In June 1959, in the region of Viqueque, there was a revolt manipulated most likely by these elements against Portuguese settlers living and working on farms. The colonial repression was immediate and extremely violent. It killed about 1,000 East Timorese, and hundreds more were imprisoned in inhumane conditions.

From then on, the anti-colonialist patriotic sentiment of the indigenous peoples experienced a new boom throughout East Timor.

Moreover, the General Assembly of the United Nations would soon vote, on December 14, 1960, the famous "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". The world was living in the era of decolonization.

The maturation of the national claim was reinforced following the "Carnation Revolution" in Portugal. Indeed, on May 16, 1974, General Spínola, the new head of state of this country, announced that the Portuguese colonies should become free.

The rise of nationalism was in the eyes of history quite rapid and caused as everywhere contradictions on strategy and tactics among the people concerned.

The Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), led by a group of "progressive Catholic" intellectuals, became much more influential than other political parties. In 1974, its founders, Francisco Xavier do Amaral and Nicolau Lobato came under strong pressure from younger elements such as Roque Rodriguês and Abílio Araújo, who closely sympathized with Mao Zedong's ideas and principles. So when Australia announced its support for Indonesia's intention to annex East Timor, these young leaders decided to radicalize their positions, and on September 12, 1974, transformed the ASDT into the "Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor", Fretilin.

At the beginning of 1975, this party, which had become the most popular, dominated all the other parties.

It declared that the only possible way for the people to be freed from exploitation and oppression in all its forms "was none other than that of independence".

For several years, Indonesia, led by the fascist General Suharto, had been preparing, not without hesitation, the implementation of its project to take control of East Timor. Indonesia acts in a skillfull and steady way trough the actions of an organization linked to the army, the BAKIN (Agency for the Coordination of National Intelligence Services). The BAKIN can be compared to the secret services of all capitalist countries, and to the Nazi Gestapo in particular. False news were broadcast by Indonesia's national radio, claiming that Soviet, Chinese and Vietnamese military advisers and armaments had been sent to East Timor to support a "minority group of

communist intellectuals”.

The agents of this very special service managed to provoke a rupture between the leaders of the UDT and the Fretilin. They did not go out of their way by proclaiming that Indonesia would never accept a communist government sitting in East Timor, next to Indonesia itself. On April 14, 1975, the leader of the UDT, Domingos do Oliveira, impressed by this warning, cancelled a trip with Nicolau Lobato, leader of Fretilin, to visit Africa formerly occupied by Portuguese colonialism, as well as Europe, that is to say most likely Portugal where many Portuguese anti-colonialists were active, including in government circles.

The only one now to represent the anti-colonialist nationalism deeply rooted among the popular masses, Fretilin eliminated in 17 days of civil war the Apodeti, the “Timorese Popular and Democratic Association” supported by Bakin and the CIA, as well as the UDT which implored the Portuguese colonialists to stay.

The revolutionary patriots began to organize the management of independent East Timor from August 1975 and worked hard to overcome the many difficulties bequeathed to them by the history of their country.

Supported by the vast majority of the people, Fretilin proclaimed, on 28 November 1975, the independence of the “Democratic Republic of East Timor”. Its president, Francesco do Amaral, exalted the people’s armed struggles for independence and declared: “We are appealing to Indonesia for peace, but we are sticking to the slogan: independence or death”.

In a subsequent report to the United Nations Security Council, Australian MP Ken Fry, who was in East Timor from September to December 1975, provides the following testimony: “We found here a responsible and moderate administration that had the strong support of the Timorese people... Like all Australians who visited Portuguese Timor during this period, I returned full of admiration for the Fretilin Central Committee. I was enormously impressed by his moderation, integrity and intelligence, as he faced a very difficult situation.” (Cf. *Timor-Est génocide oublié, Droits d’un peuple et raisons d’États* (East Timor forgotten genocide, Rights of a people and reasons of States) by Gabriel Defert, page 83, L’Harmattan 1992)

Preceded by kommando actions and military incursions violating the border between Indonesia and East Timor, an aggression by the Indonesian army (Abri) was launched on the night of 6 to 7 December 1975. About twenty warships sprayed shells on the center of the capital, Dili, and its surroundings. Then, around five o’clock in the morning, a general landing was coordinated with the parachuting of many soldiers on the waterfront. In all this operation engaged ten thousand men, under the command of General Murdani, right-hand man of the fascist dictator Suharto. But the fierce resistance of

Fretilin soldiers, grouped in the Falintil (Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor) prevented him from occupying the capital in twenty-four hours according to the planned plan. The attackers did not manage to occupy the entire city until after three weeks.

One could mention the serious military blunders that led to the drowning in the open sea of many paratroopers, or to fighting between invading units themselves, but the most important, from the historical point of view, lies in the manifestations of savagery of these Indonesian troops supervised by officers worthy of the Nazi SS. The latter were guilty of deliberate massacres. From the first two days they had one hundred and fifty prisoners executed in cold blood on the port, most of whom were civilians, men and women, who did not belong to the Fretilin or the Falintil. These victims, once dead, were thrown into the sea. In addition, the population of the southeastern suburbs of the city was forcibly gathered on a stadium, where they were summarily mowed down by bursts of automatic weapons. There were only a few survivors, wounded who managed to hide their bodies under corpses.

From then on, Timorese populations and fighters adopted the tactic of withdrawal and abandoned some cities to continue the struggle in the countryside and mountains. Indonesian radio itself provoked a patriotic stiffening by making terrifying threats, including the threat to kill all the communist soldiers of Fretilin.

The last Portuguese soldiers still present on the island of Atauro fled on December 8 to Darwin, definitively ending 460 years of Portuguese colonial presence.

The Indonesian offensive did not allow General Murdani to accomplish the plan of conquest of the whole country. The Falintil, helped by their knowledge of the terrain, managed to keep two-thirds of the territory under their control.

So the Abri was forced to send new reinforcements to conquer the main cities. 10,000 marines landed to reinforce the ten thousand soldiers already present, but held in check. They managed to occupy the largest cities, but in no way eliminated the forces of resistance. The Fretilin Central Committee retreated to the south-west of the island, to Ainaro. Eventually the Indonesian troops, unable to crush the Timorese guerrillas, reached the figure of 32,000 men in East Timor, while a reserve of another 10,000 soldiers was stationed in West Timor.

For their part, the Falintil consisted of 2,500 Timorese from the Portuguese army of occupation, 7,000 infantrymen who had performed military service in the latter in the past and 10,000 volunteers without effective military training.

In all its communiqués from 1975 to 1977, Fretilin ensured that 90% of

the territory was kept under its authority, and, while this assertion can be taken as somewhat exaggerated, it should be noted that the few journalists who were able to visit the country thanks to the Indonesian authorities all indicated that the Abri controlled only 30% of the country. This situation of relative failure did not prevent the government of Jakarta from proclaiming on 17 July 1976 that East Timor was now the 27th province of Indonesia.

The behavior of Indonesian soldiers and officers was fierce. They ruthlessly massacred women, children, old men in all the villages where they managed to penetrate. In 1976, all the Chinese in the city of Maubara were gathered on the beach and shot dead, while their wives and daughters were raped. In the same year, the Abri used chemical weapons along with napalm bombs. The Western capitalist states and the United States supplied almost all the armaments used. In addition to the multifaceted support of the United States, contracts in this case bound Indonesia with the Netherlands, Australia, Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany. For its contribution, France sent Alouette helicopters and Puma 330s.

The enormous superiority in weapons of the Abri did not allow it, from the end of 1975 to the end of 1977, to achieve the strategic objectives set at the beginning of the invasion. The continuous attacks of the Falintil, ambushes followed by retreat to the still free areas, imposed heavy losses on the conquerors. If we add up the toll of the fighting provided by Fretilin during the years 1975 to 1979, we reach the figure of 17,000 invaders killed, to which must be added thousands of wounded.

The losses suffered by both the Fretilin and the Timorese civilian population are difficult to assess if we take them back to that period alone, but it is clear that they were already far greater than those of the aggressors. The latter had sophisticated armaments, including in addition to heavy and light artillery, absolute control of the air allowing terror bombings.

An event with adverse consequences occurred on September 7, 1977. Strategic disagreements had already opposed during the previous year the president of Fretilin to the members of its political committee. He had proposed to enter into negotiations with the occupier. Moreover, he believed that the Central Committee should take the initiative to ask the United Nations to hold a referendum on self-determination. Xavier do Amaral was then deposed and arrested by the other Fretilin leaders, who accentuated the radical nature of their proclamations and activities. Accused of treason, he was soon to fall into the hands of the Abri, was not executed but sent to a camp. His replacement was Nicolau Lobato.

Under these circumstances, the Abri decided to do everything possible to destroy the Resistance. From September 1977 to March 1979, it launched three offensives as part of a strategic campaign of "encirclement and annihili-

lation”.

The primary objective was to isolate the guerrilla fighters from their logistical support, the Timorese population. Then came two successive campaigns reducing the civilian population to starvation, in 1979 and 1981.

These military operations used new and modern armaments, bombing aircraft, and the systematic destruction of crops under the slogan “seek and destroy”. The resistance was fierce, but eventually suffered inevitable setbacks.

The Catholic clergy did not abandon the patriots. Here is what a priest from Dili wrote to two Dominican sisters: “Since the end of September, the war has intensified further. The bombing lasts from morning to night. Hundreds of human beings die every day and their bodies are left to graze by scavengers (if it’s not bullets that kill you, it’s epidemics). Some villages were completely destroyed and some tribes decimated. Barbarism, cruelty, unspeakable destruction, executions for no reason, in a word ‘organized hell’ has taken deep root in Timor... No one but Indonesian soldiers can be seen in the streets of Dili. There are very few Timorese left, they are refugees in the forests, dead or in prison.” (*Ibid.*, work by G. Defert, page 110)

After some time and after furious engagements, the Fretilin fighters and sixty thousand unarmed civilians withdrew to the mountain areas deep in the jungle.

The surviving key leaders were captured after fighting of appalling intensity and killed. The president of Fretilin, Nicolau Lobato, was first wounded, then died on the plane that transported him to Dili, probably assassinated. With the exception of those who belonged to the external delegation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor and three members of the Central Committee, all Fretilin leaders were exterminated.

Fascist barbarism, quietly approved and supported by the Americans and deliberately ignored by Western and Australian rulers, had the same characteristics as that of the Hitlerites. Amnesty International spoke openly of the systematic executions of civilians and soldiers who had surrendered or had been captured by the Abri. It was also learned that some of them had been burned alive after being tortured, others had been thrown into the void from helicopters.

In several mountainous regions, thousands of Timorese were killed in systematic cleansings.

Villages in which residents who had not had time to flee had remained were turned into special camps. Numbering about 150, these camps kept in detention 250,000 to 350,000 people who had no food, carried only rags on their bodies, suffered from epidemics without receiving any care.

A Western journalist who managed to visit one of these camps, probably



under the Indonesian Red Cross, gave this mind-blowing account: “Men, women and children, all showed traces of deprivation: frail bodies, dressed in rags, emaciated and empty faces, already marked by death. The children’s bloated bellies were so protruding above their lean waist that the little ones had to take off their shorts if they didn’t want to lose them.” (*Ibid.*, p. 118).

Tuberculosis, malaria, dysentery and other infections caused the death of tens of thousands of these people who lived about the same existence as that of the Nazi death camps (except for the industrial character of the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz). Those who tried to move away to try to find food were shot without warning.

However, although 80% of their strength was destroyed, the Falintil did not surrender.

One of the three surviving members of the Central Committee, Alexander Gusmao known as Xanana, endowed with legendary energy and courage, managed to reconstitute some units and launched bold operations to the heart of Dili. In the summer of 1980, these patriots managed to sabotage a newly built Indonesian television station in the Timorese capital.

The new management of Fretilin decided to change its strategy.

It was necessary to take into account the situation created throughout the country of which all the cities were occupied, as well as many rural regions. The Falintil were no longer numerous enough to carry out large-scale operations as before the failures at the end of 1978. A decision was made to reorganize the surviving forces into small units capable of carrying out rapid operations followed by immediate withdrawals making them elusive.

Nicolau Lobato’s successor was Xanana Gusmao, who had been involved in the struggle since the days of the ASDT. He became the new leader of Fretilin and the Resistance.

The change in strategy was not limited to military matters, but also manifested itself ideologically. Instead of a single formation holding all the truths to lead the just struggle of the Timorese people, Fretilin opened up to others despite the ancient contradictions. The only point required of a volunteer to enter the Resistance was the reality of his patriotism and no longer his unconditional allegiance to the ideas of the leaders in place. Former members of the Apodeti and the UDT were thus able to join the Falintil.

The Apostolic Representative of Dili indicated as early as 1983 that Fretilin was inseparable from the entire population of East Timor and that it was entirely in solidarity with its activities.

For their part, the generals of the Abri believed that they had definitively got rid of the Fretilin, after having ordered the execution without trial of 80 of its leaders.

The helping hand in Dili in 1980 provoked surprise and anger among

Indonesian fascists. They then carried out a crackdown that Amnesty International deemed the most violent and deadly since the beginning of the war. Torture and executions followed one another in ferocious conditions. 600 residents of Dili were arrested and deported to the island of Atauro, while hundreds more were summarily killed in the streets of the capital. The Indonesian army was acting in exactly the same way as in October 1965 in Jakarta against communists or supposed communists.

The latter also adapted to the new strategy of the Resistance. It implemented the so-called “limb barrier” tactic. Indonesian soldiers forced the Timorese to build human chains tens of kilometers long to rake the island from east to west. The fascist generals felt that they could thus catch the Falintil, supposedly unable to escape this fine comb.

The main result of this measure was that countless Timorese civilians died of cold, hunger, exhaustion and malaria, while all those who tried to escape were mercilessly shot. At the same time, the fascist occupiers burned all the expanses of grass where resistance fighters could hide, and in fact many of them were burned alive. However, a number of Falintil fighters managed to cross the human barrier thanks to the spontaneous complicities of their compatriots. Realizing this reality, the officers of the Abril became more and more criminal, if it was still possible. In the autumn of 1981 they began to massacre more and more systematically. Following the mutiny of a unit of auxiliaries organized by them, on September 7, 1981, they annihilated the entire population of the Craras camp, near Viqueque, first 200 people, then 800 others who had managed to cross a river, mowing them down with machine gun fire. There was only one survivor. Later fascist soldiers who had participated in these operations boasted about it and explained how they had Timorese dig their graves, then shot them at point-blank range, which made them fall into the hole.

Operation “barrier of limbs” had another appalling consequence. The people required for this criminal task were almost all peasants who could not take care of their crops. As a result, the result of agricultural production used to feed local populations was therefore very low. Malnutrition and disease were the direct consequences. The second great famine then reached the people of East Timor, causing thousands more victims.

Contrary to the hopes of the fascist generals, the Falintil escaped this new form of encirclement and annihilation quite easily. On the other hand, all the civilians who were compelled by force to participate in the human chain, at least those who survived, spontaneously asked to join the Falintil. Xanana refused to integrate them into the already existing units, to which he intended to retain the characteristics of the guerrillas. But he had them organized into groups of three to six, remaining in the city or in the villages,

with the mission of monitoring all the activities of the Indonesian soldiers and reporting immediately to Fretilin.

There were some of these groups called “Nurep” everywhere. The failure of the Indonesian initiative became bitter.

Also at the end of 1982, a new military commander of East Timor, Colonel Purwanto, was appointed. His mission was to try to win the sympathy of the Timorese not through gun violence, but through negotiation. After various prevarications, a meeting brought together in neutral ground, in Lari Guto, from 11 to 13 March 1983, the Indonesian General Purwanto and Xanana Gusmao, President of Fretilin. The Resistance Party demanded “the use of a United Nations contingent that would interpose itself between the belligerents and guarantee the smooth running of a free and democratic consultation ensuring the establishment of a parliamentary system in East Timor”. The representative of the Indonesian fascists refused, arguing that the discussion could only concern the conditions and forms of the surrender of the Falintil.

However, four months of truce allowed the Timorese resistance fighters to reorganize and strengthen themselves. But they earned his dismissal to Colonel Purwanto who was replaced by officers close to General Murdani, already known as a war criminal against humanity.

The very serious incidents in Dili in November 1991 prove that the Timorese population, although disarmed, still rejects the Indonesian occupation.

As requested by the patriots of East Timor, a local visit by United Nations delegates had been decided since 1982 and Secretary-General Perez de Cueilar had been given the task of organizing it. There was also the decision to call a referendum on self-determination under the auspices of the former colonial power, Portugal, still considered by the United Nations to hold at least administrative power in East Timor. Indonesian fascists opposed these decisions.

However, on 13 October 1991, the first of these initiatives was again postponed indefinitely. It was to convene a committee composed of Portuguese and Indonesian parliamentarians, but the latter claimed that in the Portuguese delegation there was a member of Fretilin, thus justifying their opposition to the decided investigation. This was obviously just a false pretext.

Ten days later, on 23 October 1991, probably during a protest demonstration, a young Timorese man named Sebastiao Gomes was killed by the police.

On 12 November, at 8 a.m., more than a hundred young Timorese went to the Santa Cruz cemetery to honour the memory of their comrade. It was actually a religious ceremony. They went to the church in Moatel to

attend a mass, but when they left they headed to the Resende Hotel where a United Nations representative was then staying to investigate cases of torture. There they allegedly threw stones at the façade of the settlement and chanted slogans in favour of East Timor's independence. They were not carrying any weapons.

The Indonesian police immediately intervened and fired without warning at this group of young people.

The Jakarta government acknowledged that about 50 "rioters" had been killed. The daily newspaper "Le Monde", dated November 19, 1991, reproducing dispatches from the A.F.P. and Reuter, spoke of "19 to 200 dead according to the sources". The Indonesian Human Rights Association claimed that 80 young people arrested were executed after the incidents on 15 November 1991.

Barely a year later, on November 20, 1992, Gusmao Xanana was captured by the Shelter security forces. On 2 December, Indonesian television presented an alleged interview with him and made him say "that he accepted the annexation of East Timor" and "that he urged his former guerrilla comrades to surrender". Had he been the victim of torture or psychological pressure on his family, or was it simply an audiovisual montage? None of his companions and Timorese patriots believed in this turnaround completely contrary to the known character of the president of Fretilin. In any case, the Portuguese news agency "Lusa" published on Monday, January 2, 1995, just over two years later, "an appeal by the leader of the Timorese resistance, Xanana Gusmao, currently imprisoned, asking that the status of the island be determined by referendum".

Xanana's arrest was a severe blow to the Timorese Patriot Resistance.

In addition, in 1993, an agreement was signed between Australia and Jakarta to exploit an oil field discovered in the Timor Sea. With this event the economic motivation for this fascist annexation began to be revealed.

According to an article by Cecilia Gabizon, in "Liberation" of November 12, 1994, the Portuguese were able to see on television the Indonesian soldiers shooting at close range at a crowd of young Timorese... "Between the 100 official deaths and the 500 announced by the committees supporting the cause of the Mauberes (majority ethnic group in Timor), the Portuguese opt instead for the second version and add that the soldiers would have finished the wounded with poison".

The demonstrations of the young Timorese, who could no longer resort to armed struggle, did not stop. On December 20, 1994, the daily newspaper *Libération* also stated: "The former Portuguese colony has experienced a new news with the occupation of the United States Embassy by pro-independence demonstrators during the visit of President Bill Clinton."

On 25 November 1996, journalists Isabelle Bouc and Pierre Haski announced that José Ramos Horta and Bishop Carlos Belo had just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for their action of resistance to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor”.

Finally, very recently, in its edition of November 15, 1997, on page 7, we could read in *Libération*: “Timorese Bishop Ximenes Belo, winner of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, denounced the ‘unprecedented brutality’ of the Indonesian military, who opened fire on Friday in the University of Dili... For its part, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has officially protested against the actions of the police who forcibly seized a seriously wounded student whom the Red Cross was rescuing... (this) young man, shot in the neck and covered in blood, was pulled from the ICRC vehicle and dragged by the police who took him away on a bus. Four to six students were injured, with some unconfirmed reports also of one death.” (AFP)

This war of colonialist conquest by a fascist state supported by international capitalism has taken on the character of an almost complete genocide, or ethnocide. The Indonesian services themselves acknowledge between 170,000 and 212,000 deaths on the part of the population of East Timor. Representatives of the Catholic Church provide more credible estimates, putting the number of victims at between 308,000 and 345,000. On a population that was to reach at the beginning of the confrontation about 600,000 inhabitants.

But these statistical data relate only to the period from 1975 to December 1981. Since that time, however, new killings have been perpetrated against the indigenous Timorese population. There is every reason to estimate in 1998 that two thirds of the people of East Timor have been decimated. Let us judge, in all objectivity, by comparing what this percentage represents, applied for example to France. If these crimes had been committed in our country, they would have caused 40 million deaths, which is obviously unimaginable, apart from an atomic war.

And it is here that we can measure the criminal and complicit character of the capitalist world, when we know that no concrete measures have ever been taken to save the people of East Timor from this massacre.

Since the proclamation of East Timor’s independence by Fretilin, a number of countries had recognized its sovereignty, including the People’s Republic of China, several Asian countries including Vietnam and the African countries formerly colonized by Portugal.

The Foreign Minister of Dili’s government, José Ramos Horta, had left on December 4, 1975, to tour the world in order to obtain diplomatic support in case the Indonesian fascists launched a military aggression against his country with a view to annexing it.

Events soon caught up with him and, in the aftermath of the invasion of

the Abri and the attack on Dili, he only had to accept an invitation from the UN Security Council dated December 15 to come and present his government's point of view. The international body, after also listening to the representatives of Indonesia and Portugal, voted unanimously on 22 December 1975 for a resolution (number 384) "calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Indonesian armed forces from East Timor" and "calling on the Portuguese Government, as the administering Power, to cooperate fully with the United Nations in order to enable the people of East Timor to exercise freely their right to self-determination". The Security Council text contained other stipulations and decisions, all in line with the demands made by the young Timorese Government. A special representative was to be sent to the country and the UN Secretary-General was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the unanimously adopted resolution.

The Government of Jakarta opposed the decisions of the Security Council on pretexts, each more fallacious than the last. The fascist aggression continued and only the fierce Falintil Resistance slowed its progress.

It was not until 24 April 1976 that the Security Council, again seized by several Third World countries, reiterated the injunctions to Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor and once again recognized the right of the people of that country to self-determination. The deliberations in question took place thousands of kilometres away and were only worth the paper and ink that recorded them. Moreover, the United States and Japan began to unmask themselves in this matter by refusing to vote for the new declaration.

In 1988 and 1991, new decisions brought together majorities of Western official bodies. The European Parliament, on a proposal from Portugal, passed a resolution condemning Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. But this was only a formula without follow-up.

The obvious failure of all these proclamations is to be blamed on the international bodies, the United Nations, the Security Council, the United Nations Decolonization Committee and the European Parliament, which were careful not to decide on any military intervention or other embargo against the aggressor in order to restore the legality of East Timor. The United States, a superpower claiming the role of planetary policeman, constantly supported, hypocritically or directly, the government of the country where it had an accomplice in power, Indonesia led by General Suharto.

During a visit to Paris after the serious events in Dili in November 1991, José Ramos Horta, representative of the National Committee of the Timorese Resistance, was legitimately harsh on the international community. "Our tragedy is to be a small country, he says, lost in a corner of Southeast Asia." He gave a press conference at the "France-Liberté" Foundation, in the presence of Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the President of the Republic, to

recall the latest proposals of Fretilin (who no longer claimed to be Marxist):

“Unconditional negotiations with Indonesia under the aegis of the UN.”

He demanded “that all EEC members join Portugal in demanding a new meeting of the Security Council”, and that “the countries selling arms to Indonesia (Britain in particular) decide on an immediate embargo.”

His last two words were “Help us!”

In the last lines of his book rich in essential documentation “East Timor, the forgotten genocide — Right of a people and reasons of State”, Gabriel Defert wrote in 1992: “As long as compliance with a text depends exclusively on the interests at stake, it will certainly be possible to continue to claim that Iraq should not consider Kuwait as part of its territory while Indonesia can easily appropriate East Timor, but it will be difficult to grant legitimacy other than that of force to international arbitrations” (cf. p. 289). And Bill Clinton will be able to threaten Iraq with a “strategic strike”, even nuclear, as he does every day in these months of January and February 1998.

Without anyone being able to accuse of anti-Semitism the condemnation of the policy of Netanyahu, the current head of state of Israel, toward the Palestinians, can it not also be held as characterized by the systematic rejection of UN decisions without the Western countries deciding against him the slightest sanction, the slightest embargo?

So there is a double standard. For countries that do not submit to the hegemonic will of the American superpower and its accomplices, for small peoples, for the poor, capitalism, like colonialism, has long since become hell on earth.

In conclusion, the 350,000 to 400,000 victims exterminated in East Timor since 1975 unequivocally attest that the “Book of Capitalism” is indeed a “black book”.

**Jacques Jurquet**

## 16.1 Bibliography

Gabriel DEFERT, *Timor Est - Le génocide oublié - Droit d'un peuple et raisons d'États* (East Timor - The forgotten genocide - Rights of a people and reasons of States), L'Harmattan, novembre 1992, 323 p.

*Libération*, différentes éditions des années 1991 à 1998.

*L'Humanité-rouge*, années 1975 et 1976 — peut être consultée à la Bibliothèque Nationale ou à la Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine à Nanterre. Cf. notamment n° 509 du 15 juin 1976 et communiqué de solidarité du Parti communiste d'Indonésie (PKI).

*Le Monde*, evening daily, Cf. editions of 13, 14 et 19 november 1991 especially.

*Amnesty International*, Londres 1977 especially.

Revue Proletariat(Proletariat review) n° 12, 1er Trimester 1976, p. 56 et following- Bibliothèque Nationale et BDIC de Nanterre.

A brochure by Mary Mac Killop, Institute of East Timorese Studies- PO Box 299-STMARYS NSW2760 — Australia.



# Chapter 17

## Iraq victim of oil

**Subhi TOMA**

The war for oil began in Iraq when in 1908 Emperor Wilhelm II obtained from Sultan Abdül Hamid the grant of a concession for a strip of territory fifteen hundred kilometers long crossing Turkey and Mesopotamia. By that grant, Germany had not only acquired the right to build a railway line from Constantinople to Baghdad, but also to exlocate the mineral wealth from the subsoil on a strip of thirty kilometres on either side of the said railway.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1920 allowed England to occupy most of the Middle East. The United Kingdom, in order to avoid the difficulties inherent in the administration of this vast ensemble populated by multiple communities (Arabs, Kurds, Sunnis, Shi'ites, Christians, Bedouins) formed several states in oil-rich territories. This is how several principalities were created, including that of Kuwait, in the south of Iraq. The British mandate over the emirate was set at 99 years, but as early as 1938, the King of Iraq, Ghazi, demanded the annexation of Kuwait to his country, believing that he was being despoiled by the British. He began a series of steps in this direction with the authority of the colonizer as well as a broad information campaign aimed at the populations in the two territories. A radio station was set up at the royal palace in Baghdad to invite the Kuwaitis to revolt. In 1938, during a trip to Switzerland, King Ghazi died as a result of an obscure accident that everything suggests was an assassination. Since then, no Iraqi government has really abandoned this claim. Nor even Nuri al Sa'id, who was the man of the British, but tried to convince the Americans to put pressure on England for the return of Kuwait. He too perished, murdered.

In 1961, General Kassem, the leader of the revolution, three years after his accession to power decided to recover Kuwait by force. British troops, hurriedly dispatched to wage war on Iraq, halted the Iraqi army's advance. In

February 1963, Kassem was assassinated by a junta of officers supported by the Kuwaiti government. In March, the new regime, under pressure from oil companies, immediately recognized Kuwait. The emirate will pay 32 million dinars to the new master of Baghdad. Britain, weakened by the Second World War, could no longer secure the positions of the major oil companies in the Middle East, and then proposed a pact linking the main countries of the region to the United States. Apparently, this agreement was intended to protect the “free world” from Soviet threats; in reality, it was a new alliance between the countries of the region allowing the protection of Western oil companies and the exploitation of oil by the United States and England.

The agreement of Germany and the Ottoman Empire to build a railway linking Berlin to Baghdad and to carry out oil exploration was not to the liking of Britain, which invaded Iraq, then a Turkish province, in 1914, with the help of Indian troops<sup>142</sup>. This was one of the causes of the First World War. After this, the revolt of the Iraqis, particularly in the south, forced British troops to leave the country, but Britain was given a mandate over Iraq by the League of Nations in 1920.

After the First World War, Britain and France imposed their conception of law in the Middle East by drawing from Paris borders in line with their oil interests. The question of international law never arose because this law was always adapted to preserve the interests of oil barons. We will be able to see later how the United States and the other members of the Security Council have interpreted international law.

In 1932, power returned to the Iraqis whose royal government concluded a pact with the British. From 1920 to 1958, a succession of revolts cost the people enormous sacrifices: repression, executions, hangings perpetrated by the royal power helped by the British.

In 1958, progressive forces, the centre-left, the left and the nationalists formed the United Patriotic Front. The revolution of 14 July 1958 put an end to royalty and pacts with Great Britain. Various reforms were initiated, including agrarian reform, personal status and women’s equality before inheritance. The feudal system instituted by the British, which had given 5% of the population 95% of the land, was repealed. The land is redistributed to the peasants.

In 1963, five years after the advent of the Republic, the new Iraqi regime brought to power by a vast popular movement had engaged in a tug-of-war with the powerful I.P.C., the Iraqi oil company, in the hands of the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, which had a stranglehold on the country’s wealth since the end of the First World War and which did not use all

---

<sup>142</sup>Lionard Mosley, *La Guerre du pétrole* (The Oil war), Presse de la Cité, 1974.

the oil potential in order to to maintain prices, leaving the Iraqis with only a paltry share. The Iraqi state hoped to have a say in its oil and demanded an increase in its production in order to finance the reconstruction of the country already plundered by the Ottoman Empire and the British colonialists, but the I.P.C. did not want to give up anything. The government demanded that the British mandate over Kuwait, which it considered an Iraqi province, be cancelled. (the border had been demarcated in 1922 by the British protectorate, which entrusted power to the sheikh before the Kuwait Oil Company, Anglo-American, awarded itself the concession for exploration and oil exploitation for 99 years). Faced with the English refusal, the government then decided to nationalize 90% of the land containing deposits not yet exploited by the I.P.C.

The nationalization provoked the anger of the oil companies who, in 1963, fomented a coup d'état, of which the Ba'ath party was the prime contractor, with the help of the various Anglo-Saxon interest groups, and financed by the Kuwaitis. After several days of bombing the seat of the republican government and clashes with the population in the streets of Baghdad, the military junta managed, by executing Kassem, head of government and leader of the revolution, and several of his companions, to set up a regime of terror that lasted nine months during which all forms of repression, torture and exaction were inflicted on anti-imperialist patriots and republican loyalists. More than 400,000 people were arrested and tortured, 20,000 of whom never returned from concentration camps, died under torture or were summarily executed. A large number of trade unionists, communist party leaders, intellectuals and simple anti-imperialist militants were thus eliminated in a few months. The patriotic movement was beheaded.

This coup d'état allowed the oil companies to achieve their objectives by cancelling Law No. 80 on the nationalization of oil, abolishing the new Civil Code (which had established equality between men and women) and repealing the agrarian reform by returning the land to the big landowners. Abolition also of labour law, suspension of negotiations on the rights of the Kurdish people. A few years later, several coup leaders revealed that they were closely linked to Anglo-Saxon circles. Ali Salh al-Saadi, the party's number two and interior minister, told Lebanese journal *Études arabes* in 1968: "Our party was led to power by an American train".

In July 1963, the Iraqi Minister of Defense officially informed his government that the U.S. military attaché in Baghdad had asked him to host the American experts in charge of studying the manufacture of the T-54 tanks and MiG-21 aircraft in the possession of the Iraqi army. In return, the U.S. government would be willing to arm Iraq in its war against the Kurds. Thus the war against the Kurds was indicative of the absence of the sovereignty of

the Iraqi government of the time toward the United States<sup>143</sup>.

In 1964, the Ba'ath party removed from power, the new leaders of Baghdad showed their sympathy for Nasser and tried to establish in Iraq a socialism modeled on the Egyptian model. After the nationalization of the banking sector and large industries, the government decided to create a national Iraqi oil company (I.N.O.C.) and began negotiations with the I.P.C. with a view to reaching an agreement to associate Iraq with the exploitation of its oil. Separate agreements were signed with the USSR and France but the conflict with the I.P.C. resulted in the fall of the government.

In July 1968, the Ba'ath Party returned to power. It engages in ruthless repression of the opposition and develops tactical alliances with the super-powers.

In 1975, the new government nationalized all oil. A vast programme of reconstruction of the country, industrialization, infrastructure, education (Iraq won three UNESCO medals), and a literacy campaign were undertaken. Oil must be used to rebuild the country. Industrialization in 1991 is comparable to that of Europe. The Gulf War will take the country back fifty years.

Between 1970 and 1975, the Iraqi government spent \$1,500 million on the development of Kurdistan.

Education was compulsory and free. The number of primary school pupils was 2,200,000 in 1986. In secondary schools, 640,000 and 90,000 in technical colleges. In the five universities 130,000 students. In total, in 1986, one third of the population was in education, including 3 million students and pupils and 2 million adults in literacy classes.

If there is the problem of political freedom, women's freedom is acquired. Women have taken a considerable place in modern Iraqi society, although many of them still work the land. Before the first Gulf War, they accounted for 38% of teachers, 31% of doctors, 30% of civil servants, 11% of factory workers. In all, 30% of the working population.

In 1981, the budget of the Ministry of Culture reached \$30 million<sup>144</sup>.

## 17.1 War with Iran

Britain had consciously drawn imprecise fictitious boundaries between Iran and Iraq. Border claims will trigger the war waged by Saddam Hussein.

France as well as other countries has lent planes, the Super Etendards<sup>XXIII</sup>, and sold armaments to Iraq. Thirty governments, more than a thousand com-

<sup>143</sup>Lionard Mosley, *La Guerre du pétrole* (The Oil war), Presse de la Cité, 1974.

<sup>144</sup>Charles Saint-Prot, *Saddam Hussein*, Albin Michel, 1987.

XXIII French jet fighters

panies have competed with zeal and ingenuity to equip Iraq with a powerful war machine. A global loss in gross products of \$500 billion!<sup>145</sup> For their part, arms dealers have provided \$50 billion worth of arms on credit.

Iraq had \$15 billion in foreign exchange reserves in 1980, before the war, but in 1988 it was with \$70 billion in external debts, including \$40 billion to the West and the Third World and \$30 billion to the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia and Kuwait). The debt to France amounted to 28 billion francs.

Iraq had been supported and encouraged by both the West and the oil monarchies to stop the Iranian republic. All the countries of Europe, the United States, were friends of Iraq. Meanwhile, Kuwait had an Iraqi oil field (Rumaliyah) to increase production and cause prices to fall.

Eight-year war will kill three million people and leave two countries<sup>XXIV</sup>

## 17.2 The guet-apens

Westerners want to retain control of oil in the Middle East, so states must not have their independence. In Iran, when Mossadegh, prime minister, nationalized oil, the CIA dispatched its agent, General Scharwzkopf (father of the First Gulf War!) to foment an uprising against the power elected by universal suffrage. Scharwzkopf maintained excellent relations with the officers of the imperial army, of which he had been the instructor from '42 to '48. He led the repression with his friend, General Zahedi. After sentencing Prime Minister Mossadegh to death for high treason, the Shah's power inflicted bloody repression on the people, especially in the oil fields where thousands of workers were murdered and in Abadan where thousands of people were imprisoned or shot. US imperialism has always been ingenious in maintaining conflicts in order to seize wealth. He relied on the weakening of the region to ensure its economic power. It does not want a strong state capable of ensuring its independence.

After the war against Iran, the Americans immediately asked Iraq to reduce its military capacity and decreed the embargo to make it bend. When Saddam Hussein expressed his desire to reconquer Kuwait, the United States reassured the Iraqis. "This is a matter that does not concern us". At the end of July 1990, Iraq massacred its troops on the border with Kuwait, a movement that the US had been following hour by hour since July 14<sup>146</sup>. Saddam thought he had the green light, the Westerners owed him that.

---

<sup>145</sup>Alain Gresh and Dominique Vidal, *Golfe, clefs pour une guerre* (Gulf, keys for a war), Le Monde édition, 1991.

<sup>XXIV</sup>Part of the sentence appear to be missing in the pdf version used for the translation.

<sup>146</sup>Bob Woodward, *chefs de guerre* (Warlords), Calmann-Lévy, 1991.

But as soon as Kuwait was invaded, the war process began.

On 6 August 1990, the Security Council decided on military and economic sanctions against Iraq. On 25 September, he imposed the air embargo. On 29 November it decided to use all means to punish Iraq from 15 January 1991. Moreover, the same Council has repeatedly tried to impose sanctions against Israel without any success because of the American vetoes. Here are some examples: US veto against the Security Council resolution that imposed the military and economic embargo on Israel in 1982 due to the occupation of Syrian territories. On June '82, the United States vetoed the Council's resolution to impose sanctions on Israel because of its refusal to withdraw from Lebanon. In August '82, the US reiterated its veto against a new resolution that demanded Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. On August '83, the United States opposed the Security Council resolution that threatened to impose sanctions on Israel because of its expansionist policies. In January '88, a new US veto against a resolution condemning Israel for its policy of disrespecting human rights towards the Palestinians. In '89, the Security Council issued five resolutions condemning Israel. The US makes three of them fail thanks to its veto power. In May '89, US veto against the Security Council resolution condemning the Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. In November '89, the US veto defeated the resolution protesting the destruction of Palestinian homes. In November '89, the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly calling for a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli problem on the basis of the creation of two states received 151 votes in favor against three votes (United States, Israel and the Dominican Republic) but the next day the New York Times published an article denouncing the influence of the Arab states on the UN. However, this same newspaper never mentioned US pressure on the Security Council<sup>147</sup>. Until 1990 no state had really complied with the multiple UN resolutions.

A coalition of the 33 most powerful countries in the world. Unprecedented propaganda to mobilize public opinion. Iraqis are referred to as 18 million fascists who threaten humanity. Manipulated opinion accepts the idea of war: Iraq had become a threat to world peace while its economic power represented 1/1,000 of that of the opposing powers. The press in Saudi Arabia and Israel was subject to military control. During the war, Western journalists were able to work in better conditions in Iraq than in these two countries. And in any case, Iraq left and arrived defeated in the media competition. In the great game of propaganda, disinformation, lies, Saddam and his family didn't weight much<sup>148</sup>.

---

<sup>147</sup>Norman Finkelstein, political sciences professor, *AL Quds* 16.12.97

<sup>148</sup>Dominique Jamet et Régine Deforges, *La Partie de Golfe* (The Game of Gulf), (édi-

Saddam Hussein's chemical arsenal was rudimentary. The two gases that had his predilection, tabun and sarin, already used by the Germans against the Jews, kill, by spreading, those who breathe them. The FAE bomb (Fuel air explosive) or vacuum bomb, the latest in American technology kills everything that breathes by sucking by a combustion effect all the oxygen available in a circle of one square kilometer. The Americans who effectively banned Saddam Hussein from tabun and sarin allowed themselves to use the vacuum bomb, not to mention napalm and phosphorus bombs, eminently clean weapons that clean everything they touch<sup>149</sup>. As for the use of uranium, it would have contaminated 60,000 American soldiers and 10,000 British. We do not know its impact on the populations of southern Iraq.

A clean, fast, effective, inexpensive war. That was the slogan. We must forget the most powerful aviation ever assembled, leaving every day from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, France, Spain, England, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to drop its deadly bombs on a people of 18 million inhabitants. We must forget about missiles, napalm, vacuum and fragmentation bombs. Result: the conflict had almost apocalyptic effects on the economic infrastructure of what was until January 1991 a highly urbanized and mechanized society. Most of the means of support of modern life have been destroyed or made precarious. Iraq has been returned, for a long time, to a pre-industrial era, but with all the drawbacks of a post-industrial dependence on intensive use of energy and technology<sup>150</sup>. Bush promised it: an independent government managing its wealth cannot be accepted.

The US undertook three types of war against Iraq: military, embargo, destruction of the social fabric. First, the destruction of military forces and infrastructure. Then an attempt to destroy national unity by manipulating the Kurdish people and the Shi'ites. Help and protection are promised to incite revolt and then the rebels are abandoned to repression. The Kurds were always the stake of blackmail and manipulation. In truth, neither the US nor England ever wanted to solve the Kurdish problem, they never accepted the independence of Kurdistan. In 1920, the Sèvres, Lausanne and Versailles agreements did not grant independence to the Kurds. In 1922, when a Kurdish king was proclaimed after the First World War, the populations were bombed and gassed by the British. As early as 1991, the Kurds were subject to the embargo. Turkey is killing in Kurdistan tens of thousands, but Turkey is on the "right side", therefore unassailable. Divide and rule is the motto, we encourage ethnic, confessional rebellions: Shi'ites, Sunnis, Arabs,

---

tions 1991)

<sup>149</sup>Dominique Jamet et Régine Deforges, *La Partie de Golfe* (The Game of Gulf), (éditions 1991)

<sup>150</sup>Report of the mission sent to Iraq by the UN, 20 March 1991.

Christians. Lebanon is the most tragic example. The goal of the conflict was to have cheap oil. For this it was necessary to put the nation under tutelage, to massacre its population and to destroy the productive apparatus of the country.

The United States reaped the first industrial benefits of the war against Iraq by winning most of the arms markets in the region. The profits of the arms industry come from external markets rather than from the domestic market. These external markets have shrunk considerably (before 1990) because large buyers, such as those in the Middle East, have seen the financial windfall reduced. The world arms market fell by 60% in 1990. This has exacerbated price competition and therefore a search for cost savings, logically leading to a drastic reduction in the number of operators on the market. Thus, in a decade, the US defense industry has experienced an unprecedented wave of restructuring and mergers, with divestments and acquisitions of activities or entire companies in this sector amounting to more than \$100 billion<sup>151</sup>. These operations gave birth to three giants. Cumulative arms sales by the companies that are now part of Lockheed-Martin, Boeing-MacDonnell Douglas and Raytheon in 1996 amounted to nearly \$50 billion and were about as much as the Pentagon's acquisition budget (excluding research). American industry, buoyed by the collapse of the USSR and especially by its leading role in the coalition against Iraq, is widening the gap with its competitors, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). In 1996, the United States captured 44% of the market (some specialists even put the percentage at 50%). They enjoy in this sector a supremacy which they no longer have in any civil field<sup>152</sup>. After the Gulf War, the United States, in four or five years, secured control of half of the markets (all materials included). France held in 1985 nearly 10% of the world market, it now has only 4 to 5% after having been dethroned by the British who hold double<sup>153</sup>.

Iraq ravaged, the war continues economically by the embargo. Oil revenues were \$20 billion, of which \$5 billion was spent on the import of medicine and food. Eight years later, only 2 billion a year in oil sales are authorized and most of it is used to pay the war debt to Kuwait.

The embargo is nothing but a process designed to bring Iraq back to pre-industrial age and to remove any possibility of economic independence in oil matters. The Western powers do not want to let an independent state, with

---

<sup>151</sup>Pierre Dussauge, Professor of Corporate Political Strategy at the H.E.C. Group, *Le Monde* 20.1.98

<sup>152</sup>Claude Serfati, *Le Monde*, 20 January 1998.

<sup>153</sup>Christian Schmid: President of the Association of Defence Economists: *Le Monde*, 20.1.98.



military power, develop and play a role in the region. It intends to control all oil wealth. Iraqi soil still contains for a century or two of oil. It was inevitable that it would be hit.

Arms control is a comedy that no longer deceives anyone. We will not be led to believe that in eight years the UN experts, and particularly the Americans, with all the ultra-sophisticated means of detection at their disposal, telecommunications, radars, satellites, etc. have not been able to verify their existence or absence.

Before the embargo in 1990, Iraq met the criteria of the World Health Organization. It spent \$30 a month per individual, whereas today it spends only \$2, a drop of 93%.

The most tragic consequences of the embargo particularly affect the vulnerable segments of the population, especially children.

In 1977, French researchers sent to Iraq predicted a population of 25 million by the end of the century<sup>154</sup>. It will be 22 million. UNICEF, the F.A.U., the United Nations Commission on Social and Economic Rights estimate that 1,300 thousand children under the age of 5 have died because of the embargo. One million children no longer go to school. Out of 5 million children under the age of five, 1 million will never have normal mental faculties due to a lack of protein and milk to develop their brains. Thus, a quarter of the future population is now estimated to be lost.

Thus a people is sacrificed, for purely economic purposes, as an offering to the oil god.

Whereas in Iraq there were once several million immigrants from neighbouring countries, we are witnessing an emigration abroad of intellectuals, the brightest minds. This is a loss of substance for Iraqi society. Many families are torn apart by emigration. Many women find themselves alone. Families are disunited, delinquency is on the rise. Women must control family misery, share food between their children, one day one will eat, the next day will be the turn of the other. A father can walk twenty kilometres to take his sick child to a hospital where he cannot be treated because there are no medicines.

Medicines or food cannot be imported, but neither can spare parts for medical equipment, for tools, for vehicles, nor can we import notebooks, pencils or books for school children. For eight years, Iraq has not been able to import scientific publications. Researchers may not travel abroad or attend international conferences. You cannot equip yourself with computers or have access to the Internet, to the knowledge that other countries are developing.

---

<sup>154</sup>Alain Guerreau, *L'Irak, développement et contradiction* (Iraq, development and contradiction), le Sycomore, 1978.

It is estimated that the delay will be 30 to 40 years by reducing the chances of communicating with the new culture of the world. All sectors are affected. It is a deliberate desire to reduce Iraq to the rank of a Third World country. The oil-for-food deal solved nothing. It is mainly used to pay the war debt. The country receives only 20%. As far as health expenditure is concerned, the same is true. And import agreements are not even respected. As for the frozen Iraqi contributions abroad, it is obvious theft.

It is indeed the will of the powerful that dominates the Security Council to impose an unprecedented blockade to prevent a country from developing, to ruin its future, a country that had the economic means to help the Third World. After the filthy war, the embargo is still a colonial war of an economic nature, whatever the pretext, even if it is international law.

Yet this people has demonstrated its will to resist and survive, to preserve its dignity. But the people cannot be asked to sacrifice themselves for honor. It is forced to ensure his survival. Contrary to what had been hoped when the embargo was imposed, the differences with the regime have faded if not forgotten. A hungry population seeks only to feed itself, it does not make revolution. Iraqis are aware that what they are suffering is being done to prevent their country from developing. They are resisting, but they will not be able to resist for another 10 years. This people is in peril. If a civil war broke out in Iraq, no one could contain it, the whole region would be affected. The Americans play the sorcerer's apprentice but no longer know how to control when Pandora's box is opened. They have not been able to control fundamentalism and conflicts in Afghanistan for 25 years. Whatever the regime, it is up to the people to determine. The embargo is the war waged against all progressive or indocile regimes against the United States. Solidarity with the Iraqi people should animate all progressive forces in the world.

**Subhi Toma**

Subhi Toma is a sociologist of Iraqi origin, exiled in France since 1971. He was secretary general of iraqi students opposed to the Baghdad regime. Co-founder of the international coordination against embargoes, he has led several observation missions in Iraq since the 1991 war.

### **17.3 Before embargo:**

30,000 hospital beds built after the nationalization of oil.

Budget: \$500 million. Medical stocks were a quarter of a billion.

Infant mortality: 24 per 1,000. — Less than 5 years: 540 per month.  
Over 5 years: 650

## 17.4 After embargo:

Budget: \$37 million. Zero stocks.

Infant mortality: 92 per 1,000. Under 5 years: 7,500 per month. More than 5 years: 9,000 per month.

Malnutrition: 1,100 calories per person instead of 2,500. Children's weight decreased by 22%.

(Unicef Health Observatory)



## Chapter 18

# Black Africa under French colonization

**Jean SURET-CANALE**

During the nineteenth century, the old colonial slave and mercantile system gradually disappeared to make way for “modern” colonization, the one that reigned from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century.

This “modern” colonization is marked by a return to protectionism within the “imperial” framework: each great power reserves for itself the markets of its colonies and zones of influence which now cover the whole world.

France, which from 1830 embarked on the conquest of Algeria, completed its “old colonies” inherited from the Old Regime and returned in 1815, by new acquisitions, under the July Monarchy and under the Second Empire.

But it was the Third Republic who realized, between 1876 and 1903, the constitution of a vast Empire, whose centerpieces, economically speaking, were North Africa and Indochina, but whose largest part was in tropical Africa, with French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, to which were added in 1918 most of the former German colonies of Cameroon and Togo. Together in one piece, by the Sahara, with the French domains of North Africa, completed in the Indian Ocean by Madagascar and the territory of Djibouti.

In the “new way” colonization, the financial groups, resulting from the merger, by concentration, of the large industrial and banking enterprises, shared the markets, substituting monopoly for free competition, and, in the colonies, gave the export of capital the first place, in relation to the export of goods and the import of raw materials. French black Africa, from this point of view, is an exception. Exploitation remains essentially commercial,

monopolized by a limited number of Marseille and Bordeaux firms, integrated late into financial capital, having limited their investments to a minimum and practice the exchange of picking or culture products provided by the traditional peasantry for imported goods (fabrics, hardware, small tools).

## 18.1 The Colonial conquest

The division of the African continent, from coastal trading posts inherited from the time of the slave trade, will take place roughly from 1876 to 1900.

It will oppose France especially to Great Britain, in a rivalry that will culminate in 1898 with the Fachoda “incident”, when the Marchand Mission, trying to establish a link between Central Africa and Djibouti, will clash with the English troops of Kitchener, on the Upper Nile. France will have to abandon its claims in this area. But, most of the partition completed, the “Entente cordiale” concluded in 1904 will put an end to the Franco-British conflict.

The colonial conquest was covered with humanitarian pretexts: it was a question of putting an end to the slave trade and slavery, of eliminating the “bloody kinglets” who set Africa on fire and blood, of opening Africa to trade, and thus to civilization. The missionary (mainly Catholic in the French domain) is, for the conquest of souls, associated with the officer and the administrator.

In 1884-1885, the African Conference in Berlin, bringing together the main European powers and the United States, affirmed, in the name of these principles, the right of the European powers to divide Africa.

Colonial practice, as we shall see, will be somewhat distant from the proclaimed principles.

For the French military, the conquest of Africa, in the aftermath of the defeat of 1871 and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, is a way to regain lost military glory, and, in an often perilous adventure, to gain notoriety and stripes.

The military and traders are sometimes divided, when, for example, the political authority claims to prohibit, to the chagrin of traders, the import of firearms and ammunition. But, on the whole, the territorial stranglehold serves the interests of European trade, which eliminates competition from African traders and establishes, from coast to inland, its network of factories where local products are exchanged for imported goods.

The resistance of the African heads of state, Lat Dior in Senegal, Ahmadou in Sudan (now Mali), Samory in Upper Guinea, Béhanzin in Dahomey (present-day Benin), etc., will be broken because of the superiority of the conquerors in armament (rapid-fire rifles, artillery); the resistance of

the “stateless” populations, living in autonomous tribal or village communities, will take longer to overcome, and will continue very much before in the twentieth century (“pacification” of the forest Ivory Coast from 1908 to 1916; insurgency of the Gbayas in Equatorial Africa, from 1928 to 1931). The Saharan borders of Mauritania and Morocco were not submitted until 1936.

The “treaties” concluded with the African sovereigns, which founded the “rights” of France against its colonial competitors, will be outrageously reduced to paper rags as soon as the colonial authorities find it in their interest: thus, in French West Africa, a simple decree of October 23, 1904 simply annexed the territories “under protectorate”.

## 18.2 Methods of warfare

The methods of warfare are expeditious and ruthless. As European troops could only be reduced, local recruitment would be required, and it was mainly African soldiers who would conquer Africa on behalf of France.

Faidherbe, governor of Senegal under the Second Empire, had created the first units of “Senegalese riflemen”, who will retain this name, although later recruited mainly outside of Senegal.

Bonuses and pay can attract future soldiers: but in the conquest of Sudan, it was often done differently. When the need for manpower arose, registers of “voluntary engagements” were opened in the “posts” (garrisons). Forewarned, the slave traders brought their “goods”: the “captive” in good condition of service was bought in general (in the years 1895-1900) for less than 300 francs. Sold against receipt and signature of an “act of liberation”, the captive was supposed, after being “released”, to have committed himself “voluntarily”.

In the great campaigns, in addition to the regular troops, the “auxiliaries” were widely called upon, recruited without being paid, against a promise of participation in looting, and in particular in the partition of the vanquished reduced to slavery. A French officer, participating in the capture of Sikasso (Mali) in 1898, described the “sack” of the city as follows:

“After the siege, the assault... The order for looting is given. Everything is taken or killed. All the captives, about 4,000, gathered in herds.”<sup>XXV</sup>

“The colonel starts the distribution. He wrote himself on a notebook, then gave it up saying, ‘Share this amongst you’. The

---

<sup>XXV</sup>This quote and the next are not terminated in the original text

sharing took place with arguments and blows. Then, on the way! Each European received a woman of his choice... We did the 40-kilometer stages with these captives. Children and all those who are tired are killed with butts and bayonets..."

"The corpses were left by the side of the roads... In these same stages, the men requisitioned on their way to carry the millet remained five days without rations; receive 50 rope blows if they take a handful of the millet they carry."<sup>155</sup>.

Another author explains: "The scenes that accompanied, last year, the capture of Sikasso, were only the reproduction of those that had followed the sack of Ségou, Nioro, and all the villages conquered by our weapons ... It is by the hundreds, by the thousands, that our incessant columns thus increase the number of slaves..."<sup>156</sup>.

When, in the session of the Chamber of Deputies of 30 November 1900, Vigne d'Octon denounced the horrors of the conquest of Sudan, Le Myre de Vilers, a good-natured colonial, replied: "Our honourable colleague is attacking enforcement agents; I blame governments; they cannot ignore that by sending troops several thousand kilometers from their base of operations, without means of transport, without food, without exchange goods, the troops are forced to live on the inhabitant, to requisition countless carriers, who sow the paths of their corpses..."<sup>157</sup>.

The African wars of the nineteenth century were limited in their effects by the mediocrity of armament; they devastated only certain regions. On the contrary, the wars of colonial conquest raged everywhere, not sparing the "friendly" villages, removed from destruction but ruined almost as much by the requisitions of grain, cattle, carriers.

A peak in horror was reached in 1899, by the "Mission Voulet-Chanoine" (named after the two captains who commanded it). These two officers had already "distinguished" themselves in Mossi country (now Burkina Faso) by their "Prussian" methods.

Leaving Sudan, they must join on Lake Chad the Missions Foureau-Lamy, who left from Algeria, and Gentil, who left from Congo, to ensure the French takeover of the northern shore of Chad, and achieve the continuity of French possessions on the African continent. Too heavy, having to cross an area

<sup>155</sup>Quoted by P. Vigné d'Octon, *La gloire du sabre* (The glory of saber), Paris, Flammarion, 1900, p.131 and following (Notes from a witness to the capture of Sikasso).

<sup>156</sup>Jean Rodes, A look at Sudan, *La revue Blanche* (The White review), November 1st 1899.

<sup>157</sup>Chamber of Deputies, sitting of 30 November 1900 (*Annales de la Chambre des Députés*, 1900, p. 580).



lacking food resources and water, the mission will multiply the atrocities, which will reveal in France a member of the mission, dismissed following dissensions. We will cite here only one example: on the night of January 8 to 9, 1899, reconnaissances are prescribed:

“Patrols must approach the villages, seize them with knives, kill everything that resists, take the inhabitants into captivity, seize the herds. On the morning of the 9th the reconnaissance returned to the camp with 250 oxen, 500 sheep, 28 horses, 80 prisoners. A few riflemen were wounded. In order to ‘make an example’, Captain Voulet had twenty women mothers, with young children and udders, taken and had them killed with spears, a few hundred meters from the camp. The bodies were later found by the commander of Say’s post”<sup>158</sup>.

In another village, carriers having been drafted, all the able-bodied men took refuge in the bush. “The old men, the women, the children alone remained. They were taken out and, after having them placed on a row, salvo fires shot them down to the last.”<sup>159</sup> There were 111 bodies as a result of this “incident” alone.

Concerned, less about the procedures used and revealed by the press, than about the delay in the mission’s planned schedule, the Sudanese authorities sent Lieutenant-Colonel Klobb and Lieutenant Meynier in search of the mission to regain control. Fifty years later, Meynier, now a general, describes the traces of the mission as follows:

“Wide strides in the grass and on the paths, various abandoned objects, etc. and, above all, burned villages and scattered human bones... (To Birni Nkoni) we could read on the ground and among the ruins of the small city the various phases of the assault, the fire and the massacre... The ditches had been backfilled in places to serve as mass graves and human debris appeared here and there, on which the hunger of large frightened dogs was exerted. The more the column advanced, the more frequent and horrific these macabre spectacles became. It was, around the large village of Tibery, the corpses of dozens of women hanged in the surrounding groves. Or, at the crossroads of two tracks, we discovered the corpse of some guide, suspected of having wanted to mislead the mission. The most painful impression was caused by the meeting

---

<sup>158</sup>P. Vigné d’Octon, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>159</sup>Testimony of Sergeant Toureau, dans P. Vigné d’Octon, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

of two corpses of girls (nine and ten years old) hanging from a large tree branch on the edge of the small village of Koran-Kalgo.”<sup>XXVI</sup>

“... In the villages encountered, the wells are almost everywhere filled or polluted by piles of corpses that are difficult to distinguish whether they are animals or humans.”<sup>160</sup>.

When the two officers join Voulet and Chanoine, the latter, furious at being dispossessed of “their” mission, shoot at them: Klobb is killed, Meynier wounded. But when Voulet and Chanoine inform the riflemen that they will create with them an independent Empire on the scene of their conquests, and that they will not return home with their loot, they mutiny, Voulet and Chanoine are killed. The “incident” will be attributed to a crisis of madness, and vigilant censorship will ensure for half a century that there is no more talk about this unfortunate case.

### 18.3 The colonial system

What does the African colonial system look like when it stabilizes at the beginning of the twentieth century, and as it will continue until the fifties of this century?

Until the enactment of the 1946 Constitution, the new colonies (other than those bequeathed by the Old Regime) were abandoned to the arbitrariness of the Head of State. The sénatus-consulte of 3 May 1854 (under the Second Empire) left the administration of these colonies to the discretion of the Head of State, the Emperor. The Third Republic maintained this situation, for the benefit of the President of the Republic, who in fact delegated his powers to the government, in practice to the Minister of the Colonies. Unless expressly provided, laws passed by Parliament are not applicable to the colonies (for example, laws on freedom of the press, or on freedom of association). The Minister shall legislate by decree, extending to certain colonies, if he deems it appropriate, metropolitan legislation, or instituting special provisions for them.

The colonized are French “subjects” , but not citizens; they do not vote; they are subject to the discretionary authority of European governors-general, governors and administrators. Local decrees regulate the status of these “subjects” known as “indigénate” The European local administration can,

---

<sup>XXVI</sup>Not terminated

<sup>160</sup>General Meynier, *La Mission Joalland-Meynier*, Paris, Éditions de l’Empire français, 1947, pp. 39-40.

by these texts, impose on the subjects by simple administrative decision, without judgment, for reasons as varied as “negligence in the payment of tax”, “disobedience to village or canton chiefs”, “unfounded” complaints, or “infringement of the respect due to the French authority”, prison sentences and fines. Governors and Governors General may impose deportation sentences. The governor of Ivory Coast, Angoulvant, in 1916, regretted that the death penalty was not provided for, but observed that in view of the statistics, deportation led to the same results<sup>161</sup>. Indeed, the sending of deportees from forest regions to Port Étienne, Mauritania, in the middle of the Sahara leaves them only a reduced life expectancy, and the “notables” affected by this measure are advised to make their will before departure.

The “attack on the respect due to French authority” is, for example, on the part of an indigenous, forgetting to uncover himself or to make the military salute at the passage of a white leader (and all whites are, more or less, leaders). When the chief is magnanimous, he is content to have the offender’s hat confiscated by a circle guard, with orders to come and look for it “at the office”, where it will be returned to him with a few strokes of “manigolo”, the hippopotamus leather chicote, an obligatory attribute, although not provided for by legislation, of the circle guard.

It is all the more so, of course, any criticism, any claim, against the authority.

Subjects are subject to the so-called personal or capitation tax, payable by all, men and women, from 16 to 60 years of age. The sum is lump sum, the same for the rich (there are so few!) and for the poor, with a rate that varies according to the region. On the other hand, settlers (who must be attracted by “advantages”) are exempt from most of the taxes required in the metropolis.

Subjects are subjected to forced labour: in principle, a few days of “providing” per year. But, in case of necessity, the planned number of days is unscrupulously exceeded, and in some cases, the “required” are sent, for months, hundreds of kilometers away. Forced labour provides for the construction and maintenance of administrative buildings, tracks and roads, railways.

From 1921 to 1934, the construction of the Congo-Ocean railway, from Pointe Noire to Brazzaville, led to a real massacre, denounced in its time by the journalist Albert Londres<sup>162</sup>. The local requirements were not enough, so workers of 3,000 kilometers or more were brought in from Oubangui-Chari (now central African Republic) and Chad, part on foot, part by the wa-

---

<sup>161</sup>G. Angoulvant, *La pacification de la Côte d’Ivoire* (The pacification of Ivory Coast), Paris, Larose, 1916.

<sup>162</sup>Albert Londres, *Terre d’ébène* (Ebony earth), Paris, Albin Michel, 1929.

terway of the Oubangui and Congo. The exhaustion of the journey, the epidemics following the crowding on the barges almost without food and in unimaginable hygienic conditions, the passage, for these populations from the savannahs to a humid climate and a different diet, make the required die like flies. The survivors must work under the foremen's chicote to drill the rock with shovels and mine bars.

In 1929, Albert Londres estimated the number of dead (while there were still 300 kilometers to be built) at 17,000. He notes, however, an "improvement", since, according to official statistics, mortality, from 45.20% in 1927, fell to 17.34% in 1929!<sup>163</sup>

Another major project responsible for massacres: the Office du Niger. In its central part, in present-day Mali, Niger slows down its course and spreads out in multiple arms and lakes: it is the central Niger Delta. The idea was conceived of developing this area into irrigated perimeters, in order to make it a new Egypt, giving France a national supply of cotton. The operation was entrusted to administrators and engineers of public works, in complete ignorance of the soil, their reaction to irrigation, the methods of cultivation. It was in use that it was found that irrigation, after giving below-average yields, resulted in sterilizing the soil by leaching. Cotton was abandoned for rice.

To "enhance" the developments of Niger, people from the Mossi country (in present-day Burkina Faso), settled in colonization villages subject to military discipline, with compulsory work from dawn to dusk, prohibition of circulation, and royalty to be paid for the use of facilities and water, were massively deported.

There are other forms of forced labour.

Export crops are encouraged by various means, the simplest of which is the obligation to pay tax. In regions where the use of money is not widespread, the only way to obtain tax money is to produce and sell products demanded by trading companies, crop products such as peanuts, cotton, coffee, or picking products such as "herb rubber" (provided by a savannah vine) much sought after at the beginning of the century, palm oil, kapock. Farmers are required to supply the markets, placed under the control of the administration and where European traders or their agents buy at the prices of the "administrative mercurial", prices set very often well below the real market value. In addition, farmers are often defrauded (counterfeit scales, unpaid goods under the pretext of "poor quality", but nevertheless marketed afterwards...)

---

<sup>163</sup>R. Susset, *La vérité sur le Cameroun et l'A.E.F.* (The truth about Cameroon and A.E.F., Paris, Éd. de la Nouvelle revue critique, 1934.

The exaction is even more evident in the regions (especially those of Equatorial Africa) where the regime is that of “mandatory crops”.

This is the case of Oubangui-Chari (now Central African Republic) and Chad for cotton cultivation, starting from 1929.

In cotton areas, each taxpayer is obliged to cultivate a parcel of cotton, of a specific size, and to deliver the products to “concession companies” that have been given a monopoly on the purchase and processing of cotton. Under the supervision of the administration and the agents of the companies, and under penalty of sanctions, the peasant must, when the time comes, deliver to the “buyers” of the company the required cotton. The price set is ridiculous. It allows, at most, to pay the tax<sup>164</sup>.

But this regime is nothing compared to the one to which these same populations were subjected at the beginning of the century.

The “French Congo”, which in 1910 became French Equatorial Africa, was almost entirely shared between 40 “concession companies” in 1899. The latter have a monopoly on the exploitation of local resources on their territory and, de facto, on trade.<sup>165</sup>

They will make almost no investment and many will quickly go bankrupt, after having plucked a few suckers on the stock market. Those in employment exploit picking<sup>XXVII</sup> rubber, with forced labour paid only as “harvesting work”, with the companies arguing that the harvested rubber, produced from the soil, belongs to them under their concession.

On what happened, we have the testimony of a missionary, Fr. Daigre, who is also a good-natured colonial:

“To the orders to harvest rubber, most of the villages responded with a refusal, and, to support the administration, flying columns of guards were sent into the country... ” Coercion is used. “Each village or group of villages was then occupied by one or more guards, assisted by a number of auxiliaries, and the exploitation of rubber began... At the end of the month the harvest was brought to the capital where the sale took place at the rate of fifteen pennies per kilogram. The administration carried out the weighing and the buyer taking delivery of the goods paid cash,

<sup>164</sup>See Jean Cabot, *La culture du coton au Tchad* (Cotton cultivation in Chad), *Annales de géographie*, 1957, pp. 499-508.

<sup>165</sup>G. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Le Congo au temps des grandes compagnies concessionnaires (1898-1930)* (The Congo at the time of the big concession companies (1898-1930)), Paris-La Haye, Mouton, 1972.

<sup>XXVII</sup>*Ceuillette* in the original text. Many methods for harvesting rubber were used at the time, including picking rubbery lianas. See [1].

not to the harvesters, but to the official who paid the sum to the village tax. The mass thus worked nine consecutive months without receiving any remuneration.”

The missionary explains that, in the first two years, the populations were able to subsist on their old cassava plantations. But, little by little, resources are running out. The “harvesters” have to work further and further away from their villages, as rubber vines become scarce near the villages. “Towards the end of the month, they were given two or three days to go to the village to refuel, but most of the time, they came back empty-handed, the plantations were no longer renewed... The sick and small children (who remained in the village) died of starvation. I visited several times a region where the least sick finished off the most affected and ate them; I saw open graves where the corpses had been removed for food. Skeletal children searched piles of rubbish for ants and other insects they ate raw. Skulls, shins, dragged around the villages.”<sup>166</sup>

## 18.4 The exercise of “French authority”

As we have said, the authority is entirely held by a hierarchy of European officials: Governor General (head of the “groups of territories” of the A.O.E, the A.E.E. and large colonies such as Madagascar; Cameroon, a territory under the mandate of the League of Nations, is under the authority of a Governor-General who bears the title of “High Commissioner”); governor, administrator (circle or subdivision commander — the circle sometimes has a few subdivisions, placed under the authority of a junior administrator reporting to the circle commander).

The tasks of the circle commander are: the collection of taxes, the supply and marketing of products required by trading companies, the recruitment of those required for forced labor, and, from the First World War, military recruitment (raising a contingent of conscripts for a three-year military service).

To carry out these tasks, the administrator needs indigenous auxiliaries; it is first of all civil servants (clerical clerks, interpreters) who populate its offices; but it is above all the “customary chiefs”. These leaders sometimes come from the old pre-colonial dynasties; sometimes it is a parvenu, a former gunman, sometimes even a former boy or cook of a governor whom he wanted to reward.

---

<sup>166</sup>R. P. Daigre, *Oubangui-Chari, témoignage sur son évolution (1900-1940)* (Oubangui-Chari, testimony on its evolution (1900-1940), Issoudun, Dillen et Cie, 1947, pp. 113-116.

The head of the canton, let alone the village chiefs who are subordinate to him, enjoys no legitimacy, no stability: "The head of the canton", writes Governor-General Van Vollenhoven in a circular, "even if he is the descendant of the king with whom we have dealt, has no power of his own; appointed by us, after a choice in principle discretionary, it is only our instrument."<sup>167</sup>

At any time, if he does not fulfill his obligations in the desired way, the leader can be dismissed, imprisoned.

His charges are numerous. Together with the village chiefs appointed on his proposal, he is responsible for collecting the tax, on which he collects a modest rebate. He adds, on his behalf, "customary royalties" and chores, on which the administration turns a blind eye. The tax is levied on each head of household, according to the number of its nationals. But the amount, calculated for each canton and village according to an approximate "census", is flat-rate. If the number of real taxable persons is lower than that of the census, the real tax will be increased by the same amount. Those present pay for fictitious recorderes, fugitives or the dead.

To collect the tax — and to meet the other obligations that we will see — the chief maintains at his own expense a small troop of henchmen.

To the administrator and ethnologist Gilbert Vieillard, who reproached his "notables" for surrounding themselves with "frank scoundrels", they replied: "Do you want, yes or no, that we collect the tax, that we provide chores and conscripts? We will not achieve this through gentleness and persuasion: if people are not afraid of being tied up and beaten, they are laughing at us."<sup>168</sup>

Here we see mention of the other two obligations that are those of the chief: provide recruits for forced labour; and, since the war of 1914-1918, for conscription (quota fixed for each canton, military service of three years).

The choice is arbitrary: naturally, relatives, friends and protégés of the chiefs are exempted as much as possible; the weight of requisitions and conscription was primarily on the humble, first and foremost the former slaves.

If the chief's followers fail to meet these objectives, the armed force of the circle guards is used, and both the levying of taxes and the recruitment of exploited and conscripts is akin to a raid: villages surrounded by surprise, property confiscated and sold at auction, conscripts tied with ropes to be taken to the place of incorporation.

The chief is also obliged to receive and maintain the administrator on tour and his retinue, the circle guards, the various officials passing through. Daily

---

<sup>167</sup>Quoted by R. Cornevin, *L'évolution des chefferies dans l'Afrique noire d'expression française* (The Evolution of Chiefdoms in French-Speaking Black Africa), Recueil Penant, n° 687, juin-août 1961, p. 380.

<sup>168</sup>Gilbert Vieillard, *Notes sur les Peuls du Fouta-Djalon* (Notes on the Peuls of Fouta-Djalon), Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire, Dakar, n° 1, p. 171.

life is dominated by fear, the one that stems from arbitrariness: arbitrariness of the leaders and their followers, arbitrariness of the white leaders.

There is no relationship between whites and blacks except from “boss” to subordinate. Any familiarity, including (and perhaps especially) with those who are called with contemptuous condescension the “evolved”, those who have followed the school and have become civil servants, teachers, doctors, is frowned upon, possibly sanctioned. This is evidenced by this mention in the file of a European official: “Frequents indigenous people; even receives some at his table. Not made for colonial life.”

In the bush, when the wife of a white man is dissatisfied with his boy or his cook, whether he has broken the teapot or spoiled the sauce, she sends him to the “office” (of the circle commander) with a note indicating the number of chicote shots to be administered by the guards.

Still in 1944, the socialist Albert Gazier, a member of the Provisional Consultative Assembly of Algiers, having toured our Colonies in Africa, asked about forty Europeans the following question: “Sir (or Madam), do you ever beat your boy?” And he notes, “I didn’t get any negative answers.”<sup>169</sup>

## 18.5 From colonial legend to reality

To young French people, through school textbooks, and a whole propaganda (in particular that of the “Maritime and Colonial League”), it was argued that France had brought to its colonial populations roads, schools, hospitals, in short progress and civilization and thus, an improvement in their living conditions.

What was the reality?

At the beginning of the century, colonization had set up a network of railways, which remained unfinished: some routes of penetration of the coast to the interior, the junction of which was never realized. These narrow-gauge railways (gauge of 1 m instead of 1.44 m for normal railways) were of low capacity. They were originally designed for the transport of troops — the rapid transport of armed forces where they were needed. Subsequently, they were used to transport local products to ports and, conversely, to transport imported goods.

These railways, as well as the carriage tracks, were essentially built and then maintained by forced labour.

---

<sup>169</sup>Testimony during the Colloquium of the Institute of History of the Present Time, published in 1986 by Éditions du CNRS, under the title *Les chemins de la décolonisation de l’Empire français (1936-1956)* (The paths of the decolonization of the French Empire (1936-1956)).



Schools? They were designed to provide the colonization with the auxiliary staff it needed, interpreters, administrative clerks, and, at the highest level, teachers and doctors. These latter functions were the highest to which an “native” could claim but always in a subordinate position compared to French teachers and doctors. Their diplomas, in fact, were local, and gave access only to the corresponding local administrative functions. They were not valid in France, and the absence of courses leading to French diplomas (brevet supérieur and baccalaureate) precluded them from being able to access higher education. There was, in each colony (and in Brazzaville for the A.E.F.) an upper primary school; the brightest pupils entered the “École normale William Ponty”, which trained “indigenous” teachers and doctors. It was only in 1946 that some Ponty graduates were admitted to the Dakar High school, to prepare both parts of the baccalaureate in order to be able to do higher education in France. Africans, who, thanks to special circumstances, had been able to pursue higher education in France, such as Lamine Gueye, a lawyer, or Léopold Sédar Senghor, an associate in grammar, were counted on the fingers of one hand.

In 1945, the primary school enrolment rate in A.O.E. did not exceed 5%; there were only two high schools in A.O.E., in St Louis of Senegal and Dakar, initially reserved for Europeans. The University of Dakar was not created until the eve of independence, in 1957.

In French Equatorial Africa, the situation was even worse: it was not until 1937 that an education service was created in Brazzaville; previously the few schools were attached to the “Political and Administrative Affairs” department. Only one upper primary school existed, in Brazzaville.

Let’s move on to public health: the “Colonial Health Service”, militarized (it was to remain so until independence) was originally reserved for Europeans and troops, incidentally for indigenous officials.

The missions had set up infirmaries or dispensaries. It was not until 1905 that the “Indigenous Medical Assistance” was created in the A.O.E., oriented towards mass medicine, with a network of “indigenous” hospitals (3 in 1910), and dispensaries. In 1908 statistics indicate 150,000 patients treated, for 12 million inhabitants.

To endemic diseases (malaria, yellow fever, etc.), colonization added imported diseases, all the more formidable as Africans were not immune and took particularly brutal forms (syphilis, tuberculosis). Population displacements following the massive requisitions of labour and the development of trade relations contributed to the spread of epidemics.

The director of the health services of Cameroon could write, in 1945:

“Diseases, although they play a very important role in the decay

of indigenous populations, are not the only ones responsible, and other causes that facilitate their devastation and whose importance is great but which escape the action of the health service, must be rightly incriminated: undernourishment and the almost general lack of nitrogenous foods, an inconsiderate economic policy that, in some regions, has pushed for the development of rich (export, Editor's note) crops to the detriment of food crops, the imbalance that exists between the earnings of the natives and the prices of the most essential items."<sup>170</sup>

As a result, mortality rates, especially infant mortality, are very high.

It is only from the twenties that vaccination campaigns will make an effective contribution to the reduction of mortality.

Among the most formidable diseases, the object of mass prophylaxis, it is worth mentioning trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness).

To deal with this, the colonial administration created specialized mobile services. However, in order to gather populations, to enumerate them and to carry out screenings, the mobile teams used methods very similar to those used for civilian or military recruitment or tax collection, and similar to manhunting. The lack of enthusiasm of the population for the care provided is easily explained: the mobile teams of nurses and their retinue, in the good colonial tradition, lived on the country, shamelessly demanding food, women, etc. The lumbar punctures essential for bacteriological examinations carried out by nurses who were not always skillful and under summary hygienic conditions sometimes led to serious accidents. On the other hand, the therapy implemented was not without danger, which could lead in case of wrong dosage to serious damage to the nervous system (nephritis, blindness).

It was not until the 50s that the medical and prophylaxis system became truly effective and that we witnessed a "reversal" of demographic trends, from the decline or stagnation towards growth, and, from about 1955, the explosion.

A final word on one of the "objectives" invoked of colonization: the fight against slavery.

We have seen that at first, that of conquest, slavery, far from retreating, experienced a clear development. Subsequently, the prohibition of the slave trade (enacted in A.O.F. only in 1905), then the abolition of slavery, only very gradually became a reality.

The liberation of slaves was commonly applied, toward rebellious or reluctant populations, as a punishment. But where the support of the tra-

---

<sup>170</sup>Médecin-Colonel Farinaud: Medical report 1945. Cité in *Afrique noire: l'ère coloniale*, op. cit. Cit. p. 493.

ditional ruling classes was deemed politically necessary, such as in Fouta-Djalou (Guinea) or in the Sahelian Saharo regions, slavery remained intact, and the administration endorsed (or covered up) the practice of the “resale right” (search, capture and return to their masters of fugitive slaves). In Guinea, the first census by sampling carried out by the I.N.S.E.E. in 1954-1955, listed separately, in Fouta-Djalou, the “captives”. In Mauritania, the persistence of slavery, with administrative support, was denounced in 1929 by the Dahomean teacher Louis Hunkanrin, who was sentenced to ten years of deportation to Mauritania. He denounced the practice in a pamphlet, the text of which he managed to send in France, and which was published by a local section of the League of Human Rights<sup>171</sup>. This situation was perpetuated after independence and it is known that, most recently, Mauritanian human rights activists, for denouncing this survival, were arrested, imprisoned and convicted.

## 18.6 Demographic data

The slave trade, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, had already demographically weakened Africa. The trauma of the conquest dealt a new blow, perhaps more brutal, although more limited in time. The fighting, then the excesses of the carrying and requisitions of men, food, livestock, increase mortality. They leave populations weakened, more susceptible to epidemics and other accidents — droughts for example.

“The slightest accident — exceptional drought, invasion of locusts — was dramatized by the simultaneous colonial withdrawal of food and work, without the administration having provided the means for the necessary intervention.”<sup>172</sup>

It was the period 1880-1920 that was the period of the largest demographic decline, moreover impossible to quantify given the mediocrity of statistical information. In Dahomey (now Benin), one of the most densely populated and relatively peaceful colonies, there was a decline of 9% between 1900 and 1920<sup>173</sup>. The decline was certainly more noticeable in regions with

---

<sup>171</sup>J. Suret-Canale, Un pionnier méconnu du mouvement démocratique en Afrique: Louis Hunkanrin, *Études dahoméennes, nouvelle série, no 3* (Dahomean studies, new series n°3), Porto Novo, December 1964, pp. 5-30.

<sup>172</sup>C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Afrique noire, permanences et ruptures* (Black Africa, permanences and ruptures), Paris, Payot, 1985, p. 52.

<sup>173</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 57.

more limited resources and hit by massive requisitions of men, livestock and food with regard to their resources such as Niger<sup>174</sup> or Mauritania.

Already depopulated, the regions of the A.E.F. ravaged by the abuses of the concession system (Central African Republic) or by the exploitation of wood (Gabon: adult men “drafted” by two-year contracts to work on the forest sites; villages — where only women, children, and the elderly remain, “taxed” in cassava to feed the construction sites) the fall was even more massive (from 30 to 50%)<sup>175</sup>.

In the Sudano-Sahelian regions, the great droughts of 1913-1914, 1930-1933, the consequences of which were aggravated by the political-economic context (war of 1914-1918, crisis and depression of the 30s) and finally the drought of 1972 and following, led to famine and famine.

It was not until the 30s that the first effects of mass medicine were felt. The Africa of independence has gone from demographic regression to explosion, but the consequences of an economic regime inherited from colonization have maintained to this day misery and undernourishment, aggravated by internal conflicts. But that’s another story.

**Jean Suret-Canale**

The data used here have been largely borrowed from our books: *Afrique noire occidentale: géographie, civilisations, histoire* (Black West Africa: geography, civilizations, history), Paris, Éditions sociales, 1958 (reedition 1968) and *Afrique noire — L’ère coloniale (1900-1945)* (Black Africa- The colonial era (1900-1945)), Paris, Éditions sociales, 1964 (rééd. 1982).

---

<sup>174</sup>See Idrissa Kimba, *La Formation de la colonie du Niger 1880-1920* (The Formation of the Colony of Niger 1880-1920). State thesis, University of Paris VII, 1983.

<sup>175</sup>C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

## Chapter 19

# Algeria 1830-1998: From colonial capitalism's infancy to the monopolar enterprise of "globalized" recolonisation

André PRENANT

In Algeria, capitalism, even if it has little part in the decision of conquest, intervenes as soon as it is implemented and, with the exception of the two decades that followed independence, until now: until 1962 it played as a model of colonial capitalism, from its mercantilist beginnings to its oil fixations; today, in the context of globalization, as a type of monopolar "re-colonization".

Admittedly, in 1830, capital still had little authority in France. But it was throughout the duration of its evolution that he presided in Algeria over the structuring of legislation and the colonial economy, its maintenance in the face of the resistance that emerged there, until the final violence by which he tried to avoid being ousted. Since independence, it has played on the fragility and external dependence of the "non-capitalist" economy that was trying to build itself there, on the consolidation of the antagonism between social classes developed by the contradictions of this economy, to provoke its crisis. It provided an opportunity to reintroduce the constraints that have aggravated and aggravates it, by determining the violence weighing on the country, in turn used to put it back in its place in the "new world order".

Alien to the very decision of the expedition of 1830 (born of the refusal by the French monarchy to assume a debt), the capitalist system determined, on the other hand, the forty years of gaiter and violence it took to control

the country (1830-1871), the seventy-five years that followed during which it was able to exploit it without massive “illegal” violence (1871-1945), and the seventeen years (1945-1962) that range from the Setif-Guelma massacres to Independence. It remains to measure its past and present role, no longer on the French scale but “European”, even “globalized” in the destructuring / destruction of the economy and society of independent Algeria and in the resumption of (Islamist) violence, from the 1980s to today.

## 19.1 Emerging capitalisme and colonial conquest

### 19.1.1 The share of capital in the decision of the expedition of Algiers.

Paradoxically, the Algiers expedition, which occurred in France at the end of the transition from mercantilism to the Industrial Revolution, was made against the proponents of economic liberalism and the representatives of manufacturing. They are opposed to public spending where they see little prospect of profit. Unlike the colonial strangleholds that would follow, such as that of England over Egypt, it did not invoke unpaid debts by the country to be dominated, and for good reason: the conflict originated in the non-payment, under the Empire and then under the Restoration, of grain deliveries to the Directory, for 7,942,992 gold francs including 350,000 due to the bey, representing in 1827 with the accumulated interest some 24 million-gold, including 1.25 due to the bey.

The mercantilist circles of the port of Marseille nevertheless aggravated the conflict, in particular by the murky game of the consul Deval. The latter, not having transmitted to the Dey 478 891 gold Francs (about 6 million current) released by Louis XVIII in 1816, has, on the other hand, in 1825, had militarily occupied the trading post of La Calle taken as a pledge by Algiers and had Charles X claim, in addition to his concession without royalty, the suzerainty on the surrounding plain, from Bône to the Tunisian border. Colonial rivalry played a role: on 14 Oct. 1827\*<sup>XXVIII</sup> the Minister of War, Clermont-Tonnerre, proposed that he “take advantage of the embarrassment in which (...) England is to conquer the state of Algiers”. And the economist Sismondi, hostile to free trade, wrote as early as May 1830, three months before the landing <sup>176</sup>: “This kingdom of Algiers (...) will be a colony, (...) a new country on which the surplus of the French population and activity can spread. ” There is therefore a goal of exploitation

<sup>XXVIII</sup>The “\*” is in the original text, I don’t know why, maybe some missing footnote?

<sup>176</sup>in *Revue encyclopédique, May 1830*.

of capitalism still in its infancy, even if the supporters of opposing interests fight the expedition, source of expenditure of men and wealth, by wrapping themselves in respect for international law. Thus, Alexandre de Laborde<sup>177</sup> refuses to take Algiers “without being able to keep it (and that) these expenses can bring profits”: it is in the name of “this mass of hard-working men (...) who will see the flow (...) of enormous sums of which they do not understand either the purpose or the cause” which he denounces “the last deals... passed without open credit” for a war that he “does not fear to ... call... unjust”, at least as long as the occupation of Algiers is not carried out. The same is true of a Bignon, deputy of the Eure (and the textiles of Évreux), declaring on July 10, 1829<sup>178</sup> that “the causes of the rupture did not deserve the tenth part of the sacrifices it ... has already cost”

Both tendencies persisted after 1830: liberalism, advocating the use of capital spent in Algeria to equip France, and “a small number of monopolists” speculating on land “bought fictitiously and at a low price (to re-)sell it much more expensive”. These monopolists were denounced on May 20, 1835 by Desjobert, deputy of Seine-Maritime, also a draper department<sup>179</sup>. In his eyes, the motivations of the monopolists remain interested<sup>180</sup>: “the only result” of the conquest remains in 1835 “to have transported to Marseille the business (...) previously spread throughout France. ” In 1839, however, he could not “grant (the war) a man, nor a penny.” The Count of Sade, recalling in 1835 that “the lands are not available”<sup>181</sup> refuses to “exterminate the natives before dispossessing them”. Hippolyte Passy, future minister of Napoleon III, still advocates in 1837<sup>182</sup>. to “prohibit, or at least limit... the acquisition of land”, and proposes, in the same sense, to “deal with the ready-made powers on this country” and to “put it ... in such a state that we can maintain friendly relations with him, traffic with it without fear... and extract grain from it for the supply of our southern provinces.”

The latter saw in it, like Marshal Gérard on 12 November 1830, like Sismondi, “a vast outlet for the superfluous of our population and... the sale of the products of our manufactures”<sup>183</sup>. On March 21, 1832<sup>184</sup>, after

---

<sup>177</sup>To the king and the chambers on the real causes of the break with Algiers, Paris, 1830.

<sup>178</sup>Parlementary Archives , vol. 61, in R. VALET, *L'Afrique devant le parlement au XIXe siècle*(Africa before the parliament in the XIXth century), Paris 1824.

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 96, in R. VALET, *op. cit.*

<sup>180</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 96, in R. VALET, *op. cit.*

<sup>182</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 110, in R. VALET, *op. cit.*

<sup>183</sup>Quoted in DUBOIS and TERRIER, *Un siècle d'expansion coloniale* (A Century of Colonial Expansion.)

<sup>184</sup>parl. arch., vol. 66, in R. VALET, *op. cit.*

that, on the 20th, Marshal Clauzel, himself interested in Mitidja in several companies (two from Paris with a capital of 2 and 3 million (gold), two from Marseille worth 5 and 6 million, and several English) boasted that “Algiers receives more buildings than it once received in three years”, the Marseille deputy Reynard mentions a company in creation “for the construction of steamboats (for) navigation”.

The war of conquest is, with them, that of the “swarm of speculators (...) shot at Algiers, seeking to buy at a low price to resell (...) the buildings of the city ... and the countryside”<sup>185</sup>, resulting in the government’s “tacit commitments to the farmers, industrialists and capitalists it allowed to settle”<sup>186</sup>. The dominant tendency of rising capitalism was, from the beginning, to assume the risk of war, massacres, a risk admitted on July 7, 1833 by the African Commission. The latter proposes, after having noted “the contradiction (of) the march of the occupation” “to extend colonization under military protection” so as not to reduce “the fruit of many efforts”<sup>187</sup>. The capture of Constantine in 1837 rallied, apart from Desjobert’s last fires, the liberals to a “single thought” of French capitalism.

### 19.1.2 War on the people, a deliberate policy. 1830-1871.

As an instrument of conquest, war had, from the beginning, led to atrocities. The African Commission was aware of it, which, before deciding to continue it, reported: “We sent to torture, on mere suspicion and without trial, people whose guilt has remained more than doubtful ever since. (...) We have massacred people with safe-conduct; slaughtered, on suspicion, entire populations who then found themselves innocent; ... put on trial men with deemed saints (brave enough to) intercede on behalf of their unfortunate compatriots (...) that there have been judges for... condemn and civilized men to have them executed.”<sup>188</sup>

The “contempt for a solemn capitulation<sup>XXIX</sup> (...) of rights ... the most natural of the peoples”, recognized as such by the very decision which violated them, marked in 1833 the will to continue this war to extend the occupation of the country. Following its example, Voirol, as early as 1834 in Algiers, then Trézel in 1835 in Orania, violated the Desmichels Treaty, concluded on January 6, 1834 with 'Abd el-Qader, to have a free hand against the bey of

<sup>185</sup>LARCHER, *Traité élémentaire de législation algérienne*, vol. II Paris, 1911.

<sup>186</sup>R. VALET, *op. cit.*

<sup>187</sup>Minutes and reports of the commission appointed by the King on 7 July 1833.

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.* (Paris 1834).

<sup>XXIX</sup>Stray end quote here in the original text



Constantine. Similarly, once this city was taken, the deliberate transgression in 1839 of the Treaty of Tafna concluded for the same end, with the same partner, on May 30, 1837, the deliberate passage of troops in the disputed area because of the ambiguity between Arabic text and French translation, provoked the offensive reaction of the emir. In the House on 8 June 1838, had Not Bugeaud said: "Treaties have never bound nations except when they are in accordance with their interests?"<sup>189</sup>

### Massacres.

In 1833, massacres had already taken place: thus, in 1832, that of the tribe of el-Oufia, in Mitidja, reported in his memoirs by an officer<sup>190</sup>: "A corps of troops surprised... the sleeping tribe... and slaughtered the unfortunate... without a single one seeking to defend himself (...); no distinction was made, neither of age nor of sex. On their return from this shameful expedition, our riders carried heads at the end of their spears. All the cattle... was sold (...); the rest of the loot, bloody remains..., exposed to the market... Bab-Azoun (...), women's bracelets still attached to cut wrists, earrings hanging from shreds of flesh (...); was divided between the slaughterers and an agenda of April 8 ... proclaimed the high satisfaction of the general." In his book just after<sup>191</sup>, the geographer of the expeditionary force Rozet envisaged the necessity, in order to colonize mitidja, "to exterminate all the Berbers (of) the mountains of Beni-Menad, Chenoua, etc." Shortly after, General Cavaignac, regretting not having met a Turk who went "to present his flag in the tribes with 300 or 400 Turks who cut 1,000 to 2,000 heads, shook a province and returned ... loaded with booty", at the same time considered that Algerians "must have seen in the French regime only Turkish violence in the hands of Christians"<sup>192</sup>. Still Bugeaud will judge, after the rupture of the treaty with 'Abd el-Qader, that his predecessors sinned by weakness: "There must be," he declared in the House on 14 May 1840, "a great invasion, which resembles what the Franks were doing, what the Goths were doing."

These principles will be methodically applied in the war waged against 'Abd el-Qader from 1840. Colonel de Montagnac reported, on 17 Jan. 1842, that he was abducting from the "enemy" (sic), in the Mascara region, "women, children, cattle, wheat, barley" and, on 11 February, that General Bedeau "forcibly abducted women, children and cattle" from "a tribe on the banks of

<sup>189</sup>Cité par AZAN (Colonel P.) *L'Émir 'Abd-El-Kader*, Paris, 1925..

<sup>190</sup>CHRISTIA, *L'Afrique française*, Paris, 1863.

<sup>191</sup>*Voyage dans la Régence d'Alger*, vol. III. Paris, 1833.

<sup>192</sup>CAVAIGNAC, Letter to General Létang, 19 Avril 1834, in M. EMERIT, *L'Algérie au temps d'Abdelkader*.

the Chelif”<sup>193</sup>. On November 19, he had praised his leader Lamoricière to “find the Arabs” and take “women, children, flocks” from them. In 1845, the “technique” recommended by Bugeaud was that of the enfumages initiated by Cavaignac against the Sbeha, in the Ouarsenis. Saint-Arnaud used this same technique on August 12, against the Beni-Ma’doun of Tenès thus causing 500 deaths. “Compensation” for the defeat of Sidi-Brahim, Pélissier smokes, on June 19, the Ouled-Riah, in the west, making 760 dead and leaving only about forty survivors. These massacres are described as “strict measures” by the Table of French Establishments<sup>194</sup>.

The surrender of ‘Abd el-Qader in no way put an end to the massacres, reproduced at each resumption of the conquest and during each repression, during the Second Republic as during the Second Empire. The collection of taxes from the ‘achour alone resulted in 40 killed and 29 women prisoners among the Beni-Snous, near Tlemcen, on September 27, 1848<sup>195</sup>. After the use of such methods in the Biban, in the “devastated” villages of Beni ‘Abbes and Zouaoua in 1847, it was the extermination raids of Saint-Arnaud in the Guergour, the Babor and the Wadi el-Kebir in 1851<sup>196</sup>. In 1849, in the Aurès and ziban, the populations of Nara and Za’atcha were massacred after the assault: in Nara, “everything that had been locked there passed through weapons or crushed by the fall of the terraces of houses”<sup>197</sup>. In 1857, during the occupation of the great Kabylia, according to the Count of Hérisson<sup>198</sup>, “the native ears were worth for a long time 10 francs a pair, and their wives remained, like them, a perfect game” as well as in the South where, from a column where a shot had not been fired, he confessed to having brought back “a full barrel”.

### Looting and destruction.

The looting had begun as soon as Algiers was taken, with the sack of the “Treasury of the Qaçba” estimated at “30 million strong piastres” (more than a billion and a half today) and “reduced by two-thirds, and all the precious stones”<sup>199</sup> in violation of the capitulation agreement and in defiance of the claims of the dey. After the stranglehold on the 51.7 million gold francs

<sup>193</sup>MONTAGNAC (Colonel de), *Lettres d’un soldat*(letters of a soldier), Paris 1885.

<sup>194</sup>T.E.F. (Tableau des Établissements Français dans l’Algérie/Table of French Establishments in Algeria) 1844-45.

<sup>195</sup>*Ibid.* (1846-49), p. 7.

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.* (1846-49), p. 11, (1850-52) pp. 2, 3, 5, 7 et 8.

<sup>197</sup>*Ibid.* (1846-49), p. 11.

<sup>198</sup>HÉRISSON (Count of), *La chasse à l’homme*, Paris, 1866.

<sup>199</sup>BARTILLAT (Marquess of), *Relation de la campagne d’Afrique en 1830*(Relation of Africa campaign in 1830), Paris, 1833.

inventoried in the Algerian treasury (more than 600 million today), they continued to swell, “formalizing”, confusing themselves with the collection of taxes, penalties, fines, war contributions, or sequestration. They thus contributed to the economic decline of the country.

As early as September 8, 1830, in defiance of the convention of capitulation of July 5 guaranteeing to “inhabitants of all classes their religion, property, trade and industry”, its signatory Bourmont sequestered the property of expelled Turkish Algerians, those of Islamic and Habbou institutions intended for worship and Koranic teaching: it assimilated them to the state-owned of a State abolished but not replaced by the Convention. We saw the looting accompany the massacre of El-Oufia, and all those that followed. In 1836, according to Cavaignac himself, the Arab who came to sell at the Tlemcen market was “obliged to give a quarter, a half, the whole.” In 1837, the capture of Constantine was followed by the sack of the city, as was going to be any city capture, from the war against the state of 'Abd el-Qader, so Miliana in 1839, Medea in 1840, etc. Until 1872, Algeria's budget would include a chapter “taken from the enemy” covering the proceeds of public sales of confiscated movable property, crops and livestock removed.

Thus, as early as March 1839, “2,500 sheep and 600 oxen” and a year later “a large quantity of cattle” were taken from a fraction of the Harakta (Constantinese) following the murder of a sheikh already sanctioned by the execution of six convicts <sup>200</sup>. One can note, in the long list of these cases, the taking, with 3,000 prisoners, of “1500 camels, 300 horses and mules and 15,000 or 16,000 head of cattle ... brought back” from the Beni Menacer, west of Algiers, in 1842 <sup>201</sup>, those of 3,000 head of cattle to Ouled Defelten (Ouarsenis) in May 1845 and, in June, for “insubordination”, that of 20,000 sheep, 800 oxen and 500 camels to the Nememcha; 500 sheep, 350 oxen, 250 camels in the Mouïadat (S. de Medea); from 700, then 1,000 oxen, 2,000 then 15,000 sheep, 300 beasts of burden and 30 camels to refugees in Morocco in the Tlemcen region; in 1846, the taking “every day,... (of) large herds (...) of some fraction of the Ouled Naïl”; from 33,000 sheep, 500 camels, horses, tents to the Hamyan on January 13, 1847 <sup>202</sup>.

War contributions can simply formalize these flights, as, in the Jebel Amour, “in just three days, (that) of 3,000 oxen and 7,000 sheep” of May 1846 <sup>203</sup>. They can replace or be added to it in the form of cash raises; thus the 58,000 F gold raised in 10 days on the Bellezma in 1844; in 1845, near Tenès, a “fairly strong” contribution was required from the Beni Hidja and

---

<sup>200</sup>T.E.F., 1839 and 1840.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, 1842.

<sup>202</sup>*Ibid.*, 1844-45, pp. 2-5, and 1846-49, pp. 2.

<sup>203</sup>*Ibid.*, 1845-46, p. 8.

the Beni Macdoun, the latter shortly before they were smoked, and 120,000 F were requested from the Beni Chougran; in 1846, 20,000 francs were taken from the Ouled 'Abdi after the fire in their village, and 200 to 300 francs per head from the Harrar du Chergui (i.e. the average income of two years); were still raised, that year, 20,000 F on the Amoucha (Babor), 30,000 in three days on the Ouled Sidi-Yahia, near Tebessa, 55,000 on the borders of Philippeville and, in 1847, on January 10, 50,000 F on the Ouled Jellal. In January 1948, the Hamyans, already deprived of their herds, were taken 100,000 francs and removed 10 douars for not having paid. Fines are imposed on the refusal (or inability) to pay war contributions or taxes: as well as those which, in the Ouarsenis, had to pay, for refusal of taxes, in 1848, the Ouled Defelten deprived of their herds two years earlier, and those imposed on the Beni Zouqzouq, the Righa, the Beni-Menad close to Miliana, and the Beni Hassan of Titteri; in 1849, the fine due by Bou Sa'ada for the barricades erected in the city, and the 10,000 francs demanded of the neighboring Ouled Faradj, the fines levied on the Ouled Soltan and Ouled Sylem of Ouarsenis, and the Ouled Younès of Dhahra; in 1850, those who hit the Harakta, eleven years after the confiscation of their livestock, and the Segnia of Hodna <sup>204</sup>.

In addition to the destruction of the resources remaining for the occupied populations, above all that of their crops and livestock, there is also the transfer to the occupier of the latter, of crops, and monetary income, in order to impoverish the poorest for the benefit of the richest and thus place him in his dependence. This destruction is indeed, as is the destruction of humans themselves, a major weapon of repression. From the first year, Rozet <sup>205</sup> defined the tribes around Blida as "those that we sacked with General Berthezène (en) May 1831"; he estimates the consumption of fruit taken the previous winter by the troop to the inhabitant in the 400 hectares of orange trees of Blida at 400,000, while "it was not noticed"; he points out that "our bivouacs ... have lightened a little" the olivettes of the Mitidja, and that this plain was cultivated, towards Birtouta and Boufarik, only "when we passed there for the first time".

Again, this was only about the life of the troop on the country. Destruction is only then erected as a system. Let us recall that, for Montagnac <sup>206</sup> "all populations that do not accept our conditions must be razed, everything must be taken, ransacked, regardless of age or sex". The Official Journal, *Moniteur algérien* of April 14, 1844, will publish bugeaud's threat to the Kabyles de Tisser, namely to "burn... (their) villages ... to cut ... (their) fruit trees" if

---

<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, 1846-1849, pp. 7-11.

<sup>205</sup>ROZET, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 202-214.

<sup>206</sup>MONTAGNAC, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

they “do not banish Ben-Salem”. During the war against the state of 'Abd el-Qader, the litany began, only to accelerate as the Algerian resistance weakened: these are the Hadjout douars destroyed in western Mitidja on March 12 and 13, 1840; on 27 and 28 August the second “severe punishment” of the Kabyles of Mouzaïa and the Beni-Salah of the Atlas of Blida then the “ruin” of the Righa of southern Setif rallied to the emir <sup>207</sup>. In 1842, among the relatives Beni Menacer, Saint-Arnaud <sup>208</sup> said to fire “few shots of rifle”, but burn “all the douars, all the cities, all the huts” and, two months later, confirms: “we ravage, we burn, we plunder, we destroy houses and trees.” On October 2, 1844, he wrote “burn (in Kabylia) the properties of Ben-Salem and Bel-Cassem”, and “cut down the orange trees”, by only executing the threats of Bugeaud mentioned above, after having “almost entirely ruined” the houses and burned the crops of 19 fractions of the Flissa <sup>209</sup>. Again, after the surrender of 'Abd el-Qader, during the occupation of Kabylia and until the repression of the insurrection of 1871, these “methods” will remain used. In 1845, the Ouled'Abdi, before being fined, saw “their main villages burned” <sup>210</sup>; in January 1847, the same treatment for the Ouled Younès, and seven Ouled-Naïl douars, in order to “prevent any attempt” <sup>211</sup>. In 1848, among the destructions, let us mention near Tlemcen that of Tameksalet, those carried out among the Zouagha, the Ouled Sidi-Cheikh, the Zouaoua, that of the Mzaïa villages near Bejaïa, “the devastation” of the villages and crops of the Beni 'Abbes; in 1850, the destruction of the Tifra villages of Sebaou, and the burning of those of the Beni-Immèl du Guergour. In 1851, Saint-Arnaud recurred: he burned on April 10 on the Wadi Sahel, Selloum and its inhabitants, on May 12 the villages of Ouled Mimoun and Ouled Asker, on the 19th, “more than fifty villages surrounded by orchards and gardens”, on the 26th and 27th those of the Beni Foughal, on June 9th, three villages Beni Aïssa, in July, towards Collo, three others of the Djebala, still others, before in July were burned villages and harvests, further west in the Guergour and Soummam, among the Ouzellaguen, the Beni Aïdel and the Beni Immèl <sup>212</sup>. He himself writes, from Little Kabylie: “All the villages, about two hundred, were burned, all the gardens ransacked, the olive trees cut. <sup>213</sup> ” From 1854 to 1857, the resistance of Greater Kabylia yielded only to the systematic burning of villages and crops, practiced even sometimes

---

<sup>207</sup>T.E.F., 1840.

<sup>208</sup>SAINT-ARNAUD (letters of Marshal of.), t. I, Paris 1858.

<sup>209</sup>T.E.F. (1844).

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.* (1844-45) pp. 2-5.

<sup>211</sup>*Ibid.* (1846-49).

<sup>212</sup>*Ibid.* (1850-1852), pp. 2-8.

<sup>213</sup>SAINT-ARNAUD, .op. cit., vol. II.

after refusing to accept the submission of the tribes.<sup>214</sup>

Urban destruction has affected most cities in non-Saharan Algeria, even partially those that have not experienced fighting. Among these, especially the first taken from the Turkish state, before any people's war, Algiers saw from 1831, according to Rozet, its "small suburb" of Bab el-Oued "partially destroyed" and its pipes punctured "to make our horses drink", Blida was looted; as for the "beautiful houses" of Oran, "our soldiers destroyed almost all of them, in order to have the wood of the floors to cook"<sup>215</sup>. In the cities that, after 1840, surrendered without a fight (Tlemcen, Nedroma), clearing the ramparts and drilling clear roads destroyed many houses (by the hundreds in Algiers). Those who resisted suffered not only the destruction of sieges and assaults (a third of Constantine in 1837), but the sacking after their occupation. Clauzel plundered and burned Mascara, capital of the emir, from 6 to 9 December 1835, so that in 1838 his suburb of Arqoub Ismail was "in ruins and almost devoid of inhabitants" and those of Baba Ali lived "in huts... on the ruins of their houses"<sup>216</sup>. The generalized war from 1840 multiplied the destruction of cities. That year, Mascara and Medea were set on fire again. In Miliana, "the ravages of the fire were joined by inevitable degradations, consequences of the abandonment of the city (...) and the first necessities of military occupation"<sup>217</sup>. In 1841, the capture of the cities created by the emir permanently razed his capital, Tagdemt (near Tiaret), but also destroyed Scaïda, Sebdou, Boghar, T'aza, at the same time as his attempts to retake those already lost were sanctioned by new destruction in Miliana, Medea, Mascara, in 1842 in Tlemcen, in 1843 in Tenès, Laghouat, Biskra.

All thoses destructions was accompanied by the flight of the inhabitants: of all those, Muslims and Jews, of Miliana; of all those also of Medea, Mascara, Cherchel, Tenès; 7,000 of the 10,000 Oranese, more than a third of the 35,000 Constantinois, the 12,000 Tlemcenians, the 30,000 to 40,000 Algiers. The result, note the T.E.F. about Constantine, "an unfortunate influence on the industrial and commercial movement of the city"<sup>218</sup>, also reported for Algiers, Mascara, Tlemcen, etc. (increase in prices and rents, impoverishment and scarcity of buyers, break with the countryside, etc.), in no way compensated by the "traffic" initiated around the garrisons of the new

---

<sup>214</sup>Case of General Youssouf reported by d'Hérison. According to AZAN (op. cit., p 459), in 1854, in the High-Sebaou, "everywhere the houses ... were largely demolished,... the fruit trees, olive trees, fig trees, were cut down by the workers."

<sup>215</sup>ROZET, op. cit. cit., vol. I, p. 120, vol. III, p. 264 and p. 204.

<sup>216</sup>T.E.F. (1838), pp. 263-264.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid. (1840).

<sup>218</sup>T.E.F. (1840), pp. 364-65.

centers.

### The looting of property and land.

The looting of property and land is, from the outset, the intended outcome of these abuses. “Wherever there is good water and fertile land,” Bugeaud said, “this is where settlers must be placed without knowing who owns the land (... and ...) distribute them to them in full ownership”<sup>219</sup>.

In the city, the sequestration of the property of refugee families in rural areas, especially in the mountains, prepared the substitution of a colonial population for Algerian city dwellers, thus excluding them from their own city. This phenomenon has led to the lasting deurbanization of Muslim Algerians. Thus were sequestered, and generally redistributed or resold to “Europeans” 812 urban buildings in Mascara, 1,033 in Tlemcen, 490 in Miliana, almost as many in Medea, 60 in Jijel, etc. Even with the colonial contribution, Algiers did not regain its total population of 1830 until 1861, Constantine in 1871, Mascara in 1876, Tlemcen in 1886; as for their Muslim component, these cities were not to find it again until 1906, 1911, 1901, 1891 respectively; Oran, and even Kolea and Cherchel, yet intact, not before 1872<sup>220</sup>. Still, it would essentially be a rural or ruralized settlement for at least a generation, driven back or exodus by their impoverishment in the countryside, precarious in a dilapidated or marginal habitat.

The “dispossession of the fellahs”<sup>221</sup> began in 1830 with the confiscation of the lands of the former state (beylik) and its dignitaries, — their *haouch*(s) in Mitidja — then in the plains of Bône and Oran, and after 1837 of the *'azel* of the Constantinois, first awarded for rent to speculators who made their former farmers work there, then increasingly conceded (the 94,796 ha of the *haouchs* in 1838). The expropriation of the *'arch* lands of the communities immediately followed, prolonging destruction and extortion, to establish on their best lands, following sequestration or confiscation of fallow land without titles, centers of colonization populated in particular by the deportees of June 1848. This “cantonment” often took more than half of the *'arch*. 224,993 ha of *'azel* were lost for their 5,232 farmers, expelled, before the end of the Second Empire. If the proclaimed objective of the senate-consulte of 1863 is to establish the property of the tribes, it will above all make it possible to detach possibly unrecognized sections on the best lands. The sequestration, at the expense of tribes refugees in Morocco or sanctioning the insurgents of 1863-1864 and 1871, puts the richest lands at the disposal of colonization: a reserve

<sup>219</sup>Speech to the Chamber of Deputies, 14 May 1840.

<sup>220</sup>Data derived mainly from comparative population counts.

<sup>221</sup>To use the title of a book by Djilali SARI, Alger, 1975.

of 568,817 hectares in 1871<sup>222</sup> removing from the Kabyles the winter pastures of their plains and the high cereal plains of Medjana. This sequestration was accompanied by the deportation of the Hashem from this plain in the arid steppe of the Hodna, and the raising of an extraordinary war contribution of 27,452,000 F or, putting entire populations at the mercy of usurious loans. This dispossession benefits, from this phase, the concentration of land capital, by the intervention of bank credit for the benefit of the most solvent, then by the major concessions dedicated to latifundiary under-exploitation: 20,000 ha. to the Société Genevoise, near Setif from 1853; 100,000 to the Algerian Generale in 1865, in the middle of the “Arab Kingdom” against a loan of 100 million F. gold. It has destructured and impoverished rural society, putting it at the mercy of imposed “purchases” in the future, even though even before the sequestration of 1871, more than 500,000 hectares were taken from it by colonization, 96% by the colonial state. It has also nationalized or communalized areas of the same order.

### Consequences: The algerian “demographic disaster”.

The whole period of colonial possession is indeed for the country, as Dj. Sari pointed out about the famine of 1867-1868, a “demographic disaster”<sup>223</sup>. This was compounded by the loss of life in combat, during the massacres, the destruction, looting and taking committed on a piecemeal basis, as well as the dispossession and living conditions imposed on all Algerians by the system. If we can debate the number of inhabitants (5 million) to which Sari estimates the population in 1830, the minimum of 3 million for non-Saharan Algeria alone, 6% of whom are urban, is no longer disputed<sup>224</sup>. The enumeration of 1845, from which Kabylies and Aurès escaped, and those of 1851 (three years after the deadly famine of 1848) and 1856, which can still only estimate the population of Greater Kabylia, give respectively 2,028,000, 2,324,000 and 2,302,000. In 1853, Carette’s more reliable estimate attributed to the tribes (excluding the cities) 2,670,410 inhabitants, or in all, more than 2.8 million, after 23 years of occupation and war. This is a figure very close to that of 1861 (2,732,851), following the murderous campaign of Kabylia. That is to say the shortfall on the evolution that would have occurred outside this

<sup>222</sup>Figure borrowed from A. NOUSCHI, in LACOSTE, NOUSCHI, PRENANT, *L’Algérie, passé et présent* (Algeria, past and present), Paris, 1960, like other data in this paragraph

<sup>223</sup>SARI (Djilali), *Le désastre démographique* (the demographic disaster), Algiers, 1982.

<sup>224</sup>Cf. YACONO (X.), Can we evaluate the population of Algeria on the eve of the conquest, in *Revue Africaine*, 1954, and PRENANT (A.) in LACOSTE, NOUSCHI, PRENANT, *op. cit.*.



context, which can be estimated, in thirty years, between half a million and a million lives lost. However, in the same space, there were only 2,653,000 souls and, in 1871, 2,125,052, down 80,000 and then 527,000, at annual rates of -0.58%, during a period that included the repression of the insurrection of 1863-1864, then by 4.37% during the years of famine and epidemics of 1867-1868, this implies an average mortality rate of more than 8% per year. On this basis, we can make the minimum hypothesis of an excess mortality that has hit, in forty years, between 1.2 and 1.7 million souls, half of the number of 1830, one in five of the Algerian Muslims who lived in the period.

This excess mortality is obviously linked in part to the massacres, the addition of which figures “by tens of thousands the losses ... of the civilian population” <sup>225</sup>. It is also explained by the fighting, very unequal: T.E.F. report, for the only most important battles, 2,000 killed in 1840, 800 in 1841, 480 in 1842, 950 in 1843, more than 600 in 1844, or 1,136 in 1851, 880 in 1852. To these figures, we must add the simple unquantified notations, the most frequent, of “significant losses” or “considerable” (as in 1840 for the fight, however crucial, of Mouzaïa). Nothing is even said about the 200 killed, according to Azan, at Bab T’aza in April 1842, the 1,800 to 2,000 he mentioned to Maeta on June 28, 1835, nor the 2,000 killed and wounded at Tafna on April 25, 1836, etc. It “is no exaggeration to estimate the number of those killed in action at an annual average of one or more tens of thousands” <sup>226</sup> for forty years. Less cruel was the loss of settlement due to the emigration, in the Moroccan refuge, of entire populations of plains neighboring Orania such as that of the Mekerra.

The most massive mortality, however, was due to the famines of 1848-1849 and 1866-1868, the root causes of which, contrary to what has been said, are not climatic. Admittedly, the years in question, except 1867-1868, were marked by below-average rainfall, aggravated in several regions by poor annual distributions, with light rains at the end of winter and spring and in 1865-1866 by a marked scale of locust flights; there are no decisive conditions here, but only favourable to the tipping point into scarcity. These two phases, on the other hand, have in common:

— to follow two periods of marked repression: in 1848-1849, the one that followed the crushing of the resistance of 'Abd el-Qader and the upheavals that prolonged it, among others the burning of all the crops of the insurgent Ouarsenis, the destruction of reserves, the consequent abandonment of land, fines, confiscations; in 1866-1868, the repression of the insurrection of 1864-1865 arose in particular in the west, the Algerian-Oran steppe and the Babor,

---

<sup>225</sup>Cf. A.PRENANT in LACOSTE, NOUSCHI, PRENANT, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>226</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 320.

also marked by destruction, heavy fines, 6 million gold of war contribution — to accompany a decline in Algerian appropriation and the exploitation of land itself: the first phase is characterized by the beginning of the “cantonments” and the creation of many centers of colonization on the land taken, the second by their acceleration, the first limitations of *'arch* because of the *Senatus-consulte*, the granting of its concession to the Algerian company.

The responsibility of power can be read in this official commentary on the famine of 1848-1849: “The Arabs are beginning to understand that peace alone will provide them with the means to repair the disasters caused by two years of famine”<sup>227</sup>. And Napoleon III himself announced one to two years in advance that of colonial capitalism in 1866-1868: “Among the indigenous populations, poverty is increasing because of their proximity to the major European centers. The Saharan tribes are rich and the Arabs of Tell are ruined”<sup>228</sup>. The fact that exports persisted—especially wheat produced by the settlers, in 1866 and 1867, despite the need to import flour in 1867—shows how scarcity encouraged people to take advantage of rising prices at the expense of *matmura* reserves.

Cereal harvests fell rapidly, more markedly for barley than for wheat, from 20 million quintals to 11.3, then 10.8, then 8, then 4.4, from 1863 to 1867, before rising (but to just 10.3) in 1868. The harvests of the settlers, subject to the same climatic hazards, certainly fall by 60%, but those of the Algerians fall by 80%, from 18 to 3.9 million quintals. At the same time, the area sown fell from 2,450,000 hectares to 2.3, then 2.1 and then 2 million hectares in 1866 and 1867 and fell to 1.4 million hectares the following year, climatically favourable: the lack of arms, due to the loss of life caused by famine and cholera, will render vain in 1868 the good climatic conditions and will prolong the crisis.

According to an official account, it was the depletion of resources that allowed the cholera epidemic of 1867. The latter, which wreaked havoc on “the poorly clothed and malnourished natives” and provoked, in 1868, the famine that brought the inhabitants down to the plain “where they hoped to find barley and wheat ..., compact masses of Arabs (who we saw) desert their douars to come and implore the mercy of the settlers. Our cities and our countryside were cluttered with these hungry crowds”<sup>229</sup>. This report, which “estimates the number of victims at more than 300,000”, is, as we have seen, far below the reality.

The human effects of the first disaster cannot be assessed, due to the lack

---

<sup>227</sup>T.E.F. (1846-49), p. 13.

<sup>228</sup>Letter to the Duke of Magenta (Mac Mahon), 20 June 1865.

<sup>229</sup>T.E.F. (1866-72), pp. 62-64.

of data on indigenous demographic movements; we can measure those of the second in the civil status of the cities, only to hold one. Sari provides <sup>230</sup> a whole series of mortality evolution curves in Medea, Miliana, Mostaganem, Oran, Tlemcen, Mascara, Constantine, during the 1860s, which often show (in Oran, Constantine) a negative natural movement over the entire period, only exacerbated from 1866 to 1868; sometimes (in Tlemcen) appeared in 1865, return accentuated in 1867 and especially 1868, and persistent, less marked, until 1870. The effects of winters are very marked. In Miliana, if the balance sheet is, narrowly, negative for the Europeans (but not for the Jews), in 1867 and 1868 it is much more so for the Muslims of the commune, except in 1865 and 1870, with, in 1867 and 1868, 485 deaths then 354 deaths per 3,000 inhabitants (16.2 then 11.8%!) and a growth deficit of 379 then 281 individuals. The mark of a rural excess mortality at least as serious can be read in the inscription (usually insignificant) of 107 and then 486 unknown and external to the commune who came to take refuge and die there, these two years.

### **The consequences: the impoverished and bruised French people.**

If the colonial conquest entails, for Algeria, the integration into structures of colonial exploitation in the subjection to a minority of newcomers supposed to represent France, this mutation is not for all that to the advantage of the French people.

During these forty-one years, public expenditure on the French treasury must meet both the costs of the war, the civil expenditure accruing to the metropolitan ministries (religion, justice, public education, finance), and those intended to make up the Algerian deficit. Over the whole period, the total real participation of the French State in civil expenditure amounted to 192 million gold francs <sup>231</sup> (about 2.7 billion currently) of which 37% (71 million) devoted to filling the deficit of the Algerian budget. However, this deficit has not tended to be reduced, both because of the tax facilities granted to colonial companies and the growing crushing of the Algerian tax base by looting, destruction, transfers of property, abuses of "Arab taxes" and sanctions taken to impose them on an impoverished people to the point of not being able to pay. The metropolitan contribution intended to fill it, equal to 45% of local resources in 1836 (2.5 million gold), amounted to 59% of these resources (3.15 million) in 1839, 54% (8.5 million) in 1841 and 101% (12.86

---

<sup>230</sup>SARI (Dj.) *op. cit.* Cit.

<sup>231</sup>General Statistics of Algeria (1865-66) pp. 110-111, and (1866-72), pp. 212-213. The evolution is provided by the T.E.F. (1830-37, 1838, 1839, 1840-41, 1842-43, 1844-45, 1846-49, 1850-52, 1853-58, 1859-61, 1862, 1863-64).

million) in 1844. In 1863 it accounted for 11% (2,316,000 gold francs) of the forecasts of civil expenditure alone— a quarter of total expenditure — unproductive expenditure devoted solely to administration. However, these expenses represented little cost compared to military expenses, entirely covered by the French budget of the war: in 1839, the appropriations of the military health service and engineering alone (6,893,038 gold francs) equalled 80% of the total civilian budget, and in 1863, the year of respite from the fighting, as the previous one, the total forecast of army expenditure reached 62,067,553 gold francs (nearly one billion today).

The profits went to colonial enterprises, primarily financial and commercial, without enriching or equipping Algeria other than to install colonization and drain its production. The installation of a system of exchange of raw products of colonization, then agricultural for more than 40% of their value, — cereals exported even in 1867, against the import of very little flour!<sup>232</sup> - against elaborate imports, created, at the same time as these profits, a permanent deficit, of the order of 40 to 50 million fr.-or (between 20 and 50 % of exports) by increasing exports from less than 10 million in 1850 to 108 in 1864 and 165 in 1872 and imports from 50 to 130 and then 206 million<sup>233</sup>. It was also this deficit that was offset by the contribution of public funds.

The human losses, especially affecting the working class who were unable to pay the replacements they provided in the era of seven-year military service, exceeded 200,000 deaths during these forty years. The war retained at least until 1871 more than 70,000 metropolitan soldiers each year (73,188 out of 80,862 to the total number in 1844, 70,611 out of 83,870 in 1859, relatively calm years) and many more during offensives and uprisings (in 1835-1836, 1840-1842, 1845-1846) where they were well over 100,000, one for every 30 Algerians, including women and children. It was the same in 1857, 1863-1865, and even in 1871, before the uprising, when the German army invaded France.

Of these numbers, deaths in ambulances and hospitals, 125,000, or more than 3,000 per year (4%), are approaching, in a population of young adults physically “fit”, twice the average rate of civilian deaths at the time. For a rate of 1% of the workforce in the quiet years (thus in 1861-1863), or 2% (in 1852-1853), we reach 4% in 1847, 5% in 1838, 10% in 1832-1833 or in 1836-1837, 14% (9,587) and 12% (7,802) in 1840 and 1841, at the beginning of the war against 'Abd el-Qader, and as much in 1851 and 1857 during the Kabylie campaigns, in 1859 and 1871. This means that more than 100,000

<sup>232</sup>Cf. SARI (Dj.), *op. cit.*, pp. 188-191 and pp. 208-209.

<sup>233</sup>PRENANT (A.), *La dépendance de l'Algérie et les finances françaises*, In *Économie et Politique*(economy and politics), Nov. 1956, pp. 42-51.

of these dead were direct victims of the war. The number of killed in battle, when it is mentioned (254 at the Macta in 1835, "hundreds" at the Tafna in 1836, more than 1,000 in 1837 during the two assaults against Constantine, 108 in Mitidja on November 21, 1839, 332 at the Mouzaïa pass on May 12 and June 15, 1840, 400 at Sidi Brahim in 1845, the entire Beauprêtre column in 1864) was often superior, rarely less than half that of the wounded. It exceeds even more the number of those who died of their injuries in hospital. This allows for a total loss approach.

Finally, among the generals of the army of Algeria are Cavaignac, who, having returned to France, directed the murderous repression of the days of June 1848, and Saint-Arnaud, organizer of December 2, 1851 and the repression that followed.

## 19.2 The exploitation of "French Algeria" (1871-1954)

The suppression of the insurrection of 1871 created for 75 years, then, after an even more deadly repression, in 1945, for another ten years, until November 1954, a period of "calm" favorable to "business".

### 19.2.1 The "calm" of exhaustion.

It is in reality the cessation of military resistance, which is now disturbed only by sporadic movements. It was achieved by the physical destruction of a significant part of the population, especially male, the economic ruin of its great majority, its social destructuring and its cultural disintegration, at the end of the forty years of previous war. It is characteristic that the major uprisings that occurred in the period, in 1881 among the Ouled Sidi-Cheikh under Bou 'Amama, and in 1916 in the Aurès and the Sahara, which remained local, occurred on the borders of the South, outside the regions of agrarian colonization, in socially less unstructured areas despite previous repressions but victims of the code of indigénat. The first, already raised in 1863, was subject to military rule, the second refused conscription for the foreign war of 1914-1918 in Europe. It is also notable that the Marguerite affair, which occurred in 1898 near Miliana, in colonized land, called into question problems, no longer directly of refusal of domination and insubmissiveness, as the previous ones, but of social relations and posed political problems of resistance to economic domination.

It is that, even if the colonial power resumes, from 1880, on the southern margins of the country, military operations to annex the Sahara, with the ob-

jective, which it will not really achieve, to thus open to French capital a land trade route to its African empire, the “pacification” obtained by exhaustion must allow by stabilizing relations of domination, to organize the exploitation of the resources and human labor power of the country. It is against this exploitation at the same time as against the political and cultural dependence that allows it that, from the First World War, the political movement is organized more and more around a national demand. It is against this politicization that exploitation imposes from the end of the nineteenth century its discriminatory legislation, corollary of socio-economic discrimination.

### 19.2.2 What does “the work of France” represent?

Until Algeria’s independence, French schoolchildren heard about “the work of France”; since 1962, memories of the “exceptional infrastructure” bequeathed by the colonizer to his colonized who became independent have been revived: roads, railways, vineyards, citrus fruits, health, schools, etc., on the understanding that Algeria would have had nothing in 1830 and that it has been “given” everything since then.

In the context of a more subtle colonial “revisionism”, Jacques Marseille, in the edition of his thesis <sup>234</sup>, considers that the importance of the expenditure of French public funds in this country <sup>235</sup> would attest to the magnitude of the “metropolitan effort”. It is he who would have thus set up “the structures generating imbalance” by making it possible to satisfy demand “at the price of (the) trade deficit”, an effort made “to save Algeria from misery and rebellion” <sup>236</sup>. It considers as proof that the possession of the country would not have been “of such great convenience for the metropolis” the maintenance by this financing, — and by the transfers of the emigrants -, of a local consumption and, a posteriori, the finding that with independence, “the disappearance of the protected area did not (a) finally cause any serious damage” <sup>237</sup> for “France” whereas according to *Les Échos* on 12 March 1956, it should have “inevitably led to unemployment”. The favourable evolution for “Algeria” of the terms of trade during the crisis and the Second World War would prove that “France” did not take advantage of it to “impose surcharges on its Algerian customers (and) to supply themselves cheaply”<sup>238</sup>. Ultimately, it would

---

<sup>234</sup> *Empire colonial et capitalisme français, histoire d’un divorce* (Colonial empire and french capitalism, history of a divorce), Paris, Albin Michel, 1984.

<sup>235</sup> “from 1865 to 1937,... as first investment capital,... 1531, 3 million francs” *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

be the generosity of French capital that would be responsible for the deterioration of the "state of equilibrium (...) of the 'Algerian economy'"<sup>XXX</sup> that Jacques Marseille believes to detect from 1914 to 1945 in the "satisfactory situation of public finances and foreign trade" by arousing, by "the parity of wages with France," social security, family allowances, a "new series of hand-caps" to "attract capital". He also took up the thesis of *Le Figaro* affirming, on October 11, 1953, that if "half of the Muslim rural masses (...) slowly dies of hunger, this is the 'consequence of hygiene brought by the France'"<sup>XXXI</sup>; the increase in the trade deficit expresses only "an imbalance between demographic and production developments"<sup>239</sup>. And it blames infrastructure development for the rapid worsening of financial dependence after 1945<sup>240</sup>.

Enough. What is true in this thesis is the reality of Algeria's budgetary and trade deficits, which are in fact permanent, except for the second out of thirteen of the years 1930-1948 when the terms of trade are balanced or positive. These deficits precede family allowances and social security allocated in fact sparingly to permanent Muslim employees and this not before 1947, and all the more so a parity of wages never applied. Supporting these theses is only possible by amalgamating reality within broad categories: "France" or "Algeria", without distinguishing sufficiently between public and private shares, capital and wage labour; by classifying in Algeria "settlers", "mining companies", and "Muslims" without separating, for example, among them, their mass from the small handful that participates in exports, etc. This is to neglect the observation, in 1955, by the very official "Maspétiol commission", of the impossibility of increasing the tax burden on the indigenous masses.

In reality, demography owes to a French contribution of hygiene only vaccinations (as much ignored in France as in Algeria in 1830!), here applied late in the face of contagions insensitive to the distinctions between natives and settlers. The number of doctors, including civil servants, from 1,033 in 1939, still 1,074 in 1943, amounted to only 1,356 in 1945, 1,449 in 1949, 1,629 in 1952 (242 hospitaliers), including 916 in Algiers and Oran (one per 900 inhabitants, 64% European), and 713 for the rest of the country (one per 11,000 inhabitants, to 95% Muslims). While J. Marseille asserts that "a subsistence minimum (is) relatively maintained for a large majority of the population", the years 1941-1942 and 1945-1946 find, in the middle of a period of "economic equilibrium" (because of it?) a demography close to that of the years of famine 1867-1868. If the general statistics mask it because of

---

<sup>XXX</sup> Only one end quote in the original text here.

<sup>XXXI</sup> Again only one end quote.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145-139.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

under-reporting (in particular of child deaths), urban civil states denounce it, as three quarters of a century earlier: at Setif <sup>241</sup>, in 1942, the mortality rate (4.88%), almost double the already high minimum rate of 1932, 1936, 1948, exceeded the birth rate, in 1945 it equalled it (at 3.9%) despite still undeclared child deaths, with marked peaks in winter and late summer and, in 1945, in the “lean season”, from March to May. In Sidi bel-'Abbes <sup>242</sup>, according to the declarations, the mortality rate, 4.77% in 1941, 5.32% in 1942, 4.8% in 1945, exceeded in those years that of the birth rate (3.77%, then 4%, then 4.27%), leaving a natural increase deficit of 238, 326 and then 135 individuals; it compensated for it to the nearest 115 in 1948, with 4.57% against 5.08, between usual rates still of 2.52% in 1951 and 3.72% in 1943, double, despite the youth of the population, those of the settlers of the time. The same was true in marginal precarious neighbourhoods, such as the Sénéclauze “subdivision”, where the mortality rate remained at 2.8% in 1951, mainly due to the death rate of less than one year per 1,000 births and where life expectancy at birth did not exceed 17 years. This was also the case in the peri-urban areas of Tlemcen, Miliana and Nedroma, for example <sup>243</sup>. Poor health services and poor rural areas exacerbated these imbalances, even if under-reporting seemed to make them areas of well-being. In 1947, 1948, 1949 had died at less than a year 245, then 195, then 201 children out of 1,000 born in the prefectures and sub-prefectures of the country <sup>244</sup>. One wonders how much of the difference between the 276,000 Muslim children declared in 1948 and the 195,000 recorded is due to this infant mortality.

Similarly, schooling affected very few Muslim school-age children, mostly male and especially urban: in 1951-1952, 168,940 boys in primary classes and 56,796 girls— 16% of schoolchildren, or 25% and 8.8% of each sex, compared with 10% in 1940. However, according to Rozet <sup>245</sup>, in 1830, “almost all men knew how to read, write, count” and “there were (in Algiers) a hundred schools... where children were taught to read and write the Qur'an, and sometimes a little calculation.” All the more so, at the end of the colonial period, segregation only exceptionally allowed “Muslim” children access to kindergarten, secondary education (one for every five Europeans), and even complementary courses, where there were 5,567, including 1,625 girls, 0.6%

<sup>241</sup>PRENANT (A.) Settlement factors of a city in inland Algeria: Setif, In *Annales de Géographie*, Paris, 1953, pp. 434-451.

<sup>242</sup>Id. Questions of urban structure in three suburbs of Sisi-Bel-Abbès. In *Bulletin de l'Association de Géographes Français*, 1956, pp. 62-75.

<sup>243</sup>Statements of Civil Status, and Diplomas of Higher Studies of H. Delannoy (Annex) and M.-A. Thumelin-Prenant (1956).

<sup>244</sup>Statistical Yearbook of Algeria, Algiers, 1948-49, 1950, 1951.

<sup>245</sup>ROZET, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p.75.



of their age group, compared to 10,111 colonials; At university, at the time of independence, they would be only 5% of students.

As for the technical infrastructures, they were only commensurate with the requirements of colonization and capital. There was of course in 1830 no kilometer of rail in Algeria, — neither in France. But the 4,372 kilometers, single-track, often narrow-gauge, set up from the 1860s, represented, for four times the surface and a fifth of the population of France only one-fifteenth of the metropolitan railways, based on the colonial minority alone and a tenth of the colonized, in equivalent numbers. They responded, in their traffic as in their route, only to the need to drain export products to the ports, by linking Morocco and Tunisia by Oran, Algiers, Bône (Annaba) through the colonized plains, and leading to these ports, to Nemours (Ghazaouet), Bougie (Bejaïa) and Philippeville (Skikda), zinc from Zellidja, alfa of the routes of Crampel (Ras-el-Mâ), from Bechar (Kenadza) with coal, and from Djelfa, dates from Touggourt and Biskra, phosphates and iron from Kouif and Ouenza. All the unprofitable branches from Tlemcen to Beni-Saf, towards Arzew and Mostaganem, even the wheats from Tiaret, especially in the Eastern High Plains between Meskiana, Khenchela and Tebessa, had already been deposited. On a network with loose meshes, traced (like the Bechar rail for strategic reasons) private road traffic replaced, with 43,078 trucks in 1951, 40% of a car fleet whose 56,391 passenger cars corresponded to the French service rate (1 for 40 souls) only, again for the million Europeans and one Algerian in ten.

### 19.2.3 Gifts? Yes, not to Algeria, but to Capital.

What remains true in the thesis of J. Marseille is the constancy of deficits, except for certain years from one world war to another. But these are public deficits, and they do not have their origin in spending of general interest, let alone social carried out "for Algeria". As we have seen, the "state of equilibrium" linked to the "satisfactory situation of public finances" from 1914 to 1945 is in no way accompanied by "a relatively maintained subsistence minimum for a large majority of the population" <sup>246</sup> which, before 1941-1942 and 1945, experienced urban mortality rates exceeding 4% from 1911 to 1929, 4.5% from 1917 to 1922 and in 1927-1929 and even 5% in 1920-1922. These rates are linked to malnutrition and lack of care and demographic deficit factors. This is because, as A. Nouschi notes, only "5 to 10% of the natives (are) inserted in the commercial movement" and that, as Marseille acknowledges <sup>247</sup>, the difference with the price paid to the producer matters

---

<sup>246</sup>MARSEILLE (J.), op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>247</sup>*Id.*, *ibid.*, p. 72.

a lot.

In fact, government spending is the result of low private investment, and the assistance provided to it to make profits. J.Marseille writes it himself, when he shows <sup>248</sup>, in 1927, the “(French) winegrowers exasperated by wine imports from Algeria (subject) to infinitely lower tax charges”, subsidized, paying the gasoline of tractors five times less, and that he recalls the absence of social insurance. The quote he makes of Giscard d’Estaing taking up H. de Molinari in 1898, according to which “Algeria had already cost more than 4 billion (and) claims every year from 20 to 30 million from the metropolis to cover its budget” underlines the permanence of the imbalance between these public investments and the weakness of the private effort to withdraw its profits: if, “from 1865 to 1937, public expenditure on first investment capital amounted to 1,531.3 million F <sup>249</sup>” in comparison, the share capital of the companies did not exceed 94 million. Algeria is no less, for this author, with Indochina, one of the two areas of “good business” ... “on which are located 20 of the 32 companies” <sup>250</sup> that have made the most profits.

In truth, these “good deals” were made at the expense of the Algerian people, and for the benefit of a very small minority of colonial owners and the large French capitalist companies, first mining or commercial. The clearest is the transfer of land, from the Warnier law (1873) carried out more by forced transactions (for debts, mortgages etc.) than by official attributions, often for the benefit of absentee urban businessmen. In the 1950s, this transfer left in the hands of 20,000 owners, 2,700,000 hectares, a third (the best) of the country’s arable land, half to a tenth of them. 99% of Algerian owners share the remaining two-thirds and are thus reduced either to insufficient exploitation or to daily work, possibly complementary. This is the major factor in the rural exodus.

In the years preceding the Second World War and in those that followed it, the very slowdown in production and the difficulties due to the crisis and then the war led to a decrease in French exports and, consequently, a reduction or disappearance of the Algerian balance deficit. However, this deficit, already present and increased, as we have seen, from 28 to 90 million gold francs from 1863 to 1873, rose from 34 to 78 billion francs in current terms from 1950 to 1954, toward France, but also, increasingly, toward other countries.

From 1950 to 1953 the metropolitan budget paid Algeria 286 billion francs (about 40 billion francs today), of which, according to the Maspétiol commis-

---

<sup>248</sup>*Id., ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>249</sup>*Id., ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>250</sup>*Id., ibid.*, p. 132.

sion <sup>251</sup>, in 1953 "50%... seem to be considered as providing aid to Algeria." Thus, in 1953, out of 93 billion, 62 billion related to operating expenditure, two-thirds military, investment credits (35.7 billion) used, for 6 billion, to repay previous loans, and for 27 billion, to subsidize, by 6% of expenditure, colonial enterprises or by 27%, to lend them. However, they benefited from "advantages already granted in tax matters" the importance of which the Maspétiol report stressed. The tax burden rate, from 33% in France, fell for them to 19% (16.4% in metallurgy against 28.4% ; 16.2% in textiles against 26.2%); in the face of taxes on property income and agricultural profits further reduced from 6% of the budget in 1949 to 1.8% in 1953, taxes on wages were doubled, income tax left at constant rates, indirect taxes increased. It was to prolong the constant tendency to "make the poor pay" since the time, a century earlier, when Muslims, from 1863 to 1872, had provided in "Arab tax" and war contributions, 28% of the Algerian budget, against 2.8% to the beneficiaries of colonization or that, in 1890, when "Arab taxes" provided 3/4 of direct contributions (15% of budgetary resources) when settlers were still exempt from property tax. In the Algerian GDP of 1953, the share of profits was 47% (239 billion francs current), that of wages only 34% (160 billion), and the proportion of accumulated capital reinvested on the spot, 52%: the repatriation of the rest (46 billion that year) and the amount of the trade deficit represented the exodus of capital offset by public funds.

#### 19.2.4 The massacre opposed to rising political demands.

Exceptional legislation, maintaining segregation, has been the weapon used to impose on Algerians this situation of inequality formalizing their exploitation. The code of indigénat, legalized in 1874, extended to the "mixed communes" of civilian territories in 1881, revised in 1881 and 1914, maintained this "apartheid" until the Second World War. It defined a series of crimes specific to Muslim Algerians, ranging from "remarks against the France and the government" to "delay in paying taxes," and placed them under the arbitrariness, not of justice, but of the administration of appointed officials of authority. This exceptional procedure, which included, in addition to penalties of deprivation of liberty, free work (chores) and sequestration, will persist after the Second World War, without the "Southern Territories" under military administration. It is coupled with a forestry code that excludes Algerians from an essential resource and, in defiance of basic rights, admits responsibility and collective punishment. It is relayed, throughout the territory, from

---

<sup>251</sup>The data of the report of the study group on financial relations between France and Algeria (1955) are largely put to use in these paragraphs which attempt to summarize A. PRENANT, Art. Cit. in *Économie et Politique*, Nov. 1956.

1935, by the decree Régnier threatening with prison and fines “whoever has ... provoked... Indigenous Algerians... to disorder or demonstrations against French sovereignty”.

These are the only answers made, between the two world wars, to a political movement that initially demanded justice and access to equality, from the beginning of the twentieth century either, for the notables, by access to a less restricted, even limited, share of the management of their own affairs, or to a French citizenship that did not impose renunciation of personal status. These answers remain, from the immigration in France of workers, those given to the national demand carried, in the 1920s, by the North African Star. Created by Messali Hadj with the support of the French Communists, disappointed in its aspirations, like the entire national movement, by the reversals of the Popular Front, it became the P.P.A. (Algerian Popular Party). Forbidden, its leaders imprisoned, this one, in the wake of the liberation, claims independence, like the U.S. D.M.A., the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto, which represents more the small and middle bourgeoisie, does not reject any link with the France.

It is to these demands associated with the celebration of the armistice understood as the announcement of the freedom of the peoples, and intolerable for capital and the colonial owners that responds, on May 8, 1945, the prohibition of demonstrations and, in Setif and Guelma, the provocation supposed to impose it: the banners torn off and the first shots fired. The 88 victims of the demonstrators' reaction unleashed the repression by which colonial capital believed it was establishing its power, especially over the entire region north of Setif, the Babor, where resistance was manifesting. Aerial bombardments, naval bombardments of the coast, sweeping of the region, destruction of farms and villages, parking of entire populations, executions without judgment, including “wood chores”, drownings etc. in Kherrata, are added to the 1,500 official deaths in “operations”, most often estimated at around 45,000 dead, and according to the French military themselves 6,000 to 8,000.

The break of May 8 nevertheless allowed exploitation by colonial capital to continue: the status of Algeria made Algerians, in their country, sub-citizens, having, in the Algerian Assembly, in the French Parliament, in the local assemblies, only a number of elected representatives equal to that of ten times fewer colonials.

Still, fraud reigns over these “Algerian-style” elections systematized by the socialist Naegelen and the “mixed communes” continue to administer most of the mostly rural areas of dominant Algerian settlement. It is, with the continuation of the repression, and the maneuvers of division of the national movement, in particular between parties, but also within the M.T.L.D. (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms) the means sought to

allow the continuation of exploitation. This is the observation that leads to the insurrectional struggle a nucleus from the O.S. (Special Organization) from the P.P.A., which triggers, on November 1, 1954, the armed action that will lead, eight years later, to independence.

## 19.3 1954-1962. A war to keep exploiting

### 19.3.1 A return to massacres, destructions, destructuring.

The number of Algerian deaths from the war of independence is uncertain. Even if it is probably between the million and a half affirmed by the F.L.N. and the 330,000 to which the official French counts reduce it, anxious not to count the corpses of the mass graves that are discovered from time to time. Disagreements between the results of the 1954, 1960 and 1966 counts and the natural increase balances allowed by the declarations must be read in view of the accentuation of the under-reporting of births and deaths. This is evident for births, the rate of which from 1950 to 1955 was constantly between 4.2 and 4.4% and rose to almost 5% after 1962. It exists all the more so for deaths whose reported number, during these eight years, rises, above the 115,000 of 1954 as of 1963, up to 140,000 to 154,000 after 1956, i.e. an annual excess mortality of 0.4 to 0.5% (already more than the official French figure). The 1960 count also found 168,000 fewer inhabitants than would result from the reported natural increase, while emigration to France had become scarcer, and the 1966 census another deficit of 160,000, mainly due to the years 1960-1962, if only because of the return of refugees in 1963-1964. We can thus consider as likely the loss of at least 600,000 Algerian human lives, not counting the French killed, due to the obstinacy of French colonial capital, especially after the discoveries of Saharan hydrocarbons, to keep Algeria. This is much more than just the victims of the fighting.

To the deaths are added, in Algeria, the destruction of villages, crops and forests, much more effective than those of the war of conquest which ignored bombs and napalm, all the more so than the forest offenses, true or suspected that punished the specific code; and the displacement of populations (estimated at least 1,800,000 souls) <sup>252</sup>, driven from prohibited areas, thus removed from their cultures and “grouped” (concentrated) either in plains in areas of mechanized colonial appropriation that do not offer work, or around cities. The rural exodus, triggered at the end of the last century by the

---

<sup>252</sup>Cf. *L'Événement du Jeudi*, 25 au 31 Octobre 1990.

dispossession of the fellahs, reinforced after 1918 by the loss of jobs linked to the mechanization of agriculture, is thus exacerbated, accentuating imbalance and distortion between settlement and economy of cities deprived of housing (until the colonial exodus of 1962), social infrastructure and industry.

### 19.3.2 Adverse impact on France.

Financial imbalance and budget deficit only increased in France, from 1954 to independence, due to the increase in military spending that had given rise to it 124 years earlier. As early as 1955 the contribution of the metropolitan budget to that of Algeria was increased by a third — from 107 to 140 billion francs <sup>253</sup> (about 17 billion today) — apart from the military expenses due to the sending in 1954-1955 of the “drafted”, then to that of the conscripts of the contingent and to the extension of one year of their service, allowed by the granting in March 1956 of the “special powers” to Guy Mollet.

This policy of preserving “French Algeria” devoted increasing sums to keeping half a million men permanently on the spot until 1962, an eighth of the number of French armies in 1916, or almost twice that of the French armies of liberation (1944-1945). A whole series of coups de force ensued, and first on May 13, 1958 which “authorized” the establishment of the Fifth Republic with the support of French capitalism. J. Marseille <sup>254</sup> acknowledges “that the employers’ groups (have) participated in the campaign for French Algeria”, later extended by the “plot of the generals”, the “barricades of Algiers” and the O. A.S., guilty of attacks in France as well as massacres in Algeria, even if he does not want to see it as “a formal proof of their attachment to the colonial form of imperialism”. This violence, in France, is also reflected in the racist attitude of the police engaged in “face hunting”; they will find their climax after the arrival at the police headquarters of Maurice Papon, former prefect of Constantine, on October 17, 1961, when 200 Algerians, peaceful demonstrators, are killed, mainly by drowning in the Seine, by police commandos <sup>255</sup>. This violence of the power is also exercised against the French protests, two months later, in Charonne, where nine demonstrators are killed.

---

<sup>253</sup>PRENANT (A.), art. Cit. 1956, p. 43.

<sup>254</sup>MARSEILLE (J.), op. cit. cit., p. 256.

<sup>255</sup>See EINAUDI (J.L.), *La Bataille de Paris*, 17 October 1961, Paris, Seuil, 1991.

### 19.3.3 The oil interest. The deficit worsened, the profits increased.

Even before May 13, the discoveries of Algerian gas and oil (Edjeleh, Hassi Mess'aoûd), initially of interest to the C.F.P., Esso-Rep and S.N. Repal had, for 40 billion then invested until 1957, brought new motivations for the continuation of the war. An Israeli-style partition plan, already suggested under Guy Mollet, had even been prepared for de Gaulle by Alain Peyrefitte <sup>256</sup>, bringing together the colonial population, and oil installations fixed in Arzew, between Mitidja and the plains of Oran and Sidi bel-'Abbes, with the Saharan corridors of oil and gas pipelines, and leaving Algerians Algeria non-oil, non-wine-growing, and not citrus.

From the launch, in 1959, of the "Constantine Plan", the expenses related to the permanent maintenance of half a million men on the spot were added, those intended to "anchor Algeria to France" by thus promoting "a form of metropolitan decentralization" <sup>257</sup> This new orientation is based on the observation, affirmed by the Ministry of Algeria in 1958, that "the natural limits of agriculture lead to the recognition that industry must be the main basis for expansion" <sup>258</sup>. First of all, it leads to the acceleration of the search for and production of hydrocarbons. Thus the Gaullist regime created the public company E.L.F./Algérie, and in 1958-1959 only, 188 billion (old) were invested, which allowed in two years the exploitation of deposits that could produce 20 million tons annually. Outside this field, it essentially leads, with few exceptions (Berliet, Michelin), to public investment by national companies (Renault), but above all to the first massive capital expenditure by the State, which had increased, between 1950 and 1955, only from 14 to 25 billion <sup>259</sup> (from 27 to 18% of the civil public funds transferred). These expenses reinforce the strategic densification of the road network by the military, multiply emergency or other "cities" (which "welcome" Algerian families displaced from 7 to 8 people in "housing" of one to two rooms); above all, they act as substantial support for private investors. Faced with the stated objective of increasing, by creating 875,000 non-agricultural jobs, the standard of living by 5%, and the official appeal to "industrialists (that) Algeria (their) offers (in addition to this expected expansion of the market) an aid to the establishment of (their) companies" <sup>260</sup> provided by the French

<sup>256</sup>PEYREFITTE (Alain), *C'était de Gaulle*.(It was De Gaulle)vol. 1, Paris, Fayard, 1994, pp. 76-77.

<sup>257</sup>Quoted by J. MARSEILLE, op. cit., p. 349.

<sup>258</sup>Quoted, *id.*, *ibid.*

<sup>259</sup>PRENANT (A.), *art. cit.*, 1956, p. 44.

<sup>260</sup>Cité in MARSEILLE (J.), p. 146.

budget, “all the reports noted evasions of savings”<sup>261</sup>. Public investment has therefore played well, at this time to compensate for the lack of private financing and nevertheless allow the formation of profits for the most part repatriated. Mendès-France declaring, on April 11, 1961: “Algeria costs us (...) more than it brings us”<sup>262</sup> silenced these returns to private capital. The fact remains that, for the first time in the history of colonization, probably in the illusion of retaining its use, the French colonial capitalist state created in Algeria, and bequeathed to it in 1962 with independence, a productive equipment, although conceived exclusively as integrated into the needs of French capitalism.

#### 19.4 1980-1998. Towards structural adjustment through Islamist terrorism

It is a productive apparatus created for Algerian national needs, offering four times more jobs than before independence and on the way to a largely integrated structure, which the opening to the “market” neutralizes from 1978-1980 before sterilizing and eroding it, again destructuring Algerian society. During the previous eighteen years, during which Algeria had hardly remained linked to international capitalism except by the exchange of 95 to 98% of its hydrocarbons for imports, mainly of equipment (for more than a third) and (for all that) of raw materials and semi-finished products, the production of energy (and above all electricity) had been multiplied by 7. Industrial production, especially public production, diversified, had seen its value more than tripled and satisfy for more than half its own demand, that of agriculture, construction and consumers; that of agriculture, despite the decline of the vine with the closure of its subsidized market, had remained constant, but for a population almost doubled and with increased requirements. Oil exports (\$8 billion) accounted for only 15% of GDP, quadrupled since independence, which represented per capita, 2.3 times that of Tunisia, 4 times that of Morocco. The distribution of creations, planned to rebalance between regions and between rural and urban areas, employment and settlement, implied the acceptance of additional costs increased by the demand for housing and social needs: primary school enrolment increased to 75% (60% for girls), average enrolment to 40%, secondary school to 25%.

It is by giving the classic weapon of colonial control, the debt, contracted

---

<sup>261</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>262</sup>In a press conference quoted by J. TOUCHARD, *Le Gaullisme, 1940-1969*, Paris, Seuil 1978, taken up by MARSEILLE (J.), *ibid.*, p. 373.



#### 19.4. 1980-1998. TOWARDS STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT THROUGH ISLAMIST TERRORISM

to respond by importing to shortages born of increased demand and turn a “non-competitive” production towards a diversification of exports that Algeria has reopened itself to the domination of big capital. But its recolonization, which is no longer the work of a State, requires its integration, in a subordinate position, into the “new world order”. The search for an increase in the value of exports through the very expensive valorization of hydrocarbons (the “Valhyd” plan) increased the external debt from 11 to 198 billion dollars from 1978 to 1980. The tolerance of a parallel market born of shortages affecting in particular the wealthy circles, and thus of a traffic on the dinar eroding its value, all the more accepted as the ruling circles profited from it, confirmed the increased fragmentation of the “Front” in power into antagonistic social classes, by linking it to the bourgeoisie. Under Chadli’s presidency, the slowdown and then the cessation of productive public investment, the successive increases in the ceiling of private capitalizations, the opening (often against mafia commissions) to international capital, the recognition of currency trafficking, the “restructuring” of public enterprises aimed at their profitability often at the expense of production, such as those of the units of the Agrarian Revolution, have only aggravated the dependence on the nascent Algerian capitalism, itself linked to its foreign counterpart. Having become a “rentier” by ceasing to invest, the State saw its debt increased to \$25 billion in 1986 by the first fall in the price of crude oil and its annual service reach and then exceed its trade surplus. The rescheduling granted in 1994 (until 1998 and 2002) was granted in exchange for the IMF’s “conditionalities”: structural adjustment, over the past four years, has confirmed the direction that led to it: openness, devaluation, privatization, liberalization. The efforts of the “good student” did not even prevent, in the winter of 1998, the macroeconomic “good results” from being cancelled out by the fall in crude oil prices, in the absence of new sources of income.

The consequences are in fact first of all, the radical fall in production, often by half, after its stagnation in the 1980s, linked to the ageing of its tool, without more means to renew it than to import raw materials and semi-products, also linked to the restriction of the internal market and non-competitiveness against competitors from the “North”.

It is, in the neo-liberal logic, the adjustment of employment to this fall <sup>263</sup> which led, in 1997 alone, with the dissolution of 300 public enterprises, 132 000 redundancies, joining the 2 500 000 unemployed, — a third of the working population. It was the continuation of the destructuring of Algerian society that, as early as the 1980s, had begun measures to prevent any workers’

---

<sup>263</sup>Cf. PRENANT (A.) et SEMMOUD (Bouziane) : Algeria; the deconstruction of an industrial fabric, in : Méditerranée, N°3-4, Aix, 1997.

opposition and to appeal to Islamist support: Article 120 imposing on the unions F.L.N. leaderships in 1982, family code in 1984, social segregation expelling from “standing” neighborhoods the marginalized popular elements offered to Islamist populism<sup>264</sup>.

Thoses are also the destructions and massacres of Islamist terrorism, manipulated, well before 1990, by supporters linked as much as state power to neo-liberalism, that of the Algerian bourgeoisie as well as multinationals, with a presence in Western capitals, especially in London. They are instrumentalizing an identitarianism that they want to confuse with Islam as a hope to recruit the marginalized of the system, especially in the suburbs. The violence, used since the 1980s (by the maquis of Bouïali, among others) is part of a fascist strategy of terror. Before 1995, it targeted trade unionists and intellectuals, artists, journalists, writers and academics, who were fighting it; then, in addition to non-Muslim foreigners, the masses, men, women, children, of those who disobeyed him by working, voting, studying, especially in the isolated countryside, in 1995-1996 and in the winter of 1997-1998; then the marginals who had escaped him and had met those who had fled him, in the new poor suburbs of Algiers. This terrorism, as is less well known, has also destroyed public production units, never private or belonging to big foreign capital, public educational, health and social institutions, in convergence with their destabilization by mafia speculation and structural adjustment. The deaths of 36,000 civilians in six years, not including the police and the army, according to official statistics, is the most dramatic effect. The resumption, for security reasons, of a massive rural exodus to the big cities, which had ceased since the 1970s with often abandonment of crops, is a factor in the coming crisis, as are the increase in mortality, and infant mortality, with the deterioration of care. The resumption of the decline in the birth rate, after its interruption from 1990 to 1994, no longer responds to family planning as it has since 1972, but to disarray<sup>265</sup>.

Multinationals, American, Canadian, Japanese, Korean or Italian etc., are currently investing mainly in protected oils, from which they can easily take their share of this much-maligned “rent”. With French capital, anxious to put on the mask of “Europeans”, they want to recover the major industrial sites cheaply, update them and reconvert them by relocating units there: the labour power of unemployed Algerians trained in industrial labour, to produce not for the depleted Algerian market, but for the neighbouring

---

<sup>264</sup>Cf. *les Cahiers du GREMAMO*, n° 12 : SEMMOUD (B.) Urban growth, mobility and social change in the Oran conurbation (1995) and n° 14: Recherches urbaines sur l'Algérie (1997).

<sup>265</sup>Algeria : a resistible regression, in *Aujourd'hui l'Afrique(Today Africa)*, n° 67, February 1998.

19.4. 1980-1998. TOWARDS STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT THROUGH ISLAMIST TERRORISM

European market, can exert more effective pressure on wages in the Schengen Europe than by keeping immigrants there. To this end, capital can hope for a dormancy of violence at the cost of a compromise that supposes the sharing of power with the Islamists: seven HAMAS ministers already sit in the government of Algiers.

The enterprise of imperialist recolonization by globalized capital uses this time the classic pressure of colonial enterprises of the nineteenth century: the indebtedness of the country to be dominated, by an ideological and economic mold, more than by military constraint. Nevertheless, it uses violence and threats of violence, that of an identity-based fascism, to weaken the potential of the country, Algeria, and exploit it, once appeased, without major investment, as a “deregulatory” satellite of Europe.

**André Prenant**

André Prenant is a geographer.



## Chapter 20

# African independencies and “communism” (1960-1998)

**Francis ARZALIER**

We are living at the end of this century, a time of strange repentance. The failures, the dramas, the crimes of the three previous generations jump in our faces, like furious cats, all claws out. Should we lose all common sense, all honesty of analysis, disguise our father's and owns' dreams of happiness, as matrix of murder? Is it necessary to abandon all lucidity, all ideal of progress, and integrate the bleating cohort of penitents saying mea culpa at the horn's sound for the sins of others?

It is certainly time to know how movements born of ideals of social and political liberation were able to transform themselves into their opposite, into terrorist groups, massacring a people they claimed to liberate. This work is initiated by historians and continues in the silence of the media. And this is fortunate, because our future depends on this lucid look at the 20th century.

This was not the purpose of the Black Book of Communism, to which its masters assigned an ideological, if not political, objective: to criminalize communism, thereby “sacralize” the unsurpassable capitalist society in this perspective of the “end of history” that Mr. Fukuyama invented.

It would be too long to point out in the 900 pages of the Black Book the historical incongruities. Let us stick to the precise example of the passage devoted (twenty-five pages) to three of the regimes that claimed to be Marxists in Africa (Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique), under the title “Afrocommunism”.

Why these three, and only those? Who does not remember the fiery proclamations of “Marxism-Leninism” in Sekou Touré's Guinea, Sassou-Nguesso's Congo first way, Mathieu Kérékou's Benin before his ouster followed by a return through the ballot box? In what way did these experiments of claimed

socialism of the 70s fall less under "real communism" than the three restraints? Could it be because the aforementioned revolutionary episodes, even if they have failed to achieve their proclaimed goals of democracy and social equality, do not present mass slaughters? Thus works Mr. Santamaria's "analysis": The only "communism with African mirrors" is the one to which it is possible to impute mass graves.

Initially, five confusing pages want to demonstrate that Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia, although African, were indeed communists, therefore criminals, or criminals, because communists: this by virtue of "the criminal dimension of communism", African or not.

After this "demonstration", dotted with some ethnicist errors (the "Rwandan Patriotic Front (Toutsu)" —sic— "Rwanda, with the genocide of the Hutu" —sic—), begins the history of the "Red Empire: Ethiopia": if the chronology is more or less accurate, the events are quoted outside any political and social context. In 1974, Haile Selassie's Empire "collapsed without major upheavals," and the head of the military government Mengistu "openly committed the country to the path of socialism." He was born a bastard, therefore revolutionary and criminal: the author does not hesitate to occasionally take up the old refrain of the counter-revolutionary historiography of the French 19th century... From there, ten pages make an avalanche of imprecatory words spread into a litany: "liquidation", "fate settled with machine gun", "imperial remains endorsed", "survivors", "physical destruction", "extermination", "red terror", "blood bottles", "execution", "suffocators", "death squads", "victims of terror", "political assassinations", "mass graves", "Bolshevik Saturn", "carts of convicts", "ready to liquidate ritual", "mass graves", "disappeared", "put to death", "exhibition of tortured victims", "murdered children", "abuses", "gas poisoning", "wave of barbarism", "Oradour-sur-Glane", "massacres of civilian populations gathered in churches", "butchers", "mass graves", "concentration camp", "total war", "massive reprisals and air terror raids", "systematic rapes", "famine", "food weapon", "diversion of aid", "forced transfer", "mass deportations"... Words are not innocent, linguists and psychoanalysts know this well. They take the place here of evidence and compensate for the lightness of the assertions, the death figures which are only a matter of possibility ("for the period February 1977-June 1978, the figure of 10,000 political assassinations has been put forward", p. 751). Invective is elevated to the rank of historical analysis, structured by the negative aspects of the period 1974-1991 alone. Seventeen years of the history of the peoples of Ethiopia is thus demonized, amputated from everything that was progress or popular struggle for a generation. For finally, let us return to the historical reality: the revolution of 1974, under the leadership of the military and progressive intellectuals of the DERG, overthrew the Ethiopian

Empire, one of the most anachronistic feudal regimes in the world. In the following years, it tried to force Ethiopian society into a modernity tinged with socialism: agrarian reform and cooperative development, secularization of a hitherto clerical state, literacy, pensions for wages, national unity, etc. From 1974 to 1980, the number of primary school pupils increased from 850,000 to 1,400,000 and the adult literacy campaign was cited as an example by UNICEF. All the analyses of Specialists in Africa say it, Ethiopia from the years 1975 to 1980 experienced “an almost unique case of an African agrarian revolution. . . . a remarkable amalgam between a desire for socialist collectivization and the reference to African communal customs” (C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Afrique noire permanence et ruptures* (Black Africa, permanency and rupture), L’Harmattan, 1992). And all of them recorded initial peasant support, especially in the south, before hostility to bureaucratic collectivization from 1984 onwards. Certainly, the “red terror” from 1975 to 1980 was very real, certainly beyond the necessary constraints of a state power eager for reform. The mistakes were numerous, and the final failure followed when the government found itself isolated in the face of the flowering of armed regional uprisings, largely supported by the United States. The observation of this failure, however, does not allow us to forget the initial progress.

After Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique are entitled to ten pages of the same growth: accusatory logorrhea as evidence, conditional to convey any rumor, according to the process dear to our television journalists, afflicting count of all the victims of the war and its corollary hunger, all of course attributed to the “Soviet model” and “the deeply Leninist nature of African states”! It would hardly deserve to dwell on it, if this description of the former Portuguese colonies for twenty-five years did not push the instrumentalization of history to the point of ignoring the role of apartheid South Africa. Yet it was very present, and in what way, in subsidies, in weapons, in men, until the victory of the ANC in 1994. The author does not hesitate to invert the most proven facts: the Union of South Africa reportedly intervened in Angola alongside Jonas Savimbi’s Unita in response to the presence in Luanda of Cuban and Soviet forces. It is therefore necessary to recall what even the Western press did not deny; the racists in power in Pretoria have also throughout these years proudly claimed their intervention “to stop communism”.

In Angola, the colonial repression carried out by the Portuguese fascist regime from 1961 to 1974 against the armed liberation movements (MPLA of Marxist inspiration, UNITA and FNLA more ethnicist and anti-communist) led to independence, thanks to the Portuguese democratic revolution of the “carnations”. The Angolan people did not long enjoy their new freedom: in 1975, the FNLA and especially UNITA installed their separatist power,

particularly in the diamond-producing regions, with the financial, material and human support of the two pro-Western governments of Zaire and South Africa, and the CIA. Defeated on the ground by the forces of the MPLA government, helped by a Cuban contingent, UNITA mercenaries, supervised by the South African special services, officially supported by the United States of Presidents Reagan and Bush, continue to manage various parts of the country, to multiply terror raids against villages that do not accept their law. According to UN publications, the toll of a decade of war, from 1978 to 1988, is more than 300,000 dead, hundreds of thousands maimed, and as many refugees. The gradual collapse of apartheid in the GDR finally forced UNITA and its US protectors to accept an end to the fighting: the 1992 peace agreements explicitly provided for the departure of foreign contingents, and elections. They took place in 1992, under the control of observers from all over the world and gave a large majority to the MPLA. And Savimbi's UNITA, refusing the popular verdict, restarted the civil war: in 1994, the UN estimated that this new conflict killed a thousand Angolans a day! It was not until the defeat of Mobutu's Zaire in 1997 and its UNITA protégés that hope was reborn in Angola destroyed by 30 years of wars. Where the hell are the crimes of communism?

Mozambique has a parallel history. It too, barely freed from Portuguese domination, suffered the ravages of the war waged by the separatist forces of RENAMO, financed and armed for sixteen years by racist South Africa, and, hypocritically, by some major Western powers, including, unfortunately, France. Here too, the peace process, laboriously installed after 1994 (Mandela's ANC was then in power in South Africa) gave a large majority to the FRELIMO party (very little Marxist, no offense to Mr. Courtois). It has yet to rebuild a ravaged country that has lost hundreds of thousands of citizens, most of its industrial equipment, and whose arable land is dotted with anti-personnel mines uprooting lives and limbs for decades to come. Crimes of communism? Mr. Courtois' authors should study some of the history of black Africa elsewhere than in the works in use in Pretoria 10 years ago!

Angola, Mozambique, have been left exhausted at the end of conflicts born mainly from the appetites of the great powers and multinational corporations, eyeing the riches of the subsoil, diamonds, oil. What do the few abuses, human rights violations and executions, attributed by our authors to "communist" Frelimo and MPLA weigh in this dramatic assessment?

Angola, Mozambique: crimes of communism or criminal consequences of African and international capitalism?



## 20.1 Capitalism and Africa since the 60s

Because finally, this is what it is all about: the “black continent” is not an isolation, it is inhabited by the same ideological controversies, the same economic and social structures as the rest of the universe.

Let us not repeat the manipulations of the Black Book in reverse: ideologies are not responsible for the criminal excesses of those who claim to be so.

In Rwanda, in 1994, nearly a million human beings, because they were Tutsi or democrats, were exterminated in a few weeks by the Interhahwe militias of the fascists and racists of the “Hutu Power”. These assassins were for years, and even in their defeat, armed, financed, protected by the secular arms of President Mitterrand. This in no way makes it possible to affirm the responsibility of the social-democratic ideology in the crime.

It is also unfortunately real that some priests in Rwanda, the most Catholic country in Africa, have approved or even participated in the racist massacres: it does not allow anyone to speak of a crime of Catholicism on occasion.

It is common knowledge that the fundamentalist and militarist dictatorship that has imposed its law on Sudan for ten years has maintained very cordial relations with the French networks of Charles Pasqua and Marchiani: this cannot allow Gaullism to be blamed for the fierce war waged by the fundamentalist power against the peoples of South Sudan, which has left millions of people dead and refugees in twelve years.

On the other hand, there is an undeniable reality: contemporary Africas, from north to south and from east to west, are inserted into the global mechanisms of capitalism. The masters of the major Western powers, notably through the international organizations they control (IMF, World Bank, UN Security Council, etc.), exercise daily surveillance over African states. The price of commodities, which make up the bulk of African exports, is the sole responsibility of Western financial markets, and has fallen steadily over the long term; the industrial or food products that undeveloped Africa has to buy are, on the contrary, becoming more and more expensive.

The World Bank’s recent diagnoses are clear with regard to Africa: even more than before, African economies and African states are crushed by debt to the point of being able to dream of an independent practice.

Despite sluggish growth in commodity exports and debt reduction agreements, the situation in sub-Saharan African countries continued to deteriorate. Their debt represents on average 170% of their exports (1,000% in Mozambique, 600% in Côte d’Ivoire).

According to the “debt tables” published by the World Bank, out of 40 heavily indebted countries, 33 are in sub-Saharan Africa. The Maghreb is

not much better off: in Algeria, the debt-to-export revenue ratio is 308%, in Morocco 247%, in Egypt 214%. Many experts from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, can even afford the luxury of recognizing that many of these debts can never be repaid: the African continent and its peoples must remain crushed by the straitjacket of debt. Debt is for the great financial and political powers more political weapon than source of profit: sub-Saharan Africa's total debt (\$223 billion) barely exceeds 10% of the global total. But it makes it possible to impose on African governments the "structural adjustment plans", that is to say to control their political, economic and social orientations (austerity for public services and privatization of wealth). Better: this grip of world capitalism is stronger in Africa in 1998 than in the colonial era. Most of the villages of the AOF in 1930 lived in quasi-communal autarky, and felt the weight of colonial authority only through forced labor and taxation. At the end of the 20th century, the Ivorian or Senegalese farmer knew that the price of his cocoa or groundnut harvest depended on Western stock exchanges!

In this universe regulated by the laws of the world market, where one invests only according to the expected profit (in "useful Africa" according to the terminology of the financiers), the network of capitalist interests has its local relays, impregnated with the "liberal" creed, able to propagate it and to make it respected by the populations who suffer from it, emanating from the profits that derive from the system: it was for a long time (from 1960 to 1990) fierce military thugs, such as Bokassa in the Central African Republic, or Amin Dada in Uganda, corrupt tyrants like Mobutu in Zaire, and many others: all owed the wealth they have accumulated and their political longevity only to the multifaceted support of the powerful of the West, in the name of anti-communism. Some of them still survive, such as Eyadema in Togo, maintained by French support after ruthless repression.

But a new generation of African leaders dedicated to global and local capitalism is taking place, which is no better: they are the fine talking technocrats trained by the IMF and the World Bank, who never cease to extol the virtues of multi-party politics confused by them with democracy and the laws of the sacrosanct world market. Soglo was one of them, whom the people of Benin have just thanked after seeing that he had only aggravated their poverty.

The new masters of world capitalism, feeling the African soil moving under them, are also ready to make an arrow of any wood, to support in relay leaders displaying very varied ideologies, provided that they ensure the essential, political stability, obedience to the "laws of the market"... and "structural adjustment plans". Here a former Converted Marxist, there a former supporter of the maquis of the 60s, elsewhere an avowed fundamentalist: : the

IMF is very “plural”, it expects from them only the ability to make their peoples accept the need for capitalist profit.

Since the dawn of African independence, capitalism has been the context of some of the worst mass slaughters of the 20th century.

1. — In 1966, the Biafran war began in Nigeria. This former British colony, the most populous in sub-Saharan Africa, had managed to federate into a single country various peoples: its unity, as much as its oil, could give it hope for an exit from underdevelopment. It was counting without the appetites of the great capitalist societies of western states and their ability to play with separatism. The ethnicism opposing the Ibos of the east to the majority Yoruba in Lagos, led to the proclamation by the former of a republic of Biafra, eager to keep for itself the profits of the oil fields. If the British oil companies (BP, Shell) support the federal state, the Biafra of Ojukwu is helped, and even aroused in its military stubbornness, by their competitors who see it as an opportunity to expand their area of influence. De Gaulle’s France and Foccart, its African affiliates, Houphouet-Boigny of Côte d’Ivoire and Bongo of Gabon, take up the cause of the separatists, organize the supply of weapons and mercenaries: the SDECE and Bob Denard are part of the adventure.

French opinion was then outrageously manipulated in its good feelings by a campaign in which some of the tenors of the “humanitarian” used any means: the images of children starving, mutilated, as a result of the war, “demonstrate the just cause of Biafra”. To the end, the Biafran secession is nourished by the sordid ulterior motives of financiers and politicians ready to fight to the last living Biafran. After three years of fighting and famine, the toll is eloquent, recognized by all analysts: nearly 2 million dead!

2. — In this list of crimes against African peoples, let us recall for the record what was mentioned above of Sudan and Rwanda.

Sudan, a vast pivotal country between Arabized Muslim Africa and animist or Christian black Africa, has been suffering for 30 years from ethnicist hatreds, military authoritarianism and fundamentalism: it must also be seen that these evils have been aroused, fuelled by anti-communism.

In 1971, a clumsy (?) uprising of far-left military led to the eradication of the trade union movement and the Sudanese Communist Party, the most powerful on the continent. Fundamentalism then began to develop, especially within the Muslim bourgeoisie and the army, with two essential ideological components: hatred of communism and democracy, religious fanaticism and racist contempt for black Christians in South Sudan. This was until 1989, when the army installed a military dictatorship, whose master thinker was the fundamentalist Turabi. Make no mistake: the fundamentalist masters in Khartoum are no more “anti-Western” than the Nazis were “anti-capitalist.”

Their opposition to the US and Saudi Arabia is geopolitical, non-ideological, based primarily on their unachievable desire to play the leading roles in the northeast of the continent. Their economic management is inspired by the purest criteria of "liberalism"

The fundamentalist regime that the official France has helped for so long (by virtue of which it delivered carlos, this retired terrorist), waded blood in the south of the country since his birth: the figures put forward by the United Nations and NGOs such as Amnesty International are staggering: 1,300,000 dead in 10 years, 3 million displaced, millions undernourished, etc.

While imposing its law on the increasingly reluctant people of Khartoum in the name of Islam, the military-fundamentalist power provides arms and ammunition to the guerrillas of Christian fundamentalists (Lord's Resistance Army) who are ravaging northern Uganda by terrorizing the villagers: implacable demonstration, if it were still necessary, that fundamentalisms are not religious movements, but political manipulations of the religious. But will it be necessary to wait for the foreseeable collapse of the current regime in Sudan for the disappearance of the hypocritical supporters who bring it certain French networks that still believe themselves to be in the era of Fachoda? The dossier produced on this subject by Pax-Christi France in June 1995 was damning and remains partially relevant.

There is no need to insist on the appalling massacre in Rwanda in 1994, the perpetrators of which are known (the "tropical fascists" of the late Habyarimana) and the accomplices who armed their arm. On 4 February 1998, C. Josselin, Minister Delegate for Cooperation, regretted the weak presence of the France in Rwanda, "with which diplomatic relations are not the best". Should we pretend to be surprised, when we know the past of the official France in this country to be rebuilt, when the memory is still fresh of the "Operation Turquoise" of the French army: Armed with great humanitarian pretexts, it saved above all the Interhamwe massacrers of Rwandan fascism, already defeated around Kigali, from being definitively put out of harm's way. En conséquence de quoi, ils ont pu continuer à combattre au Congo, au service de Mobutu et de Lissouba, et animer encore aujourd'hui une meurtrière guérilla au Rwanda. It remains to be hoped that the peoples of the region will not be able to revive the ethnicist embers that are still present, whether from States (USA or France), international organizations (World Bank) or private (capitalist multinational companies): external pressures can only hinder the healing of wounds left by recent history, as the past amply demonstrates.

3. — How can we finally forget the long martyrdom of the people of South Africa under the racist apartheid regime from the 1960s onwards? In itself, apartheid is already a crime, because it is based on legalized racism, "genetic" inequality erected as law, and the rejection of democracy theo-

rized in political principle. It should also be remembered that the apartheid South African republic was the perfect example of capitalism in Africa, led by a bourgeoisie whose standard of living exceeded that of its French counterparts, thanks to the overexploitation of black workers in the mines and fields. Local capitalism, therefore, regulating the economy of the only industrial power south of the Sahara, but supported throughout the Cold War by the US and other Western powers, in the name of the struggle against Soviet influence. Even after 1977, and the multiple embargo decisions of the UN General Assembly against apartheid, multinational corporations (Shell), Western states, including France, supplied the racist power in Pretoria with the weapons, nuclear technology, oil that it lacked. Even better, if we can say so: on March 29, 1988, Dulcie September, representative of the South African ANC fighters in France, was assassinated in Paris. The French courts closed the case as unanswered in 1992. Six years later, in liberated South Africa, the “truth and reconciliation commission” wondered about the help that could have been given to the killers of members of the French secret services, while Dulcie was preparing to denounce the plans of the France to provide the government in Pretoria with Mistral surface-to-air missiles.

The daily management of apartheid from 1960 was a long police and judicial oppression, punctuated by collective murders in case of organized popular resistance:

- in March 1960, in Sharpeville, the police machine-gunned the crowd, killing 69 people and wounding hundreds;
- in June and July 1976, demonstrations by students and high school students were fiercely repressed: 300 dead in Soweto, a thousand in total in the country...

This was until the surrender of the “white power” in 1990, asphyxiated after the popular uprising and the erosion of American support, and the electoral victory of the ANC in 1994. Nothing is definitively closed in South Africa, struggling with the heavy legacy of apartheid still inscribed in social inequalities; and the white or black “liberal” bourgeoisie dreams of serving as a relay for US capitalism in Africa rather than social progress. But the future of the continent is at stake.

Finally, beyond these periodic collective massacres, capitalism is responsible even more directly in Africa for dramatic consequences that are part of everyday crime: Massive poverty, the collapse of the most basic public services, growing illiteracy over the past ten years, majority unemployment in urban centres that are becoming homeless, are the common lot of the ma-

jority of States subject to the debt law and structural adjustment plans that prohibit them from any endogenous industrial development.

Some of Africa's wounds, which often pass for its exclusive attributes in the simplistic images delivered by Western television, are the direct result of North-South relations within the framework of world and African capitalism.

First, corruption, which plagues the management of most African states and the mores of many political and administrative leaders. Western states and private companies vying for African markets are the corruptors: the distribution of barely hidden gifts, for them minimal according to the stakes, allows them to secure political clientele and juicy business. Given the disparity of currencies, the discreet foreign currency rebate of 0.1 per cent of the amount of an arms contract represents for the African person concerned, minister or civil servant, the equivalent of years' salary. What Western industrialist would therefore deprive itself of corrupting?

In this "market logic", the time of the slave traders was succeeded by that of the poison merchants. Industrial firms in Western countries are all the more overwhelmed by their waste as sensitivities favorable to the protection of the environment have become the majority in public opinion. Therefore, to dump the most toxic waste at a lower cost along the African coasts, to pay so that he closes the eyes of some president, some minister, a tidy sum, what could be easier for the technocrats running large transnational corporations? In 1988, a contract signed by the British company Sesco-Gibraltar to four ministers from Benin provided for the delivery of 1 to 5 million tonnes of toxic waste for ten years for a ridiculous official fee of \$2.5 per tonne. Pierre Péan (*L'Argent noir* (Black money), Fayard, 1988) revealed some other visible elements of this problem: like an iceberg, the essential is hidden, but very real.

Another aspect of the African reality is hunger, which has become in our world mediatized to the point of excess, as a symbol of the black continent. Who does not remember these images of bloated children, crowds fighting over the bag of saving rice brought by generous patrons? However, this image of Africa, even if it was born of good feelings, is false, it is enough to realize it by visiting cities and villages.

Certainly, hunger is a very real scourge, which has wiped out tens of thousands of Africans over the past ten years, and is still preparing to do so; Admittedly, this endemic hunger sometimes originates from climatic causes (in the Sahel where the desert extends), and even more demographic (population and herds too numerous for fragile grazing areas). But famine in Africa is only contingent; it occurs, against a backdrop of difficulties, when society is disturbed by an armed conflict, which prohibits seeds and crops, transport and food storage. Overall agricultural production is increasing, al-

beit insufficiently, but promising: according to the F.A.O., cereal production in Africa grew by 1.95% per year from 1961 to 1990, and cereal yield by 32 per cent between 1986 and 1990. All the major famines of recent years have been linked to military conflicts, external or internal, to the destruction of agricultural and industrial potential, and to the displacement of population that were the result: this was the case in Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Mozambique, etc.

However, these warlike conflicts are intrinsically linked to the arms sold throughout Africa to the various belligerents, governments or armed groups by traffickers of all kinds, at the forefront of which are States, such as the France or the Usa, major producers of death devices of all kinds. Because the production and sale of firearms, from the surface-to-air missile to the machine gun that its price makes it possible to buy from the poorest, is an exclusivity of the industrial firms of the West that derive billions of dollars in annual profit. In Africa, the only weapons produced are by South Africa, and Egypt: the latter often serves only as a commercial relay; and does Mandela's power pursue this murderous trade only with some modesty, torn as he is between his need for foreign exchange, and his objectives of international morality.

The observation, in any case, is clear: wars and therefore famines plague Africa only because of the arms trade, juicy traffic for the benefit of Western producers, a capitalist mechanism inherent in contemporary North-South relations. Has it been noticed enough that, curiously, the structural adjustment plans imposed on African states by the IMF still require a drastic reduction in health and education spending but not military equipment? Elf was able to finance in 1997 the militias that took power in Brazzaville, at the cost of some 10,000 deaths.

We cannot highlight everything about this "logic of the capitalist world market" in the current African trouble. Let us conclude this overview with an enlightening example, most recently highlighted by the report published on 26/11/97 of the W.H.O. and the United Nations on AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, 7.4% of men and women between the ages of 15 and 49 are infected with the virus. There are 2.4 million of them in South Africa, 25 to 30% of adults in Botswana. Everywhere, life expectancy, which had increased by nearly 15 years from 1960 to 1990, is falling again.

The most dramatic finding is the growing gap in care between industrialized and African countries. In Western Europe, the number of reported AIDS cases in 1997 was 30 per cent lower than in 1995: this is, for the most part, due to the effectiveness of current treatments, particularly triple therapy, which costs more than 100,000 francs per year in Europe. Under these conditions, the twelve African countries, which alone represent 50 per cent of the world's HIV-positive people, have no chance of offering their peoples this

existing and effective treatment. At the international meeting in Abidjan in December 1997, the President and the Minister of Health of the France honoured each other by calling for the creation by the industrialized countries of an "international fund of therapeutic solidarity" for AIDS patients in the countries of the South. And the representatives at the World Bank conference immediately rejected this possibility, for it was contrary to healthy "liberal" logic.

Professor Gentilini, for his part, denounced to the delegates "a crime against humanity that future generations will tragically reproach us".

Let's say it: this crime against man, in Africa, is called capitalist profit. The century that will begin will surely answer what is for the moment only questions and uncertainties. We do not know in what sense, but one thing is clear, regardless of the ideologues of the "crimes of communism": in this Africa, which is called French-speaking because it was a French colony half a century ago, dreams and hopes of well-being, equality and freedom are not embodied in technocrats and dictators manufactured by the French military academies or the IMF: this dream is called Thomas Sankara, mythical image of the incorruptible reformer, disorderly and generous fighter for the rights of the poorest and women, assassinated in 1987, who recognized himself inspired by the communist ideal.

**Francis Arzalier**

Francis Arzalier is a historian, professor at the IUFM of Beauvais, responsible for the journal *Aujourd'hui l'Afrique* (Today Africa).

## 20.2 Rough Bibliography

C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Afrique noire, permanence et ruptures* (Black Africa, permanency and ruptures), Harmattan, 1992.

*Fin du Tiers Monde*, collective dossier, La Découverte, 1996.

P. Péan, *Affaires africaines* (African businesses), Fayard, 1983.

P. Péan, *L'Argent noir* (Black money), Fayard, 1988.

Faligot, Krop, *La piscine* (The swimming pool), French Secret Service 1944-84.

M. Cahen, *Mozambique, révolution implorée* (Mozambique, revolution imploded), l'Harmattan, 1987.



Mr. Cukierman, *Cap sur la liberté. Afrique du Sud* (Heading toward freedom. South Africa), Messidor, 1987.

J. P. Chrétien, *Le défi de l'ethnicisme. Rwanda, Burundi* (The Challenge of Ethnicism. Rwanda, Burundi), Karthala, 1997.

A. Gascon, *La grande Ethiopie* (The great Ethiopia), Éd. CNRS, 1995.

Centre bordelais d'études de l'Afrique Noire: D. Bach, *La politique africaine du général de Gaulle* (The African policy of General De Gaulle), Éditions Pedone, 1980.

*Changement du climat et production agricole* (Climate change and agricultural production), PAO study by F. Bazzaz and W. Sombroek, Ed. FAO-polytechnica, 1997.

Collection of the journal *Aujourd'hui l'Afrique*, from n° 53 (Nov. 94) to 65 (January 1998), articles by Y. Grenet, R. Borrelly, C. Grandrien, S. Cerqueira, F. Wurtz, M. Dos Santos, M. Macheve, H. Ibrahim Ali, B. Bouché, J. Kagabo, P. Kaldor, F. Arzalier, etc.

*Journal de la paix, Pax Christi France*, special feature France Sudan, June 1995.

Powderkegs of the planet, published by *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January-February 1998, articles by A. Conchiglia, P. Leymaire, C. Braekman, J. L. Pénina.



## Chapter 21

# North American interventions in Latin America

**Paco Pena**

The process of emancipation of the Spanish colonies, begun in the early nineteenth century, culminated in the second decade of the last century, ending Spain's domination of the New World. In 1898, the last strongholds on the continent — Cuba and Puerto Rico — were wrested from Spanish power by the United States, falling under their rule.

Once the colonial link with Spain was severed and its commercial monopoly was broken, it was mainly English and later North American companies that established their predominance in Latin America.

The English preponderance, which supplanted the rigid Spanish commercial monopoly, manifested itself throughout the nineteenth century by the rise of British trade with the recently independent colonies: they were mainly English ships that frequented the main American ports, such as Veracruz, Buenos Aires, Valparaiso, Havana, El Callao.

It was above all a commercial supremacy that did not seek direct political domination, although England had also tried to make its place in the sun in the New World, employing the big means: the capture of Buenos Aires in 1806 was followed by the landing in other territories and in the Caribbean, or even the creation of a ghostly "Kingdom of Mosquitia", on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua and, the occupation in 1833 of the Falkland Islands, populated by them, from 1829, by Argentine settlers.

England was able to establish itself in Latin America during the first half of the nineteenth century, despite the claims of other candidates wishing to gain their share of influence in the region: France and the United States.

France could not thwart British policy and had to bow to the power of the

Royal Navy while seeking to gain or retain territory in parts of the continent: Haiti, the West Indies, Guyana and Mexico. The latter had always attracted the interest of the French and the first clash took place during the July Monarchy during the incredible cake war (1838). More serious will be the intervention of France and the European powers from 1861, which ended in the defeat and execution of Maximilian of Austria at Queretaro in 1867.

The United States, for its part, sought in vain, during the first half of the nineteenth century, to challenge English hegemony. They will be content — because they do not have the means for a more ambitious policy — with the absorption of the territories adjacent to the East Coast. The time for the “Anschluss” and military interventions had not yet arrived.

It will take place as early as 1835, when the North American expansionist wave engulfed half of the territories belonging to Mexico. Texas split in 1835 and became part of the union in 1848. In the same year, California and New Mexico were annexed by the United States. The United States was ceded in 1846 by Great Britain, Oregon in the Northwest, and bought Alaska from Russia in 1867.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this policy of expansion allowed the formation of a vast territory and, after the Civil War — which diverted the attention and efforts of the North Americans to internal problems — the United States will focus on establishing its political and economic domination in Latin America, replacing English hegemony and engaging in a process of development and industrialization that will place it in the twentieth century at the head of the capitalist countries.

These few lines have the ambition to tell the story of the imperialist interventions in Latin America, which helped in a significant way to increase the strength of the one that would become the first power on the planet and the spearhead of world capitalism.

The interventionist policy of the United States manifested itself very early in Latin America. Although north Americans had a major adversary in this area — Great Britain — they had always looked with lust at the territories that for three centuries had been subject to Spanish colonial rule and that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century — after their independence — experienced long periods of anarchy, the result of the infighting that developed in almost all the young republics.

The process of territorial expansion of the United States began at the end of the eighteenth century. The border being “elastic” to the west, they acquired various territories between 1792 and 1821 <sup>266</sup>.

---

<sup>266</sup>Vermont, in 1791, Kentucky, in 1792, Tennessee, in 1796. The latter two territories, along with Mississippi, Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, were acquired by the Union

The process continued further west and south, where the voracity of the Union swallowed great extensions of the “middlewest” obtained through the cession or purchase of territories to the European powers. Purchase and disposal made on the backs of the indigenous populations – “the red skins” – who were turned away and/or exterminated. This is how the United States managed to significantly increase its initial territory.

Despite a position of official non-interventionism announced by George Washington in his “Farewell Message” of 1796, the United States thought from the beginning of seizing the territories contiguous to those of the Union. This was the case with Florida.

A vassal of the King of Spain, Pedro Menendez de Avilés, founded the city of San Agustín in September 1565. This peninsula was in turn occupied by the English from 1763 to 1783. The United States, for its part, claimed that the southern border went up to the 31st parallel, but Spain occupied up to the 33rd parallel and there was a serious dispute over the Mississippi, whose navigation was closed by the monopoly it exercised on the traffic of the river.

In 1811, taking advantage of the presence of Napoleon’s troops in Spain, the North American Congress passed a resolution declaring that it intended to occupy Florida in order to remain there.

The text says a lot about the nascent North American interventionist vocation: “The United States, in the special circumstances of the current crisis, views with grave concern that some of these territories may pass into the hands of a foreign power... Its own security forces them to proceed with the temporal occupation of these territories... (which) will remain in our hands for future negotiations. ” <sup>267</sup>.

In 1818 General Andrew Jackson definitively occupied Florida and, the following year, Spain agreed to sell to the voracious new state, a territory almost as large as England, for the trifle of 5 million dollars...

But the desires of the United States were not limited only to Florida. Luis de Onís, the Spanish ambassador at the time, warned his government about North American ambitions. He warned in 1812 — at the time of the second war between the Union and Great Britain — about the real aims of North American diplomacy:

“This government has proposed nothing more and nothing less, to fix its borders from the mouth of the Rio Bravo... in a straight line towards the Pacific, including the provinces of Texas, Nuevo

---

in the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Others, further west, were bought from Bonaparte in 1803.

<sup>267</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos, Estados Unidos y America Latina*, Editorial Patria Grande, Montevideo, 1968, p. 11.

Santander, Coahuila and part of Nueva Viscaya and Sonora... It may sound delusional, but it is a fact that the project exists and that they have made a map that includes Cuba as an integral part of this republic.”<sup>268</sup>

Cuba, already in the sights of the United States.

Ferdinand VII's Spain — put back on its throne after the Napoleonic episode — supported by France, Russia, Prussia and Austria, had thought and tried to reconquer its former American territories.

But interests diverged between the imperialist powers. England, which had been the first beneficiary of the loss of Spain's American colonies, was unwilling for Spanish power to return in force to its former possessions.

Thus, around the second decade of the nineteenth century, when the Spanish monarchy wanted to start the war again to reconquer its former territories, it found in the front line to oppose it, His Most Gracious Majesty who attempted a kind of agreement with the United States.

The British minister, George Canning, invited the North Americans to make common cause and oppose the Spanish claim.

It was then that former President Jefferson replied to President Monroe who was consulting him on the attitude to have towards the European powers:

“Our fundamental motto must be not to meddle in European imbroglions... (and) not to accept that Europe intervenes in American affairs...

Britain is the nation that can cause us the most harm; by having it on our side, we do not fear the whole world...”

Later the former Yankee president clarified his thought:

“We must ask ourselves the following question: do we wish to acquire for our Confederation, some Spanish-American provinces? ... I sincerely admit that I have always been of the opinion that Cuba would be the most interesting addition we could make to our system of states... Domination on this island and Florida would give us control of the Gulf of Mexico and the Isthmus states...”<sup>269</sup>

Florida fell into Yankee hands in 1819. Cuba, the obsession with American diplomacy, will be reduced to the state of protectorate in 1898.

<sup>268</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>269</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

A few weeks later, President Monroe in his annual message to the nation would set the guidelines that the diplomacy of the United States should adopt in the face of the desires shown by the European powers towards the Spanish-American nations. It was what has since been called the “Monroe Doctrine”.

Taking up a number of ideas already set out by Washington and Hamilton, Monroe announced that the United States would not interfere in European affairs and would adopt an attitude of strict neutrality.

On the other hand, the Union would guarantee the independence of the Spanish-American countries, opposing Spain’s reconquest of its former colonies on the continent, and any attempt to do so by any other European power.

In his seventh annual message of December 2, 1823, President Monroe informed of the conversations he had had with representatives of Russia and Great Britain. “They were warned that the United States considered Latin American nations to be free and independent, and that consequently they cannot be subject to future colonization by any European power... We would regard any attempt by them to take any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and security.”<sup>270</sup>

On the other hand, Monroe, reaffirming North American neutrality in European affairs, entrenched himself in the isolationist policy that would characterize the United States in its relations with Europe:

“In the wars between the European powers and in the affairs within their jurisdiction, we have never taken sides... Our policy towards Europe – which was adopted at the beginning of the wars that have recently shaken it – remains unchanged: not to interfere in their internal affairs and to regard de facto governments as legitimate.”<sup>271</sup>

Although the “Monroe Doctrine” deterred the European powers in their dreams of reconquest, it could not prevent their interference and intervention on several occasions: England played an important role in La Plata, and succeeded in creating a buffer state in 1828 between Brazil and Argentina, separating from the Provincias Unidas, the Eastern Strip, Uruguay.

The threats contained in the “doctrine” also remained a dead letter, during the English invasion of the Falklands in 1833 and the French intervention in San Juan de Ulua, Mexico, in 1838 (the “Cake War”). Same thing, when the Anglo-French aggression against Argentina of Rosas and Uruguay of Oribe

---

<sup>270</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>271</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

took place, and when in 1837 the port of Buenos Aires was subjected to blockade by the French navy. Nor when the French and British organized in 1845 a military expedition on the Parana River, closed to foreign navigation by successive Argentine governments.

Same silence when the Spanish fleet bombarded Valparaiso and Peruvian ports in 1866, and during the cession of the island of San Barthelemy by Sweden to the France, in 1876.

Nor did the “doctrine” prevent the invasion of Mexico in 1861 by Franco-Anglo-Spanish troops and the attempt to establish a “Latin Empire”, with Maximilian of Austria.

On the other hand, in texts that will appear during the decade of the forties, the idea justifying Yankee expansionism begins to manifest itself, which the publicists of the time – writers and parliamentarians – called the Manifest Destiny.

Fate would have granted — an idea close to the notion of predestination, dear to Presbyterian Protestantism — to the American nation a civilizing mission, making it the guardian angel of freedom and democracy, while granting it vast territories to conquer, and a vocation of domination over the entire New World.

The supporters of manifest Destiny, of course, did not say a word about the fate of the thousands of blacks living on the territory of the Union, for whom the manifest destiny manifested itself precisely in the form of brazen slavery.

From the beginning of the independence of the Spanish-American nations, the United States and Great Britain viewed Bolivar’s American attempts with a negative eye. The two Anglo-Saxon nations preferred to rub shoulders with a divided continent, separated by conflicts and borders, instead of a single and powerful country that could become a formidable competitor.

Bolivar, in 1826, convened the First Pan American Congress in Panama and put on the agenda the question of the liberation of Cuba and Puerto Rico, still in the hands of Spain.

But the combined efforts of the British and North Americans succeeded in boycotting it, and Congress was a failure.

England obtained that the Argentine and Brazilian delegates were not present. And, of the delegates of the United States, one died during the trip, the other, with instructions written by Secretary of State Henry Clay and President John Quincy Adams, was to oppose the war advocated by Bolivar, for the liberation of the last Spanish colonies in America.

Adams and Clay’s instructions tended to act in the direction of maintaining the status quo. In relation to Cuba, the directives to the U.S. delegates said:



“No power, not even Spain... has such a great interest as the United States in the future fate of this island... We do not want any change in his possession or in his political situation... We will not see with indifference the transfer to another European power than Spain. Nor do we want it to be ceded or added to a new American state.”<sup>272</sup>

The United States scrupulously applied the idea contained in Monroe’s seventh message: “America to the Americans.” They simply interpreted it as if they had heard: “America to North Americans.” The history of Mexico’s stripping is dramatically instructive in this regard.

## 21.1 The carving up of Mexico

Texas — a territory larger than France — had always belonged, since the arrival of the conquistadores, to the crown of Spain, and then to independent Mexico.

The colonial authorities maintained relative control, thanks to the combined action of military garrisons and Catholic missionaries: these were the Presidios.

As early as the eighteenth century, Spanish families had settled in Texas. But, around 1817, a process of infiltration — “illegal immigration” one would say today — began to appear: Yankees, Germans, Poles, even officers and soldiers of Napoleon’s army, were expelled by the authorities after clashes with the Spanish Catholic population.

The real difficulty began when 300 Anglo-Saxon families were allowed by the Mexican Congress to settle in 30,000 hectares of land, allocated free of charge. They reintroduced slavery — which had been abolished in Mexico — and the Mexican government agreed to make an exception and allow the practice by newcomers.

In December 1826, an adventurer — Hayden Edwards — proclaimed the “Free Republic of Fredonia,” quickly annihilated by the Mexican army. Another attempt at independence failed the following year. Suggestively began to appear, in various states of the Union, publications denouncing Mexico, guilty of having “seized” Texas.

In 1835, when a new constitution was approved in Mexico — which would be at the origin of an internal conflict between federalists and centralists — the Yankee settler Stephan Austin proclaimed the independence of Texas. The United States then took advantage of this opportunity, which favoured its expansionist aims. They sent boats with weapons and ammunition from New Orleans.

---

<sup>272</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

Mexico, for its part, intended to enforce its sovereignty and sent the famous General Santa Anna. After some successes of the Mexican armies at San Patricio, Encinal del Perdido and El Alamo — which the newspapers presented to the public opinion of the United States as the defeat of a sublime cause — Santa Anna was defeated on April 21, 1836 in San Jacinto. Taken prisoner, he was forced to sign a Leonine Agreement (“Convenio Publico”) at Puerto Velasco on May 14, 1836, where it was agreed that the Mexicans would withdraw from Texas on the southern edge of the Rio Bravo. The agreement provided that “all special properties, including horses, black slaves, in the hands of the Mexican army or passed on the side of this army, shall be returned to the commander of the Texas forces”<sup>273</sup>.

The better-equipped Texas troops had imposed an agreement that, twelve years later, would play an important role in the carving up of more than half of Mexico’s territories. North American support for Texas adventurers was confirmed in the forties by President John Tyler, who said of the separation of Texas from Mexico:

“The mere probability that slavery could be abolished in neighbouring territories must be sufficient grounds for annexing them.”<sup>274</sup>

In 1845, Texas entered the Union as a slave state. The election campaign led by Tyler’s successor, James Polk — President of the United States between 1846 and 1850 — had been: “Annexation of Texas. 54°/40’, or death”. (He was referring to the Yankee border and the territories torn from Mexico.)

## 21.2 The Anschluss of New Mexico and California

Once Texas was swallowed, the next Anschluss was practiced on two other major Mexican provinces: New Mexico and California.

Texas — a former Mexican province — began to claim certain territories from New Mexico, which had always belonged to Mexico, supported in its request by the United States government. Then, once Texas was annexed by the Union (1845), it was the North American government itself that pushed for the War of Conquest.

California — whose presence of a subsoil rich in gold ores would soon be discovered — had a small population (only some 1,000 North Americans), and suffered several outrages: an armed “scientific expedition”, sent by President

---

<sup>273</sup>Leopoldo Martínez Carroza, *La intervención norteamericana en México, 1846-1848*, Panorama Editorial, México, 1985, p. 19.

<sup>274</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27

Polk, and in January 1843 the landing of troops under the command of a naval officer who “mistakenly” occupied the Mexican port of Monterrey in California. He had to re-embark against the firmness of the Mexican authorities.

The pretext sought by the United States was provided by a clash between two border patrols of the respective armies on April 24, 1846, in the hamlet of “Carricitos”, in Mexican territory.

Polk announced a few days later, in Congress, that Mexico had invaded the territory of the United States and shed North American blood.

War was immediately declared and only a few prominent voices were raised to condemn the planned Anschluss. Among them, Abraham Lincoln, Representative of Illinois: “I believe that the president is deeply convinced that he is in an incorrect position, that he feels that the blood of this war — such as Abel’s — is accusing him.”<sup>275</sup>

On July 4, when hostilities had already begun, a group of North American adventurers opportunely proclaimed in California the Republic of the Bear, which nevertheless had an ephemeral life.

The invaders landed in Veracruz and, after heavy fighting, occupied Mexico City in September 1847. A long list of battles punctuated this war of conquest: Palo Alto, Monterrey, Angostura, Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, Padierna, Chapultepec.

The people of Mexico City then demonstrated against the occupier. Riots took place and North American troops had to leave the city. Especially since desertions were taking place among the invaders: dozens of Irish from St. Patrick’s Battalion refused to continue the war against a Catholic people. They were the poor and miserable, fleeing famine in their home countries. They had been enlisted to fight the “Mexican barbarians.” Thirty-two were hanged for desertion in the Aztec capital.

Hostilities lasted until 1848, when Mexico had to sign the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

In ten years Mexico had been amputated of half of its territory.

In the years that followed, California gold and the subsequent exploitation of oil and gas in Texas began. They will make an important contribution to the development of the United States.

But one of the most important consequences will be the age-old resentment and resentment of Mexicans in the face of this dispossession that will indelibly mark the relations between these two countries. On the other hand, anti-Yankee sentiment, latent among Latin Americans, was born from these usurped Mexican lands.

---

<sup>275</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit., p. 32.

A Mexican president liked to use an old saying steeped in fatalism, when he wanted to make people understand the particular geographical situation of his country, a source of misfortune for his people: “So far from God, and so close to the United States.”

The concerns of the United States for much of the nineteenth century were focused on solving internal problems—occupation and colonization of the West, controversy over slavery, destruction of pre-capitalist enclaves by the Civil War, development of agriculture. They refrained from participating in direct conflicts with the great powers.

This is true in their relations with Europe. But as far as the Latin American countries are concerned, the United States has practised, from the beginning, an interventionist policy.

These interventions and interferences were not limited to neighboring countries, but also, through military interventions or the sending of armed expeditions, to distant South America.

The naval expedition to Paraguay in 1858-1859 is an example of this.

### 21.3 The expedition to Paraguay

In 1851, the United States government had appointed Edward A. Hopkins of the United States and Paraguay Navigation Company as Consul in Asuncion, one of the owners of a shipping company domiciled in Rhode Island.

Hopkins, a former sailor and adventurer, knew Paraguay where he had stayed since 1845. Armed with letters accrediting him as an official agent of the United States government, he had broken into the corridors of power and knew the Paraguayan president, Carlos Antonio Lopez<sup>276</sup>.

A series of intrigues, involving offers of North American mediation to coax its neighbors in a border dispute with private affairs and the interests of the United States, which intended to take advantage of the Parana waterway, resulted in Paraguay’s non-ratification of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation in 1854.

The Paraguay Navigation Company was sanctioned in 1854 for violating Paraguayan legislation and was forbidden to operate in the country. Hopkins was expelled in turn for disrespect following a confused brawl with Paraguayan soldiers.

From a friend of Paraguay and President Lopez, he became his fierce enemy, developing in official circles and the entourage of Presidents Pierce, then Buchanan, a propaganda that encouraged North American military intervention in “this country of Berber-Asians”, this “outgrowth of the international

---

<sup>276</sup>Carlos Antonio López, 1790-1862, President of Paraguay between 1840 and 1862.

body. .. less civilized than the Sultanate of Moscato.” He asserted in his diatribes that South Americans were barbarians who should “receive treatment accordingly. Talking with them is a waste of time; we must speak to them with our cannons” <sup>277</sup>.

It was then that the *Water Witch*, a North American Navy ship that, exceeding the authorization given to it, crossed the Paraguayan border and arrived at the Brazilian port of Corumba, entered the scene opportunely. Authorizations for peaceful passage were suspended and a presidential decree banned the navigation of foreign warships.

On February 1, 1855, the *Water Witch*, ignoring the Paraguayan decree, attempted to force a dam on the Parana.

The officer of the Paraguayan garrison of Fort Itapiru who controlled the passage of the ships ordered him to turn back, then fired two warning shots blank. Faced with the refusal to comply, a cannon shot destroyed the rudder, killing the helmsman of the Yankee ship. The *Water Witch* was then swept away by the waters of the river and had to retreat.

Then began a major campaign of press and intimidation to force Paraguay to apologize. Finally, in May 1857, the United States Congress approved the dispatch of a “small armada” of twenty ships that set sail in October 1857. The toast to the company’s success was greeted by one of the officers, according to Pablo Max Ynfrans, with an overflowing flight of geopolitical exuberance:

“I raise my glass... so that our difficulties with Paraguay end and we end up annexing the entire basin of the Rio de la Plata...”<sup>278</sup>

This wish, fortunately, will not be granted.

But the “little armada” arrived in Paraguay in early 1859 and President Carlos Lopez had to bow down.

Paraguay apologized — guilty of enforcing its sovereignty over its own territory — compensated the family of the Yankee sailor who died during the Itapiru confrontation, and had to accept, under threat of force, the Treaty proposed by the United States. The United States and Paraguay Navigation Company, for its part, continued a long lawsuit against the Paraguayan government, in which it was later dismissed.

---

<sup>277</sup>Ynsfran Pablo Max, *La expedición norteamericana contra el Paraguay, 1858-1859*, Editorial Guaranía, Mexico, Buenos Aires, 1954, 2 vols., p. 208.

<sup>278</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 42.

## 21.4 The Buccaneers

By the mid-nineteenth century, the conflict of interest between Britain and the United States for control of the Caribbean worsened. The two countries were led to sign the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty by which the contracting parties declared that they were working for the construction of an interoceanic canal in Nicaraguan territory, without informing Nicaragua of this. They recognized each other's prerogatives in its future use and asserted that they had no intention of building fortifications or "occupying Nicaragua... nor to exercise domination over any territory of Central America..."<sup>279</sup>

Nicaragua lived, in the fifties of the nineteenth century, like many states in the region, in the midst of continuous civil wars. In 1854, a conflict between liberals and conservatives escalated into an international conflict: the liberals called for help from Yankee mercenaries. The time for the buccaneers had arrived.

Among them, William Walker, a staunch supporter of slavery and its extension to Central America, tried to seize Nicaragua, proclaiming himself president in 1856.

Despite the official neutrality displayed by the United States, an emissary of Walker was received by President Franklin Pierce, but the countries of Central America put an end to the adventure<sup>280</sup>.

For its part, Britain was trying to resist Yankee power in the region, clinging to a "state" created by it from scratch, the "Kingdom of Mosquitia." With imprecise contours, populated by the Miskitos Indians, in a vague place, the "kingdom" had to be on Nicaraguan territory. It was fiction, and everyone knew it was a farce. Britain wanted, with this ghostly kingdom, not to lose its rights to the future inter-oceanic canal to the United States.

The end of the century nevertheless marked the rise of the United States in the world.

Entangled in their Civil War in the 60s, they then very firmly demanded the departure of French troops from Mexico. They intended to remain the only masters in Central America and succeed in making the Caribbean a new Mare Nostrum.

The desire for North American expansion, which would result in an active foreign policy, is dated back to the late nineteenth century. However, this desire for expansion, as we have seen, has existed for a long time at the

---

<sup>279</sup>Lemaitre Eduardo, *Panamá y su separación de Colombia*, Ediciones Corralito de Piedra, Bogota, 1972, p. 66.

<sup>280</sup>An account exists of this episode: *La guerra de Nicaragua*, translated from English by Ricardo Fernández Guardia, Ediciones Universidad Centroamericana, San José, Costa Rica, 1970.

expense of the Latin American nations.

What is true, however, is that at the end of the nineteenth century, the United States effectively entered the world international scene, replacing in Latin America the hegemonic role held until then by the British.

The United States had become a great industrial power and had reached an imperialist phase that was now vying the other powers for its share in world affairs.

Some authors point to the role played in the new foreign policy of successive governments of the time by Alfred Mahan, author of *The Influence of Maritime Power in History*. Mahan, in this book, recalled the superiority of maritime empires over land powers in history.

In this perspective, the constitution of a powerful navy, linked to the possession of bases and sea and river routes, was essential.

Anticipating this theory, which would be in vogue at the turn of the century, President Ulysses Grant presented, in May 1870, a project to the Senate for the purchase of Santo Domingo, considered a point strategic in the Yankee *Mare Nostrum*. The project reveals an interest that goes back a long way and that will be a permanent obsession of the U.S. governments: getting their hands on Cuba.

In his project, Grant claimed that Santo Domingo was a weak nation, but that its territories were rich, “the richest that exist under the sun, capable of accommodating in luxury 10 million human beings... The acquisition of Santo Domingo suits us by its position... would give us control over all the islands I told you about... The acquisition of Santo Domingo... is a national security measure... it is a question of ensuring the control of the commercial traffic of Darien (Panama) and of resolving the unfortunate situation in which Cuba finds itself...”<sup>281</sup>

From the “belly of the beast”, and in front of the plans for annexation of Santo Domingo and Cuba, the pen of the apostle of Cuban independence, José Martí, rose in New York on March 21, 1889.

Martí addressed a clarification to *The Manufacturer* where he stigmatized the undignified Cubans who called for the outright annexation of the island by the United States:

“No dignified Cuban can want to see his country united with another... Those who went to war and were exiled... Those who build with their work... a fireplace, ... engineers, teachers, journalists, lawyers and poets... do not desire annexation by the United States and are suspicious of the evil elements who, like

---

<sup>281</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit. cit., p. 41.

gusanos in blood, have begun their work of destruction...”<sup>282</sup>

The United States, imbued with a very strong nationalist sentiment — it was the time of “Jingoism”<sup>283</sup> — went so far as to consider an intervention against distant Chile. Indeed, in 1891 took place the Baltimore incident in Valparaiso<sup>284</sup>.

The Baltimore was a 4,600-ton Yankee warship that had just been built in England. It had the reputation of being “the fastest boat in the world.” It was in front of the Chilean coasts as soon as April 1891 — during the civil war that had broken out against President Balmaceda — its mission being to protect North American nationals.

On October 16, 1891, a brawl of drunkards broke out in the red-light district of Valparaiso between Yankee sailors and port workers. As a result of the general brawl, several sailors were wounded with knives. Two North Americans died.

However, in a banal brawl, the United States engaged in an international conflict, blaming the new Chilean government — which, supported by London, had just won the civil war against President Balmaceda — and adopted an arrogant attitude that the Chilean government deemed unacceptable.

The war preparations of Benjamin Harrison’s North American government were well advanced. Gonzalo Vial reports that the father of the “naval power” himself, Alfred Mahan was called for consultations in Washington<sup>285</sup>.

The Chilean government bowed to the threat of the use of force and agreed to apologize to the United States, compensated the families of the sailors, and withdrew expressions held by Foreign Minister Manuel Antonio Matta, considered offensive by North Americans.

In reality, the conflict of interest between the United States and Great Britain was through interposed countries.

Thus, three years later, in 1895, there was a border conflict between Venezuela and the colonial georgetown government in British Guiana. Faced with British war preparations, the United States warned Britain that it would not tolerate intervention. And President Cleveland’s Secretary of State instructed his ambassador in London to do so, saying that the rights of the United States were born of “its infinite resources”.

At the end of the century, Yankee interventions multiplied: Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Cuba, Guam, Samoa, the ports of China and Panama.

---

<sup>282</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>283</sup>Jingoism: “English term synonymous with patriotic chauvinism”, Universalis.

<sup>284</sup>Vial Gonzalo, *Historia de Chile*, vol. II (1891-1920), Santillana editions, Santiago de Chile, 1983.

<sup>285</sup>Gonzalo Vial, *op. cit. cit.*, p. 165.



Dismayed, Mark Twain wrote: “Let us paint the white stripes black and add the shins and skull where the stars are placed.”

## 21.5 Cuba under the U.S. boot

Since 1868, Cuban patriots had taken up arms against the Spanish colonial power. Defeated after ten years of fighting, they started the war again in 1895. They had achieved success in the war. Victory and independence were within their reach.

It was then that the United States hastened to intervene.

Yankee investments in the island’s sugar plantations and mines were significant, and U.S. leaders did not hesitate to say publicly that, to them, Cuban sugar was of vital importance, like wheat and cotton from India and Egypt to Britain.

The pretext found this time was the explosion of the battleship *Maine* in Havana which caused the death of more than 250 crew members. There was no evidence of Spain’s involvement — and later it was learned that it was an accidental explosion — but President Mac Kinley, driven by Jingoist hysteria, declared war on Spain on April 21 1898.

It was short-lived. The Spanish fleet was annihilated at Santiago de Cuba and Yankee troops landed in Cuba. Among the Rough Riders who occupied the island was Theodore Roosevelt, the future president of the United States who would become the champion of intervention policy and the Big Stick.

By the Treaty of Paris (December 10, 1898), Spain ceded to the United States, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

The war between Spain and the United States marked the entry into force of the latter as one of the main players on the international scene. On the other hand, for Spain, it was the last act of the progressive international erasure, which would lead it to withdraw into itself.

Cuba, which had become theoretically independent, was subject to the authority of the Yankee military governor, Leonard Wood, leader of the occupying troops. They will stay for three years.

It was Wood himself who convened a constituent assembly. An amendment drafted by Connecticut Senator Orville Platt was then introduced, despite opposition from several constituents who considered it an unacceptable interference that violated Cuba’s sovereignty and independence.

In Havana, demonstrations broke out against this diktat and Governor Wood issued an ultimatum: “The United States will continue to occupy the island until a Cuban government is organized, whose constitution bears, as

an integral part of it, all the precepts of the Platt Amendment.”<sup>286</sup>

The Platt amendment was a blatant demonstration of the state of vassalization in which Cuba had been placed. On May 23, 1903, it was incorporated into the constitution. It was only in 1934 that certain clauses were amended. Here are some pearls: Article I: “The Government of Cuba shall not sign any agreement which allows a foreign power to obtain, for naval or military purposes, a part of the island...”

Article III was particularly humiliating: “The government of Cuba consents to the United States being able to exercise the right to intervene to preserve Cuban independence (sic!) and the maintenance of an adequate government for the protection of life, property...”

Article VII gave the right to establish military bases on Cuban territory. Guantanamo is, in the news, living proof of a supposedly bygone era.

Governor Wood was not mistaken when, in a letter to Roosevelt in 1903, he wrote:

“Little, if any, independence has left Cuba with the Platt Amendment. The most sensitive Cubans understand this and think that the only positive thing left for them to do is to call for annexation.”<sup>287</sup>

Invoking the amendment, the Yankee troops will land several times: in 1906, 1912, 1917. It was only in 1934 that Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed to withdraw certain clauses, particularly binding.

## 21.6 The Drago Doctrine and the “Roosevelt Corollaries” of the Monroe Doctrine

In December 1902, British, German and Italian warships appeared in front of the Venezuelan coast, sank a few ships and blocked ports. They demanded the payment of compensation due to European nationals.

“Teddy” Roosevelt, then President of the United States, approved the naval action of the European powers. But Latin American countries were indignant at this aggression.

Argentina’s Foreign Minister, Luis Maria Drago, then sent a note to the State Department — which later set a precedent and was adopted by the Hague Conference in 1907 — in which he called for a prohibition of the use

---

<sup>286</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit. cit., p. 53.

<sup>287</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 55.

of force as a means of recovery of debts incurred by a State. The "Drago doctrine" was born.

But Roosevelt did not intend to let the European powers police his area of influence. He reserved this police right only for the United States. On December 6, 1904, in his annual message, the North American president stated: "If a nation demonstrates that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and in a decent manner... if it maintains internal order and pays its debts, it will not need the intervention of the United States... Mistakes... or impotence... can force the United States... to exercise an international police role..."<sup>288</sup>

A year after Roosevelt — who had been New York's police chief — warned in his annual message to Latin American nations that he intended not to apply the "Monroe Doctrine," that is, not to prevent the punitive actions of foreign powers in the continent: "If a republic of the South... makes a mistake against any nation... The Monroe Doctrine would not require us to intervene to prevent the punishment of fault, except to prevent punishment from turning into an occupation of the territory..."<sup>289</sup>

Roosevelt's two speeches will serve as a justification for the Yankee imperialist policy that will result in interventions in Panama, Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti and Santo Domingo. The Big Stick policy — "speak softly and take with you a big stick" — would be the official policy of the Yankee government for the first decades of the century.

## 21.7 The secession of Panama

Since the time of the Spanish conquest, many people had striven to imagine an inter-oceanic passage in Central America. Several projects and scouting to find the most suitable place had been made. The territories of Nicaragua and Panama were "foreseen". It will be the latter which, as a result of an organized secession fomented by the imperial power, will finally see the coveted canal dig on its soil.

Panama had declared itself independent in 1821 and voluntarily proclaimed its attachment to Colombia. Ten years later, a secessionist movement proclaimed its autonomy while declaring itself part of the "Colombian Confederation". In August 1831, the army returned the isthmus to Confederation.

In 1840 and 1855 there were other separatist attempts. Organized the first by General Tomas Herrera, an "Estado Libre del Istmo", was proclaimed.

---

<sup>288</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>289</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

Brought back to the right path by the army of the Confederation, Panama will experience a new attempt at secession in 1855, but also declared itself part of the “Nueva Granada” (Colombia). In 1858 the new constitution of the “Confederacion Granadina” was enacted, of which the isthmus was still a part.

After the annexation of California, the Colombian province of Panama became a vital point of east-west communications for the United States.

As early as 1851, a Yankee company, the Panama Rail Road Company, had managed to run the first train, and in 1854 a locomotive crossed the isthmus. The route of the railway had been made in a particularly unhealthy area and prone to tropical diseases. More than 6,000 people lost their lives because of malaria and other diseases: Chinese coolies, West Indians and a significant number of Irish, German and Austrian.

The California gold rush forced thousands of men to cross the isthmus — a must from the east — and the United States made the unfortunate habit of moving its troops through Panama without asking Colombia for permission.

Several draft treaties were submitted by the Yankee companies to the Colombians, but they were not approved by the Congress of Bogota. Yankee Ambassador Sullivan wrote to his government in 1869:

“If you want to get the rights to the canal through a route that is not a treaty, things can be easier in the Colombian Congress with some funds from the secret service.”<sup>290</sup>.

But, despite North American efforts, it was Lucien Bonaparte Wyse — grandson of Lucien Bonaparte — who, between 1878 and 1880, obtained, for the French of the “International Civil Society”, “the exclusive privilege for the execution and exploitation through his territory of a maritime canal between the Atlantic and the Pacific”<sup>291</sup>.

U.S. President Rutherford Hayes threatened and declared that he wanted to break through another canal in Nicaragua. He warned the international community by demanding “the right to exercise an exclusive protectorate on the canal that the French plan to break into Colombian territory.”<sup>292</sup>

Wyse convinced Ferdinand de Lesseps – the builder of the Suez Canal in 1869 – to take charge of the work, financed by a loan launched by the “Universal Company of the Inter-Oceanic Canal”.

But in the following years a great financial scandal broke out which, together with certain technical errors made in the drilling of the canal, caused the company to go bankrupt in February 1889.

---

<sup>290</sup>Lemaitre Edouardo, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>291</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>292</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 128.

It was then that a French adventurer, liquidator of the company, Philippe Bunau-Varilla, intervened, who tried to sell to the United States the rights to the concession of the canal. At the same time, Britain freed them from the commitments made in the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and they were able to draft a treaty with Colombia (Herran-Clay Treaty), which was to be ratified by the Bogota Congress.

The majority of Colombian senators considered the project to be an attack on Colombia's sovereignty, and on August 12, 1903, refused to ratify it.

Faced with this refusal, the United States provoked the secession and uprising of the Colombian province of Panama.

One day before the Declaration of Independence, on November 3, 1903, the State Department sent a cable to the Yankee consul in Panama: "Inform the Department as soon as the uprising takes place... Not yet, the uprising must occur during the night...."<sup>293</sup>.

The uprising was proclaimed and a junta was formed in Puerto Colon. Yankee troops disembarked from ships, which conveniently were on the spot and which prevented the Colombian forces from putting down the rebellion.

On November 6, the United States recognized Panama's "independence."

Philippe Bunau-Varilla, a French citizen — who had taken part in the rebellion without moving from the 1162 suite of the Waldorf Astoria in New York — later acknowledged that the idea of secession had been discussed with President Roosevelt<sup>294</sup>.

He was hastily appointed Minister Plenipotentiary of Panama by the junta and on 18 November in Washington signed with Secretary of State Hay — a day before the panamanian envoys arrived — a Leonine treaty that mortgaged the sovereignty of the isthmus in perpetuity.

Three years later, Theodore Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1936, Roosevelt (Franklin) made some adjustments to the treaty.

The head of the National Guard, Colonel José Antonio Remon, succeeded in 1955 in obtaining some modifications from Eisenhower. Then, Kennedy agreed that the Panamanian flag be hoisted alongside the Yankee flag, which did not prevent clashes in 1964 between Yankee troops and Panamanian students, causing more than 20 deaths and a hundred wounded.

Colonel Omar Torrijos negotiated with Carter in 1977 the end of the Yankee stranglehold on the canal and the recovery of its sovereignty by Panama, planned, according to the Torrijos-Carter Treaty, for the year 2000.

Remon and Torrijos will die in two mysterious aviation accidents.

---

<sup>293</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit. cit., p. 57.

<sup>294</sup>Bunau Varilla Philippe, *From Panama to Verdun*, p. 162 et seq.

## 21.8 Interventionism in the Caribbean

The Caribbean area was a privileged place where North American armed interventions were concentrated.

In 1901, the first intervention of the century was carried out in Nicaragua, and in 1903, as we saw in Panama. The canal opened a new path for *manifest destiny*.

It was in 1905 that, “answering the call” of several leaders of the Dominican oligarchy, the future Nobel Prize, “Teddy” Roosevelt, installed — with the support of the Marines — Yankee tax collectors in the customs of Santo Domingo... The presence of diligent experts lasted four years.

Secretary of State Elihu Root signaled in those years that interventions would take place “whenever North American capital was in danger”<sup>295</sup>.

A new landing of marines in 1916 put Santo Domingo under the Yankee boot until 1924.

In Nicaragua, President José Santos Zelaya of the Liberal Party had been in power since 1893. He had managed to get rid of the English on the Atlantic coast and tried to interest the Japanese in building an inter-oceanic canal. The United States saw this as a challenge and armed the Conservatives who had risen up against Zelaya and landed at Bluefields. He resigned along with his successor, José Madriz. The presidency then fell to a former employee of the Yankee mining company Fletcher, Adolfo Díaz.

Nevertheless, a liberal-led revolt broke out in 1912 and President Taft sent 1,700 Marines to protect conservative President Adolfo Díaz. They remained until 1925.

At the same time, the United States imposed on Nicaragua the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty (August 5, 1914), by which it was granted the rights to establish a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca as well as the cession for 99 years of the various islands and islets.

El Salvador was occupied in 1921 and Honduras in 1924. Yankee interference came to such an extent that the appointment of a Honduran president was made in those years aboard the North American battleship “Tacoma”. Precedent of the future oath taken in 1989 in Panama, in a Yankee base, by “President” Endara?

In Guatemala, the North American-owned fruit company United Fruit — including Foster Dulles, Secretary of State and brother of the head of the C.I.A. — had been operating in the region since the turn of the century. A true state within a state, it had signed a first contract in 1901 with

---

<sup>295</sup>Castor Sucey, *La ocupación norteamericana de Haití y sus consecuencias*, Casa de las Américas, La Habana, 1974, p. 22.

the Guatemalan dictator Estrada Cabrera, immortalized by Miguel Angel Asturias in *El Senor Presidente*.

By the end of the Great War, the United States had begun to oust European influence — mainly British, but also German and French — from Latin America. Over this period, Cardoso and Faletto report that “... the American presence expanded rapidly... The countries of the Pacific coast were fully incorporated into the economy of the United States and those of the Atlantic, such as Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, fell under its influence”.<sup>296</sup>

From the end of the twenties, North American capital will exercise an undeniable preponderance in the region.

The presence of Yankee capital had its corollary in an imperialist policy which, as we have seen, manifested itself several times throughout those years. The new interventions in Mexico were an example of this.

## 21.9 Interventions in Veracruz and Tampico

After the overthrow and assassination of President Francisco Madero in 1913 —in which Yankee Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson took part— General Huerta seized power.

Venustiano Carranza, former governor at the time of Porfirio Diaz, then rebelled against the one he considered a usurper.

President Taft had refused as early as 1912 to recognize Huerta as head of the Mexican government and was massing troops on the border.

In the midst of the whirlwind of the Mexican Revolution, General Victoriano Huerta sought and gained the support of English investors. At the same time he sketched a rapprochement with Germany and Japan.

In the meantime, Wilson had succeeded Taft and deployed warships to the Mexican coast. Thus, on April 16, 1914, an incident occurred between Mexican soldiers and Yankee sailors, who had illegally landed.

Unacceptable demands for reparation were addressed to the Mexicans and, at the expiration of an ultimatum, 50 warships carrying 23,000 men presented themselves at Tampico.

On the 20th the landing took place in Veracruz. Despite fierce resistance, Yankee troops managed to seize the city and get their hands on \$8 million that was in the coffers of customs.

On the same day, President Wilson addressed Congress for approval “so that the armed forces of the United States may be employed (against) General

---

<sup>296</sup>Cardoso F. H. and E. Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, PUF, 1983, p. 83.

Huerta... and obtain from him the recognition of our rights..."<sup>297</sup>

Five years later, in 1919, Woodrow Wilson was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

And when in 1924, General Obregon appointed his successor – Elias Calles – part of the army did not accept this decision and rose up. Calles exerted a harsh repression and counted with the support of the Yankee troops to put down this rebellion as well as that of “cristeros”, who had revolted against the measures taken by Calles against the Church and who for three years (1926-1929) stood up to the army.

## 21.10 Intervention in Haiti

North American investments were estimated at \$15 million in Haiti. Aside from interests in sugar, transportation and ports, Yankee investors owned 50% of the shares in the Haitian National Bank.

One of the most important businessmen was Roger Farharm. Vice-president of the National Bank, of the Railroad of Haiti, he was also an official of the National City Bank.

He played a leading role in the conflict between the government of Davilmar Theodore — and in 1915, that of Vilbrun Guillaume Sam — and the Yankee bankers and led the campaign that provoked the North American military intervention.

On December 17, 1914, at his request, marines from the cruiser *Machias* disembarked and took away \$500,000 belonging to Haiti from the vaults of the Haitian National Bank.

Faced with protests from the Haitian government, Secretary of State Bryan signaled that the United States must “protect North American interests that were under threat,” adding that this was “a simple transfer of funds”<sup>298</sup>.

Pressure from Yankee businessmen, addressed to the State Department, wanted to push it to seize control of Haitian customs.

The pretext was the situation of chaos and civil war that developed in April 1915 and caused abuses on both sides, resulting in the horrific death of President Sam.

On July 28, the Marines landed in Haiti. This time, they will stay for 19 years.

The president of the Haitian Senate, deputies, ex-ministers and notables — protected by the bayonets of the marines — hastened to assure Admiral

<sup>297</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos, op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>298</sup>Castor Sucey, *op. cit. cit.*, p. 28.



Capperton, commander of the occupation troops, of their agreement to place Haitian customs and finances under Yankee control.

It was Capperton himself who gave the green light for the appointment of Sudre Dartiguenave. On 11 August he became president for a period of seven years.

Three days later, the draft agreement with the United States was submitted to deputies and senators. The conditions were so humiliating for Haiti that within this submissive assembly there were voices of protest: "According to the statements of their agents, the government of the United States — in the name of humanity — carried out a humanitarian intervention in our country and, with its bayonets..., its guns and its cruisers, presented us with a project. So what is this project? A protectorate imposed on Haiti by mister Wilson..."<sup>299</sup>

The project was approved on 16 November. In 1918 a new constitution was promulgated, the inspiration and one of the drafters of which was the undersecretary of the Yankee Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, theorist of the doctrine of "good neighborliness".

Over time, Dartiguenave himself will show some resistance to his protectors. He was replaced in 1922 by the docile Luis Borno.

Thus Haiti was offered to imperialist voracity.

Article V of the constitution, which for a century had prohibited whites from owning the land, was abolished.

Haitian peasants were the first victims of the arrival of the owners who bought and developed new plantations. This, in addition to the systematic repression of the campaigns carried out by the occupying troops, provoked a veritable exodus of peasants to Cuba: from 23,490 in 1915, the number rose in 1920 to more than 30,000. Another migratory flow headed for Santo Domingo.

The shameless collaboration of the bourgeois elites was counterbalanced by the epic of the "Cacos" of Charlemagne Peralte, who for four years (1915-1919), practiced a guerrilla war and stood up to the occupying troops before being treacherously murdered.

The marines did not leave Haitian territory until July 1934.

## 21.11 The third intervention in Nicaragua

In August 1925, the marines left the country after thirteen years of occupation. Two months later, Emiliano Chamorro deposed President Carlos

---

<sup>299</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

Solorzano but had to return power to former President Adolfo Díaz — the former employee of a Yankee mining company and a trusted man of the State Department — who thus returned to the presidency.

In December 1926, Vice President Juan Bautista Sacasa led a force to restore legality, but Yankee Admiral Latimer landed with 2,000 soldiers and forced the warring parties to make peace and surrender their weapons to the marines.

One of the liberal leaders, Augusto César Sandino, opposed it and returned to the northern mountains.

On January 10, 1927, U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, in his annual message, explained that the Yankee intervention had proved necessary because “now we have great investments in sawmills, mines, coffee and bananas plantations... If the revolution continued, North American investment would be seriously affected...”<sup>300</sup>

Sandino and his “crazy little army” will resist victoriously in the mountains for six years the Yankee troops, who engaged in looting and bombing the countryside and villages.

Sandino turned the struggle for the restoration of flouted legality into a war of national liberation against the foreign occupier: “I am fighting to expel the foreign invader from my homeland... The only way to put an end to this struggle is for the forces that have invaded the national soil to withdraw immediately...”<sup>301</sup>

Faced with the impossibility of a military victory, the United States pushed for a political agreement: Sacasa, the vice president became president as Sandino demanded and the marines left Nicaragua in January 1933.

But the real strongman, the head of the National Guard, Anastasio Somoza, a former poker player and counterfeiter, was devoted to the Yankees.

It was he who organized, on February 21, 1934, the kidnapping and assassination of Sandino. This crime opened the doors of power to him in 1936.

Faithful to imperialist interests, his government was a series of abjections, crimes and corruptions. He remained in power until 1956, when he was riddled with bullets by the poet Rigoberto Pérez. Franklin D. Roosevelt had said of Somoza, the man of the United States: “Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he’s our son of a bitch.”

---

<sup>300</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit. cit., p. 85.

<sup>301</sup>Du rêve à la Révolution, *Solidarité Nicaragua* N° 3, Paris, 1982, p. 5.

## 21.12 The Chaco War: An Expression of Imperialist Rivalries

Between 1932 and 1935 the bloody Chaco War took place. An old conflict over the demarcation of the borders between Paraguay and Bolivia escalated when the Yankee company Standard Oil thought it had discovered, in Bolivian territory, what seemed to be a rich oil field. For its part, the Anglo-Dutch company Royal Dutch, made a similar discovery in the Paraguayan Chaco.

The two countries then engaged in a chauvinist campaign, encouraged on both sides by the oil companies. War broke out in June 1932 and was particularly cruel.

The armistice concluded in June 1935 forced Bolivia to push back its border by 300 kilometers and the existence of oil in the Paraguayan Chaco proved illusory.

More than 130,000 Paraguayans and Bolivians had been killed, driven by chauvinist hysteria and the voracious appetite of oil companies.

The Life Conference of American States meeting in Havana in 1928 condemned Yankee interventionism, the occupation of Haiti, the occupation of part of Panama, and the maintenance of the Platt Amendment in Cuba.

At the VII Conference of 1933 in Montevideo, Franklin D. Roosevelt had to set out the Good Neighbour Policy, and the conference in the section on "Rights and Duties" stated:

"No State has the right to intervene in the internal affairs of another State."<sup>302</sup>

Yankee Secretary of State Cordell Hull voted for the article "with reservation," but avoided a condemnation of U.S. customs protectionism.

Then, the VIII Conference, held in Lima, authorized the meetings of consultations of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

It was during the Second World War that these meetings took place and the United States imposed on the Latin American countries the severance of diplomatic relations with the Axis.

Only Chile and Argentina refused to bend. It was not until 1944 that the Argentine government broke with Germany and Japan, which provoked a coup, organized by soldiers who disagreed with this decision.

In 1945, the "Chapultepec Act", approved on the occasion of the "Inter-American Conference on the Problems of War and Peace", celebrated in Mexico — where the absence of Argentina had been noticed — committed the

---

<sup>302</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit. cit., p. 87.

countries of the New World to face the aggressor together in the event of an attack. Article 3 specified that: "Any aggression ... against an American state will be considered aggression against the signatory states."<sup>303</sup>

This provision, which should have played fully in 1982, on the occasion of the Falklands War, was not applied.

On September 2, 1947, the "Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance" was signed in Rio de Janeiro, defining the scope of the Mexican Conference. Argentina delayed until 1950 to affix its signature.

### 21.13 The United States and Perón

The quarrel between Argentina and the United States dated back to the time of the Second World War. Perón, who came to power legally in 1946, had been in office in Mussolini's Italy between 1939 and 1941. Accused of pro-fascist sympathies, he participated in the military movement of 1943 and became Minister of Labour, then of War in 1944.

He advocated a nationalist policy that offended North American interests, and the United States worked hard for him.

The Yankee ambassador in Buenos Aires, Sprulle Braden, a man with the Esso oil company, led an openly anti-Peronist campaign. Supported by the Communists, he intervened in the current presidential campaign, publishing a "Blue Book" in which he accused Perón as a Nazi.

Perón retaliated in a "Blue and White Book," where he asserted that the United States wanted to "install... a government of their own, a puppet government, and for this they began by ensuring the assistance of all the "Quisling" available."<sup>304</sup>

For its part, through Ambassador Braden, the White House did not mince its words: "The majority of the Argentine people have always been democrats and contrary to totalitarian ideas... the government follows the German model of 1933..."<sup>305</sup>

The election result gave Perón a large majority, and the Saturday Evening Post newspaper, commenting on the State Department's policy of intervention in Argentine internal affairs, wrote: "This is evidence of political schizophrenia that undermines North American prestige and influence. The Argentine people have responded as any people would have replied when foreigners feel entitled to tell them what policy they should follow..."<sup>306</sup>

---

<sup>303</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>304</sup>Ibidem, p. 90.

<sup>305</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>306</sup>Ibid.

## 21.14 The “guatemalazo”

The Cold War increased the paranoia of the United States, which behind every strike or demonstration saw the hand of the Communists.

The policy of “containment” had been enunciated by Truman and the White House was striving to counter communist expansion in the world.

In 1944, in Guatemala, a revolt of students, peasants and officers, deposed the men of Washington linked to the powerful United Fruit company, (Mamita Yunai as the Guatemalans called her).

The successive governments of Arévalo and Arbenz carried out reforms: especially the first, which began a timid redistribution of land, which Colonel Arbenz – elected in 1951 – tried to deepen, decreeing an agrarian reform that met the aspirations of the peasantry, the majority sector of the population. 85,000 hectares of the United Fruit were expropriated.

It was not to reckon with the reaction of the powerful Mamita Yunai, Foster Dulles, Secretary of State and his little brother, Allen, head of the CIA.

In the midst of the Cold War, they stirred up the scarecrow of communism, and in the Pan-American Conference in Caracas (March 1954), Foster Dulles attempted to equate the presence of communists in any government in the hemisphere with “extra-continental aggression.”

Meanwhile, his younger brother Allen was arming a “liberation” army with the complicity of the Honduran government, which placed itself under the orders of Colonel Castillo Armas, linked to the International Railways of Center America, a subsidiary of United Fruit.

In the Caracas conference, Foster Dulles declared that “the domination and control of the political institutions of any American state by the international communist movement would constitute an intervention by a foreign power, and would be a threat to peace in America.”<sup>307</sup>

Arbenz’s government had expropriated land, established social security, built roads — the United Fruit held a monopoly on transportation — and laid the groundwork for the construction of a new port, the only usable one belonging to Mamita Yunai. At the same time, he undertook a reform of education, while keeping political rights and freedoms once unknown.

But the United States saw only the hand of communism behind the Arbenz government, and the Conference approved a declaration that went in the direction desired by Dulles.

As early as May, Yankee aircraft flights began over Guatemala. Then came the bombings of Puerto Barrios and Puerto San José.

---

<sup>307</sup>Carlos Machado, *Documentos*, op. cit., p. 96.

The landing of the mercenaries of Castillo Armas occurred and soon after Guatemala City fell into the hands of the “liberators”, while a young Argentine doctor of twenty-six years — Ernesto Guevara — desperately sought to organize the defense of Arbenz’s legal government.

The Guatemalan spring had lived.

As soon as he came to power, Castillo Armas repealed the land reform and other measures taken by Jacobo Arbenz.

## 21.15 Bay of Pigs

Triumphant in 1959, the Cuban Revolution caused an earthquake throughout the continent. A few miles off the Yankee coast was a revolutionary power that would become the nightmare of nine North American presidents.

Very quickly, after the Cuban government had decreed land reform and the North Americans, in retaliation, had refused to refine Soviet oil and suspended the purchase of Cuban sugar, provocations and aggression took place.

The conflict reached the point of no return on April 17, 1961 when the CIA, duly authorized by President Kennedy, organized a landing in the Bay of Pigs.

The CIA, using Cuban and Central American anti-Castroists, thought the news of the landing would provoke an insurrection on the island. But this time, little brother Dulles was wrong.

Within days, the attempted invasion was quelled by Cuban militiamen and more than 1,000 “gusanos” (literally, earthworms) were taken prisoner.

Kennedy was appalled and denied Yankee involvement in the affair. But when the evidence of U.S. involvement became irrefutable—pilots shot down by the Cuban DCA—and although the planned invasion had been bequeathed to him by his predecessor, Dwight Eisenhower, he took responsibility for the failure in these terms:

“If ever the inter-American doctrine of non-intervention obscures or allows a policy of passivity, if the nations of this hemisphere fail in their struggle against communist penetration, then I want to let it be clear that my Government will not hesitate to assume its responsibilities... If this moment ever comes, we do not intend to receive lessons of non-intervention...”<sup>308</sup>.

Since then, Cuba’s history has been the story of continuous resistance to thwart intervention plans and to counter U.S. interference with the island.

---

<sup>308</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

Encouragement from opposition groups followed assassination attempts against Cuban leaders.

Forced to resist the greatest power in history, Cuba had no other solution than to flee forward.

Thus, apart from sugar and rum, the export of a "non-traditional" product became, for more than two decades, the weapon with which Cuba counter-attacked: the export of the revolution.

The latest interventions aimed at making the economic situation in Cuba even more difficult (Torricelli Act, 1992) provide for economic sanctions against countries that provide assistance: a ban on trade with Cuba for subsidiaries of United States companies in third countries, and a ban on docking in a Yankee port for ships that have allegedly touched Cuban ports in the last six months.

This law has been widely condemned by the international community. Its extraterritoriality violates international law and tries to discourage third countries in their trade relations with Cuba, which has been supporting a ruthless embargo for thirty years.

Since the advent of the Cold War, the United States has been tasked with training officers of Latin American armies. They trained them for the fight against communism that they believed they saw in every social protest, or in the many struggles for better living conditions that swept across the continent in the sixties.

Kennedy, panicked by the growing prestige of the Cuban Revolution, launched in 1961 the idea of a vast program of economic and social aid: "The Alliance for Progress".

This little "Marshall Plan" was abandoned by Johnson a few years later when the effort to fight communism resulted in collusion between Washington and the Latin American military.

## **21.16 Coup in Brazil**

The coup, against President Joao Goulart, inaugurated a series of coups in which the United States appeared directly involved.

Goulart's government had shown its willingness to fight against the miserable conditions in which thousands of his compatriots found themselves. He announced the right to vote for the illiterate and his intention to promote an agrarian reform law.

On March 31, 1964, the armed forces deposed Goulart, assuming control of the country, and President Lyndon Johnson hurried on April 2 to send the military "his warmest wishes," adding that the North American people

had “watched with anxiety the political and economic difficulties your great nation was going through... We admire the resolute will of the Brazilian community to resolve these difficulties within the framework of constitutional democracy... (sic!)”.

The democratic convictions of the military were expressed in the following years. They unleashed a savage crackdown on left-wing movements and parties that were trying to resist the dictatorship.

Only from 1979, a return to civilian rule would begin.

## 21.17 The intervention in Santo Domingo

The United States intervened and occupied Santo Domingo from 1916 to 1924.

Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, a trusted man of the North Americans, had seized power in 1930. Thus began the “Trujillo era” with its aftermath of deaths, tortures and abuses.

The “Benefactor” — a megalomaniac dictator, only comparable in excess in this century to another Washington protégé, Anastasio Somoza — remained in power for more than thirty years with the acquiescence of the United States.

The dictator was killed in an attack in 1961 and one of his loyalists — Joaquin Balaguer — converted into a democrat in a hurry, was then promoted to president.

A succession of coups and backlashes from states ended with the call for the first truly democratic elections in December 1962.

It was Juan Bosch, a democrat exiled for twenty-five years, who won hands down.

Bosch’s victory was decidedly not part of Washington’s plans. Although anti-communist, the United States was suspicious of him. In September 1963, he was overthrown by Colonel Elias Wessin y Wessin.

But a group of constitutional officers, led by Colonel Francisco Caamaño, took up arms against the usurpers and proclaimed — supported by the vast majority of the population — its desire to reinstate the overthrown president, Juan Bosch.

Clashes broke out and the constitutionalists of Caamaño were on the verge of winning. It was then that Johnson decided to send the Marines once Ambassador Tapley Bennet had announced his intention to protect North American nationals.

The world then watched, amazed, by an operetta in which Lyndon Johnson strove to deny the flagrant violations of the provisions of the Charter



of the O. E.A., and had to, after many prevarications and lies — and in the face of the wave of indignation, particularly strong in Latin America, where Yankee embassies and companies were stormed by demonstrators — to disguise the Yankee intervention with the participation of troops from four military dictatorships, the only ones who agreed to follow Washington in its invasion: the Brazil of the military putschists, Nicaragua of Somoza, Paraguay of Stroessner and Honduras.

It was for the North Americans to prevent the establishment of a new Cuba, which justified, in their eyes, all the breaches of the standards established by the O.E.A. itself: “I understood that there was no time to waste, talk and consult... American nations cannot, must not and will not allow the establishment of another communist government in the Western Hemisphere...”<sup>309</sup>

In September of the same year, a resolution of the United States House of Representatives (Selden Resolution) declared that, faced with the mere threat of communist danger, American nations could and should assist each other.

Balaguer, the former loyalist of dictator Trujillo, was accepted by North Americans and elected president in 1966. Colonel Caamaño, crowned with immense prestige, died a few years later, in a last attempt to bring the armed struggle to Santo Domingo.

## 21.18 The Thousand Days of Popular Unity

The specter of communism — Washington’s obsession — seemed to turn into flesh and blood when Chilean socialist physician Salvador Allende, supported by a coalition of left-wing parties — Popular Unity — won the election on September 4, 1970.

Chile was jubilant and from the balcony of the historic Federation of Students of Chile, in the center of Santiago, Salvador Allende, moved, pledged, in front of his supporters, to carry out the promised program. Then he asked them to withdraw peacefully and not to respond to provocations.

Not a single disorder, not an incident occurred, not a window was broken that night, and the Chilean people celebrated, with sobriety, their victory.

But in the beautiful neighborhoods, in the opulent houses and in the shade of the thick walls of the U.S. embassy, those who had always accused the left of being the bearer of barbarism, were already sharpening the knives.

The Yankee intervention in Chile has been widely known since the publication of the secret TTI documents and the report — Covert Action —

---

<sup>309</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

presented to the Senate by the Church Commission.

U.S. action began — in collusion with the Chilean right — during the presidential campaign. The CIA copiously watered newspapers and parties of the center and the right. The ineffable Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, made it a point to declare in June 1970: “I don’t see why we would fold our arms without acting and watch a country become communist because of the irresponsibility of its people...”<sup>310</sup>

The head of Chile’s main news outlet, *El Mercurio*, and the vice president of Pepsi-Cola met on September 15, 1970 in Washington, D.C., with CIA Director Richard Helms. On the evening of the same day, Henry Kissinger, Richard Helms and President Nixon coordinated a plan of action — “Track I”, then, “Track II,” to prevent Congress from proclaiming Salvador Allende President of the Republic.

According to the Church Commission, Nixon’s instructions were precise, written in his own hand: “Save Chile... we must not deal with the risks, do not compromise the embassy, 10 million if necessary ... full-time work... action plan in 48 hours...”<sup>311</sup>

The “Track II” plan included several phases, ranging from the corruption of deputies, generals and admirals, to the assassination of the army commander-in-chief who refused to follow the putschists and was ambushed in October 1970.

Nixon’s instructions were, as has been said, precise: everything had to be done to prevent Allende from coming to power, except for an action like the one that had been undertaken in Santo Domingo. Nathaniel Davis, the U.S. ambassador to Chile to the Allende government, questioned the CIA’s plan to assassinate the allende.

Nevertheless, Allende was appointed by Congress and governed for three years. It has implemented the promised programme: nationalizations of copper, banks, nitrates, telephones, insurance, agrarian reform, etc.

But Chile faced an invisible plot, “A Silent Vietnam,” said poet Pablo Neruda who, taking his weapon, the pen, wrote: “Incitement to nixonicide...”.

A plan, supported from the outside, destabilized the country and led to the coup d’état of September 11, 1973. Yankee Navy ships, the *Richard Turner*, the *Tattersali*, the *Vesol* and the submarine *Clamagore*, were conveniently in front of the Chilean coast that day to participate in the naval maneuvers of *Unitas*.

In a few hours, the soldiers broke through the narrow wall that adorns

---

<sup>310</sup>Davis Nathaniel, *Los dos últimos años de Salvador Allende*, Plazay Janes editores, Barcelona, 1986, p. 18.

<sup>311</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

the civilization of barbarism.

Allende set himself on fire in his burning palace.

The victorious counter-revolution was then able to restore capitalism to new foundations, sinking the country for seventeen years into a bloody dictatorship that proposed to “eradicate the Marxist cancer forever.” As a result, thousands of opponents have been arrested, tortured, killed and/or disappeared.

A democratic transition began in 1989 when the dictator Pinochet was forced to call for a plebiscite. Defeated, he had to give way, in 1990, to a democratically elected civilian while remaining commander-in-chief of the army until 1998 when he agreed to retire... in the Senate... the same Senate he closed in 1973.

## 21.19 Intervention in Nicaragua

On July 19, 1979, E.S.L.N. troops entered liberated Managua. Two days earlier, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, heir to a dynasty founded by his father in 1936, fled.

The Sandinista government then faced the immense task of having to rebuild a devastated country.

It implemented an agrarian reform, redistributed land, developed a vast literacy campaign while fighting, from the first months, against the ex-guards of Somoza who were massing on the Honduran border.

The Reagan administration, which during the presidential race had denounced the Sandinistas as agents of Moscow, began a gigantic international campaign, accusing the Managua government of wanting to seize all of Central America.

From the beginning of the eighties, the silent invasion of Nicaragua began. Reagan banned credit, encouraged opposition parties while funding and arming the “contras” in Honduras.

In the international press campaign, the Reagan administration emphasized Sandinista “overarming,” which posed a clear danger — Reagan said — for the “free” governments of the region.

“Irangate” demonstrated the Yankee intervention in Nicaragua as a provider of funds and weapons to the “contras” who used the territory of Honduras as their main base of operations.

Nicaragua was bled by the war decided by Reagan and led by “contras” interposed. The United States government was condemned by the International Court of Justice for its participation in terrorist acts such as the mining of the port of Corinto.

In this “little belt of Latin America”, as Pablo Neruda called it, a little of the dignity of Latin America was played out in the eighties.

Carlos Fuentes, the famous Mexican writer said it in his own way in Mexico, in a demonstration in support of Nicaragua: “The war of time... the war that concerns us all, is being waged by nicaraguans on behalf of all... The war being waged in Nicaragua is wrapped in ideological pretexts... But, they want to restore, or create democracy, those who for a century and a half have only been concerned with their privileges... Nicaragua is required to become what no Latin American nation can be: a democracy like the United States, something that somoza was never asked to do, or that we would not ask of the contras in power.”

The "low-intensity war", the attacks, the generalized violence, the death of young soldiers, killed in ambushes by the contras, ended up tiring part of the population. In 1990, the Sandinista government — decried as a totalitarian regime — held elections. The candidate of the United Opposition, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, won in a country ravaged by years of conflict.

## 21.20 The invasion of Granada

The invasion of the tiny island of Grenada was part of the new Cold War that took place during the first half of the eighties.

The United States, which felt it had been abused internationally in recent years — Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua, Africa, Afghanistan, and Lebanon — wanted to let the world, and especially the Soviet Union and its allies, know that “America is back.”

Reagan attempted to counter revolutionary movements in Central America and, in his crusade against the “evil empire,” he supported the military escalation of the contras in Nicaragua and encouraged successive Salvadoran governments in their struggle against guerrilla warfare.

It was in this context that the United States invaded, on October 25, 1983, the small island of Grenada — 110,000 inhabitants — in the Caribbean.

A conflict between two factions vying for power, which “endangered the lives of North American citizens,” was Reagan’s pretext.

Subsequently, he added, for propaganda purposes, that Cubans were developing the runway of pointe-Salines airport with the obvious aim of landing large Soviet planes... And interventionist hysteria gripped millions of North Americans.

Without fear of ridicule, President Reagan went so far as to tell, very seriously, that the intervention had been decided "after an urgent request", emanating from five Caribbean countries, whose weight could be measured

on the international scene: Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent...

The “Granada victory”—more than 6,000 heavily armed Marines against Cuban construction workers—would serve Reagan in his re-election campaign the following year.

For the North American administration, it was also a question of making people forget the fiasco in Lebanon, where, a few weeks earlier, more than fifty soldiers had been killed.

The operation that “liberated Grenada from a Marxist dictatorship” had an electoral purpose, but, at the same time, it served to show the world the determination of the Reagan administration in its fight against communism.

## 21.21 Operation “Just Cause”

On October 2, 1977, a referendum in Panama ratified the new Carter-Torrijos Treaty. The Panamanian people abrogated the Leonine Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty, “never signed by a Panamanian,” as General Omar Torrijos liked to repeat.

Panama, under the terms of the treaty, would gain full sovereignty over the canal and its facilities in the year 2000.

General Torrijos, head of the National Guard, had to overcome the obstacles and encroachments that the Yankee senators — enemies of the treaty — opposed to the signing of the treaty.

Senator De Concini’s amendment added a clause that sought to guarantee the United States the right to intervene militarily in the canal: “If the canal were closed or its operations prevented... the United States will have the right to take action... including the use of military force...”<sup>312</sup>.

Torrijos then wrote to Carter and Carter pledged “not to use this amendment as a legal justification for possible further intervention in Panama”.

Torrijos died in 1981 in a mysterious and never solved aviation accident. The Panamanians give him credit for having managed to reach new agreements on the canal, under extremely difficult conditions.

---

<sup>312</sup>Conte Porras Jorge,

## 21.22 Del Tratado Hay-Bunau Varilla, al Tratado Torrijos-Carter

, Impresora Panama, 1982, p. 144.

General Noriega became, after Torrijos' death, head of the National Guard. He was said to have been a man of the Americans, working for years for the CIA.

As is well known, the Bush administration did not bother in 1989 with legal subtleties or so-called seniority rights at work.

That year, presidential elections were held. The opposition regrouped around Guillermo Endara who later claimed to be the winner. But, under pressure from the National Guard, Francisco Rodriguez was appointed president of the republic.

A tug-of-war then began between the opposition – supported by the United States – and General Noriega's National Guard.

General Noriega, who presumably worked for the CIA a few years earlier — and as such was Bush's former employee — was accused by Bush of involvement in drug trafficking.

An arrest warrant was issued against him. At the same time, Yankee troops stationed in the Canal Zone engaged in provocations and intimidation against the population, which in part supported Noriega.

On December 20, 1989, Bush — a few days after Malta, where he had toasted with Gorbachev, celebrating the end of the Cold War — launched Operation "Just Cause".

And the Yankee troops, regardless of the legal justifications, once again invaded Panama using thousands of soldiers, aviation and helicopters.

But the Guard resisted as well as the working-class neighborhoods where weapons had been distributed. They were bombed by the soldiers of the "Just Cause", the only way to overcome the resistance that the invasion was encountering.

More than 2,000 people were killed in the rubble of the bombed-out neighborhoods.

The leader of the opposition, Guillermo Endara, preferred the comfort and air conditioning of a Yankee military base – proof of the tranquility that reigned in the country and the popular support for the North American coup – to be sworn in as president of the republic... George Bush imposed a president who, in the 1970s, had created a company domiciled in Panama, whose partner was none other than General Manuel Contreras, head of Pinochet's secret police...

Noriega was arrested by his former employers on 3 January 1990. Brought to the United States, he was sentenced to 40 years in prison.

In May 1994, Ernesto Perez Valladares of Noriega's party triumphed in the elections.

Panamanians are holding their breath waiting for the year 2000 which, according to the last Treaty, will bring them full sovereignty over the canal.

Unless...

## 21.23 Humanitarian response in Haiti

Contrary to what many people think they know, the North American intervention of the nineties in Haiti, does not date from October 15, 1994, but... of September 30, 1991, when President Aristide was overthrown by a coup d'état organized by Haitian soldiers with the "assistance of the CIA and the American Embassy".<sup>313</sup>

In 1971, Jean-Claude Duvalier, Baby Doc, succeeded his father — François Duvalier, Papa Doc — in power since 1957. Baby Doc was overthrown in 1986, and moved to France, once the government of Prime Minister Laurent Fabius granted him a residence permit. He found a very comfortable refuge on the Côte d'Azur where, since then, he has been living his days of forced retirement.

General Raoul Cendras, head of the junta that overthrew Father Aristide in September 1991, had perpetrated the 172nd coup since Haiti gained independence in 1804, almost two centuries ago.

Christophe Wargny wrote, in 1996, with Pierre Mousterde, a book that bears the suggestive title of *Après bal tambou lou: five years of American duplicity in Haiti, 1991-1996*<sup>314</sup>, where he shows the combined action against Aristide — not free of contradictions — by the United States, the military, the Haitian oligarchy and the Vatican. The latter, being opposed to Father Aristide, because of his commitment to liberation theology.

The last North American military intervention in Latin America — September 1994 — brought President Aristide back to Port-au-Prince. It was a "humanitarian operation" authorized by the UN.

Thus, three years after his overthrow, Father Aristide returned to power, transported by the power that had contributed to his downfall.

**Paco Peña**

Paco Peña is a Chilean professor, journalist, contributor to Punto Final.

---

<sup>313</sup>Wargny Christophe, Manière de voir N° 33, February 1997, Le Monde Diplomatique, p. 68-C.

<sup>314</sup>Éditions Austral, 1996.





## Chapter 22

# United States, the uncomplete dream. The long march of African Americans

**Robert Pac**

What happened to Martin Luther King's dream that he was talking about in August 1963, in Washington, in front of 250,000 black and white people neck and neck? The dream of a multicolored America finally free of racism, poverty and exploitation...

Today, 35 years later, his dream is still not realized and African-Americans are in an even worse situation than in 1963, worse than before the Civil Rights Act snatched in 1964.

The struggles of African-Americans for the recovery of their civil rights lasted more than 40 years to end with a victory, at least in the texts, around 1970, thanks to the action, unfortunately too often disorderly, of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, the Black Panthers, the lawyers of the NAACP, the white and black liberals and the radicals of the Democratic Party.

After the assassinations of Malcolm X in 1965 and Martin Luther King in 1968, on which the shadow of the FBI looms, ruthless repression almost completely destroyed the revolt of African-Americans and other minorities in the 70s. It was a veritable covert war against domestic dissent waged by the FBI and the CIA as part of the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), a covert but massive offensive against left-wing organizations and groups, the Communist Party, peace movements, blacks, students, and other democratic forces. The aim of this programme was to "unmask, dismember, destabilize, discredit or neutralize", killing them, the leaders, members or sympathizers of these groups if necessary. The implementation of this plan, led by FBI

Director Hoover, who declared the Black Panthers to be “the greatest threat to national security”, resulted from September 1968 to December 1969 in the killing by police of 14 Panther leaders and the imprisonment of hundreds of activists, some of whom are still in prison and threatened with ending their lives there.

Although officially abandoned for 20 years, this program continues to be implemented, as evidenced by the persecutions that continue today against Leonard Peltier, the Indian leader of the American Indian Movement, sentenced to life imprisonment in 1976 and against Mumia Abu Jamal, black journalist, former spokesman for the Philadelphia Black Panthers, sentenced to death in 1982, victims of both of a coup set up by the FBI and a trial marred by numerous irregularities.

Today, there are no more large national and structured black organizations, no more charismatic leaders, no more large mass movements.

## 22.1 A victory called into question

Since the 70s, the benefit of hard-won legislation, officially intended to end racial exclusion, has been nullified by a government strategy of physical encirclement and economic isolation leading to a real decadence of social life in the ghettos.

This strategy, inaugurated by Ronald Reagan in 1980, and continued by his successors Bush and Clinton, has severely cut budgets for welfare, education, health, housing construction and urban renewal. African-Americans have borne massive costs of this dismantling. 35% of black families are now below the poverty line (compared to 6% of white families). On average, the income of a black family is 58% of that of a white family, a lower figure than in 1967!

The official unemployment rate for African-Americans is twice the national average rate, the method of which is questionable (5.5%!). In reality, that of blacks must be around 25%.

For Black youth aged 16 to 19, the rate is 57%. In 1967, it was 26.5%! Today, in Harlem, 75% of young people are unemployed. Further intensifying the war on the poor, Reagan cut the duration of unemployment relief in half: 13 weeks instead of 26.

Life expectancy for a black man is 69 years compared to 76 for a white man. The infant mortality rate among blacks is 16.5 per thousand compared to 8.1 for whites.

The poorest, hundreds of thousands of families, are gradually being deprived of social assistance without which they cannot survive; such as the

“welfare” allowances or the “food stamps” created by Kennedy in 1961 and which still exist. Thus, it is estimated that 12 million children in the United States do not absorb the minimum amount of calories needed. By depriving the federal government of the necessary funds, the Reagan-Bush administration withdrew the management of “welfare” from the central authority. Thus, it is extraordinary to note that today in the United States, health, retirement, childcare, education, downtown renovation and social housing are a private matter in the hands of trusts (Corporate welfare).

Finally, in recent years there has been a purely racist offensive. Thus, blacks, who have always been overexploited, who have always constituted a sub-proletariat on which the wealth of white finance was built, are designated today as the cause of America’s difficulties. The meagre allowances that some receive to survive are presented as laziness bonuses that we like to consider congenital among blacks. The government relies on this racist propaganda to justify programs to gradually eliminate the gains of civil rights. Thus, it is almost the end of “busing” and school integration or “affirmative action” which was intended to ensure equal opportunities in education and employment for victims of discrimination of yesterday and today.

## 22.2 A policy of genocide

“Every year, our economy produces more and more products and services with fewer and fewer people. The hard, unskilled work—the work that no one wanted, the work that tolerated blacks in America, the kind of work that we ‘niggers’ have always done—is rapidly disappearing. Even in the South, mississippi for example, more than 95 percent of cotton is picked by a machine. Today, black labor is no longer profitable, or even sought after, the American economy no longer needs it.” This is how actor and activist Ossie Davis spoke in the preface to *We charge génocide* in 1970 (International Publishers Co. Inc.).

The new, well-paid jobs are not easily accessible to African-Americans because, on the whole, they have a low level of education and degrees.

Many black sociologists and activists see government policy toward African-Americans as a genocidal desire to keep the number of black population at a certain financially acceptable level, eliminating what U.S. leaders call a “population surplus”.

The example of recent decades shows that this solution has been accepted and implemented: that of limited genocide.

The weapons of this genocide, in addition to misery, hunger, the break-up of families, unemployment, are social confinement (ghettos) and the intro-

duction into black communities of drugs and AIDS. Plus the elimination of a large part of the black population by the American judicial and penitentiary system.

### 22.3 Ghettos: an American-style apartheid

The black question in the United States is the result of a centuries-old policy of exclusion in its economic, cultural, ideological, social and political aspects. The current strategy of sidelining African-Americans could only result in American-style “apartheid”. There is no question, of course, of parking blacks in “townships” surrounded by barbed wire as in South Africa at the time of apartheid. But these “townships” nevertheless exist in the very center of the major cities of the United States: they are the “downtowns”, the ghettos, which can be surrounded and gridded in a few hours by the police and the army. The ghettos are now abandoned to African-Americans by the rich and petty white bourgeois who can sleep soundly in their pretty cottages in the polished and self-defended suburbs.

The lockdown since 1972 has achieved what slavery and segregation had not been able to achieve completely, that is, the surveillance, without watch-towers or barbed wire, of 97% of black Americans.

The ghetto was cut off from the official economy and the rest of society. Habitat degradation is compounded by high crime, high mortality rates, poor social and educational structures and chronic unemployment. It is a micro-society apart, a closed world with specific structures and language. Violence, family dislocation (56.2% of families are headed by a single woman), alcoholism, drugs lead to inertia or despair that leads to suicidal revolts.

The confinement of African-Americans in ghettos falls under Article II, § C of the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, ratified by the United States, which states: “In this Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: [...] Article II C: Intentional subjection of the group to conditions of existence which should lead to its total or partial physical destruction”.

Almost all black families in the ghetto survive only through “welfare”, public aid, which is an essential factor in the break-up of black families, as well as an instrument of oppression. With “welfare”, “one becomes the slave of the worst kind, the slave who demands chains”.

And hunger often reigns in these destitute households. How do you live on three dollars a day when a burger costs two? There is no social security coverage in the United States. Social budgets, already cut by the Reagan ad-

ministration, were further cut by his successors, Bush and Clinton. Harlem, for example, is the place in the world where crime is the highest. Delinquency flourishes there, because survival in the ghetto is a daily struggle. It kills six times more than in the rest of New York or Chicago. And, for most of these crimes, the motives or perpetrators will never be known. Black men are seven times more likely to be murdered than a white man. A black man living in Harlem is less likely to reach age 65 than a bangladeshi resident. “According to studies, you have less sleep, you are more likely to be obese and to have hypertension. This is not only due to poverty. Your shortest and most painful life is, to a large extent, the anxieties caused by being black in America.”<sup>315</sup>

Regarding the Los Angeles riots of April 1992, 1 New York Times editorial of May 7, 1992 states that “the Los Angeles fires illuminate with a harsh and new light the way America draws a line under certain places ... Worse still, America is drawing a line under people: a generation of young black people.”

On a project for a so-called “reform” of social assistance in the early 80s:

“This is not a welfare reform, it’s a plan to turn ghettos into vast cemeteries — because there is no work. The aim of this legislation is to ensure that entire layers of minorities die, because this decrepit capitalist system no longer needs it.”<sup>316</sup>

## 22.4 Drugs

Drugs have always been in the hands of the white man an important instrument of his oppression of men of other races. The best known example is the import into China of opium from India which was to provoke the famous “Opium War” (1839-1842) between England and China whose government wanted to ban opium trafficking. With China defeated, England’s rule was facilitated by a corrupt regime and, above all, by the organized poisoning of an entire people by drugs.

Poisoning is the term used by Ho Chi Minh (then Nguyen ai Quoc) in 1925, in his clandestine book *Le procès de la colonisation française* (The Trial of French Colonization) in which he denounced the French policy in Indochina which imposed on every Indochinese a significant consumption of alcohol and opium.

---

<sup>315</sup>Andrew Hacker in *Two Nations*, Charles Scribner’s Son. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1992.

<sup>316</sup>Genocide USA, *Workers Vanguard* n° 463, 21 octobre 1988.

This method of annihilating the will to revolt among the colonized was of general use among the colonizers. It was particularly widely used by the conquerors of North America against the Amerindians. It was the famous “fire water” well known to western lovers, which, added to the massacres and diseases imported by “civilization”, precipitated the demise of the Indians.

The weapon of drugs is still used today against those colonized inside their metropolis that are the blacks of the United States. In the past, marijuana first, opium, morphine, heroin and cocaine were tolerated among blacks, or at least repression was done in such a way as not to destroy the general level of trafficking.

Today, Harlem, for example, has eight times more drug addicts than the rest of the New York metropolitan area. Currently, 40% of drug-related crimes. For cocaine and heroin, African-Americans in Harlem substituted “crack”, this cheap derivative of cocaine with violent and immediate effects.

This drug, which acts on the brain, produces euphoria followed by depression, irritability, anxiety and paranoid psychosis. Then come pulmonary emphysema and an overdose can cause a heart attack, an increase in heart rate and blood pressure; the addict has hallucinations, he has the impression that his body is traversed by an army of insects. There is also anorexia and considerable weight loss. Eventually comes death.

Drugs are everywhere in the ghettos. The rapid increase in the supply of “crack” caused the price of the sachet to fall from \$40 in 1988 to a price of between \$3 and \$10 today. This decline has led to an influx of consumers with low livelihoods. In addition, this trafficked cocaine, consumable without a syringe, keeps away the fear of AIDS. In New York State, more than one-third of crack users are African-Americans, although they make up only 14.6% of the state’s total population.

African-Americans account for 50% of the estimated 1.2 million people who inject drugs inject drugs, of whom about 300,000 have AIDS. In the state of Georgia, African-American males account for 8 in 10 (79%) of cases attributable solely to intravenous drug use. While they account for 43% of all AIDS cases in Detroit, they accounted for 76% of all AIDS cases due to intravenous drug use in April 1987.

African-Americans make up a disproportionate percentage (27%) of all AIDS cases recorded by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta.

African-American and Hispanic children make up approximately 80% of all children infected with the AIDS virus in the United States.

Two-thirds of all black AIDS cases are concentrated in New York, New Jersey and Florida. Blacks are three times more likely to contract AIDS than whites.

The miserable living conditions of blacks and also the lack of immune

defenses of blacks with AIDS, explain the current rapid spread of tuberculosis in the ghettos.

## 22.5 Cocaine babies

One in five black children born in the ghetto today is a drug addict. He is even before he is born. It becomes so during pregnancy, in the womb of its mother who takes drugs, using “crack” most often. “Drug addiction has direct and multiple effects on pregnancy. One in ten children born in Harlem is underweight than average. At the maternity ward of the Grand Hospital in Harlem, out of 3,000 thousand births, the rate of drugged infants is 15%. They are called ‘cocaine babies’. Two months premature, they weigh 600 grams less than other children at this stage and are three times more likely to die in their early years. In the same institution, the rate of miscarriages is twice as high as the average.”<sup>317</sup>

“Crack damages the developing fetus much more than heroin or other hard drugs.”<sup>318</sup>

The “cocaine baby” that escapes infant mortality will suffer throughout its short life from the direct and multiple effects of drug addiction on pregnancy: epilepsy, paralysis, malformations, motor and mental delays, feverish agitation, incommunicability...

“‘Cocaine babies’ are 15 times more likely than other children to be victims of ‘sudden death’. But, for them, death may be the best thing. For many ‘cocaine babies’ who survive, their first experience in life is the agony caused by the ‘withdrawal’ of cocaine. They suffer horribly. They are so sensitive that they cannot be handled or fed normally. They stir their limbs endlessly, looking for relief. Even the most hardened of medical specialists cannot bear the intolerable screams of these babies. ‘Never in my medical career have I seen such suffering as cocaine,’ the director of maternity at General Hospital in the District of Columbia told the Wall Street Journal.”<sup>319</sup>

## 22.6 The genocide

The drug spread like an epidemic in black American ghettos. Is this trivialization the effect of chance? To this question put to three members of

<sup>317</sup> *L’Humanité*, February 22 1990.

<sup>318</sup> *New York Post*, May 9 , 1990.

<sup>319</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, July 29/30 1981.

the Detroit City Council, infamous for its ghettos, the following answers were given: "It is a capitalist industry and a means of psychological action". "Drugs are first and foremost a source of money. But it was introduced into the black community to fight the Civil Rights movement. It is a new form of slavery, as in the last century, alcohol among the Indians. It must be noted that, if it also wreaks havoc on whites, it remains better controlled." After discussing the social causes of drug addiction, a third local elected official adds: "... But we must not forget that drugs keep the people quiet."<sup>320</sup>

Remarks by Leonard McNeil of the American Friends Service Committee collected at a conference on crack cocaine at the Tenderloin District of San Francisco on April 27, 1990 and reported by *Recovering Issue* 18, June 1990: "But 'crack', added to the short life expectancy among black men, the high infant mortality rate, the disproportionate percentage of blacks incarcerated or killed by the police, the homeless, the unemployed, life in the midst of toxic waste, AIDS and the lack of health facilities clearly show a deliberate offensive against minorities."

During the same conference, Daniel Sheehan of the Christic Institute developed the theory that a market for crack was intentionally created by the U.S. government to secure profits by controlling the manufacture and importation of drugs. These profits are used to finance illegal operations such as the supply of arms to the contras (of Nicaragua).

"The fact that African-Americans have become the target of the 'war on drugs' and are essentially condemned for this problem, is part of a strategy to blame the victims, Sheehan says, in order to ward off suspicion from the real culprits: suppliers and members of government who are trying to disintegrate minority communities and perhaps even destroy them."

"I'm scared. We will jeopardize the future of an entire generation of people who will not be able to find their place in society and become productive members", says Dr. Sterling Williams, Director of the Department of Obstetrics at Harlem Hospital.<sup>321</sup>

The federal government estimates that by the year 2000, there could be between 1 and 4 million children exposed to "crack" in the United States. And that at least 100,000 would live in the five neighborhoods of New York City<sup>322</sup>.

---

<sup>320</sup>Quoted in *L'Humanité*, November 8 1988.

<sup>321</sup>*New York Post*, May 9 1990

<sup>322</sup>*New York Post*, May 8 1990.



An April 21, 1990 article in the Oakland Tribune shows unambiguously that the war on drugs has become a war against the African-American community.<sup>323</sup>

In August 1996, the Californian San Jose Mercury News published a resounding investigation by a reporter of the newspaper, Gary Webb, accusing the CIA of being at the origin, during the 80s, of the introduction of “crack”, the “cocaine of the poor”, in the black ghettos of American cities. Titled “Dark Alliance” and quickly circulated on the newspaper’s website, the investigation accused Nicaraguan drug traffickers of having put on the market, in Los Angeles, large quantities of “crack” to finance, in cahoots with the CIA, the resistance of the “Contras” to the Sandinista regime. It had caused considerable emotion in the black community and led to the opening of an internal CIA investigation.

This reaction of the CIA had an immediate result quite predictable. The management of the San Jose Mercury News launched a counter-investigation at the end of which the daily admitted to having accused the CIA without evidence. But Jerry Ceppos, the editor, wrote: “... Although drug traffickers did have ties to CIA-paid ‘Contra’ leaders, and although Webb believes that relations with the CIA were very close, I don’t believe we have evidence that senior CIA officials were aware of these relationships.”(!)

Despite this (spontaneous?) about-face of the San Jose Mercury News, we see, as many African-American sociologists and activists believe, that the trade in “crack”, cocaine and heroin, like AIDS, are all elements of a secret and unspeakable conspiracy on the part of the government and the CIA to exterminate a large part of the black population.

## 22.7 Police brutalities

The murder by Miami police officers of Arthur McDuffy, a black insurance agent guilty of burning a red light on his motorcycle in 1979; the beating filmed by a Rodney King fan, another black man, in Los Angeles in March 1991; the despicable martyrdom inflicted on a Haitian resident, beaten and sodomized with a suction cup handle in the premises of the 70th District police station in Brooklyn, which sparked a scandal and even riots for the first two cases, are only the tip of the iceberg.

In a country where the general opinion considers that being of African origin is already a crime, the entire black community is considered to be “predisposed to crime” and the criminal justice system is focused not on

---

<sup>323</sup> *Peoples Daily World*, May 3 1990.

reducing crime, but on arresting, convicting an ever-increasing number of “criminals”.

The Philadelphia newspaper *Inquirer* investigated police brutality during interrogations: “... one technique was to cover the suspect’s head with a phone book and then hammer him with a heavy object. But on other occasions, officers beat suspects with lead pipes, batons, brass knuckles<sup>xxxii</sup>, handcuffs, chairs and table legs. Sometimes other suspects were forced to watch the brutality through the mirrors and the police officers told them that they would suffer the same fate if they did not cooperate with the police.”

Murder is usually used without provocation and very frequently. Murder is most often justified by claiming that the police were attacked by the victim and therefore fired in self-defence. To a journalist for the French daily *Le Matin*, a police officer from the 28th sector in Harlem said: “When you kill someone, the case is closed directly.”<sup>324</sup>

From 1968 to the present, the judicial system has been systematically used to justify assassinations committed by law enforcement and law enforcement agencies against members of minorities. Let us recall just a few examples:

More than 30 activists of the Black Panther Party were murdered by the police or by individuals who acted at the instigation of the police, as has since been proven. All of these murders, which required legal justification, were classified as “justified homicide” (including the murder of Fred Hampton who was shot in the head at close range while he was sleeping).

The many black students killed during protests, such as in Orangebourg State, South Carolina in 1968 (three students killed), Jackson State, Mississippi in 1970 (two students killed) and Southern University in Louisiana in 1972 (two students killed).

The objectives of the government’s programme cannot be mistaken when looking at the anti-ghetto weapons supplied to police departments across the country.

The P.38 revolver was replaced in many sectors by the super-powerful Magnum P.357. These pistols are capable of passing through the engine block of an automobile. This means that the use of this weapon in urban areas can easily cause many victims, the same projectile can pass through the bodies of several people in line.

“New York City police officers will begin changing their P.38-caliber revolvers to 9-caliber semi-automatic pistols this fall. This decision reflects a change in the position of the Department,

---

<sup>xxxii</sup>*Poings américains*

<sup>324</sup>*Le Matin*, supplément, December 29/30 1979.

which had previously refused to use more powerful and faster weapons.”<sup>325</sup>.

The standard equipment of many patrol cars features the 12-gauge riot shotgun that can fire dum-dum bullets as well as shot<sup>XXXIII</sup> (each cartridge contains a charge of 9 pellets the size of a P.32 caliber projectile)<sup>326</sup>.

These shotguns are called “riot control” because their 45-centimeter barrel allows them to cover a wide angle of fire, killing or wounding indifferently.

With such weapons, and in the repressive context of the American political system, it is not surprising that every year more than 600 people, men, women and children, between the ages of 10 and 81, are killed by the police.

45 to 55% of those killed by police are African-Americans. In Chicago and Philadelphia, more than 70% of those killed by police are black.

## 22.8 Justice and prisons

“These are your creations, uncle: chains and sticks. You created them four hundred years ago and you use them to this day. You created them. But they represent only a fraction of your barbarity, my uncle. You used the tree and the rope to hang it. You used the knife to chastise him while he struggled with the rope to catch his breath. You used fire to make it squirm even more, because hanging and castration were not enough fun for you. Then you used something else — another of your creations — this thing you called the law. It was written by you and for you and those of your kind, and any man who was not of your kind had to violate it sooner or later...”<sup>327</sup>.

The fruit of a long history, American racism does not lie only in the minds of whites, it is institutionalized in all the workings of American society. And particularly in the criminal justice system. The most obvious sign of this racism is the racial composition of this system. In a country where 20% of citizens are of non-European origin, the criminal justice system is composed of 95% of people of European origin.

---

<sup>325</sup>International Herald Tribune, August 23 1993.

<sup>XXXIII</sup>*Chevrotines* in the original text

<sup>326</sup>Center for Research on Criminal Justice, Berkeley, California, *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove*.

<sup>327</sup>In *Par la petite porte* (by the little door), by Ernest J. Gaines, Liana Levi Éditeur, 1996.

“In the most usual case, the black person suspected of having committed a crime is arrested by a white police officer, presented to a white judge, a white prosecutor and a white jury, in a court whose proceedings are recorded by white clerks. The usual place of the black in this judicial system in the hands of the whites is the box of the accused. Such a situation convinces him that justice is an instrument of oppression in the hands of whites and that this situation can only influence the application of justice. This can only result in discrimination in prosecution and convictions. And even when whites acting in the justice system have no land biases, the cultural and class barriers that stand between them and the defendants invariably place the latter at a disadvantage.”<sup>328</sup>

As a result of this racist justice, nearly half (48%) of the 1,630,940 people who inhabit penitentiaries, state and municipal prisons are African-Americans, while they represent only 12% of the population. The same proportion of blacks are among the 3,350 death row inmates currently on “death row”. Blacks are imprisoned in the United States much more than in South Africa during the apartheid era: 3,109 per 100,000 compared to 729 in South Africa <sup>329</sup>.

A study of this situation shows that there is no relationship between the delinquency rate of blacks (even if it is high) and the rate of their imprisonment, nor is there a relationship with the proportion of blacks living in a state. On a general level, we discover that the doubling of the prison rate observed over the past five years in the United States has nothing to do with crime, which has not increased in the same proportions (it has even decreased in the last two years according to the triumphant reports of the Department of Justice).

In 1996, the imprisonment rate for blacks was 800 per 100,000 inhabitants compared to 114 for whites, meaning that a black person is seven times more likely to go to prison than a white person. In Illinois, for example, it’s ten times.

It is also instructive to compare prison rates around the world. According to the latest available figures, it can be seen that in the United States, the rate of white imprisonment is similar to that recorded in most Western European countries. But, incredibly, blacks in the United States go to jail more often than those in Apartheid South Africa. In fact, the rate of imprisonment of blacks in the United States is the highest in the world.

---

<sup>328</sup>Lennox Hinds, *in Illusion of Justice*, University of Iowa, 1978.

<sup>329</sup>Sentencing Project 1991.

The police arrest blacks seven times more often and black women eleven times more often.

Indicts them seven and twelve times more often respectively.

They are sentenced eight to fourteen times more often.

Obtains sentences of deprivation of liberty eight and eighteen times more often.

And has them sentenced to prison ten to fourteen times more often than whites.

An African-American is arrested while a white person would not be arrested in the same circumstances; we ask the black person for a deposit that we know well that he will not be able to pay. He finds himself in prison, far from his family, without the means to afford a lawyer; he cannot prepare his defence and is forced to accept a court-appointed lawyer who does not even have time to study his case, assuming he intends to do so. In the most usual case, he is brought before a white judge, a white prosecutor and a white jury and ends up in jail. The racist justice system will sentence him to a very long sentence for a real or fabricated crime, for which many whites would have been acquitted or sentenced to a much shorter prison term.

A 1979 government study found that one in five black people would go to jail in their lifetime. This has since worsened, and today this proportion is close to one in four. The total number of African-Americans in the United States who have gone to prison is about three million, almost the population of Chicago.

In February 1990, a study conducted by the Sentencing Project, a Washington D.C. law association, showed that black delinquency, combined with racism in the U.S. justice system, resulted in one in four young black people between the ages of 20 and 29 behind bars, on parole or on probation. This study concluded that an entire generation of blacks was at risk of being permanently excluded from working life. A sacrificed generation.

How can we not see in this policy of sidelining the society of African-Americans as an aspect of the implementation of the Genocide limited?

More than half of the deaths of prisoners in the northeastern states of the United States in 1991 were caused by AIDS, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Nationally, 28% of the 1,863 prisoners who died in custody were victims of AIDS. In New Jersey, 69% of inmate deaths were AIDS-related, as were 66% in New York, 44% in Florida, 33% in Maryland, and 30% in North Carolina and Massachusetts<sup>330</sup>.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, reports that AIDS cases are on the rise in U.S. prisons. 5,279 prisoners were

---

<sup>330</sup>*International Herald Tribune*, September 14 1993.

infected with AIDS in 1994, or 5.2 cases per 1,000 prisoners, almost six times the rate in the general adult population of 0.9 per 1,000 <sup>331</sup>.

## 22.9 The “Crime Bill”

On 19 November 1993, the Senate adopted a major “Crime Bill” which proposes, inter alia, to extend the scope of the death penalty to more than 60 new crimes. These include the killing of federal officials, genocide, sabotage resulting in train derailments, the murder of U.S. citizens abroad, and murders committed with a firearm carried beyond state limits.

“This ‘crime bill’, which also includes a so-called ‘three strikes and you are out’ provision and billions of dollars for prisons and the prison administration, is so draconian that neither Reagan nor Bush could have passed it. In its essence, the project is a public employment program that mobilizes more than \$30 billion for white workers. This is a social program if ever there was one and one that reflects the socio-political and economic evolution of the United States.”<sup>332</sup>

During the debate on this bill, senators voted by 52 votes to 41 to adjourn consideration of a proposed amendment to prohibit the execution of juvenile offenders.

By its vote of 314 to 111, the House of Representatives followed the Senate’s positions on capital punishment.

## 22.10 Baseball and Justice

In March 1995, Jerry D. Williams, 25, two children, Californian and Black, stole a slice of pepperoni pizza from kids at a Redondo Beach fast food restaurant and was sentenced to 25 years in prison under the three strikes law signed by President Clinton in 1994.

Inspired by the baseball rule “Three strikes and you’re out”, this law stipulates that repeat offenders convicted twice, are liable, during a third appearance before a judge, to a sentence of 25 years in prison to life, without the possibility of parole. This is the case with Williams.

<sup>331</sup>*International Herald Tribune*, April 6/7 1996.

<sup>332</sup>Mumia Abu Jamal in *Live from the Death Row*, Éditions La Découverte, 1996.

A slice of pizza is worth 25 years of imprisonment, like a hold-up, like rape, like murder. As one journalist of *L'Humanité* noted: “The baseball<sup>xxxiv</sup> determines American jurisprudence, we can fear in the coming years that the convicts will be purely and simply handed over to the circus lions.”

## 22.11 Prison conditions

Despite the rhetoric of U.S. prison officials extolling the humanity of U.S. prisons, prisoners and their visitors claim that brutality in prisons has never gone away and even taken on a new and often hidden form.

It was this difference of opinion that led the Prisoners Rights Union (PRU) of Sacramento, California, to conduct the Prison Discipline Study (PDS) in 1989, a survey of prisoners themselves. The result of this study was the subject of a report entitled “The Myth of Humane Imprisonment”.

More than 70% of prisoners who responded to this survey said severe physical and psychological brutality was the norm in maximum security prisons in the United States. Solitary confinement, suppression of “privileges” and physical brutality are the usual practices in most high-security prisons.

“Physical abuse has a beginning and an end, while psychological abuse affects every moment. Even the most hardened are affected by every little detail of these abuses: a glance, a new schedule, a change of food, a letter delivered late, a visit refused, an observation on the content of the mail. Details that can have multiple reasons and provoke serious disciplinary action.”

While the practice of solitary confinement is considered appropriate and legal by courts and prison authorities, it is perhaps the most devastating method of psychological abuse. Although prison officials maintain that the majority of prisoners spend only a few days in solitary confinement, the survey of prisoners reveals that this punishment is most often suffered for years. Prisoners also point out that solitary confinement is often arbitrary, especially for prisoners suffering from psychiatric disorders.

Many prisoners reported intimidation of visitors, including threats by guards against family members of detainees and sexual harassment of female visitors.

Nearly 40% of the prisoners interviewed saw detainees receiving psychiatric treatment or medication against their will. 32% reported incidents of verbal abuse and racial slurs, food spoilage, extortion, “strip” searches, and

---

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Base bail* in the original, very likely typo so corrected in the translation

death threats—including those perpetrated by guards at the Los Angeles County Jail who were members of the Ku Klux Klan.

90% of the prisoners surveyed confirmed the physical brutality. 70% of them said they had them at least once a month. Prison staff use their fists, feet, electric batons, batons, tear gas, fire hoses, electric torches, broom handles, rubber hoses and rifles firing wooden bullets.

About 100 respondents testified that they had witnessed the beating of handcuffed prisoners. 40 had seen guards engage in “body slam” (for example, throwing a prisoner on the floor or against a wall, head forward) with handcuffed prisoners on their backs. Thirty others had seen “goon squads” at work (for example, a group of guards beating a prisoner, most often handcuffed).

Thirty-five women interviewed testified that they had either been beaten, raped or tied naked on a bed and subjected to the jokes of the guards. One of them claimed that she had lost her last baby after the guards shot her with their stun guns.

55 prisoners interviewed testified to “concealed” physical abuse. It is for the guards to provoke fights between prisoners by housing enemy detainees in the same cell or by introducing enemies at the same time in a common place. The guards call this “dog fights” or “cock fights”. Detainees are also beaten in their cells or transferred to security facilities to beat them out of the sight of other prisoners. Other detainees complained of being forced to perform arduous tasks while sick or infirm.

Only 10% of the detainees interviewed said they had not witnessed such brutality.

The main motivations of prison staff to commit this brutality are their racial and political prejudices.

Political prejudices are the most common. They are exercised against prisoners who fight against injustices and who encourage and help other prisoners to do the same. “Jailhouse lawyers” are the most frequent target of prison staff. “Prison lawyers” help other prisoners, many of whom are illiterate, draft their complaints and appeal procedures against prisons and courts. As the internal system in all prisons is arbitrary, discriminatory and inconsistent, most prisoners have constant conflicts with the administration and the judiciary. Because of this, guards and administrators have a usual policy of “isolating” lawyers from prisons. Finally, 30% designated “political prisoners” as a target of the prison administration.

The most frequently targeted group after “prison lawyers” is African-Americans. There were frequent complaints of “selective discipline based on racial prejudice”. There was criticism of the racist nature of the criminal justice system, which throws a disproportionate number of non-white people



in jail for longer and harsher sentences (e.g., the death penalty).

Then came the prisoners afflicted with a mental disability. Placed in an inappropriate environment and without adequate treatment, the mentally handicapped pose problems for the guards, who often find no solution other than in brutality. Hated by the staff, they are frequently housed with the unstable and agitated as punishment.

On May 3, 1995, journalists, photographers, televisions, were summoned to attend the event by the Republican governor of Alabama: the return of the convicts, irons at their feet, chained five by five, to work on the side of the roads. A show that we had not seen for thirty years. The head of the state prison administration, Ron Jones, explains that this measure was taken to save on guard staff and to make the prison so “unpleasant” that offenders will have no desire to return. “Without the shackles and chains, I need a guard to monitor 28 detainees. With chains, one for 40 is enough.” Prisoners are entitled to a minimum of thirty days of this special regime: twelve hours of work a day chained, no radio, no television, no visits, no “canteen”. Florida and Arizona plan to follow Alabama’s lead.

This method of making prisons inhumane is spreading: the sheriff of Phoenix, Arizona, has set up the inmates in a rudimentary camp, in the middle of the desert, without the slightest comfort. In other States, prisoners are being stripped of exercise rooms and television, and reintegration or treatment programmes for sex offenders are being abandoned. Human rights groups challenge this national trend as “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Constitution.

## 22.12 Death penalty

Racism also plays its role in the application of the death penalty. This is a horrible lottery, Amnesty International said in its 1987 report on the death penalty in the United States. A lottery where some have more “chances” than others to “win”. These are the poor, African-Americans and members of other ethnic minorities.

There are now 3,350 death row inmates in the United States waiting for punishment on “death row”, sometimes for more than 10 years, and their number is growing by 250 people every year. And 48% of these convicts are blacks who, let us remember, constitute only 12% of the population.

From 1967 to 1977, there were no executions in the United States, although death sentences continued to be handed down during this period. In 1972, the Supreme Court declared the current death penalty law unconstitutional and null and void, based on the fact that most of the laws applied

up to that date constituted “cruel and unusual” punishment, in violation of the 8th and 14th Amendments to the United States Constitution. In 1976, a moratorium suspending executions for 10 years ended with a Supreme Court ruling that the death penalty was constitutional if it was imposed under certain conditions. Since then, 38 States have revised their laws to this effect and reinstated the death penalty. Today, 433 prisoners have been executed since 1976 to the end of 1997, including 38 in 1993, 31 in 1994, 56 in 1996, 45 in 1996 and 74 in 1997. This means that the pace of executions is accelerating. And this goes in the direction of public opinion acquired to security theories.

The death penalty in the United States is racist, as is the entire American justice system. In its 1987 report on the death penalty in the United States, Amnesty International found that: “It appears that blacks convicted of the murder of whites are more often sentenced to death than any other category of person; on the other hand, whites are rarely sentenced to death for killing blacks.” (A former member of the Ku Klux Klan, Henry Francis Hays, who was executed on June 6, 1997, was the first white person executed for the murder of a black man since 1944.) It is observed that, as with other penalties, the American justice system establishes an order of gravity where the offenses considered the most serious are those where the aggressors are black and the victims white followed by those of white aggressors and white victims, and, finally, white aggressors and black victims. Amnesty International notes in its report: “We note that in Florida and Texas, blacks guilty of murdering whites were respectively 5 to 6 times more likely to be sentenced to death than whites who killed other whites. In Florida, blacks responsible for murdering whites were 40 times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who killed blacks.” Most of the blacks who are on “death row” have been charged with the murder of a white man. “Never has a white person been executed for raping a black woman when 54% of blacks who raped white women were executed between 1930 and 1967 and 89% of the men executed for rape were black.”<sup>333</sup>

Let us add that in the United States, on a general level, the death penalty particularly affects the poor, 60% of convicts are unemployed at the time of their arrest; 65% are non-specialty; 50% have not completed the 1st cycle studies; 90% are too poor to afford a lawyer. In California, over an eight-year period, 42 percent of workers convicted of first-degree murder were sentenced to death, while for “white-collar” workers, the proportion was 5%.

It should be noted that the death penalty has no deterrent power: Canada has abolished the death penalty and the murder rate has decreased in this

---

<sup>333</sup>Amnesty International, Report on death penalty 1987.

country; Florida and Texas have reinstated the death penalty and the murder rate has continued to rise. A number of psychologists have even advanced the theory that the death penalty actually encourages psychopathic behavior in which a person seeks his or her own death in some sort of self-programmed suicide.

Some recent Supreme Court decisions denying appeals in several death penalty cases have limited the possibilities of appeal and, by the same token, could further accelerate executions in the United States in the future, especially since the President of the Supreme Court, the ultra-reactionary William Rehnquist, placed there by Ronald Reagan, has proposed to Congress a text generalizing these decisions. He even supported a proposal by the Special Committee of Judges recommending that death row inmates be granted only one appeal (habeas corpus) to federal courts, after the appeal to the state court was dismissed.

The height of the horror is that in case of error (or error in quotation marks), it is irreversible! In November 1985, the American Civil Rights Association (ACLU) revealed that 25 people have been mistakenly executed in the United States since the turn of the century for crimes they had not committed or had not even existed. We know Sacco and Vanzetti well, the Rosenbergs or Willie McGee. But how many others have been in their case that we do not know? Such human rights violations cannot be kept silent.

## 22.13 Executions of minors

In October 1991, Amnesty International stated that the United States executes more minors than any country in the world, apart from Iraq and Iran.

Between 1989 and 1994, only five other countries executed minors under the age of 18 at the time of the crime: Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. During the same period, eight juvenile offenders were executed in the United States, five of them in Texas alone.

This outrageous practice by the United States is in violation of international human rights norms and treaties.

Indeed, according to Article 6, paragraph 5, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: "A death sentence cannot be imposed for crimes committed by persons under the age of 18 and cannot be carried out against pregnant women." Similarly, according to Article 4, paragraph 5, of the American Convention on Human Rights: "The death penalty may not be imposed on persons who, at the time the crime was committed, were under 18 years of age or over 70 years of age..." The U.S. government signed both treaties in 1977, but has yet to ratify them.

“Despite these laws, only 9 US states maintaining the death penalty prohibit its application to people under the age of 18.

[...] In 17 states, legislation allows for the sentencing to death of minors under the age of 18. This limit is set either by legislation on capital punishment or by laws specifying the age at which minors, like adults, may be tried by the criminal courts. This age limit is 10 years in Indiana and Vermont, 12 years in Montana, 13 years in Mississippi, 14 years in Alabama, Idaho, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina and Utah, 15 years in Arkansas, Louisiana and Virginia, 16 years in Nevada and 17 years in Texas, in Georgia and New Hampshire. Eleven other states did not specify any age limit.”<sup>334</sup>

As with adults, race has an influence on the death penalty in many states. In Texas, eight of the nine minors on death row reported by Amnesty International in a January 1994 report were black or Hispanic-American, as were Curtis Harris and Ruben Cantu, the two minors executed in that state in 1993.

As with black adults, these defendants are not well represented and defended, most often by court-appointed, inexperienced and unmotivated lawyers. They do not assert the influence of the environment and do not mention mitigating circumstances, foremost among which should be their youth, which makes them influenceable for good or bad.

In a 1991 study of young people sentenced to death in the United States, Amnesty International found that the majority of them came from particularly disadvantaged families. Most of them had suffered severe physical or sexual violence and had below-average intelligence, or suffered from mental illness or brain damage. Finally, many did not have adequate defence during their trial<sup>335</sup>.

“It has been found that, in some States, juveniles facing the death penalty are automatically tried by the ordinary courts in the absence of any individual assessment of the accused’s capacity to be tried as an adult. In other cases, it is the fact that the juvenile justice system does not have institutions that can accommodate those sentenced to long sentences that seems, more than the maturity of the accused, to have been the main reason for referral

---

<sup>334</sup>Amnesty International, Report on death penalty 1987.

<sup>335</sup>Amnesty International : United States, Minors on “death row” (Index A I : AMR 51/23/91), publié en 1991.

to an ordinary court.”<sup>336</sup>

“In a 1989 ruling that found the execution of minors between the ages of 16 and 17 acceptable, the Supreme Court observed that international standards were not relevant to ‘American moral standards’. Shouldn’t we aspire to raise American moral standards to the level of recognized international human rights standards?”<sup>337</sup>

## 22.14 Executions of persons suffering from mental disorders and mental retardation

A large number of prisoners suffering from mental disorders or mental retardation are under sentence of death and many others have been executed in the United States.

International safeguards, as well as a report by the Presidential Commission in 1991, are aimed at the elimination of the death penalty for mentally retarded accused. Resolution 1989/64 adopted by ECOSOC in May 1988, [296] concerning the implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty recommends “the abolition of the death penalty, both at the sentencing and execution stages, for persons with mental disabilities or persons whose mental capacities are extremely limited”. The Presidential Committee on Mental Retardation particularly stresses the need to identify backward accused. “Accused persons who suffer from mental retardation and who are not identified as such are at a serious disadvantage in the organisation of their defence... Their rights may be less well protected and it may happen that the appropriate measures for their cause are not taken. It is unlikely that these people are aware of their right to remain silent or to refuse to answer questions about their guilt.” Amnesty International has documented more than 50 prisoners with severe mental disabilities executed in the United States since 1982.

Although, in principle, United States law prohibits the execution of the mentally ill, the assessment of the mental fitness of a convicted person to be executed is very superficial in many States. Only nine States prohibit the use of the death penalty to the mentally retarded and several of them provide for a much lower intelligence quotient than that adopted in 1992 by the American Association on Mental Retardation. It defines mental retardation as having an intelligence quotient not exceeding 70 to 75 before the age of 18. However,

<sup>336</sup>Greenwald Hélène B., Capital Punishment for Minors : An Height Amendment Analysis, in *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Volume 74, n° 74, 1983.

<sup>337</sup>Amnesty International, internal document, London, january 1994.

North Carolina only prohibits execution if the defendants have an IQ of less than 60. Arkansas admits mental retardation only for an IQ below 65. In June 1986, Jerome Bowden, a 33-year-old black man with mental retardation, was executed in Georgia for killing a white woman 10 years earlier during a robbery. He had obviously been tried and convicted by a white judge and by a jury whose prosecutor had automatically challenged all blacks. A psychologist gave him a three-hour intelligence test in prison. According to the results of this test, his IQ was 65, a figure too high to spare him the execution according to the rules of Georgia. The next day, he was executed by electrocution. A member of the Council of Pardons later indicated that Jerome Bowden would have been placed in a specialized institution if his IQ had been less than 45. Thus Jerome Bowden, who was twelve years old mentally and who did not even understand what constituted a conviction and that death, as a punitive measure, meant nothing to him, had been deemed too intelligent to live!

## 22.15 Control Units

Located in southern Illinois, Marion Penitentiary opened in 1963 to replace Alcatraz, which closed the same year. It is the most severe of the security prisons in the federal system.

It was in Marion that the Control Unit (CU) began operating in July 1972. Sixty inmates were locked up in sensory isolation and the entire prison became a Control Unit in 1983.

Since then, prisoners have been locked in their cells for 23 hours a day, completely isolated from other prisoners, in a cell measuring 2.40 m by 1.80 m, equipped only with a cement “bed”, a sink and a toilet glasses. They eat, sleep and defecate in this cell. They are subjected to physical and psychological brutality, including beatings, rectal searches and other degrading measures. Prisoners often lie down, chained to their beds, sometimes for several days. Visits are very limited, as is the right to receive letters or writing supplies. Food is insufficient, access to medical care minimal. The penitentiary is guarded by guards known for their brutality. The suicidal effects of sensory isolation and the “behaviour modification” programs that are practiced there are alarming. The Marion Control Unit has a suicide rate five times higher than the national rate.

In 1993, a new Control Unit was opened in Florence, Colorado, where Marion’s little human contact was further reduced.

Marion and Florence are not isolated. Control Units are multiplying across the country.

Pelican Bay State Prison in California opened the Security Housing Unit (SHU) in December 1989. The SHU was designed for the permanent isolation of prisoners. They are locked up for 22 and a half hours a day in their 7.4-square-metre cell and are only allowed a 90-minute “exercise” period, alone in a concrete “courtyard” as large as three cells, between 6-metre-high walls and under a metal fence. The cell doors are operated remotely by the guards and they use loudspeakers to control the prisoners. They are always chained and flanked by two guards armed with batons when they have to move out of their cells. Apart from the slamming of a door or the voice of a speaker, the SHU is perfectly silent.

California has a second Control Unit, at Folsom Prison, where the beds have been replaced with cement layers. At Stateville Prison, Illinois, “uncontrollable” prisoners are isolated in small, windowless cells, with only a small slot in the door to pass through the food trays. Other Units of the same type exist in Coxsachie, New York or Lebanon, Ohio and the list grows year by year. According to a 1990 study by Marion’s management, 36 states have adopted Marion-inspired Isolation Units.

Prison officials claim that the Control Units are intended for prisoners deemed too violent to stay in other prisons. But already a 1983 congressional report claimed that 80 percent of the prisoners in Marion did not justify this level of security. In reality, prisoners are sent to Marion for other reasons: organizing work stoppages, practicing their religion or taking too many legal actions. In addition, many political prisoners were sent to Marion. The leader of the American Indian Movement, Leonard Peltier, and the member of the Black Liberation Army, Sekou Odinga, were sent directly from the court that sentenced them to Marion, which debunks the myth that Marion’s prisoners were violent in other prisons. In fact, in 1975, Ralph Arons, Marion’s director, declared: “The objective of Marion’s Control Unit is to control revolutionary behavior in the penitentiary system and in external society.”

In 1987, Amnesty International published a report condemning Marion Penitentiary in extremely harsh terms. The report concluded that Marion’s practices violated “the United Nations minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners” and added that marion’s prison conditions constituted “cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, condemned by the U.S. Constitution and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

## 22.16 Political prisoners

In a 1978 interview with the French newspaper *Le Matin* (The Morning), Andrew Young, a member of the black community and then U.S. ambassador to the UN, said: “There are hundreds, maybe even thousands, of political prisoners in American prisons.” This sentence earned him immediate dismissal by President Carter.

Of course, there can be no political prisoners in the United States, a country of free speech. Yet these hundreds, thousands of men and women to whom Andrew Young referred, were arrested and thrown in jail, some even sentenced to death, because of their political ideas or their struggle for civil rights. They were victims of the COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) program applied by the FBI from 1956 to 1971. The FBI invented criminal charges against them, on the basis of false testimony, concealment of evidence, refusal of appeal or appeal... Although the COINTELPRO program is no longer in effect today, the FBI’s methods remain the same. Activists find themselves isolated, treated by the press and justice as murderers, drug addicts, rapists... which makes solidarity movements difficult. Almost all of these prisoners belong to ethnic minorities and the prevailing racism makes their cause even more difficult to defend. These political prisoners also include a number of whites imprisoned for their practical assistance in the work of these minorities.

Political prisoners are subjected to very harsh prison conditions. They are mostly incarcerated in “Control Units” intended to “subdue the strong heads and the leaders”. A chapter is devoted to these sinister jails.

The best known political prisoners were the black pastor Ben Chavis and the “Wilmington Ten”, Johnny “Imani” Harris, released on parole in 1991, after a first death sentence and twelve years in prison, Terrence Johnson, incarcerated in 1978 at the age of fifteen and released in 1994 after sixteen years of imprisonment, Dhoruba Bin Wahad, Sentenced in 1973 to life imprisonment and dismissed in 1990, after 17 years in prison, Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt, former leader of the California Black Panthers, imprisoned since 1968 and released on bail on June 10, 1997, under pressure from a powerful international solidarity movement. Still behind bars are the leader of 1 American Indian Movement, Leonard Peltier in prison since 1976, David Rice and Ed Poindexter, both members of the Black Panthers, in prison since 1971, and Mumia Abu Jamal, former leader of the Black Panthers and president of the Philadelphia Black Journalists Union, sentenced to death in 1982 and still, today, on “death row”. All were victims of FBI set-ups.



## 22.17 Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt

After twenty-six years in prison, fourteen applications for parole denied, and four unsuccessful appeals, Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt was released on bail on June 10, 1997, pending a new trial that is intended to be impartial.

He was serving a life sentence for a murder that everyone knows he did not commit.

Geronimo is a political prisoner, the longest-serving current political prisoner. It is the symbol of resistance to repression and the fight for the liberation of black people in the United States.

He is a veteran of the Vietnam War, several times cited in the spotlight. Demobilized in 1968, he then settled in Los Angeles where he began to participate in the activities of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

His action within the BPP, of which he became one of the leaders for California, made him a designated target for the FBI as part of Operation COINTELPRO.

On December 8, 1969, the BPP headquarters in Los Angeles had to undergo a full-blown military assault by the police. Captured with his wife and seven other Panthers, Geronimo was sentenced to one to five years in prison for “illegal possession of a weapon”!

While in prison, Geronimo was charged with theft and the murder of a white woman on December 8, 1968 in Santa Monica, California. Convicted on 28 July 1972, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Geronimo has always maintained his innocence and claimed that the case was fabricated by the FBI as part of Operation COINTELPRO and that, on the day of the murder in question, he was 600 kilometers from the scene of the crime, at a Black Panthers rally in Oakland. Moreover, the FBI, which constantly monitored him, had the trace in its files. However, when Geronimo requested, under Freedom of Information Act <sup>338</sup>, that the FBI provide this document, the FBI refused to do so.

Geronimo was found guilty on the testimony of the victim’s husband. The latter admitted to having seen the aggressor only once, four years earlier, and for a few moments. However, he identified Geronimo as the murderer, although he described the latter, a few weeks after the murder, as a very tall and very black man, while Geronimo is rather small and his complexion is close to that of an Indian (hence his nickname).

But the prosecution’s main witness was Julius Butler, a former member of the BPP, who stated that Geronimo had given him a letter admitting guilty

---

<sup>338</sup>The Freedom of Information Act, passed by Congress in 1966 and amended in 1974 in a liberal sense, guarantees every American citizen the right of access to “records” and other “information” in the possession of authorities that would or would have harmed him.

of the crime. However, it was revealed that Butler was an FBI informant, which he had denied at the time of the trial. After Geronimo's conviction, further evidence of irregularities committed by the FBI during the investigation was revealed: three indicators had been placed in Geronimo's defence team and had provided documents on its strategy and tactics, as well as the testimony of at least two defence witnesses. An eyewitness to the crime had identified another person as possibly the murderer, yet this information was not provided to Geronimo's lawyer. The FBI and the Los Angeles Police Department had worked together and exchanged information regarding the investigation, arrest and trial in the Pratt case.

Geronimo's release is a victory. His victory. That of his lawyers and all those, in the United States and around the world, who campaigned for his release. And also an immense encouragement to continue the struggles for the release of other political prisoners in the United States.

## 22.18 Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota (Sioux) Indian, has been one of the leaders of the American Indian Movement (AIM) since 1970. He is currently serving his twenty-second year in prison for a crime he did not commit, the victim of a collusion between the FBI and the American justice system to neutralize the American Indian Movement after the occupation of Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation, in 1973.

Leonardo was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for the alleged murder of two FBI agents on the same reservation in South Dakota. The charges for which he was incarcerated, as well as the "evidence" that led to his conviction, were entirely fabricated by the FBI, which presented false evidence, falsified ballistic reports, and threatened and intimidated witnesses into signing forgeries. Yet, to date, no court has been able to prove his guilt. On the contrary, during his trials and appeals, many pieces of evidence were gathered to prove the FBI's misconduct. In an October 31, 1975 teletype, FBI ballistics experts report that none of the bullets found at the scene of the shooting could match the rifle belonging to Leonard Peltier. This evidence was removed from the file and only reappeared, along with other documents, thanks to the Freedom of Information Act <sup>339</sup>. In addition, the FBI used false depositions to obtain Leonard Peltier's extradition from Canada to the United States, a serious violation of international law and the extradition

---

<sup>339</sup>The Freedom of Information Act, passed by Congress in 1966 and amended in 1974 in a liberal sense, guarantees every American citizen the right of access to "records" and other "information" in the possession of authorities that would or would have harmed him.

treaty between the two countries. In light of new evidence of the reprehensible attitude and inappropriate tactics employed in Leonard Peltier's prosecution, Attorney General Lynn Crooks admitted on November 9 before the Eighth Court of Appeals in Saint Paul, Minnesota: "We cannot prove who killed these officers." However, this same court refused, by granting a review of the trial that would have proved Peltier's innocence and prove the embezzlement of the FBI and the US government in this case.

In March 1996, despite the prosecutor's favourable opinion, the Federal Parole Office again refused to grant Leonardo a parole and informed him that the Office would again rule on his case... in 2008. In 12 years!

Deprived of the necessary care, Leonard Peltier has lost the use of one eye and his general condition remains worrying. The only hope left for Leonard Peltier is in the hands of President Clinton, who has not yet responded to Leonardo's request for a presidential pardon in 1993.

## 22.19 Mumia Abu Jamal

Mumia Abu Jamal was raised in Philadelphia. He was a founding member (at age 15) of the Philadelphia Black Panther Committee. This is where his career as a journalist began. He wrote in the Party newspaper as Minister of Information of the Local Committee.

He continued his work as a journalist by being a commentator on various radio stations. the city. During the 70s, Mumia published vigorous criticisms of the Philadelphia Police Department and its leader, Frank Rizzo. He rejected Rizzo's version of the 1985 police siege against the Black Organization MOVE in Powelton Village, which involved more than 600 armed officers and resulted in the deaths of 11 MOVE members (six adults and five children). His unwavering commitment to the poor and discriminated against earned him the nickname "the voice of the voiceless". His tireless investment in this form of journalism resulted in his dismissal from his radio station. He was forced to work as a taxi driver at night to feed his family.

On 9 December 1981, just before four o'clock in the morning, driving with his taxi and seeing a policeman beating his brother, he stopped to run to his rescue. Upon arrival, police officers called in by police officer Faulkner found him lying on the ground, shot in the back and face. A few steps away, bathed in her blood, lay Mumia Abu Jamal. The P.38 caliber revolver he had purchased after being robbed twice was found at the scene.

Police officer Faulkner died, an hour after the shooting, at the university hospital where Mumia was to undergo surgery: a bullet from Faulkner's gun had hit him in the chest and lodged near his spine.

Claiming his innocence, Mumia Abu Jamal was charged with the murder of the policeman, despite the testimony of four people claiming to have seen a third man shoot and run away. He was brought to trial in early 1982.

The case was assigned to Judge Sabo, nicknamed “the king of death row”, holding the record for death sentences in the United States: 31 of which 29 were imposed on blacks. He was also a member of the same police union as Faulkner: the “Brotherhood of police” (FOP), which casts doubt on his impartiality.

The trial was classic in the case of a black man. Mumia Abu Jamal was deprived of the choice of her lawyer and the financial means necessary for her defence. He is forbidden to defend himself. He was given a court-appointed lawyer known for his incompetence. All but one of the black jurors were excluded from the jury. The list is long of the irregularities that have punctuated this trial: bribery and intimidation of witnesses, concealment of evidence favorable to the defense, excessive politicization of the criminal phase of the trial by using FBI files relating to its activities within the Black Panther Party as definitive evidence “justifying the death penalty”, refusal to take into account on appeal the revelations of repentant witnesses reporting police intimidation during the 1982 trial and also claiming to have seen another armed man run away from the scene of the shooting. Finally, Judge Sabo remained on appeal, although he was then retired.

On 2 July 1982, Mumia Abu Jamal, accused of intentional homicide, was sentenced to death by Judge Sabo. He was due to be executed in August 1995. Thanks to pressure from a powerful international support movement, Mumia was granted a stay of execution, but Judge Sabo refused to open a new trial until his final retirement on 26 November 1997.

At the time of writing (February 1998), the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is considering the findings of the latest appeal by Mumia Abu Jamal’s defenders. In the event of a rejection, which would be followed by an execution warrant, a final appeal could be made at the federal level.

From the depths of his cell, for 16 years, Mumia has never stopped writing articles and campaigning for justice and against racism. He wrote two very important books: *Live from the Death Row* which was translated and edited in France under the title: *En direct du couloir de la mort* (Éditions La Découverte) and *Death Blossoms* (The Plough Publishing House Editors, Farmington PA, USA).

**Robert Pac**

Robert Pac is a journalist, engaged for more than 25 years in the struggle alongside blacks, Indians and members of other ethnic minorities in the three

Americas. He is the author of *Les guerres indiennes aujourd'hui* (Indians wars today) published by Messidor.



## Chapter 23

# Centenary of a genocide in Cuba. Weyler's "reconcentration"

Jean LAÏLLE

A black book of capitalism in Latin America, if it were to be exhaustive, should be a documentalist work bringing together the historical works on the iron and fire penetration of capitalism triumphant without sharing from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego. Another method would be to shine a spotlight on this or that episode better known to historians than to the general public, but significant of the irreparable damage attributable to the ferocious British, French and then Yankee imperialist appetites imposing the law of colonial capital by subjugating the peoples who had just shaken the yoke of the immense Spanish-Portuguese feudal empire. One then thinks of the countless victims around the Falkland Islands since England found a whaling interest at the expense of the Argentine Republic, around the opulent Paraguay with the Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay) which in 1870, after five bloody years, exterminated any male population of this crossroads of great navigable rivers. One thinks of the setbacks of Peru, Bolivia and Chile barely independent because guano, dethroned by Chilean nitrate, provoked five years of the so-called "Pacific" war from 1879 to 1884 in the name of capitalist interests carving up one or the other of the three countries, arbitrated by the United States and depriving Bolivia of its access to the sea. Dying for such lucrative fertilizers did not prevent Bolivians and Paraguayans from killing each other in the fratricidal battles of the Chaco War (60,000 victims, it is believed) for two "majors" of an oil that was not exploited afterwards. How to make a choice between the southern cone and the confines of the central isthmus where companies Fruitières penetrated by the iron of the modern railway flibuste for the interests of the United Fruit,

from Colombia to Guatemala?

How can we talk about the “Green Pope” better than Miguel Angel Asturias, or banana strikes like Gabriel Garcia Marquez? How do you treat the exploitation of Brazilian land as intensely as Jorge Amado in his novels? Or better appreciate the slogan “Land and Freedom” than with the Mexican frescoes of Siqueiros?

Once written, this black book will have the detractors of the eternal coalition of liberals and conservatives to defend the civilizing virtues as did before them the Spaniards rejecting under the name of “black legend” the slightest criticism of their American empire evangelized by sword and fire. This debate resurfaced in 1992 when the celebration of the fifth centenary of the discovery of America sparked the controversies that we know at the time of the Universal Exhibition in Seville: the thesis of the encounter between two worlds, that of shock and that of pure and simple destruction. It is by this word of “destruction” that the scandal arrived in 1552, under the pen of this bishop of Chiapas (already!) named Fray Bartolomé de las Casas who is at the origin of the so controversial notion of black legend. Entitled “Very Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indies”, his treatise had an immediate circulation in Spain and America and was a source of endless quarrels with the colonial authority. As he first landed in Cuba after his studies in Salamanca, he necessarily noted the disastrous fate of the peaceful Indians of the island and his later pamphlet joined through the centuries the welcome speech of President Fidel Castro to Pope John Paul II on January 21, 1998: “... you will not find here the peaceful and gentle natural inhabitants who inhabited this island when the first Europeans arrived there. Almost all men were exterminated by exploitation and slavery that they could not bear, women, converted into objects of pleasure or domestic slaves. There were also some who died under the thread of homicidal swords, or victims of unknown diseases imported by the conquerors. Some priests have left heartbreaking testimonies of protest against such crimes. (...) Under extremely difficult conditions, Cuba eventually formed a nation. It fought alone with an unsurpassable heroism for her independence. For this purpose, a hundred years ago it suffered a veritable holocaust in concentration camps where a considerable part of its population perished, mainly women, the elderly and children; crime of the colonialists which, forgotten by the conscience of humanity, is no less monstrous.”

We therefore hold with Cuba the two ends of a black book that opened in 1492 and has not yet closed, since this people has refused for forty years “to submit to the injunctions and the empire of the greatest economic, political and military power in history”. Why not flip through one of those dark pages of capitalism in Latin America, written by capitalism itself exactly a hundred years ago, when it was taking off in Cuba, the last shred of this empire that



five hundred years during the Spanish crown exploited? At the moment when the powerful neighbor to the north is ready to pick this ripe fruit, humiliated Spain clings to it shamefully and it is, under the orders of Captain General Don Valeriano Weyler, the “reconcentration”, deportation of a people in its own land, from 1896 to 1898 <sup>340</sup>.

## 23.1 A colony on hold

In the seventeenth century Cuba was already the world’s leading producer of cane sugar, the profitability of black slaves on the immense estates of the Spanish colony having accumulated enough to open, from the first part of the nineteenth century, the era of sugar capitalism in the agrarian sector already existing from Havana to Matanzas. The four sugar mills of 1784 were 22 before 1830, located near the ports in the increasingly large areas conquered from the subtropical forest that offered an astonishing fertility. Around the possibilities of maritime or river piers allowing, thanks to cabotage to major ports, to export in 183,090,492 metric tons to Europe. Landowners, in their expanding class optimism, were faced with rising production costs. In 1820, Spain was forced, under English pressure, to abolish the slave trade. Their clandestine acquisition became more expensive at the very moment when the first beet sugar factories appeared in France. But paying smuggled slaves did not exempt the need to cart goods as the production areas moved away from the coast.

This is how sugar capitalism needed iron to develop. It was no longer possible, as the harvests were increasingly abundant, to transport heavy loads to the ports on rocky and dusty roads in dry weather and impassable in the wet season when animals and wagons got bogged down. The owners of the sugar mills (*ingenios*) lost money maintaining roads and paths. However, the feeding of a black man at the rate of two daily meals amounted to a real and a half, while it took three reals to feed an ox. This is how we had to turn to the railway, whose first capitals were raised in 1830 but which did not prosper until 1837, when, 11 years before the Spanish metropolis, the six and a half leagues from Havana to Bejucal were put into service on November 19, the birthday of Queen Isabella II. This line put 1200 carters and as many black slaves in their service, not to mention 300 or 400 muleteers. This is how, without lacking Cuban shareholders, public limited companies were created,

---

<sup>340</sup>The Spanish word “reconcentration” is deliberately retained here instead of “regroupment”, which does not exactly render the concentration camp will of the Spanish colonial power. It was therefore arbitrarily translated under the spelling “reconcentration”, used in the title.

even if it meant relying on all kinds of knights of industry who had a good game to display their claims in an area where the Europeans themselves were taking their first steps. Above all, it was necessary to have relations in London and for this to have North American intermediaries who, already owning plantations in Cuba, offered their relations and their capital, because a locomotive could only be English. The island's capitalists were suspicious of the colonial, arbitrary and corrupt government. For their part, the London bankers had no confidence in Madrid's finances. It was therefore necessary for the English banker Robertson to lend 2 million pesos, guaranteed by the tax revenues of the Cuban ports, starting with Havana. This is how the first Spanish-American railroad was Cuban. A straw man, Don Claudio Martinez de Pinillos, well introduced to the court of Madrid, administrator of the colonial tax authorities, guaranteed Havana the English loan. Each having taken his commission, the locomotives and rails finally arrived from London and the railway work could begin, not without the Spanish consul in New York having recruited American engineers with mirific contracts.

The mills having become "sugar plants". These real factories receive the cane from more and more distant cuts and their range of action continues to increase, to the point of encompassing the Cuban East still ignored by cane planters. All that remained for the great sugar interests linked to the United States was to buy the lines so that the railway attached to the sugar "latifundium" was the vector of the Yankee saccharocracy<sup>xxxv</sup> covering the whole island under the aegis of the Spanish colonial power. Let us wait patiently until the end of the century to see it confiscated for the benefit of North American imperialism. Cornelius Van Horne, builder of the "Canadian-Pacific", whose father had conquered sugar by iron, was one of those who succeeded so that at his death he could say: "When I think of everything I could do, I'd like to live 500 years...". In 1902 the Estrada Palma government of the pseudo Cuban republic pushed servility to the point of proposing to the "Congress" to draw on public funds, for three years, enough to pay Van Horne the interest on capital he had risked in a line that had not yet yielded anything... But let us not anticipate this nineteenth century that saw Cuba repeatedly rebel against the two colonial dominations that it did not accept to undergo, even if they had powerful internal relays.

---

<sup>xxxv</sup> *saccharocracy* is some neologism from *saccharosis*, *sugar*, and *-cracy* rule. Roughly means empire of sugar

## 23.2 The last quarter of an hour

When the Spanish administration was characterized by corruption and absolutism faced with the exploits of the liberators of the mainland of the empire, it was in full reaction of the affluent sectors combined with a deep popular discontent that broke out in 1868 the first war of independence observed with suspicion by the United States, which refused their approval and with indifference with the Europeans. The Spanish crown has reason to worry about the solidarity proclaimed by its former viceroyalties in full emancipation. Ten years of war, from 1868 to 1878, resulted in the false peace of Zanjón which solved nothing, except the timid emancipatory laws of black Cubans. This period covers the teaching of national dignity emanating from José Martí, “the apostle of independence” (1853-1898), himself influenced by scholars trained in the school of enlightenment from the beginning of the nineteenth century within the most respectable humanist institutions of the colony. Reformist and revolutionary tendencies then clashed between supporters of outright annexation to the United States or a cautious degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the Spanish crown, and those who saw more only in real independence, the revolutionaries.

Since the failure of the “Guerra chica” in 1878, when the United States (already) closed its Cuban sugar market, Cubans understood that independence was not a simple matter of feelings. They needed it to negotiate reciprocity treaties or to be fully integrated into the North American system.

Fifteen years later, the most prominent wrestlers inspired by José Martí, undertook new military campaigns to liberate Cuba of the Spanish metropolitan yoke. By 1895, the war was spreading from east to west, taking on proportions out of all proportion to the previous conflict. José Martí was killed while attempting to intercept a Spanish column of 600 cavalry on 19 May 1895. This setback increased tenfold the forces of the patriots under the orders of Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo who, at the end of 1895, invaded the Cuban West entering the opulent region of Matanzas where they burned the plantations, preventing the harvest of that year and paralyzing almost entirely the sugar industry for lack of raw materials. From 1,034,794 metric tons in 1895, the tonnage of “Zafra” fell to 232,068 in 1896, even less in 1897, due to the military action of the “mambises”<sup>341</sup>, which forced the colonial troops to confine themselves to the fortified garrisons. At the same time, the price of sugar fell by half while the steam engine, mechanizing

---

<sup>341</sup>“Mambi” in the plural “mambises”: guerrillas of patriotic Spanish friendly battles since the Ten Years’ War (1868-1878). Perhaps named after a black officer, Juan Ethninius Mamby, a deserter from the Spanish army. Unless it’s a pre-Columbian Cuban word, the rebel with the cacique.

the production and production of sugar, had mobilized enormous capital to replace that of the blacks released in 1886. Hence the huge Yankee investments replacing those of the English bankers and Spanish shareholders who see their colonial sovereignty wavering. The railways increased their tariffs, with troop transports absorbing half of their movements: as they were not charged to the military authority, it was necessary to catch up on sugar. And the introduction of wage labour opened up a new expense in the cost price column... However, the multiplication of military failures on the island, the huge sums of money that the obstinacy of the Government of Madrid swallowed up to curb this last colonial war, the incompetence of the general staffs, the unpopularity of the overseas service among recruits who did not hesitate to mutilate themselves to escape the uniform, the heavy liability of colonial corruption, tour advised Don Antonio Canovas del Castillo, the head of the Spanish government, to put an end to all means. Impatient and authoritarian, he hesitated to concede to Cuba an autonomy that he denied to Catalonia. He did not resist the outbidding of the oligarchy linked to colonial interests or the officers who demanded a merciless war against the Cuban insurgents. He had appointed in Cuba as captain general Arsenio Matinez Campos, the same one who in 1874, at the head of a handful of men had put an end to the first Spanish republic and restored Alfonso XII without firing a single shot. It was not the same in Cuba: in July 1895, defeated in the battle of Peralejo by Antonio Maceo, he proposed to his head of government to choose a strategy to liquidate once and for all this rebellion. All the military measures adopted proved ineffective against the incendiary torches of the "mambises" that destroyed the plantations. Cane trains were preceded by exploratory locomotives, forts were built at each branch, culvert or station. The illustrated newspapers of Madrid published reports with engravings of convoys destroyed by the sabotage of the wooden bridges of the railway of the time. Nothing helped, except the even more marked desire of sugar traders and entrepreneurs to protect themselves behind Spanish bayonets. An officer known as the "Iron Man" who had already distinguished himself in the "Ten Years' War" (1868-1878) was remembered for his cruelty against the civilian population and was appointed Captain-General of Cuba, replacing Martinez Campos. It was Don Valerian Weyler <sup>342</sup>, known for his repressive imagination. Recognizing that this war was different from the previous one, Martinez Campos himself had proposed emptying the water from

---

<sup>342</sup>Surname which has nothing Spanish and dates back to the mercenaries of the Walloon *darde* of the Bourbons of Spain. Due to a lack of volunteers, Swiss, Irish and even Germans were added, which made the case of the great-grandfather Weyler, of Rhine origin. The general, his great-grandson, was born in Palma de Mallorca to a military doctor on September 17, 1837, claiming this catalan island origin.

the jar to catch the fish: a leader as experienced as Weyler was able, he said, to apply this measure of “reconcentration”, which he found repugnant to do on his own. It had already been used, albeit on a smaller scale during the “Guerra Grande”, but never exceeded the figure of 40,000 civilians regrouped after being forced to abandon their villages. This politico-military procedure was therefore applied in order to deprive of supplies, men, horses the “mam-bise” forces who received them from all the villages and fields where they were like fish in the water. After some initial experiments, it was on October 21, 1896 that Weyler published a campaign order in which he decreed the “reconcentration” of all the inhabitants in certain agglomerations, and this within 8 days, prohibiting the withdrawal of food from the villages or their transit by sea without a permit from the Spanish military authorities. To the population were added cattle.

“Hundreds of thousands of people were gathered. In the affair of a few days, the localities with garrisons were transformed into huge prisons for the elderly, women and children without the slightest means of subsistence. After having gathered them in this way, the Spanish troops had *carte blanche* to raze everything, burn the houses, destroy the fields and sacrifice the animals that they could not remove from the supply needs of the liberation army”, explains Colonel Raul Izquierdo Canoso, who has just published a study entitled “Reconcentration” published recently.<sup>343</sup>

### 23.3 A real genocide

This measure was applied during the 2 years that Weyler’s mission to Cuba lasted, 1896 and 1897. There is even a trace of it in the archives of the Cuban railway. It is true that the third class is the one that carries the largest number of passengers of the company. And since the majority of them are day labourers who have been “refocused” in towns and villages without even the necessities to feed themselves, they were even more deprived of means of transport. The authorities of the city (of Matanzas) having wished their return to their former villages from where they had come here by the thousands, the company granted them all free tickets during the months of April and May 1897, either so that they could return to areas of culture, or to make them leave this city where they can only live on begging. 2,325 people were transported in this way, but it was necessary to repeat the operation in December so that all these “reconcentrated” peasants who lived here can go and get work in the sugar factories and prepare the work of the “zafra”. An additional 2,781 were transported. This document dates the duration of

---

<sup>343</sup>VIII International Book Fair in Havana, February 1998, PABEXPO.

this inhuman grouping begun in mid-1896, imposed militarily in October, but became untenable at the end of 1897, because it was still necessary to rotate sugar production, which was in free fall. Not to mention that the State did not sufficiently remunerate the transport of military units that landed massively as reinforcements throughout 1897. The Matanzas Railway had invoiced 117,398 pesos for 1896 for military transport and had received only 77,816 pesos, the difference being considered free services for the benefit of the State. This company nevertheless managed to distribute to its shareholders a dividend of 2% while having received, housed and transported 4,322 soldiers disembarked from Spain in 1896 alone at Réglá, the entrance to the port of Havana.

If Spain put an end to this vacuum clean-up operation, it was simply because it ended in failure on all levels. The policy of the last quarter of an hour then corresponded to the slogan “to the last man, to the last peseta” which had to be abandoned at the sad end of 1897 when General Ramon Blanco arrived in Havana to replace Weyler with instructions that suddenly became “neither a man nor another peseta!” Genocide aggravated by premeditation: it was only an experiment, it gave nothing. To the point that it is again a question of installing an autonomous government, an idea quickly discarded since, unable to concede to Cuba what is denied to Catalonia, it is soon donated to the latter, torn by the convulsions of the nascent anarchism, of a new captain general who is named ... don Valeriano Weyler. Barcelona was then experiencing an epidemic of bombs and attacks that added a Cuban reference to their targets. In 1892, General Martinez Campos escaped a bomb, but Canovas del Castillo took to the waters in Santa Aguda when on August 8, 1897 he was assassinated by the Italian anarchist Angiolillo. This was the response to Weyler’s mass arrests that had filled the Dungeons of Montjuich with supposed anarchists or harmless anticlericals, horribly tortured or executed: the former captain general of Cuba had references.

As in Barcelona, Weyler’s “reconcentration” made innocent people pay the price for the policy of extermination decided by the colonial government and in either case the classic spiral of escalation played like a boomerang. The majority of the men threatened by this “regroupment” chose to join the liberating army as in Barcelona where anarchism was joined because of the horrors of a repression that provoked gigantic demonstrations of indignation as far as Trafalgar Square.

So what had been the price paid by the Cuban people? It is difficult and easy at the same time to establish the figures since their source is of Yankee origin, but one does not see how they would have inflated them more cynically than to justify their military intervention of 1898 which, among other good reasons, claimed to respond to a humanitarian concern against the hor-

rible Spanish colonizer. We have the 1887 census figure: 1,631,676 (of which 1,102,887 were white, the rest included black, mixed-race and Asian). And the 1899 census, conducted by the interventionist U.S. government, yielded 1,570,000. The decrease observed is not significant since Cuba already belongs to them and they have settled there in very large numbers. The death register for 1898 gives 109,272, largely attributable to hunger and disease resulting from the naval blockade established as soon as the United States declared war on Spain, making the survival of the victims of “reconcentration” even more critical. A U.S. Red Cross report, dated Havana, in October 1898 described tens of thousands of people walking the streets, including wealthy people who had had nothing to do with “reconcentration” and were snatching a miserable livelihood from the garbage. Clara Barton, president of the American Red Cross, had sent food, medicine and clothing collected by her even before the outbreak of war against Spain. However, the blockade of the Cuban coast prevented (already!) the arrival of these aids, which were partially used for the benefit of Yankee troops, which motivated a complaint by Clara Barton to the President of the United States, William McKinley. One hundred years after the facts Raul Izquierdo Canosa sticks to 300,000 victims as an order of magnitude, knowing that it cannot be rigorously accurate, but other historians put forward 400 or 500,000 without being able to prove it. For a population of just over one and a half million, the figure of 300,000, even when corrected downwards, is already horrific.

For we do not lack testimonies, a century apart, as to the extent of the extermination. Here is Lola Maria, literary pseudonym of Dolores Maria de Ximeno y Cruz, rich heiress of a Creole family in the city of Mantanzas who had written her memoirs. She narrated the world of opulence in which she lived, not dismissing the testimonies of the most dramatic episodes of “reconcentration” experienced live. “(...) The whole island had become a huge mousetrap, we were chased from all sides... Rather a city of insane than a huge asylum for the insane. Children in alarming proportions, men and women in the prime of their lives, decrepit old men barely twenty-five years old. One day our house fills up with a large family of ‘reconcentrated’ – they did not want bread but a roof – and she, my mother, knew a secluded house in the vicinity of the railway line outside the city... emigration was appalling, only those who did not have the opportunity to flee remained... at home, the most opulent house and the best stocked expense of Matanzas, we had resorted to the soup of these purslanes that grow even on the sidewalks and my mother had excellently patched them up as if they were exquisite ravioli ... . Every day the newspapers published the warrior exploits of the Spaniards who, at every encounter with the rebels, always pulverized them. In conclusion: nothing new on our side. I lived these days like a century... I

lost weight by an arroba <sup>344</sup>”.

These memories were published in 1983 in Cuba when, the manuscript of Lola Maria having been found, it was possible to establish a selection of which here is another example: “(...) The smell, that smell that looked like nothing and that was that of ‘reconcentration’, was that which the climate spread like the disease proper to the corpses which, swollen like toads, spread it in the streets. All this legion of unfortunate people died without protest, in hospitals, on the public road, under the arcades. Sometimes a candle on an empty jar of beer, placed there by someone, indicated to the passer-by that this package was a corpse. It is claimed that the total number of deaths amounted to four hundred thousand.”

Whatever the accuracy of the figure of these real hostages of the Spanish army, we must add an unexpected number of foreigners revealed by recent research at the National Archives of Cuba. Also in Matanzas, death certificates show a high percentage of victims of Spanish or Canary Island peninsular origin. Unsurprisingly, there are more than 3,000 Chinese since their immigration has been reported since the second half of the century in agriculture. But no or very few French people, perhaps out of gratitude to the Spanish authorities satisfied with the real fortresses that had become their coffee plantations in the santiago de Cuba region, proof of their hostility towards the insurgents. More astonishing is the figure of 1758 North Americans reported in December 1897 among the death certificates identifying Germans, Mexicans and several other minority European or American nationalities, not to mention the mention “Africans” with no further precision

## 23.4 And the U.S. wins the bet

We know the rest. At a time when Spain was striving to establish its existence as a decadent power on the last shred of its colonial empire, conquering imperialism only had to cross the Strait of Florida to pick the largest and richest of the Caribbean islands like a ripe fruit. Without any competition from England, the largest exporter of capital in the world throughout the nineteenth century, including Cuba where it only had to retain its interests in Western railways to consolidate previous sugar investments. The Castilian lion discarded, we must also rule out any desire to create an independent Cuban state. Long before 1898 the Standard Oil Company, the American Sugar Refining, the Bethlehem Iron Works had invested in nickel, manganese, not to mention the American Tobacco Company.

---

<sup>344</sup>1.5 kilograms, old castilian measure unit.



All that remained was to prepare public opinion under the generous pretext (already!) of cubans' right to freedom. This required erasing the contradiction between the condemnation of the inhumanity of "reconcentration" and the aggravating circumstances of the naval blockade of the island, the first military measure of the armed intervention officially dated 1 January 1899. The famous "memorandum" of the Secretary of State for War did not mince his words: "Cuba, with a larger territory also has a larger population than Puerto Rico, whites, blacks, Asians and their mixtures. The inhabitants are usually indolent and apathetic. It is obvious that their immediate annexation to our federation would be folly and, before proceeding with it, we must clean up the country, even if to do so it was necessary to resort to the same methods as Divine Providence applied to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah".

Present in the port of Havana since January 25, 1898, the armoured cruiser "Maine" of the United States Navy, exploded very opportunely on February 15 with 266 dead on board, while the entire staff of the ship was "miraculously" ashore. "Everything is quiet here!" said press reporter Hearst from Havana to his boss, who replied: "Send pictures and I'll give war!" The legal instrument that President McKinley obtained from Congress, the famous "Joint Resolution", made it clear that "the right of Cubans to be free" depended on "the ability granted to the President of the United States to have the resources necessary to intervene in the Cuban War of Independence and pacify the country."

In their book, *Chemins pour le sucre* (Paths for Sugar), Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro Garcia <sup>345</sup> add to the above: "The treacherous tactic of the U.S. military command of the island was to deny belligerence to the Cuban forces, relying separately on their various local leaders and, once the Spanish rout was acquired, to prohibit the entry of Cuban fighters into the main cities in order to prevent the Spanish army from capitulating to the patriots... (which) were excluded from the signing of the protocol ratifying the Spanish surrender. Thus the sovereignty of the islands passed from the hands of Spanish colonialism to those of North American imperialism. The Treaty of Paris, formally inspired by 'humanitarian principles and high social and moral duties' actually concealed the U.S. military occupation of Cuba for an indefinite time and the acquisition by the Spanish colonies of the Caribbean and pacific as spoils of war."

There is not long to wait for the entire bet to be pocketed: the 4 years of direct military occupation of Cuba are not over that, on May 2, 1901, the Cuban "Constituent Assembly" adopts the all too famous amendment

---

<sup>345</sup>Caminos Para el Azucar, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, La Habana.

imposed by the American Senator Orvill Platt which limits in the proportions that we know the independence of the country. Voted by this pseudo Constituent Assembly on February 21, this correction is brutally imposed on her just before the official promulgation of May 20 under the cynical pretext “to organize the handover of the government of the island to its own people”. To this cynicism, perhaps recalling the ravages of 1896-1897, the Platt Amendment adds that the Government of the United States receives from that of Cuba “the right of intervention to preserve its national independence, to maintain a government adequate to the protection of lives, interests and freedoms and the application and development of all health plans tending to benefit the relations between the island and the United States”...

José Martí, who died in battle before having experienced neither the tribulations of his people because of the “reconcentration” nor the humiliation of the confiscated victory and the betrayed independence, wrote this from New York, October 29, 1889: “For the island to be North American we have no effort to make, because if we do not take advantage of the little time we have left to prevent it from happening, it will be done by its own decomposition. This is what this country is waiting for, and what we must oppose (...) because once the United States in Cuba, who will get them out?” If the current will of the Cuban people has tended for almost 40 years to respond effectively to this revolutionary challenge of José Martí, what is surprising that the current Cuban Head of State wanted to attend the presentation of the book on “reconcentration” of which we have quoted here excerpts. It was an opportunity for him to recall that the United States used the same method in Vietnam in what they called the “strategic villages”, a copy of what he did not hesitate to compare to these “Cuban concentration camps”. From there to consider that two of the greatest genocides of our time have a Cuban precedent... It was at least a school for Nazism and for imperialism.

For his part, Colonel Raul Izquierdo Canosa, author of the book cited, told “Granma” on February 1, 1889: “Maintaining such a high number of people in fortified places or areas under military control implied an increase in security measures in terms of means and men, although it is clear that the colonial authorities did not pay too much attention to the reception of the ‘reconcentrated’. In my opinion, Weyler’s initial mistake, in applying such a broad and complex measure, was that he had not previously created the necessary conditions for its realization.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> When they became aware of the problem they had created, the Spaniards adopted some measures such as the creation of cultivation areas on the outer lands of the fortified areas on

---

<sup>xxxvi</sup>Some quotation mark appear to be missing in this paragraph, I placed one where it was most likely supposed to be

January 1, 1897. It was already too late for Weyler, who could not prevent the series of defeats that followed that year.

On his return to Spain he enjoyed the sad glory of having been compared to the Duke of Alba whom Philip II had commissioned to extirpate Protestantism from the Netherlands, without success despite the execution of 8,000 people. He died in his bed in 1930, at the age of 92, not without having known one last avatar: convicted of participating in a plot against the dictator Primo de Riviera, thus denying a zealous biographer who had also granted “the elegance of never having risen up in arms against the government”. We were then in the middle of the Rif War, Spain had landed in Morocco as many soldiers as in Cuba 30 years earlier. Weyler was too old to offer his services...

**Jean Laille**

Jean Laille is a journalist at *L'Humanité* and a specialist in rail transport problems for Latin America and Spain.



## Chapter 24

# The Indian Genocide

Robert PAC

The Indians of the Americas were the victims of the greatest genocide in human history. To satisfy the appetites for wealth of Europeans, the indigenous peoples of the Americas were exterminated, in the West Indies, Mexico, South America, Brazil and North America by the Spanish, Portuguese and Anglo-Saxons. This genocide continues to this day in often very different forms.

The Greater Antilles (Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica) had some 1.5 million natives in 1492, when Christopher Columbus arrived. In 1550, there was no Indian left in these islands. The accounts of Bartholomew de Las Casas are proof of this: “While the Indians were so well disposed towards them, the Christians invaded these countries like rabid wolves who throw themselves on sweet and peaceful lambs. And, as all these men who came from Castile had no concern of their souls, thirsty for riches and possessed of the vilest passions, they put so much diligence into destroying these countries that no feather, not even any language, would suffice to recount. So much so that the population, initially estimated at eleven hundred thousand souls, is completely dissipated and destroyed.”<sup>346</sup>

“Other, more aggressive indigenous populations are organized for combat, but they were going to suffer the same fate: such as the Caniba (Martinique, Guadeloupe), the Puelches, Picunches, Tehuelches de la Pampa and Patagonia; such as the Araucans (Chile) whose resistance and courage stunned the conquerors commanded by Valdivia who paid with his life for his obstinacy;

---

<sup>346</sup>“Report of the Dominicans of the Spanish Isle to M. de Chievres” (1519) in *Las Casas et la défense des Indiens* (Las Casas and the defense of the Indians), Julliard, Éd., Paris, 1971.

such as the Chibchas (Colombia) who intervened in the penetration of the military columns of Jimenez de Quesada in search of the 'Eldorado'<sup>347</sup>.

## 24.1 Brazil

When the Portuguese "discovered" Brazil in 1500, it was populated by about 3 million Indians. In 1940, they were estimated at 500,000. By 1950, there were only 150,000. Today, there may be only 100,000 of them. The magnitude of the genocide can be measured. We can also see that this genocide continues today, since 800,000 Indians have been "physically liquidated" since 1900. Since then, 90 tribes have completely disappeared.

Each advance of "industrial civilization" drove the Indians back to increasingly inhospitable areas. This has been the case since the second half of the 19th century, when the industrial rubber "boom" broke out. In 1910, the "Indian Protection Service" (IPS) was established, whose function was, in principle, to assist Indians in the exercise of their "rights" and to promote better living conditions for them. In 1968, it is the shattering scandal. The authorities acknowledge that SPI officials were easily bribed by corrupt "settlers", adventurers and government officials and carried out themselves the sale of the natives they mistreated to the point of torture, as well as the sale of Indian lands, and that they turned a blind eye to the most atrocious methods used by the buyers, when they weren't helping: machine gun massacres, destruction of villages and their inhabitants with dynamite, poisoning with arsenic and pesticides. Thus disappeared entire tribes such as the "Cintas Largas" or the "Tapalunas" on which the army experimented with new methods of strafing and perished many "Parintintins" accused of having killed a soldier, the "Bocas Negras" declared rebels, the "Pacas Novos" who were pacified with poisoned sweets.

The FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) succeeded the SPI. But it soon proved powerless to fulfill its mission. Moreover, it is accused of subordinating the needs of the Indian people to the goals of national expansion and "capitalist development". FUNAI's collusion with private companies has very often been denounced by credible voices. In addition, FUNAI's budget is insufficient.

FUNAI and The Indian jurisprudence of Brazil aim above all to promote "the integration of Indians into the national community". This is the purpose of the "Indian Status" which brings together the legal measures concerning them. Chapter II of the Statute states that, as long as an Indian is not

---

<sup>347</sup>Félix Reichlen, in *Les Amérindiens et leur extermination délibérée* (Thez Indians and their deliberate extermination), Éd. Pierre-Marcel Fabre, Lausanne, 1987.

assimilated, he is under the guardianship of the State and cannot be protected by the Brazilian Constitution. But an assimilated Indian is no longer an Indian, since he has renounced his culture. For the Indian, this “assimilation” means being at the lowest level of the social ladder. It’s misery, begging, alcohol, prostitution for women... The Indian therefore has no legal existence in his otherness and specificity and he cannot perform valid legal acts without the assistance of the competent guardianship agency. Some experts believe that the guardianship system deprives Indians of basic human rights and places them in a situation similar to legalized slavery.

The Indian Statute denies the natives the possibility of a choice of their own concerning their future. Article 60 of the Statute speaks of “psychic development” rather than cultural development and considers the Indian as a man who is not yet developed, that is, as a child! In fact, does he consider him a man?

The Indian Statute does not recognize his ownership of the land (which remains a property of the federal state). Articles 34, 35 and 36 of Title 3 allow the deportation of entire indigenous populations by simple decree of the President of the Republic for various reasons including “national security” and the “development of the region in the highest national interest”.

## 24.2 Mexico and Guatemala

According to the work of the Berkeley School, there were twelve million Indians in Mexico when Cortes arrived in 1519. 120 years later, in the middle of the seventeenth century, there were only 1,270,000, according to Eric Wolf.

As in all of so-called “Latin” America, the contact between the two peoples, Spanish and Indian, resulted in a dizzying fall of the indigenous population. Famine, repression, massacres, forced labor and diseases brought by Europeans (especially smallpox), against which the inhabitants of the “new world” had no biological immunity, having lived in a closed circuit since the Paleolithic, caused 90% of the indigenous population of Mexico to perish during the 16th century.

Then, it is the conquest of the Mayan Empire by Alvarado in 1523 and the Inca Empire by the bloodthirsty Francisco Pizarre from 1532 to 1537. “Thus, in the space of some twenty years, empires built in several centuries are annihilated, indigenous communities dismantled and enslaved, the foundations of astonishing civilizations undermined.”<sup>348</sup>.

The population of Central and South America, estimated at 70 million before the arrival of the Spaniards by Dr. Rivet and the Berkeley School,

---

<sup>348</sup>Félix Reichlen in *op. cit.*

drops to some 20 million. The Aztec Empire alone, with a population of 25 million Indians in 1519, had only 6 million thirty years later, barely reaching one million at the end of the 16th century. At that time, in Central and South America, the Indian population is only 7 million people, ten times less than 80 years ago!

The massacres of Indians continue today in these regions, as the recent events in Chiapas have recalled. Amnesty International, in a 1985 report, reported massacres in Chiapas, Tzacacum on 24 March 1983 and the Comitán region in 1985. In Guatemala, it was the massacre of 108 Indian peasants in Panzós in May 1978. On 31 January 1980, 21 Quiché Indians were burned alive with flamethrowers in the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala City by elements of the Guatemalan army. Massacres of Indians by the Guatemalan army and “anti-riot” militias have increased in recent years, as they are systematically suspected of being complicit with guerrilla groups.

Everywhere in South America, massacres of Indians are reported. In Colombia, Peru, Chile... Indians are victims of multinational corporations and the “big stick” policy whereby the United States has a *de facto* right to scrutinize and intervene in the political development of these countries.

### 24.3 United States

In the current territory of the United States, estimates of the population at the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the early 17th century have long been imprecise. But we now agree on the figure of 10 to 12 million individuals. Officially, the Americans have long put forward the figure of one million, which was a way to reduce the importance of the Indians and to minimize the extent of the genocide that reduced the number of Indians to only 250,000 in 1900.

The genocide was a long tragic and bloody series of massacres, treaties violated by Europeans, epidemics of imported diseases against which the Indians had no immunity. All accompanied by theft of territories and an enterprise to destroy the ancestral cultures of the Amerindians.

The “reservations”, which were real concentration camps when they were created in 1851, and in which the Indians are still confined, constitute serious violations of Articles II B and II C of the United Nations International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which condemn the “serious injury to the physical or mental integrity of the members of the group and the intentional subjection of the group to conditions of existence before cause its total or partial physical destruction”.

For example, poor living conditions on reserves mean that one in three



children dies within six months of birth. On some reserves, there are 100 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to 8.1 for whites. The average life expectancy for an Indian is 63 years compared to 76 years for whites, but there are reserves where it falls to 46 years.

Suicides among Indians are double those of whites: 21.8 versus 11.3 per 100,000 people. They particularly affect young people. An Indian between the ages of 14 and 24 is four times more likely to kill himself than a white person. 75% of Indians are malnourished.

Alcoholism affects one in four men and one in eight women. Urban Indians suffer more from this scourge than those on reserves, but 80% of the Indian population is victimized in various ways by this form of alienation caused by idleness and awareness of its loss of identity. Drugs, the "crack" are now wreaking significant havoc among the Indians.

**Robert Pac**



## Chapter 25

# Capitalism to the assault of Asia

Yves GRENET

The forward march of humanity follows an upward trend but with advances and setbacks, rapid progress in some peoples or in some continents while others are slowing down. From the sixteenth century Europe took off with the development of science and technology but also of a merchant capitalism that would soon set out to conquer the world. Meanwhile, after having preceded Europe over millennia, Asia remained in the Middle Ages with its empires and traditional kingdoms, a fixed feudalism and a way of thinking that did not renew itself.

At the beginning of the second millennium AD, Chinese junks, ships of an unknown size in Europe, commonly went as far as India and Indonesia. In the second part of it, it is European ships of ever-increasing power that approach the coasts of Asia, merchant ships but also warships. Vasco da Gama arrived in Calicut in 1498, just five centuries ago, and the Portuguese monopoly at the expense of arab-Venetian trade was definitively established in 1507. Two years later the Portuguese reached Malacca, in 1511 Anboine, in 1514 China. Rival European interests clashed in Asia, Portuguese and Spanish in the Moluccas in 1526 for example. The former landed in Japan in 1542, the year in which the latter settled in the Philippines.

Eager for products of the land of Asia others arrive in its waters. The first English expedition to the East Indies was in 1591. The Dutch landed in Japan in 1599, then again in 1609; it was the same year of the creation of the Bank of Amsterdam, which made a treaty in 1619 with the East India Company. The English began to penetrate the Indian peninsula by settling in Madras in 1639, in Bombay in 1662. The French in turn founded their East India Company in 1664, settled in Surat in 1668, pondicherry in 1674. The creation of the Bank of England (1694) closely followed the founding

of Calcutta (1690); it is already a question of knowing what pays best to manufacture in Europe or to import: the English Parliament forbade the manufactures of the indians in 1719. After the French East India Company was reconstituted (1723) and the Paris Stock Exchange founded (1724), the French became increasingly interested in the Indies. The conflict between France and England on this territory is not only an extension of their wars in Europe; it is the rivalry between two merchant capitalisms at a time when industrial capitalism is growing. The Treaty of Paris of 1763 gave way to England to colonize the Indies, as shown that same year by the deposition of the Bengal soubab and the following year the defeat of the Great Mogol at Buxad. The ideas of liberalism accompanying the rise of capitalism are opposed in the name of "laissez-faire, laissez-passer" to the old mercantilist charters. The conflict between the old and the new led to the abolition of the privilege of the French East India Company in 1769 and its re-creation by Calonne in 1785, the Regulating Act concerning the English East India Company in 1773 and the India Act of 1784.

Faced with the first Western invasion, the peoples of Asia fought as was the case in the Indian peninsula: the Mahrattes fought against the French and English, and various Indian rulers tried to use their rivalries to safeguard the independence of their states. The Chinese fought against Russia, which was still largely pre-capitalist, and obtained from it the capitulation of Albasin (1685); they tried to keep Europeans away from their shores by limiting the possibility of disembarking there. As for Japan, it had as early as 1638 forbidden any foreigner access to its soil, as well as any travel outside the country to the subjects of the Empire, which was intended to protect an independence hostile to any change.

## 25.1 Asia colonized by Western capitalism

Before the nineteenth century already a number of human lives had been mowed in Asia by the irruption of the Europeans, their desire to conquer at the expense of the Asians and the conflicts between themselves, in which they had dragged them. Already some of the wealth of these peoples had been drained to the West, making their contribution to the primitive accumulation necessary for the great start of liberal capitalism.

In the nineteenth century, the desire to have access to sources of raw materials and to open up all markets gradually led to the consideration of colonizing the whole of Asia. At the time of the Congress of Vienna (1815), England controlled all of India except Assam, Punjabi and Sindh; further east it occupies Malacca and Penang. The Netherlands holds Java firmly

and has positions elsewhere in the Dutch East Indies, the future Indonesia. Spain has long dominated the Philippines. In India, we must add the French, Danish (in Bengal) and Portuguese (Goa) trading posts. Portugal still owns Timor and the port of Macau in China. This somewhat disparate set is just waiting to expand.

The colonial powers manage these territories in the best interests of their ruling classes. England renewed the privilege of the East India Company in 1813, with headquarters in London and Governor-General in Calcutta; it occupies half of the Indian territory and raises the tax for the metropolis. Until then, India had exported cotton; now it is forced to export its raw cotton and it is Manchester that manufactures cotton fabrics for the greater profit of its capitalists, which makes it possible, among other things, to finance the work of economists in favour of liberalism and free trade, the Manchester school precisely. Indian textile craftsmanship is ruined, misery settles among the peasants, leading to diseases and deaths to be written without reservations on the black book of British capitalism.

In the still independent Asian countries the economy is still pre-capitalist on the basis of subsistence peasant production. There are feudal workshops and factories owned by the daimyo in Japan, large private textile and porcelain factories in China. The merchants of these countries fail to break the traditional frameworks. Constantly reborn seeds of capitalism are constantly stifled. China of the Manchu Qing Dynasty, Vietnam of the Nguyen Dynasty, Japan of the shogun remain conservative and sclerotic states, such as Burma, Siam, Laos and Cambodia. Relations with the West were even more limited in the early nineteenth century than in previous centuries. The Japanese admit exchanges with the only Dutch in the island of Deshima in the harbor of Nagasaki, China receives foreigners in Guangzhou, there are some Western trading posts on the coast of Tonkin. Westerners are eager to see these markets open up to the large population.

In the meantime, they used the first half of the nineteenth century to expand their existing possessions. England conquered Sindh, Balochistan, in India, and waged war on the Sikhs of Punjab in 1845 and 1848. It moved to Singapore in 1819 and hung on to Malaysia where it could. It occupied the coast of Burma in 1825 before conquering Lower Burma in 1852. The Netherlands reduced the last independent sultanates neighboring its territories, the last being that of Aceh in Sumatra in 1869. Spain completed the conquest of the southern Philippines in 1840. Everywhere indigenous blood flows but it doesn't matter! Teak, tin, coal and rice are supplying Europe and new markets are opening up. Isn't that what matters? France, meanwhile, gained a foothold in the territories surrounding Annam. From 1862 to 1867 it seized Cochinchina to the south of it, imposing without too much dif-

ficulty its protectorate in Cambodia in 1863. A quarter of a century later it was the turn of Tonkin (1883-1885) at the cost of bloody fighting, the Third Republic taking over from the Second Empire. But the interests are the same. With the protectorates of Annam and Laos will exist for seventy years a French Indochina. Siam owes to its intermediate situation between the British and French territories the possibility of maintaining limited political independence: it is in fact a semi-colony.

But the masterpiece of the stranglehold of Western capitalism by letting the appearances of sovereignty be saved, it is certainly in China that we find it. The Chinese government, closed to the beauties of free trade, always refused to open its ports to foreign trade; a strong smuggling was practiced on its coasts by English traders, exchanging opium grown in Bengal by the East India Company for Chinese tea. The seizure of a shipment of opium by the Viceroy of Canton served as a pretext for the First Opium War, closed in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanjing, which opened five ports in southeastern China to foreign trade and ceded Hong Kong to the British. The second (1856) and third (1858) Opium Wars, with the assistance of France, resulted in the cession by the two treaties of Tien Tsin (1858 and 1860) of eleven other ports. The capitalist powers had behaved like drug-trading gangsters and thousands of Chinese lives had been sacrificed (in addition to those killed in battle, the famine of 1857 had killed 8 million people). But the Chinese market was open and would remain so.

European capitalism is now established for a long time in Asia. The British East India Company saw its commercial privilege and its right to administer the vast Indian complex renewed in 1833 and again in 1853. However, the liberation movement was already brewing against the domination of the English. In 1857, the revolt of the *cipayes*, part of their troops, broke out, whose uprising made London tremble. It was drowned in blood: 320,000 Indians were executed, including 200,000 civilians. The East India Company, with structures so far removed from liberalism, was dissolved in 1858. The advent of liberalism was marked by the opening of land to British colonists and to the capitalist interests of Great Britain acting on the spot through their representatives (*managing agencies*). Peasants whose land escaped the greed of the colonizers had their rural economy monetized so that they could pay taxes, first to the Company and then to the administration of the Crown. Terrible famines took place in 1860, 1866, 1873, 1877 whose deaths numbered in the millions. The last of these famines coincided with the festivities that made Queen Victoria the Empress of India.

In the Dutch East Indies there is rather some sort of state capitalism whose two pillars are the Dutch Trading Company (Nederlandse Handel Maatschappij) and the Bank of Java (Java Bank), respectively established in 1825 and

1828. A fifth of the land, often the most fertile, is handed over to the Dutch and cultivated by villagers subjected to drudgery. But here too, many capitalists of the metropolis, in the name of a liberalism in accordance with their interests, wanted the abolition of this system and export crops were, from 1860, withdrawn one after the other to the monopoly and open to free enterprise. In French Indochina, in addition to the cochinchina plantations, the land emptied of its inhabitants during the Tonkin War was, after 1885, handed over to companies based in mainland France. Everywhere the products of metropolitan industries find their outlets.

In this colonized Asia, China remains theoretically independent. Relative independence. From the Treaty of Nanking (1842) Chinese customs could only impose duties of 5% on goods from European industries, after the Third Opium War they were put in 1861 in the hands of officials of the capitalist powers. They take advantage of their position of strength to carve out concessions by the *fait accompli* like England in Shanghai. Japan, still closed to foreigners, was “opened” by Commodore Perry’s American squadron in 1853, which forced the Shogun government to let Westerners access its ports by the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854). Here too, customs duties have been limited for the benefit of their exports and forced recognition of the extraterritoriality of certain portions of Japanese territory for their benefit. But, unlike China where the Tai Ping revolt did not succeed in the 50s, the shogun accused of too much complacency towards the barbarians of the West was overthrown in 1867, which will allow the rapid accession to capitalism in this part of Asia.

## 25.2 Birth and development of an Asian capitalism

Capitalism was able to prevail in other continents through the revolutions of England, America and France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the bourgeoisies of these countries having used popular movements to impose themselves as a ruling class. On the other hand, the establishment of an Asian capitalism paradoxically began with a monarchical restoration. To move from one economic and social regime to another the paths are diverse; this doesn’t apply, moreover, to the capitalist regime alone.

Contact with the Westerners had caused Japan to rise in prices, lose its gold reserves and peasant revolts. A new expedition of these in 1863 had proved once again their material superiority. The accession to the throne of the new Emperor Mutsuhito in 1867 led to the abolition of the functions of

shogun and the beginning of 1st Meiji, that of the “enlightened government”. Feudalism was abolished in its various aspects, but the new Japanese ruling class was composed not only of the merchant bourgeoisie but of many feudal lords who easily switched to capitalism, like many English lords in the previous century. But in Japan it is the state that allows the start of a modern economy for the establishment of which primitive accumulation would otherwise have been insufficient. Companies founded by the Japanese state were handed over by him to the private sector in 1881 at very low prices. There are companies of various sizes but some dominate the others and organize themselves into cartels (*zaibatsu*) as early as 1893, the most famous of which are Mitsui, Mitsubishi and Sumitomo. Capitalist Japan is moving fast, very fast forward.

In China a capitalist sector appeared and a certain industrialization began in this second half of the nineteenth century. Imports from the outside capitalist world harm certain Chinese industries (textiles in particular). Ports open to foreigners, however, constitute centres of diffusion of capitalism; to mark the possible synthesis of the old and the new, we even speak of “Confucian capitalism”. But the hinterland and the countryside remain traditional. A floating sub-proletariat exists, part of which emigrated to form coolies all over the Pacific, while more affluent elements are added to this Chinese diaspora that will play its full role in twentieth-century capitalism, especially in Southeast Asia. In China itself capitalism lives in close osmosis with the bureaucracy, which does not give at all the same results as in Japan. Capital is insufficient, management is often not rational, markets are limited. Above all, competition from better-organized Westerners, with an efficient banking sector and control of foreign trade, is a major obstacle on the road to Chinese capitalism.

Elsewhere in Asia, colonial domination plays a role as a brake. Rare are the cases of large companies created under these conditions such as those of the Birla family or the Tata family in India, whose mines and steel mills of Jamshedpur started on a large scale at the end of the nineteenth century. The Indian bourgeoisie also acquired certain structures, such as the Madras Trade Association, created in 1856 and transformed in 1910 into the South India Chamber of Commerce. In the colonial countries the bourgeoisie is above all a comprador bourgeoisie at the service of foreign capitalism and the one that works for the establishment of national enterprises remains limited.

### 25.3 Rivalries between capitalisms in Asia

“There is room in Asia for all of us”, proclaimed Lord Salisbury in 1880.



Even if “all of us” meant Western capitalist states, it was already an optimistic view, as the rivalries in Southeast Asia at the same time showed. In addition, there was Japanese expansionism, which would have to be reckoned with. The notions of “Empire” and “Imperialism” were praiseworthily spread by authors ranging from Disraeli to Kipling before it was made clear by Hobson, Hilferding and Lenin that imperialism was the union of industrial capital and bank capital to form a finance capital aimed at world domination.

At the beginning of the Meiji era, the Japanese ruling class, not feeling ready, had given up attacking Korea in 1873. It had nevertheless secured its control over the Islands of Bonin, Kurils and Ryukyu. Then Japan had proposed to China to establish a condominium on Korea in 1891, a project that did not succeed. On the contrary, the desire for expansion led Japan of large integrated companies, imperialist Japan to rush to China in 1894. By the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) it obtained not only Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands, but a large indemnity, which served to make Japanese capitalism develop even faster, and the right to build businesses in north-eastern China (Manchuria). But Russia forced it to leave Port Arthur.

The imperialist powers then embarked on the “battle of concessions” (1896-1902), each of them, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, striving to win the best share and jealously watching that of the neighbor. They agreed following the Boxer Rebellion in order to intervene in 1900 with all the brutality their troops were capable of. For the first time Japan then attacked a European state, Russia (1904-1905), defeated it and the Treaty of Portsmouth earned it Liaodong in China, southern Sakhalin and a free hand in Manchuria and Korea. The United States, which has not managed to carve out a zone of influence on Chinese soil, has instead ousted the Spaniards from the Philippines granted to them by the Treaty of Paris (1898).

The formation of a Chinese bourgeoisie, proletariat and intelligentsia linked to the progress of capitalism cannot remain without political consequences. Founded by Sun Yat-sen the “Union for the Renaissance of China” (1894) and the Tong Meng-hui League (1905) maintained insurrectional activities that led to the October Revolution of 1911. Described by British authors as an “invisible bourgeois revolution”, it established the republic, soon led by the reactionary general Yuan Shi-Kai to whom the Westerners hastened to grant a “loan of reorganization”. At the same time, the largest financial groups established in Asia (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Yokohama Specie Bank, Banque de l’Indochine, Deutsche Asiatische Bank, Russian-Asian Bank and several American banks) agreed to form the “First Consortium” in 1912, in order to share the profits. This attempt at super-imperialism was all the less lasting as the First World War soon broke out.

In Asia, it mainly benefited Japanese imperialism. Japan, which had imposed its protectorate on Korea in 1905 and brutally annexed it in 1910, entered the war on the side of the Allies as early as 1914, while China waited until 1917 to do so. Japan took the opportunity to demand that it accept its “twenty-one demands”, settle in Shandong and penetrate the Chinese market more than ever. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 the Allies agreed with Japan to intervene in the Far East against Soviet forces. At the Treaty of Versailles (1919) Japan obtained to replace Germany in Shandong, but the Westerners forced it at the Washington Conference (1921-1922) to return it to China, at the same time as to renounce its project to annex part of Eastern Siberia and Mongolia. The fury of the Japanese imperialists then prevented the realization of a “Second Consortium”. Decidedly super-imperialism was very difficult to practice!

The colonial empires of the nineteenth century continued their careers in the first forty years of the twentieth century. In India, British colonial capitalism continued to dominate, but Indian capitalism was gaining momentum, led in particular by the Parsis of Bombay and the Marwaris, money lenders from Rajputana. On the whole, Indian businessmen remain confined to light industry, but there are exceptions: the Tata Group continues its career in heavy industry. From 1927 onwards, Indian capitalists regrouped in the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, complained about the “drain of wealth” exerted to their detriment by Great Britain and significantly inspired the Congress Party founded in 1920. The granting of certain regional powers to the Indians by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 and the Round Table Conferences of 1930-1931 satisfied them. Linked to world capitalism, India felt the consequences of the 1929 crisis, which affected workers, peasants and civil servants. The movement of civil disobedience led by Gandhi in 1932-1933 led London to concede by the 1935 Statute an internal autonomy which, although very limited, was no less real.

In the colonies of Southeast Asia (Dutch East Indies, Philippines, French Indochina, Malaysia) the comprador bourgeoisie linked to foreign capitalism is, as we have seen, generally stronger than the national bourgeoisie. For plantation workers as well as for those in mines and ports, living conditions are very harsh. Social movements stood up against the exploitation of which they were victims, such as the workers’ strikes in Saigon in 1927-1929. An insurrectional movement in the Dutch East Indies failed in 1926-1927. In all these countries too, the crisis of world capitalism of 1929 hit the peoples. The decline in demand for raw materials and their prices affected both colonial companies that were laying off workers and small indigenous producers deprived of outlets. The peasants of North Luzon in the Philippines rose up in 1931, strikes broke out in Manila, others in Malaysia, others in Rangoon. In

Indochina, the Nghe-An uprising in 1931 was militarily suppressed, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of convicts in Poulo Condore's prison. Colonial power remained unchanged until the war, there as in the Dutch East Indies. On the contrary, the Americans considered it wiser for their capital to grant internal autonomy to the Philippines and the British did the same for Burma, detached from India in 1935.

The period from 1917 to 1923 has been described by British authors as the "golden age of Chinese capitalism". The latter had indeed benefited from the commands of the world at war. Many banks were established as a result of the official Bank of China in 1918. The boom lasted until 1923. But the "warlords" held a significant part of the provinces, often supported by the Western powers benefiting from "unequal treaties" (customs, extraterritoriality, concessions, tax privileges). From 1924 to 1927, Guomintang (Kuomintang) troops led by Jiang Jie-si (Chiang Kai-shek) drove out the "warlords". He himself had the financiers Kong and Song as his brothers-in-law and had nothing to deny to the bourgeoisie. Under his pressure he broke in 1927 with the Communists, who would form the "Republic of Chinese Soviets" in 1931, before leading the Long March to Shenxi in 1934. The Guomintang in turn receives the support of the Western imperialists, who cede customs and legal advantages to put it in a position of strength vis-à-vis the Chinese people. The "Four-Year Plan" aims to strengthen China's industry, in which banks invest huge amounts of capital. The annual growth rate was 8 to 9%. But the global crisis reached China in 1932, so that a quarter of China's industries had stopped working by 1935. The recovery was taking shape, the Communists had offered Jiang negotiations, and an agreement was in sight when Japan launched a general war against China in July 1937.

Japanese capitalism developed during this time and in 1930 its heavy industry could compete with that of the Westerners. Part of the Japanese bourgeoisie is looking for an expansion that is not necessarily warlike. Japan exports its capital, especially to East Asia. Japanese investment in China more than quintupled between 1914 and 1930. The Mitsui and Mitsubishi zaibatsu control the South Manchurian Company, the Bank of Taiwan, the huge Naigai Wata Kaisha cotton company that has many factories in China. Japanese interests also owned mines and railways. A proper colonial exploitation is made from Taiwan and Korea. However, the Japanese military budget was cut by more than half between 1919 and 1926. The Kinseikai-Minseito cabinets of 1924-1927 and 1929-1931 sought to reach an agreement with the Chinese nationalists of the Guomintang and with the United States. But, in the meantime, a military expedition was sent in 1928 to Shandong against Jiang's troops.

Suffering the consequences of the crisis of 1929, Japanese imperialism

became frankly military and aggressive. From 1932, the army is actually in power and big capital lets it expand by other methods that require a strong increase in the military budget. The “Manchu Incident” of 1931, followed by a landing in Shanghai, led in September 1932 to the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo. After the assassination of many politicians by young officers in February 1936, the military no longer had any obstacles to their aggressive designs, even if some of the zaibatsu were worried. “Greater Asia” under Japanese rule was their ideal. An engagement between Chinese and Japanese troops in July 1937 near Beijing (Beijing) was used by the militarists to launch Japan into an assault on China.

## 25.4 Japanese imperialism, liberation movements and the end of colonization in Asia

World War II began on Asian soil in 1937. Japanese troops advanced in 1937-1938 in northern China, in the Yangtze River basin and around Guangzhou. This war in China was extremely cruel with mass killings and the use of combat gases (which were not used elsewhere until 1945). The capture of Nanjing and its massacres resulting in 300,000 deaths have remained in all Chinese memories. The Nationalist government, which took refuge in Chongqing, retained only southern and western China, while the Japanese installed a puppet government in Nanjing in 1940 led by Wang Jing-wei. However, the nationalist and especially communist guerrillas organized themselves to resist the Japanese troops.

The generalization of the war waged by Japanese militarism in Asia began with the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, confronting it in the Pacific and Asia with the United States and Great Britain. Within a few months Japanese troops occupied Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines and Burma. Thailand following an agreement also of December 1941 let these troops pass. They reach the gates of India and Australia. Japanese imperialism establishes its “Sphere of Asian Co-Prosperity”, a modest cover of its undivided domination. Japan exploits coal from China, oil from Indonesia and Burma, tin and bauxite from Malaysia and Indonesia, cotton from the Philippines, rice from Thailand and Cochinchina for the benefit of its war economy. Like that of his colony in Korea, it brutally recruited labor from Malaysia and Indonesia. Japanese capitalism derives increased profits from the war; in 1942 the four major zaibatsu controlled 50% of Japan’s financial capital, 32% of heavy industry and 61% of Japan’s sea transport; they finance the “Development Companies”

#### 25.4. JAPANESE IMPERIALISM; END OF COLONIZATION IN ASIA 373

of occupied North and Central China, ensuring the maximum exploitation of Chinese wealth.

But other Asian capitalisms also benefit from the war. On the side of the Chongqing government, the “big four families” (Chen, Jiang, Kong, Song) also enriched themselves both by controlling production and by speculating on the dollar. Runaway inflation is ravaging Nationalist China. It is strong in Japan and very strong in India. Wages do not follow. Peasants, workers and the middle classes are suffering from living conditions worse than ever. In addition to the direct victims of the fighting, the Henan famine killed four million people in 1942, the Bengal famine at least three million in 1942-1943 and the Tonkin famine two million in 1944. So many victims who will never have a place on any war memorial but deserve to be included in this *Black Book*.

When Japanese forces were forced to retreat everywhere, the American atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan was forced to surrender in August 1945, the face of Asia was changed forever. The Japanese had, as in China, installed governments to their devotion in Burma, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia and some nationalists from these countries had agreed to follow them. But the people soon understood that the “Sphere of Asian Co-Prosperity” was working in the interests of Japan alone. Movements such as the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army in Malaysia, the Anti-Fascist People Freedom League in Burma, the Viet Minh in Vietnam, the Hukbalahap in the Philippines, all joining the demands for national independence those for social progress, had popular support. As soon as the Japanese capitulation was surrendered, power was taken by nationalists in Burma and Indonesia, but in the latter country it was soon challenged.

Western capitalist and colonialist states had the choice between two attitudes: recognizing national liberation movements, granting the independence for which they were fighting, or opposing them with force. The United States admitted independence from the Philippines in 1946, Britain from Burma and Ceylon in 1948. The armed struggle was the lot of Indonesia in 1947-1948 and Vietnam from 1946 to 1954. The Netherlands and France having made the wrong choice, have lost all their economic positions and ceased for a time to play a role in Southeast Asia. Moreover, the non-application of the Geneva Accords of 1954 led to the American war in Vietnam from 1959 to 1975 and the reunification of the country with a socialist regime that no capitalism wanted. In Malaysia, Britain fought the progressive liberation movement from 1948 to 1953, when it handed over power to pro-Western elements, with British capitalism continuing to play a dominant role in the Malay Peninsula. Japan has, of course, lost all its colonies, with Korea being

independent but divided between a socialist North and a capitalist South, and Taiwan handed over to nationalist China.

Labour Britain had recognized as early as 1945 the principle of independence for the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula that Churchill so disliked. But English colonialism had sown the seeds of division between the secular-leaning Congress Party and the Muslim League. From then on, when independence was granted in August 1947, it was granted to India on the one hand and Pakistan on the other. London managed to make them two dominions within the Commonwealth, but there were at least 300,000 deaths by massacres and executions, 500,000 by famine and 7 million refugees who lost everything on the roads.

In China, the Guo-min-dang had emerged from the war rather weakened and the Communists rather strengthened. The “big four families” of Chinese capitalism thought only of taking credit for the confiscated Japanese companies, while inflation continued and the people suffered from poverty and repression. After an attempt to form a coalition government, civil war resumed in late 1946. The Guo-min-dang troops, initially driven out of the countryside, lost the encircled cities: Shenyang (Mukden), Beijing (Beijing), Nanjing, Shanghai and Wuhan. With the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, 1949, and despite the maintenance of a “national capitalism”, Chinese capitalism seemed to have its heyday behind it.

## 25.5 The capitalist economies of post-war Asia

By the end of World War, Japan had lost 2 million dead and its economy was in ruins. The American occupiers wanted to dismantle the financial power of the zaibatsu. The companies had to hand over their shares to the authorities and were decalcified. These were more antitrust than anti-capitalist measures, which will come as no surprise to the victorious American capitalism. Moreover, this policy ended in 1948 in the face of the rise of the Cold War and in the approach of communist success in China. With the help of the occupiers, the Japanese employers broke the strikes and purged the progressive elements of the enterprises. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 brought about the San Francisco Peace Treaty between the United States, some of the Allies and Japan (1951) and the revival of an embryonic Japanese army. The recovery of the economy known as the Jimmu boom began, and in 1955 the level of production of the 30s was caught up. Gross national product is growing by 10 per cent per year. Japan also succeeded, in 1955, in gaining admission to GATT. The Kishi government negotiated a new treaty with the United States restricting the use of U.S. bases in Japan for

foreign operations in Asia, signed in early 1960; however, as it extended the American alliance, ratification met with popular protest. The new Prime Minister Ikeda promised to double the GNP in ten years but the country really achieved it in five (1965) and continued to grow by 10 to 14% per year. In 1970, Japan was the third largest economy in the world behind the United States and the Soviet Union. Japanese capitalism organizes with the state a Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), which helps it in its purchases and sales, and subsidiaries of Japanese companies multiply in South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Japan having become the second largest trading partner of the United States, whose market it has penetrated thanks to prices lower than its own, there is no shortage of reasons for friction between the two imperialist powers. The US trade balance is in deficit (one billion dollars a year on average) while Japanese capitalists refuse to lower their own tariffs. The inconvertibility of the gold dollar announced by Nixon in 1971 was accompanied by a trade surcharge that penalized Japanese products. The first oil shock (1973) led to a deficit in Japan's current account balance. The yen, which had become a strong currency sought after on the foreign exchange markets, and Japanese exporters experienced the consequences from 1976 onwards. This period nevertheless began with the Izanagi economic boom (1965-1970). From 1963 to 1972, the growth rate averaged 10.5% per year. It was lower from 1973 to 1985, at around 4.1% per year. The rise of the yen in 1985-1986, due to the desired depreciation of the dollar, again threatened Japanese exports. Japan responds by saving energy, developing research in large companies (Fujitsu, Hitachi, Honda, Nippon Electric, Nissan, Toshiba, Toyota), decentralizing labor industries in Southeast Asia, and investing in developed countries. Japanese capitalism has abundant savings (4.5% of gross domestic product), unparalleled management and information, compulsory levies are the lowest in the developed countries and military spending is only around 1% of GNP. Nevertheless, after the Heisei boom (1986-1990), which was weaker than the previous ones, Japan entered a period of low growth in 1992 (1.4% average growth). In 1997-1998 it experienced the most classic crisis of over-production, that is to say of under-consumption, of which all capitalism is threatened.

The Second World War, like the First, was a profitable period for Indian capitalism. The British government became the major customer of the peninsula's steel and textile industries, and as a result, India moved from debtor to creditor. A fifteen-year plan (1947-1962), called the Bombay Plan, was adopted, which provided for a doubling of per capita income during this period. According to him, the state was to finance the basic industries and the private capitalists the sectors promising a quick profit. This design full of

charm for the latter had received the name of “mixed economy”. The Bombay Plan has long continued to inspire the Indian economy. Nehru passed three five-year plans: 1951-1956, 1956-1961 and 1961-1966. Private industry was given protective tariffs, or even imports were banned. The Rs 163 million in public investment during the three plans favoured industry and services at the expense of agriculture. Heavy industry developed rapidly, that of consumer goods much slower. India received more than \$9 billion in aid from 1951 to 1966.

The “Green Revolution” dominated the periods 1961-1965 and 1966-1970 and agricultural production grew faster than the population. But 1965-1967 were the years of the industrial recession. The weaknesses of Indian capitalism were emerging, as was the inefficiency of the public sector. The industrial recovery of the years 1970-1977 was accompanied by concentration. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi privatized Indian banks for a time in 1971. Industrial production grew slowly until 1984 and then faster (8% per year) until 1990. In the 80s, investment accounted for nearly 25% of gross domestic product. The World Bank forced India to devalue the rupee by 50% in 1966. That same year the conflict with Pakistan ended in Tashkent but it resumed during the East Pakistan uprising in 1971, which gave birth to Bangladesh. Indian capitalism succeeded in 1981 in banning strikes in “essential” sectors, which did not prevent a general strike from killing 700 people in early 1982. India is seeking foreign investment for its industries and is striving to conquer markets in Southeast Asia. Under the governments of Indira Gandhi, assassinated in 1984, then her son Rajiv (1984-1989) and Narasimha Rao (1990-1996), India conducted a nuclear test and acquired a missile with a range of 2,500 km. The continuing tension raises fears that India, now one of the world’s largest capitalist powers, will sooner or later face neighbouring Pakistan.

Indeed, Pakistan is in conflict with it, especially over Kashmir. It has always oscillated between adopting an Islamic State position, which it has taken several times since 1956, and a more secular attitude. Progressive reforms (nationalizations, agrarian reform) were adopted in 1971 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and in 1973 by Fazal Elahi Chaudri. But a military coup put General Mohammed Zia al-Haq in power in 1978, and Sharia law was adopted as the supreme law. The country took an active part in the war in Afghanistan and received \$3 billion in U.S. aid in six years. Daughter of Ali Bhutto executed in 1979, her daughter Benazir Bhutto became prime minister in 1988, was deposed in 1990, returned to power in 1993. Despite the unrest, the growth rate has fluctuated in recent years between 4 and 6% per year. The Pakistani ruling class retains many more traits of feudalism than the Indian one. This probably partly explains the country’s political oscillations. It admitted in



1992 that it could manufacture nuclear weapons and many believe that it undertook this manufacture. The Indian peninsula may from one moment to the next ignite as a result of national rivalries between the ruling classes confronted that are reminiscent of what capitalist Europe experienced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but this time in the nuclear age.

The economies of southeast Asian countries emerged from World War II extremely weakened by the destruction (Burma, Philippines) and other consequences of the war. Whatever the differences from one country to another, the liberation movements all had economic development on their agenda. The newly independent states set up central banks, the creation of which in the 50s and 60s was recommended by the World Bank as well as... central planning, which is enough to show that this is a distant time. Thus was born the five-year plan (Repelita 1) in Indonesia in 1969, the first Malaysian plan in 1970, the twenty-year plan for Burma in 1972 and three five-year plans in Thailand, which followed one another after that date. Government participation in the economy was strong in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, providing 10 to 40 per cent of gross national product. These states used protectionism to promote the growth of their infant industries. Some of them claimed at that time to be between capitalism and socialism. It was generally a capitalism where the state played an important role and where the neocolonialism of the former colonial powers still held strong positions (Burma, Malaysia). In order to keep these countries in their camp, the United States provided aid (\$2.6 billion for Thailand between 1950 and 1975 for example) obviously welcomed by the pro-Western ruling classes.

After the American defeat in Vietnam (1975), the capitalisms of South-east Asia embarked on policies of growth in their industry, trade and financial activities. Already in Indonesia after the coup d'état of 1965 which had caused 500,000 deaths and 700,000 arrests, Suharto from 1967 had given this country an impetus both nationalist and favorable to the great interests by developing a real colonialism (West New Guinea, Celebes, Moluccas, Timor). In Thailand, military coups (1975, 1977, 1988) as in the Philippines under the presidencies of Marcos (1965-1986), Cory Aquino (1986-1992) and Fidel Ramos (from 1992), capitalism is strengthening. The "newly industrialized countries" open their doors to foreign capitalism, obeying the rules of neoliberalism advocated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Growth rates during the 90s were around 8% per year. Everywhere we give as a model the "new tigers" who have thus found the ways of economic take-off.

To these "new tigers" we must join the "new dragons" no less capitalist than them. Taiwan had an average annual growth rate of 6.7% from 1977 to 1996, with peaks of up to 13% Hong Kong has set its growth rate at 5% for ten

years and South Korea at 8.4%. The latter has become the eleventh industrial power in the world. South Korean capitalism is distinguished by the activity of its conglomerates or chaebol (Samsung, Daewoo, Kia, Halla, Hyundai, LG, Sangyong), which can not be better compared than to Japanese zaibatsu. It is also marked by the many scandals of its ruling class, which has never hesitated to exert cruel repression against workers, students and opponents. Two former presidents of the Republic were sentenced in 1996, one Chun Doo-hwan to life, the other Roh Tae-woo to 17 years in prison for the 1979 military coup and the massacre of at least 2,000 people participating in the popular demonstrations in Kwangju in 1980, the most notorious repressive fact. The leaders of the main chaebol have all been punished by the courts for corruption.

The economic successes of both “new dragons” and “new tigers” attracted foreign capital to countries whose currencies were aligned with the dollar but where profits were higher than those made in the Western world. When difficulties arose in 1997 this capital, representing speculative investments, began to flee the capitalist countries of East Asia. The crisis began in Thailand in July and then spread to the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Currencies had to be devalued (by 15-55%) and IMF and Japanese assistance was sought. The disaster spread from stock exchange to stock exchange. Hong Kong reunited in July with China, but forming a special administrative region still fully capitalist, was reached in October and South Korea in December. The same month in the latter country, discontent led to the election to the presidency of the opponent Kim Dae-jung who accepted the IMF plan, pardoned his predecessors and the leaders of the chaebol, but demanded from them a great rigor of management. The financial crisis did not end in March 1998. What is certain is that the growth rate of the East Asian countries will be lower than in previous years at least until the year 2000 and probably beyond. Bankruptcies, the cessation of foreign investment have led to layoffs, unemployment and protest movements repressed by force as in Indonesia. Asian capitalism rallied to neoliberalism no longer appears as the model that it was enough to imitate for the Third World to access a real development.

## 25.6 What is the future of capitalism in Asia?

Asia played a key role in the peoples' claim to independence after the Second World War. The 29 Asian and African countries meeting in Bandung in 1955 had demanded an end to colonialism and the right of the new States to assume their independence. The Non-Aligned Movement, which Asian personalities such as Nehru had strongly contributed to promoting, affirmed

the right of each people to choose its path, capitalist or socialist, and to dispose of its natural wealth within the framework of a New International Economic Order (Algiers 1973).

The path of capitalism was therefore not fatal. If it was followed in many Asian countries, as we have just seen, it was in the interest of the local ruling classes but strongly supported and aided by the greatest capitalist power in the world, the United States of America. Still, they experienced difficulties from the beginning: when they wanted in 1954, on the model of NATO, to create the OTASE (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) they found only three Asian states to join it (the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan). It is true that the Americans continued to occupy South Korea and exert a strong influence there in the years of the rise of its capitalism. It is also true that they protected the Chinese nationalists, keeping theirs in Taiwan, even after the United States recognized the People's Republic of China in 1979, based on their interests. The role played by them in Thailand, Indonesia, South Vietnam until 1975, and the Philippines cannot be underestimated.

Their action has always been relayed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, where the United States has the highest quotas and whose headquarters are therefore in Washington. For twenty years, these financial institutions have been the thurifers of neoliberalism in Asia and around the world. The Asian Development Bank, providing interest-free or very low-interest loans, has also played its part in the flourishing of capitalism in Asia.

North Korea from 1946, mainland China after 1949, North Vietnam after 1954 and the whole of Vietnam since 1975, Laos finally chose a path other than that of capitalism. In China, however, private companies have been authorized since 1978. Joint enterprises were established with foreign capital from 1980 and special free and economic zones were established. The slogan "socialist market economy" was launched in 1992. 3,200 joint-stock companies listed on the stock exchange (Shenzhen and Shanghai) have been established. Foreign investment has increased. Vietnam has followed a similar path, although there has been no stock market so far in that country and its leaders are showing great caution. The IMF and the World Bank insist that reforms in both states be carried out to the end, which means in the minds of these financial institutions a full return to capitalism. Officials in both countries, however, have always presented these reforms as not calling into question the socialist character of their regimes.

Our time is one of economic integration on all continents. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) has played only a limited role as a result of the Indo-Pakistan rivalry. But the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations or ASEAN,( Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand), created in 1967 in Bangkok, is an important economic and political organization with links with the European Union and other groupings of states. Vietnam joined in 1995. On the other hand, the Japanese imperialists seize every opportunity, such as the East Asian financial crisis, to seek to establish a yen zone in Asia, in which we can see a softened version of the “sphere of co-prosperity” of unfortunate memory. The workhorse of their American rivals is rather the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation launched in 1989 by Australia but which they took over in 1994 and which should lead in 2010 to a vast free trade area encompassing both sides of the Pacific.

After the return to capitalism of the countries of the former Soviet Union and those of Eastern Europe, the dominant thought in the West is that this return must take place in Asia as everywhere because capitalism is the only conceivable human regime. That he is human is what reading this book can legitimately cast doubt on. That it is the only conceivable one is no more true. He had predecessors who were not capitalists and competed in this twentieth century with another who was not either. The domination of big capital is heavy to bear. Despite the stranglehold on information and the “single thought ><sup>xxxvii</sup>” people are realizing it every day and, among them, the Asian masses facing the consequences of the financial crisis. It is inevitable that they will aspire to something else to ensure a better life and find the way to it. For capitalism is not the future for Asia or for the rest of the world.

**Yves Grenet**

---

<sup>xxxvii</sup>“>” is in the original. You probably wonder why there is “>” here. Well so do I. It might be a typo but since I’m not sure I let it as it is

## Chapter 26

# Migrations in the XIXth and XXth century: contribution to capitalism's history

Caroline Andréani

Men have always migrated and one can legitimately ask the question of why capitalism would have a particular responsibility for migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Wouldn't this be a view of the mind, a bias against a system that, after all, only takes advantage of a natural phenomenon attested since prehistoric times, human migrations?

Traditionally, migration historians have broken down the causes of migration into two poles: repulsive causes and attractive causes. Repulsive causes are the set of reasons that can push individuals to leave their place of living: misery, famines, wars, political or religious conflicts. Attractive causes are the search for new land and the attraction of fortune. The same then make subtle distinctions between "spontaneous" and organized migrations.

Such definitions obviously guide the perception that one can have of migratory phenomena. First, repulsive causes and attractive causes combine in the majority of cases. It is hard to imagine an individual driven from his home for many reasons looking for a place to live the same misery and persecution. Second, the very notion of "spontaneous" migration is fallacious. Do we migrate spontaneously when fleeing intolerable political or economic situations? It would probably be more appropriate to talk about forced migration and individual or collective routes.

Migration is in essence the consequence of extreme situations where the individual has as an escape only the departure to an unknown place and destiny. It is then probably possible to distinguish between social advancement

routes and survival migrations. The social advancement route is planned by individuals who leave their place of residence with a medium- and long-term strategy of social advancement, for themselves or for the next generation. Survival migration is the immediate response to intolerable situations: people flee to ensure their survival. This type of migration often takes on a long-term character that the persons concerned had not originally expected.

Over the period in question, I will propose a classification — with the limits that any classification implies — distinguishing: colonial migration, economic migration, and political migration. The two can also be combined.

## 26.1 Colonial migration

Colonial migrations were initiated by the colonization of the Americas as early as the sixteenth century. While population flows are regular, they remain limited by the weakness of technical means. It is estimated that the number of Spaniards who went to colonize Latin America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries amounted to 2 million individuals, the Portuguese to 1 million. The African slave trade would represent, for the same period, between 7 and 9 million individuals<sup>349</sup>.

The influence of capitalism on migration finds its first expression here. Faced with the material problem of the “development” of Latin America, the Spanish and Portuguese quickly compensated for the disappearance of Indian slaves by importing a workforce from Africa. Captured, transported as vulgar commodities, African slaves are employed in mines and farms for the benefit of the European, Spanish and Portuguese elites, soon Dutch, French and English.

In the nineteenth century, the attention of Europeans turned to Asia, Oceania and Africa. Not that these continents have not been known before. But the combined phenomena of the development of industrial capitalism and its imperatives (access to low-cost raw materials, development of new consumer markets, etc.), and the development of technical means, facilitate conquests and allow the maintenance of the European presence in continents hitherto difficult to access.

Population flows were less to these continents than to the Americas. Despite a strong ideological incitement, textbooks, colonial exhibitions, travelogues of geographical societies, religious propaganda magnifying the colonial

---

<sup>349</sup>Figures on trafficking are controversial, with some putting forward the highly unlikely estimate of 100 million Africans deported. This does not stand up to analysis, especially when one takes into account the population density of Africa and the transport capacities of ships crossing the Atlantic.

enterprise, the millions of Europeans who were candidates for emigration preferred in their majority other destinations.

Economic necessity drove Europeans to leave for the colonies. The testimony of Marguerite Duras on the small French settlers in Indochina<sup>350</sup>, that of Simenon in his report published in 1932 in *Voilà* on colonial Africa, clearly show the springs of these departures: a blocked future in metropolitan France, the possibility of living better in countries where, even without money, the European inevitably has an advantage over the colonized. In his report entitled “The Hour of the Negro”, Simenon leaves no ambiguity: “He (the European settler) will also leave because there, he has a boy who waxes his shoes and he can yell at him! He will leave mainly because he has no other future, because places are scarce in France. (...) There where, at least, the fact of being white, the last of the whites, is already a superiority...”

Nineteenth-century politicians and theorists had advocated settlements. This bet was successful in Oceania: Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania have become, like North America, colonies populated almost entirely by Europeans. The English colonization left virtually no chance of survival for the Pacific peoples. The Tasmanians were completely exterminated<sup>351</sup>. Aboriginal Australians and Maori of New Zealand were massacred, turned back to the least productive land, herded into reserves<sup>352</sup>. They still do not stop dying slowly at the moment: unemployment, delinquency, alcoholism are their daily lot.

The colonization of Australia began in the late eighteenth century. The British were careful to prevent the settlement of non-European populations, including Chinese and Japanese. First populated by convicts (they were 150,000 in the mid-nineteenth century), Australia then attracted breeders, then gold miners from 1851 with the discovery of gold resources. This colonization continued late since from 1946, the Australian government favored the settlement of 1,500,000 migrants, mainly British. This migratory movement continues to this day: since the end of apartheid, many “petty whites”<sup>XXXVIII</sup> from South Africa have settled in Australia.

Europeans have also tried to turn parts of Africa into settlements. South

---

<sup>350</sup> *Le barrage contre le Pacifique* (The dam against the Pacific) Paris, 1950

<sup>351</sup> The last Tasmanian died in 1874.

<sup>352</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, the Aborigines were probably between 300,000 and 400,000 spread throughout the country. In 1989, there were 40,000 and 30,000 mixed. Recently, the Australian government was questioned about a policy carried out since the 1950s which consisted of removing Aboriginal children from their families and entrusting them to state institutions... Hundreds of children have been victims of these practices.

<sup>XXXVIII</sup> (*Petits blancs* in the original, whose literal translation is *little whites*, an expression referring to poor whites settlers. White trash sounded too lumpen, little sounded like it was referring to height.)

Africa and Rhodesia were frequent destinations for English migrants from 1806, when England took possession of the territory. In addition to the pre-existing European colonization<sup>353</sup>, there was a massive English colonization from 1820 onwards. This European population will experience another important surge from the 1860s with the discovery of gold and diamond mines. The English colonization then invents the large-scale deportation of colonized from other continents: between 1860 and 1909, 120,000 Indians were sent to South Africa to work in conditions of quasi-slavery in the mining industry.

Other attempts ended in failure. From 1870, the France wanted to transform Algeria into a settlement. Through a policy of automatic naturalization of Jewish Algerians (1870) and Europeans (1896), it succeeded in artificially increasing the European population. France sought to attract would-be emigrants by offering them land<sup>354</sup>. These peasant settlers were quickly overtaken by land restructuring, victims of the big settlers and financial companies that dispossessed them. The European population remained confined to the cities and ultimately grew little: it did not reach one million men in 1954<sup>355</sup>. The war and the adherence of the majority of the European population to the repression of the Algerian national movement, then the policy of the OAS, pushed Europeans to leave Algeria in 1962, at the time of independence.

Finally, the last example of French colonization of settlement, New Caledonia. Annexed by the France in 1853, it first served as a prison. Here too, the deportations of populations were used. Faced with the resistance of the Kanak population (and the risk of its complete disappearance), the French “imported” from 1893 Japanese workers to work in the nickel mines, and Tonkinese migrants from 1924 under employment contracts that left them without any defense against the local French employers. But the example of New Caledonia is interesting because of the voluntary policy of minorization of the Kanak people carried out rationally from 1972, at the instigation of the Prime Minister of the time, Pierre Messmer.

The latter, in a letter to the Minister of the DOM-TOM\*<sup>XXXIX</sup>, wrote

---

<sup>353</sup>Since the seventeenth century, Dutch and French migrants (Huguenots driven out by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes) have settled in South Africa, constituting a first nucleus of European settlement. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, before the arrival of the British, this settlement remained restricted. Confined to the Cape Province, it then included 80,000 people, including about 16,000 Europeans.

<sup>354</sup>The ravages of phylloxera in the vineyards (1878) actually pushed many wine farmers from the Midi to settle in Algeria.

<sup>355</sup>Europeans were 109,000 in 1847, 272,000 in 1872, 578,000 in 1896, 829,000 in 1921, 984,000 in 1954.

<sup>XXXIX</sup>DOM-TOM : *Départements d’Outre Mer-Territoires d’Outre Mer* which means over-sea departments- overseas territories.



then: “New Caledonia, a settlement colony, although doomed to multiracial variety, is probably the last non-independent tropical territory in the world where a developed country can emigrate its nationals. (...)”<sup>XL</sup>

“In the short and medium term, the massive immigration of metropolitan French citizens or citizens from overseas departments (Reunion), should make it possible to avoid this danger (a nationalist demand, Editor’s note), by maintaining and improving the digital relationship of communities. (...)”

The success of this undertaking, which is essential to the maintenance of French positions east of Suez, depends, among other conditions, on our ability to finally succeed, after so many failures in our history, in an overseas settlement operation.”

Let us bet that the current situation in New Caledonia, a consequence of the implementation of this policy, pursued by all the governments that succeeded that of Pierre Messmer, reinforces the latter in his analyses.

## 26.2 Economic migration

European migration took on a truly massive character from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards with the industrial revolution that transformed the economies of some Western European countries - first and foremost England, Germany and France - mostly rural into economies of an industrial nature.

The English peasants were among the first to bear the brunt of the industrial revolution. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, England caught in a global process of economic transformation, reformed its agricultural production. Agriculture, competing on the English domestic market by European and colonial agriculture, was replaced by livestock. The English peasants who had become useless were driven off the land. The inability of infant industries to absorb all of this workforce forced many English to move to North America, India, Africa and Oceania. From 1825 to 1920, 17 million Englishmen left their country<sup>356</sup>.

Germany experienced a similar phenomenon: between 1820 and 1933, 6 million Germans emigrate to the United States, Brazil and Argentina. Most

---

<sup>XL</sup> Missing end quote in original text

<sup>356</sup> 80% of them settled in the United States and Canada, 11% in Australia, 5% in South Africa.

European countries, including Eastern Europe<sup>357</sup>, with a time lag in relation to Western Europe, are experiencing these phenomena of emigration. United States and Latin America absorbs the bulk of European emigrants.

France is a special case. Its lack of demographic dynamism – the nineteenth-century France is a sparsely populated country – combined with the fact that its agriculture resisted better than English agriculture during the industrial revolution, makes this country a pole of immigration.

The case of Ireland in the nineteenth century is exemplary. Ireland was then a rural country whose inhabitants were largely small farmers living on tiny farms. Between 1814 and 1841, Ireland's population grew from 6 million to 8 million. Crop failures following potato disease from 1846 to 1851 caused famines. Combined with cholera epidemics, they are responsible for the disappearance of a million people. In the same period, one million Irish left their country for England, Australia, Canada or the United States. This migratory flow is not drying up.

The majority of Irish migrants embarked for the United States<sup>358</sup>, until around the 1920s when restrictive laws blocked their entry into the United States. From then on, migratory flows shifted towards Great Britain. The United States offered greater opportunities for promotion and social success than England. They also showed greater religious tolerance than England, a colonizing country - Ireland would gain its independence in 1921 - and an oppressor.

In 1890, Irish people outside the country outnumbered Irish people in Ireland itself.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Irish developed a culture of emigration. The price of the boat for the crossing of the United States was collected at the level of the family network and the neighborhood. It could also be sent by family members already settled abroad. Disembarked in the United States, Canada, Australia, the Irish migrant was never isolated because he found networks of mutual aid. Arriving in the host country, he joined the migrants who had preceded him, settling in the same city and in the same neighborhood. The mutual aid network welcomed him, housed him, and gave him a job.

Although rural, Irish migrants in countries of immigration have settled in the majority in cities. Poorly skilled even in the field of agriculture, they had greater opportunities for survival in urban areas. In 1940, 90% of the Irish in the United States were spread out in cities. Half of them lived in the

---

<sup>357</sup>From 1875 to 1913, 4 million nationals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire emigrated. From 1900 to 1914, Russia had only 2.5 million emigrants, many of them Poles and Jews driven out by intensifying religious persecution.

<sup>358</sup>Between 1876 and 1926, 84% of Irish emigrants left for the United States.

five largest American cities, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco.

In their way of migrating and settling with a focus on community-based relationships, the Irish in the United States did not differ from other migrants at the same time: Italians, Russians, Armenians, Eastern European Jews, Chinese, Japanese, etc. proceed in the same way by recreating networks of sociability with their compatriots in the host country. For the migrant, it is a question of reconstituting a privileged social space. For him, it is a question of survival in an environment that is generally hostile. It was not until the second generation that these privileged relationships faded. They continue thanks to political, cultural, religious associations, etc.

Without over-extrapolating, we realize that “community” solidarities<sup>359</sup> — solidarity in departure, solidarity in arrival, solidarity in integration processes — still function in the same way today.

Economic migration is not necessarily intercontinental migration. In many cases, migration is transcontinental migration, or even internal migration.

France, a country of immigration since the nineteenth century, welcomed since the 1850s Belgians, Poles, Italians, Spaniards, attracted by the employment opportunities offered by the country. At the same time, this demand was partly met by internal migration in the country. Rural French people left their land very early to migrate to the cities in search of a complementary income<sup>360</sup> or more remunerative work. The nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century saw men and women from the most repulsive regions leave their “country” to work “in the city”. It can be the capital of the canton as the regional capital or Paris. Their routes are often similar to intercontinental migrations. Bretons, Corsicans, Auvergnats, to name the most numerous, arrive in the city where they welcome solidarity networks similar to those of foreign migrants.

The reactions against them are not tender. How many texts, newspaper articles to denounce these provincials as “dirty”, “crude”, “unassimilable”... How many others to explain that the Poles do not practice “the same Chris-

---

<sup>359</sup>The term “community” is, like the term “ethnicity”, of delicate use. It assumes that migrants from the same country form a coherent whole, with collective and identity reactions. Nothing is less certain. There are networks of sociability, more or less well organized. In this case, in the absence of a more suitable term, this term refers to the reception network around the migrant, his family, his neighbors, relationships ...

<sup>360</sup>Many rural French, Spanish or Italian people sought paid employment during the off-peak seasons, which they left to return to cultivate and harvest. This is the case whenever a farm is too small to support the family. In some cases, it is the children who offer their services in this way, while waiting to settle in turn on the family farm.

tianity” as the French and that they are not able to integrate into French society.

In all cases, there is a phenomenon of competition on the labour market between nationals and migrants, exacerbated in the event of economic difficulties, and which employers know how to take advantage of to lower wages.

France of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century experienced numerous abuses against migrants. The North and Pas-de-Calais were agitated throughout this period by caning, manhunts and collective expulsions. In 1892, in Drocourt, in the Pas-de-Calais, the French population organized to expel the Belgian families settled in the village. Among the most dramatic abuses, the pogrom of which the Italians were victims in Aigues-Mortes in 1893 caused many wounded and deaths.

This type of collective violence seems to be banned today. Although the chronicles of the news are rich in attacks and murders of a racist nature. The young man thrown into the Seine in Paris on May 1, 1995, during the demonstration of the National Front by a group of skinheads shows how temptations and risks exist.

### 26.3 Politically motivated migration

Politically motivated migration is a thing of history. Many could be cited. They result in massive migrations of populations, some of which disappear almost completely from the places where they traditionally lived.

Among the most important, if a hierarchy is possible, we must speak of the migrations of Eastern European Jews driven out by pogroms and persecutions throughout the nineteenth century. This classic phenomenon of exacerbation of hatred and use of racism in a general context of transformation of European societies came to a head with the Second World War and the systematic extermination of Jews carried out by the Nazis. The Jews of Eastern Europe who escaped extermination chose in their great majority to expatriate, to Israel, the United States, western Europe. In some countries, Poland for example, Jews have practically disappeared.

The genocide perpetrated by the Turks and Kurds against the Armenians between 1915 and 1923 had similar consequences. Massacres and population displacements orchestrated by the Turkish authorities of the time left no choice to the Armenians who had to flee Cilicia, a region of Asia Minor where they had lived for centuries. While some of them joined Soviet Armenia, many others took refuge in Europe and the United States. Along with the genocide of the Jews during the Second World War, the Armenian genocide

remains one of the greatest traumas of the twentieth century.

The twentieth century is rich in political and military events that forced entire peoples to flee. No continent is exempt from these phenomena, which are all problems left unresolved and which promise future conflicts: Palestinians, Saharawis, etc. For some, the wait has been going on for decades.

The misery orchestrated by the capitalist system, in which countries are kept, is more than ever conducive to the development of fascist ideologies ranging from Islamism to ethnicism. Currently, peoples and their leaders have fewer and fewer demands in terms of revolution and resistance to the established order, and more and more in terms of opposition between peoples, populations, ethnicities, communities, etc. Many countries are experiencing situations of implosion, which result in internal conflicts and the departure of population groups: this is the case in Mauritania, Rwanda, Burundi...

## 26.4 The current situation

While Europeans made up the bulk of migrants in the nineteenth century, from the 1920s to the 1930s, flows became scarce. The great change came after the Second World War: it was then the peoples of other continents who became candidates for migration.

This is not really new. Since the First World War, European countries have asked their colonies to send men into battle, but also to compensate for the lack of manpower. French industry thus solicited Indochinese, Algerians, Moroccans, some of whom remained in metropolitan France after the conflict. In the same movement, recruiters brought to France, as early as the 1910s, several hundred Chinese for a limited period of time, who were employed as labourers, workers, nurses, etc.

Mass migration began after the Second World War. Recruiters are then numerous and determined to bring in cheap labor, which can not have significant requirements in terms of social protection and comfort of life, at the request of large mining, automotive, construction and public works companies. These were all sectors that required a low-skilled workforce accepting difficult working conditions.

The turning point took place in the 1970s. Faced with the economic crisis that is looming, in the face of industrial restructuring, the French government announces its desire for “zero immigration”. France, like Western Europe, no longer needs migrants. They cannot, according to a formula that will make a fortune later, “welcome all the misery of the world”.

As a result, rich countries set up legal barriers and a police arsenal to restrict the entry into their territories of these migrants from countries some-

times described as “Third World countries”, “underdeveloped countries”, “developing countries”, “countries of the South”...

This policy is mixed with a practice of great hypocrisy which consists in employing migrants, preferably in an illegal situation, in companies at prices lower than nationals. By imposing wages below the wages commonly applied, companies know that in the more or less long term, it is everyone’s wages that will fall.

For example, California’s large farms employ illegal Mexican workers in plain sight. It is Mexican workers who are hunted down by U.S. police when crossing borders, while the companies that exploit them are never worried. The same hypocrisy has prevailed and still prevails in France where, in the name of competition, contractors impose prices that do not allow subcontractors to earn a living, except to use hidden work.

But the most distorted view comes from the French political debate. Indeed, listening to each other’s speeches, one might think that hordes of hungry people are at our borders, ready to sweep over France and Europe. It is not measuring current realities. Indeed, migration flows to rich countries are very much in the minority. They account for barely a fifth of global migration flows, which is small.

There are several reasons for this. First of all, most would-be emigrants have very few funds to begin with. They are therefore part of migration processes that are more about survival than anything else. For example, these 1.5 million Asian women, now registered as migrants, go to offer their services in very low-skilled occupations (housekeepers, domestic workers) or for prostitution. Some suffer situations that are practically slavery. Pakistani or Filipino migrants, for example, forced to move to the Gulf States - major recruiters of labour from the Third World - have their passports confiscated as soon as they arrive and are forced to work under any conditions.

The case of a Sarah Balabagan<sup>XLI</sup>, or, closer to us, a Véronique Akobé<sup>XLII</sup>,

---

<sup>XLI</sup>Sarah Balabagan, is a Filipina who was employed as a housemaid in the United Arab Emirates. She killed her employer in self-defense while he was trying to rape her. She was sentenced to seven years imprisonment and ordered to pay 150,000 dirhams (US\$40,000) in blood money to her employer’s relatives, while at the same time awarded 100,000 dirhams (US\$27,000) as compensation for the rape. However, the prosecution appealed the verdict, calling for the death penalty. On September 6, 1995, a second Islamic court found no evidence of rape and convicted her of premeditated murder, sentencing her to death by firing squad. At her third trial, her sentence was reduced to a year’s imprisonment and 100 cane strokes, along with payment of blood money.

<sup>XLII</sup>Véronique Akobé, an undocumented Ivorian woman who have been employed as a maid by a Grasse industrial. She was raped by her employer and his son. At the third collective rape, she wounded her boss and killed his son. Arrested in 1987, sentenced to 20 years in jail in 1990, she was pardoned in 1996

are indicative of the new conditions available to migrants: more and more precariousness, less and less security.

The second reason is the restrictions on emigration to rich countries, which are implementing increasingly repressive strategies against migrants. While the rich countries have directly benefited from the impoverishment of the countries of the Third World, constituting part of their wealth on the plundering of resources, feeding on their underdevelopment and indebtedness, they now refuse to take charge of the logical consequences of this situation.

Third reason, capitalism is a system in constant evolution and adaptation. Today, the technical constraints are different from those that prevailed in the 1950s. Why produce in rich countries where it is necessary to pay — more or less — correctly for labour and to respect the laws of labour, when it is enough to relocate the units of production to benefit from a workforce whose wage is so low that it becomes marginal in the total cost of production. This is how the weight of the salary on the price of a pair of Nike shoes represents 0.125% of its selling price... It is easy to understand that Moulinex closes its production plants in Alençon to settle in Mexico.

In all eras, capitalism has been able to stimulate large migratory flows for its needs. When he did not directly stimulate them, it knew how to take advantage of them. We are currently living in a period of transition where migration is no longer necessarily a benefit for capitalism as before.

**Caroline Andreani**

Caroline Andreani is a historian.





## Chapter 27

# Capitalism, armament race and arms trade

Yves GRENET

Capitalism has always maintained close ties with the works of death. Admittedly, the economic and social systems that preceded it did not ignore the manufacture, use and trade of armaments. The war itself dates back about 7,000 years, to Neolithic times in Western Europe, when it became possible for a group of men to concert and organize themselves with weapons in order to force another group to cede their wealth or enter into slavery in the service of the victor. That is to say that it was born with class societies. Subsequently, whether in Antiquity, the Middle Ages or in Modern Times, armaments and wars continued their career, the improvements of the former (old war machines, artillery, firearms, etc.) allowing the successes of the latter.

The progress of science and technology, accelerated from the eighteenth century, play a role but the relations of production are even more important. The Prussian general and philosopher Karl von Clausewitz wrote in his master work, *On War*, in 1827, during the period of the rise of capitalism in Europe, that war “is a conflict of great interests which is resolved only with bloodshed, and which differs only in this precisely from all the other conflicts that arise between men. It has much less to do with the arts and sciences than with commerce, which is also a conflict of great interests, but it is much closer to politics, which is itself a kind of commerce with enlarged dimensions, in which it develops like the child in its mother’s womb.” He added in another place, studying the wars of the Revolution: “We must attribute the new facts that manifest themselves in the military field much less to inventions and new military ideas than to this change in the social state

and social relations.”

The term capitalism was of course ignored by Clausewitz but he had sensed the essential link between war activity and this regime. Capitalism is at the origin of the arms races, the one that accompanied the wars of the Revolution and the Empire or the American Civil War in the nineteenth century, those that prepared and marked the two world wars of the twentieth century, the one that could have led to a Third World War and that still lasts, although many claim the danger of it averted. Capitalist companies have always traded in arms, weapons intended to serve here and there in the world. This trade thus contributed to bloody it on an unknown scale before capitalism entered the world scene and imposed itself on the entire planet.

## 27.1 Rise of capitalism and the first arms race

The progress of industrial capitalism in Western Europe, in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, also applied to the manufacture of armaments. Until then, weapons came mainly from the royal arsenals of the time of mercantilism. With the rise of liberalism, they will increasingly be produced by private companies even if it is the state that is the main or sole recipient. The quarrel between arsenals and private producers dates from this period. It is not over.

England is followed by the France and then the other European countries in this evolution. “During the eighteenth century, as the English hobsbawn writes, iron foundries identified roughly with cannon casting.” It is true that his compatriots were ahead of the curve for the puddlage to transform cast iron into iron and steel and that the metal drilling and boring machine invented by Wilkinson in 1774 would be used well for the manufacture of weapons. But France has also had its advances. General Jean-Florent de Vallière standardized in 1732 the caliber of the guns and their length (25 times that of the caliber). In 1771, the military engineer Cugnot developed his “fardier”, a steam car intended to drag artillery pieces. These were modernized in 1776 by the inspector general of artillery Jean-Baptiste de Gribeauval: the cannons of which he gave the model will equip all the armies of the Revolution and the Empire.

The wars that followed one another from 1792 to 1815 led to an arms race that reached volumes that were out of all proportion to those common in conflicts under the Old Regime. The France being besieged by all the monarchies of Europe, the Jacobin Republic set up the Subsistence Commission which gave priority to armies. The country became a powerful military store to supply them. At the beginning of the war, contracts with the state

were awarded by auction and only financial companies had the necessary capital. Capitalism fed on the arms race. The mass raising was to provide a million men. But, Barère cried out in August 1793: "It's not enough to have men... Weapons, weapons and sustenance! It is the cry of need." The Committee of Public Safety cannot be content to supply them with liberal capitalism. The state took control of certain companies and created national factories on the model of those of the Ancien Régime. In February 1794, the Extraordinary Commission on Arms and Powders was in fact a Ministry of Armaments on which mines and steel depended, manufacturing cannons, rifles and ammunition. The cannons "in full" and new steels were poured. Thus it was possible to manufacture 240,000 rifles and 7,000 cannons per year, considerable figures for the time.

After Thermidor, the tendency is to abandon this statism to return to liberal capitalism and the "suppliers to the armies", which are getting richer. Financial companies banned in 1793 were allowed again in 1795. The 400,000 men raised by the Directory have sufficient armaments to face the armies of the coalition but it is against a background of speculation and concussion, evils that will sweep away this regime. Under the Consulate and the Empire, industry modernized at least in some of its branches. The vastness of the market provided by the Empire and its vassals is very favorable to this progress. Armament holds its place and makes the prosperity of some capitalists such as the manufacturer of cannonballs Jean-Nicolas Gendarme. The Parisian banks helped to make a place for themselves in the sun a less efficient steel industry while its English rival and a copper industry supplying the imperial army and navy.

On the other side, "the war coincided with the emergence of Britain as the dominant industrial power in the world," as A. D. Harvey (*Collision of Empires*) notes. Military inventions are made there such as the new artillery munition invented in 1803 by Henry Shrapnel; shrapnel was successfully used in the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 and Vimeiro in 1808. English ships are reinforced with iron pieces. In 1806 out of 305,000 tons of iron produced in British factories 56,000 were for the war needs of the government. From 1803 to 1815 the British manufactured 2,700,000 firearms and bought 293,000 abroad. At the same time the French made the same number and captured 700,000 from their opponents. Both provided them to their allies: 220,000 English firearms to Spain from 1808 to 1811 for example.

The duality between private capitalist industry and state arsenals existed in Britain during this arms race of the early nineteenth century but not without relations between them. Thus new methods of manufacturing weapons developed in Scotland by the Carron company were adopted in 1809 by the Woolwich factory, the gas lighting used by Boulton's soho Works in Birming-

ham in 1802 was used to illuminate 24 hours a day the production of copper equipment for the Royal Navy in the portsmouth docks from 1807 etc. But the superiority of British capitalism over French capitalism appeared mainly financial. In 1805, the French budget was the equivalent of £27.6 million, the British budget was £76.5 million, and in 1813 it was £46.5 million and £109 million respectively. The Waterloo Campaign of 1815 cost the British government £21.3 million for its army, £12.9 million for extraordinary service, and £11 million for loans and advances to its allies. The “cavalry of Saint George”, which British capitalism has always been able to make good use of, especially if it is accompanied by arms deliveries, makes it possible to win wars.

## 27.2 Development of capitalism and armaments during the nineteenth century

Capitalism continued to flourish after the Congress of Vienna of 1814-1815. The Holy Alliance (September 1815) contained too many elements of the past to be entirely favorable to it, and the ideology of the Liberals was better suited to it. Its secular arm, the Quadruple Alliance (England, Prussia, Austria, Russia) of November 1815, an essential part of the Metternich system, needed weapons to quell the revolts of the peoples that the Congress of Vienna had made inevitable. The uprisings of General Pepe in Naples (1820), Riego in Cadiz (1820), the Portuguese army (1820), Turin (1821), the revolutions of France, Belgium and Poland (1830), the movement of the canuts of Lyon (1831), the new revolts in Italy (1832), the riot the cloister of Saint Merry in Paris (1832), a new revolt in Spain (1843), the agitation in Ireland (1843), the great strike of the Silesian weavers (1846), the anti-Austrian demonstrations in Milan (1846), the Porto revolt in Portugal (1846-1847), all this required weapons for repression. The economic and financial crisis of 1847 led to the “Spring of the Peoples” of Europe in 1848 which resulted in popular movements in Italy, Germany, Austria, the February Revolution and the June Days in France and real war operations in Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, the Kingdom of Naples, in southern Germany. There is a need for weapons for forces not only of reaction but also of liberation. However, their regular production did not give rise to an arms race comparable to that of the Napoleonic years.

England reduced its armaments from 1816, the other countries maintained or a little increased theirs.

The development of capitalism has taken place in Great Britain in par-

ticular through the succession of periods of prosperity and crises of its own. The severe British economic and banking crises of 1825-1827 and 1836-1839 marked this period significantly. That of 1847 extended to all of Europe leading to the explosion of 1848. Progress in industry, particularly in the steel industry, has had an impact on armaments, but at a relatively slow pace. The rifle loaded by the mouth in the eighteenth century is gradually replaced by the rifle loaded by the breech, but with some setbacks such as those had the Prussian government in 1841 with 60,000 Dreyse rifles of this type that exploded inappropriately. Smoothbore guns are increasingly giving way to rifled guns in all European armies. The most notable advances in armaments are being made in the maritime field. Large wooden sailing ships, carrying from 70 to 130, guns were first reinforced with armor around 1820-1830. A first steam warship appeared in England in 1814 but paddle wheels are too exposed to enemy fire and it is only after the invention of the propeller in 1840 that all the navies of the capitalist world will adopt steam at the same time as rifled guns and grenades invented in 1822 by the French general Paixhans, allowing at sea an almost horizontal trajectory and high precision.

The triumphant capitalism of the years 1850-1890 marched forward despite crises, such as the British financial crises of 1857 and 1866 and especially the first truly global crisis of 1873. The Crimean Wars (1845-1856), the Italian Wars (1859), the Civil War (1861-1865), the Mexican War (1864-1867), the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, the Franco-German War of 1870-1871, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 are a reminder that no more than the Empire, capitalism is peace. It was also during this period that armaments made great progress linked to those of chemistry, steel and mechanics. In 1846, the German scientist Schönbein had invented pyroxylin much more powerful than gunpowder, in 1847, the Italian chemist Sobrero had nitroglycerin. In 1862, the Swede Nobel undertook the manufacture of this nitroglycerin on an industrial scale, in 1867 that of dynamite (75% nitroglycerin + 25% porous earth), exploding with a mercury fulminate detonator, then in 1888 the Nobel powder dynamite. Owing factories in Sweden, Germany, France and other countries, he is the very type of arms capitalist although he would have preferred to be remembered for the creation of the Nobel Peace Prize. Other chemical mixtures with primer are born: tolite, lydia, melinite etc. The properties of picric acid, which heat detonates, were increasingly used until the First World War. Chemical plants can develop, in addition to explosives, weapons that are themselves chemical. As early as 1855, Great Britain had projectiles capable of spreading ammonia gases that were not used. British Admiral Dundonald proposed that same year to reduce the Garrison at Sevastopol with sulfur fumes and the American Doughty to use

chlorine vapors in 1862, during the American Civil War; they were denied permission. But the idea of chemical warfare, which industrial progress made possible, was in the air.

The interdependence of armaments and capitalism manifested itself with great clarity during the Civil War, a confrontation of Yankee capitalism and the slave-owning South, in certain aspects that were still pre-capitalist. The industrial advances made by the United States have allowed the adoption of the rifle rifled with very precise fire, the loading of cannons by the breech, the use of mortars, the use of repeating weapons. Both North and South had advanced steam warships, including ironclads or battleships, including the *Merrimac* among the Confederates and *the Monitor* among Union supporters. In many respects, even more so than those of the Revolution and empire, it was an all-out war, which left more than 500,000 dead on both sides, heralding the great killings of the world wars.

### 27.3 Imperialism, arms race and World War I

Concentration is a natural tendency of capitalism that constantly puts it in contradiction with the principles of liberalism it professes. The combination of industrial capital and banking capital, which has been called imperialism, into a single finance capital, increases the effects of this concentration by allowing the creation of huge joint-stock companies. At the same time, the search for raw materials and the desire to open new markets provoked not only the stranglehold of capitalism on the colonies or semi-colonies of Africa, Asia and Latin America but also, after attempts at understanding, a division of the world that two world wars would try to challenge. The rise of imperialism is closely intertwined with the arms race that preceded the First World War as well as with that that which ended in the Second.

The industrial potential of the great powers allows more than a few but the development of weapons techniques. High-quality steels, specialized machinery, chemical discoveries and the transport industry are used. Artillery in particular is making considerable progress. The Prussian guns loaded by the breech were superior to the French guns in 1870. But French industrialists and military developed in 1893 a rapid-fire field gun, absorbing the shock of recoil and allowing a rolling fire, with an effective range of 8 kilometers, the famous 75. The English have adopted, since the Crimean War, the cylindrical rifle bullet of the French Colonel Minié, thanks to which the rifled barrel of the rifles allows a very precise shot at 650 meters and quite accurate up to 1,300. The automatic rifle was invented between 1870 and 1880. Artillery and then rifles benefited from smokeless powder, developed

in France in 1884, progress imitated elsewhere, so that Great Britain, Germany, Russia and the United States had it at the beginning of the twentieth century. But the new infantry weapon is the machine gun. At the time of the American Civil War, in 1862, Richard J. Gatling introduced a model with ten rotating guns powered by a crank. In France, a few years later, we go to twenty guns and 125 shots per minute. The real modern machine gun is the work of Hiram S. Maxim in 1884; the Maxim machine gun is adopted or imitated everywhere. The weapon is so deadly that some believe they can say it will make war impossible. Alas...

One form of arms race between major imperialist states, particularly spectacular, is the naval rivalry between Britain and Germany in the years leading up to the 1914 war. The British battleships (dread noughts) ended up being monsters with a speed of more than 30 knots, displacing 60,000 tons and whose 16 main guns were capable of sending 2,000-pound projectiles accurately to more than 20 miles. To this must be added cruisers, destroyers and other types of surface ships. The race takes the form of a competition between the armor of ships and the penetrating power of modern shells or torpedoes developed before 1914. Sea mines, already used during the Civil War, were perfected in the early twentieth century. After the first real combat submarine the double-hulled "Narval" armed with four torpedoes, invented by the engineer Laubeuf (1899), the great powers all have submarines equipped with torpedoes ready on the eve of the war.

The air weapon is as old as the accession to power of capitalism since balloons flew over the Battle of Fleurus and a corps of aerostatiers of the Republic had existed from 1793 to 1798. We then turned to free and then airship balloons like that of Henri Giffard in 1852. The Russian Tsiolkowski had equipped an airship with a metal frame in 1887 and the German Ferdinand von Zeppelin had experimented with one in 1900 that would be developed for military purposes until 1914. But, for this purpose, the heavier than the air seemed more full of promise. The first modern aeroplane was the one for which the Russian Mojaiski obtained a patent in 1881. Then came the German Otto Lilienthal, the Frenchman Clément Ader (1897), the English Wright brothers (1900). The engines were perfected from 1903 to 1908 and the propellers from 1906 to 1912, so that planes were ready for reconnaissance, bombing and combat missions (oh how modest!) when war broke out.

The arms race calls on the arsenals of the capital states, but private capitalism plays a preponderant role in it. The major arms companies of these early days of imperialism are called Krupp in Germany, Vickers-Armstrong in Britain (which manufactures the Maxim machine gun), Schneider-Le Creusot in France, Skoda in Austrian Bohemia, Putiloff in Russia. Their specialty as

arms manufacturers is in the continuity of their general industrial activity, in particular the steel industry. Thus Krupp presented at Crystal Palace in London a cylinder of 2 1/4 tons of steel in which we can see the prototype of one of its giant guns. Weapons even benefit from processes that are considered too expensive for everyday use. Thus the large ingots of special steels in the crucible are intended at Krupp, as at its competitors, for guns whose bore is the next step. Everywhere large corporations play an essential role in the arms race. "The trust leading to extermination, this is the last invention of modern capitalism," exclaimed Jaurès to the Chamber of Deputies in 1909.

If it is the big capitalist corporations that produce, it is the imperialist states that pay for the armaments. In 1920, the economist Charles Gide quantified the annual military expenditure required by the preparation of the war among its main protagonists:

Table 27.1: Annual military expenditure prior to World War I

	1883*	1913*	Increase
France	789	1 471	86 %
Great-Britain	702	1 943	177 %
Russia	894	2 642	195 %
Italy	311	749	140 %
Germany	504	2 302	357 %
Austria-Hungary	318	822	158 %

\* in millions of francs

The acceleration of the arms race is evident in this picture. It was lower for the France, which had started earlier, than for Germany and Great Britain.

The First World War was a shock of imperialisms that was particularly costly for the world. Millions of men died on the battlefields, not to mention civilian casualties. In our field, it has been a period of intense activity, capitalist enterprises hastily manufacturing armaments, whose research has been considerably accelerated. It was not until 1916 that the French and the English caught up with the Germans and Austrians in the field of heavy artillery. Shells of all calibers, German Minenwerfers and French crapouillots, underground mines, grenades and flamethrowers turned the front into hell. Of course, all these machines ensured a high level of activity for the metallurgical and chemical industries. The British, French and German automobile industries began to manufacture tanks used from 1917, armed with cannons and machine guns, the best known of which on the Western Front was the Renault tank, from the famous Billancourt firm. The chemical industry found a



new outlet with the war of gases: chlorine, phosgene, hydrocyanic acid, yperite (30,000 killed in one day near Ypres in 1917), lewisite. The 120,000 tons of toxic chemicals used during the war claimed 300,000 lives, including more than 100,000 deaths on the Western Front. While Zeppelin airships bombed Paris and London, aircraft manufacturers on both sides developed fighters and bombers (such as the British Vickers Vimy with 2,500-pound bombs). Submarine warfare was another innovation: German U-boats sank 11 million tons of Allied ships, preparing for the future activity of the shipyards.

Despite a reinforced state control in all the countries at war embodied in France by the Minister of Armaments Albert Thomas, it was a capitalist war not only by its arms suppliers but also by its aims and results. It made extensive use of the economic weapon of the blockade. The arms race was accompanied by arms supplies by the imperialist states to their future partners (e.g. Germany to Turkey, Great Britain to Japan). They intensified during the war towards the new belligerents (Italy) and the Arabs in struggle against the Turks as if to allow the troops of the colonies to seize the German territories (Cameroon, Tanganyika). The arms trade has, for economic and ideological reasons, accompanied the whole life of capitalism with strong moments (wars of the Revolution and the Empire, Civil War, First World War). It is consubstantial with it as the production of armaments.

## 27.4 New Arms Race and World War II

At the end of the war, Western imperialisms were both victorious and challenged by the Russian Revolution and those that followed it (Germany, Hungary). The Allies' intervention against the Soviets uses the same weapons that served in the Great War, including chemical weapons, is generally modestly ignored. The Treaty of Versailles and its corollaries imposed the disarmament of the defeated States. The victors sent their troops back to their homes and initially reduced their military spending. But one is surprised to find that, in a historical study by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the global military de-thinking of 1925 is higher than that of 1913, the peak of the arms race that preceded the First World War. It is true that these expenses include those of a state that is no longer capitalist, the USSR which, feeling surrounded, spends on its defense (but the 1913 figure included Russia). It is also true that these data include both operating expenses (maintenance of troops) and equipment. Finally, it is true that the latter consists of increasingly expensive armaments, which are increasingly profitable for their manufacturers.

Between the two wars the size of the mortars is increased (from 82 to 120

millimeters) as well as their range (4 kilometers). Germany acquires guns of 88 and the United States of 90 which will be the weapons of the Second World War. Theorists of future wars envisioned a massive use of tanks and aviation, which required progress from them, but the former often remained small and poorly armoured, such as the English Bren, and the latter made rather slow progress until Nazi Germany acquired the Luftwaffe in 1935. In the naval field, the debates between imperialist countries led to a limitation of the tonnage of cruisers and battleships to 525,000 tons for Great Britain and the United States, 315,000 for Japan and 175,000 for France and Italy at the Washington Conference in 1922; those who saw it as a prelude to general disarmament had to admit their mistake.

Table 27.2: Annual world military expenditure (in billions of constant 1970 US dollars)

1908	9,0
1913	14,5
1925	19,3
1926	19,6
1927	21,5
1928	21,5
1929	21,7
1930	23,2
1931	21,9
1932	20,3
1933	20,1
1934	23,9
1935	32,6
1936	47,1
1937	58,8
1938	61,6

While the economic crisis of 1920-1921 had been followed by a fairly rapid recovery despite the financial and monetary difficulties of the capitalist countries during the twenties, the crisis of 1929 made capitalism itself tremble on its foundations. Hitler's seizure of power in January 1933 set Germany on the path of excessive rearmament with the restoration of military service in 1935, the reintegration of the Rhineland in 1936 and the prominent place of armament in Göring's Four-Year Plan. It was German capitalism, the Krupps, the Thyssens, the Hugenbergs, the Schachts, who put Hitler in power and benefited from rearmament. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) served

as a test bed for armaments, particularly in the fields of tanks and aircraft. In the Far East, Japanese militarism played the same role as Nazism in Europe and invaded China in 1937. The arms race was revived everywhere and global military spending tripled from 1933 to 1938. When war was declared in 1939, Germany was ready. In May 1940, it aligned 136 divisions, including 10 Panzer Divisionen, and 2,700 military aircraft against an equal number of Allied divisions but only 1,330 aircraft. Its strategic superiority allowed it to prevail at that time and to make Europe the supplier of raw materials, labor and capital to a German capital more imperialist than ever. Unfortunately for him, Hitler invaded the USSR in June 1941 and his ally, Japan, attacked Pearl Harbor in December, which put the Americans on the same side as the British and Soviets and ensured victory for the Allies in 1945.

American capitalism is already the most powerful in the world and it will strengthen further during the Second World War. The United States becomes the gigantic arms factory of all the allied world from which the giant companies derive the profits: Boeing, Lockheed, Hughes, Me Donnell, Raytheon, Martin, General Motors etc. The assault rifle, intermediate between rifle and machine gun, was developed in the United States (and improved in 1944 in Germany). The bazooka is invented (2.36 inch M9), the US rocket launcher 4.5 inch is able to fire 24 at the same time. The M4 Sherman tank entered service in 1942, especially in North Africa (El Alamein), and remained the main armored vehicle of the British and American armies until the end of the war. To face the German Panthers, it was completed by the US M26 Pershing, a heavy tank, in the last months of the conflict. The American forces had a profusion of vehicles, from the Jeep (pronunciation of GP: g nerai purpose or all uses) to tracked half-tracks and giant scrapers.

The Second World War revealed the possibilities of aircraft carriers in the naval field and confirmed those of submarines. Japanese aircraft carriers almost completely destroyed the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor in December 1941. But the power of U.S. industry made it possible to build aircraft carriers at very fast speed, the main support for other warships and amphibious forces that advanced from island to island towards Japan. German submarines sank from 1939 to 1945 more than 14 million tons of Allied ships, more than during the First World War (11 million tons), including at least 200 large warships. U.S. submarines sent 5 million tons of Japanese ships from the bottom, but this tonnage represented a much larger proportion of the capabilities of the Empire of the Rising Sun. Only British and American industries allowed the construction of the elements necessary for the landing of June 1944, as well as radar (Radio detection and ranging) and sonar (Sound navigation ranging), to locate respectively aircraft and surface ships or submarines.

In the air domain, the war had initially pitted the Spitfire III fighters against the Messerschmitt 109, the France campaign had revealed the Stuka (Junkers 87). The initiative then passed to American industry, including Boeing, which developed the B17 (flying fortress), with a range of 1,000 kilometers, then the B 29 (flying superforteresse), exceeding 45 tons. A raid by the first carrying phosphorus bombs caused 42,000 deaths in July 1943 in Hamburg and another, again by means of incendiary bombs, killed 185,000 people in March 1945 in Tokyo. It was B-29s that took on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 with bombs each equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT (20 kilotons) causing respectively 72,000 deaths and 80,000 wounded and 40,000 dead and 40,000 wounded, to which must be added the subsequent victims irradiated. The end of the Second World War also marked the beginning of the nuclear age.

## 27.5 The Cold War Arms Race

The Allies have won but only the Westerners recognize themselves in capitalism. The USSR, whose Red Army bore the main weight of the land war in Europe and advanced as far as Berlin, appears to them as a foreign body that will have to be weakened and eliminated. The United States has an atomic monopoly. Faced with the “Iron Curtain” they brought together the capitalist countries of Europe by the North Atlantic Treaty concluded in April 1949 and the resulting Organization (NATO) will dominate the years of the “Cold War”. They tried to complete their system by creating ANZUS (Australia-New Zealand-United States) in 1951, SEATO (South-East Asian Treaty Organization) resulting from the Manila Pact of 1954 and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) born of the Baghdad Pact of 1955. The creation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 and the Korean War (1950-1953) explain this military pactomania that the USSR feels as a desire for encirclement.

On both sides, a new arms race began. By 1948, world military spending had exceeded in constant currency that of 1938. The Korean War gave them a boost: they almost doubled from 1950 to 1953 (see table), decreased a little from 1954 but remained at a high level. The escalation resumed in the 60s: annual global military spending increased by 60% between 1960 and 1970 and by another 20% between 1970 and 1980. In 1975 the world devoted resources for military purposes greater than the total world production in 1900. A third of the world’s research and development spending was aimed at war in the late 70s; 500,000 scientists, researchers and engineers work there, including about 350,000 years in capitalist countries.

Their work is leading to new armaments being developed at a very rapid pace. In the land domain, the United States asked its automobile industry for heavy military vehicles, Great Britain and France more light all-terrain vehicles used by the latter in the Algerian War (1954-1962), by the Portuguese in their African colonies until 1974 and by the Moroccans in Western Sahara from 1976. For tanks, the United States created derivative versions of the M 4 Sherman and the France the AMX 30. Guns with a caliber of 120 mm mounted on high-speed vehicles have become common. In the 70s, the United States launched a new class of 78,000-ton aircraft carrier, the Forrestal class, carrying 76 fighter jets; among these entered service in 1970 the American twin-engine grumman F 14 Tomcat fighter. It was also the time of the Dassault F1 single-engine (1966) and the British V STOL Hawker-Siddeley Harrier tactical support single-engine (1969) with short take-off. Jet devices change from subsonic to supersonic. The U.S. Air Command Strategy is equipped by Boeing with the B 36 and B 47 bombers, which can carry nuclear bombs, and the B 52 whose heavy bombs will cause so many victims in Vietnam from 1965 to 1973.

Table 27.3: U.S. Access to New Weapons

Atom Bomb	1945
Hydrogen bomb	1952
New strategic bomber	1953
Medium-range missiles	1953
Tactical nuclear weapons	1955
Land-based intercontinental missiles (ICBMs)	1955
Nuclear Submarines	1956
Artificial satellites	1958
Submarine Missiles (SLBM)	1959
Solid-fuel intercontinental missiles	1962
Multi-warhead missiles	1964
Independently programmed multi-warhead missiles (MIRV)	1970
Cruise missiles	1978
Neutron weapons	1981

It was the United States that brought the world into the era of nuclear weapons. These, first with fission (atomic bomb) and then fusion (hydrogen bomb or thermonuclear), quickly found their correspondents in the opposing camp (for the latter as early as 1953). Within the arms race itself there was a megatoning race between the United States and the USSR. Britain possessed atomic weapons as early as 1954 and France as early as 1958. Progress has

been in reducing the weight and size of the machines. Above all, although many strategic bombers such as the B 47 have emerged, it is the missiles that have taken a prominent place. NASA developed in the 1960s successors to the German V 2, of the Minuteman or Titan type. Land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), with a range of more than 5500 km, were joined by those of the submarines (SLBM) of the three-headed Polaris type (1960) and then the Poseidon type with ten independently programmed heads (1970). The creation of these MIRVs and the increased precision of the machines put an end to the race to megatonnage. In addition, there are medium-range (from 1100 to 2775 km) and intermediate (from 2775 to 5500 km) missiles, such as the Pershing II. Cruise missiles launched from aircraft or submarines became efficient in the early 80s, such as Boeing's ALCM. Tactical nuclear weapons have been multiplied, loaded on mobile carriers like the French Pluto put into service in 1974.

The Cold War between capitalist and socialist countries has given an ever-increasing scale to the arms race, which is reflected in the evolution of world military spending. The "Trente Glorieuses"<sup>XLIII</sup> from 1945 to 1975 allowed the capitalist camp to finance the enormous mass of ever more sophisticated armaments that it opposed to its opponents who in turn had to follow it on this path. To revive the arms race, its supporters in the United States periodically put forward alleged shortcomings of these (for example the "missile gap" justifying the creation of new types of missiles).

---

<sup>XLIII</sup>Thirty glorious ones, refers to a prosperous period from the 50's to the early 70's in France

Table 27.4: Annual world military expenditure (in billions of constant 1980 US dollars)

1948	146,3	1968	473,0
1949	153,5	1969	481,4
1950	166,2	1970	472,5
1951	241,9	1971	472,7
1952	310,2	1972	478,7
1953	318,6	1973	480,0
1954	286,5	1974	482,0
1955	288,1	1975	483,4
1956	286,0	1976	522,5
1957	291,2	1977	531,9
1958	286,7	1978	547,1
1959	297,8	1979	561,8
1960	295,7	1980	567,1
1961	324,9	1981	579,6
1962	356,3	1982	615,1
1963	371,0	1983	631,6
1964	366,7	1984	642,6
1965	366,7	1985	663,1
1966	403,8	1986	681,0
1967	445,2	1987	701,4

## 27.6 End of the Cold War and maintenance of military-industrial complexes

The arms race at the time of the Cold War opened a new stage in the evolution of capitalism. President Dwight D. Eisenhower was not mistaken when he spoke in 1954 of a “military-industrial complex.” The close interweaving of finance capital and large military structures characterizes the imperialism of the second half of the twentieth century. The same names of societies dominate it that present the tendency towards concentration and integration inherent in the capitalist regime. Thus in the United States, Mr. Donnell Douglas, a firm resulting from a merger, works for aviation, electronics and missiles, General Dynamics has the same branches plus military vehicles and missiles, General Motors of course manufactures all kinds of land-based devices but extends its activities to missiles, electronics and aircraft. In recent years, despite the end of the Cold War, this concentration has accelerated. Between 1990 and 1995, Northrop and Grumman merged their aircraft and

electronics production. Missile manufacturer Martin Marietta was absorbed in 1995 by Lockheed to form a giant aviation and missile group. But Lockheed Martin did not stop there and in 1996 acquired all of Loral's military activities. That same year 1996 saw Boeing buy McDonnell Douglas and Rockwell's aerospace business to play a leading role in the industry, Raytheon joined Texas Instruments' missile and radar businesses and Chrysler's military electronics business, and in 1997 bought Hughes Electronics. The movement of concentration is set to continue.

The rapid evolution of American companies worries their generally smaller European competitors. It is true that the United States, within the framework of NATO, delivered many armaments during the years of the Cold War to its European partners (Federal Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal). From there, these switched to licensed manufacturing, and then some national bases of the arms industries were reconstituted. A real West German military-industrial complex, like the phoenix, was reborn from the ashes of its Nazi predecessor with firms such as Messerschmitt, Daimler, MTU or Rheinmetall (Röchling group); however, American interests are present in German firms, particularly in the latter. Great Britain has maintained, despite the decline of its manufacturing industry, a high level of military production (50% of aeronautical production has this character for example) from firms such as British Aerospace, GEC, Lucas Industries, Rolls Royce, Vsel, Hunting. The France pursued a policy of independent military production, reflecting Gaullist determination, benefiting the firms Thomson, DCN, Dassault, Aerospace, GIAT, Matra. Concentrations have taken place within the national framework: merger of Daimler Benz and Messerschmitt, merger of Krupp Maschinenbau and Rheinmetall in 1990, absorption of Ferranti and Plessey by GEC, current desire to bring Aerospace and Dassault closer together despite the reluctance of the latter.

But *these* mergers increasingly involve companies from different European countries. Siemens shares with GEC the remains of Plessey, Thomson buys the great Dutch specialist in military electronics HSA, the Belgian arms industry disappears absorbed in particular by the French. Matra and British Aerospace created in 1996 a joint company Matra Bae Dynamics, which comes immediately after Raytheon Hughes for the manufacture of missiles. Non-European firms participated in the movement: the Canadian company Bombardier took over Shorts, the largest armaments firm in Northern Ireland and the Bruges armoured manufacturer in Belgium, the American United Technologies 40% of the capital of the British Westland. The European Union aims to acquire companies of comparable size to those of the United States with the creation of the European Armaments Agency. Since 1976 there has been an independent European Programme Grouping (EIPG).



However, the British armaments industries, especially but also German, have strong ties across the Atlantic and aircraft orders from European states are often placed with the United States. Eternal contradictions of imperialism.

Among these contradictions between Europeans and the United States, the one concerning the Western European Union is not the least. Created by the Paris Agreements of 1954 as a substitute for the defunct European Defence Community, this WEU was chosen in the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 as the military structure of the European Union. But at the same time it is considered the “European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance” under American leadership. The result is very happy contortions of the Maastricht text. Who will prevail from submission to US imperialism or the desire of capitalist states to maintain sufficient military independence at the risk of confrontation with it?

The wave of neoliberalism has also passed on the arms industries. Thus, the Royal Ordnance Factories, arsenals created in England long before the birth of industrial capitalism, were privatized in 1988 by Mrs Thatcher. From this point of view, the fact that the Directorate General of Armaments (DGA), the Industrial Group of Land Armaments (GIAT), the Directorate of Naval Construction (DCN) and the Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) in France depend on the State represents a real heresy in the eyes of neoliberals, heresy that should end with their privatization as quickly as possible. The trade unions’ defence of arsenals is opposed to this. The real problem is the diversification of activities and the conversion to civilian production of an arms industry that is oversized in relation to real needs.

Table 27.5: The twenty-five largest Western companies producing armaments in 1990 and 1995 (Arms sales in millions of US dollars)

1990		1995		
1	Me Donnell Douglas (US)	9020	Lockheed Martin (US)	13800
2	General Dynamics (US)	8300	McDonnell Douglas (US)	9620
3	British Aerospace (GB)	7520	British Aerospace (GB)	6720
4	Lockheed (US)	7500	Loral (US)	6500
5	General Motors (US)	7380	General Motors (US)	6250
6	General Electric (US)	6450	Northrop Grumman (US)	5700
7	Raytheon (US)	5500	Thomson (Fr)	4630
8	Thomson (Fr)	5250	Boeing (US)	4200
9	Boeing (US)	5100	GEC (GB)	4100
10	Northrop (US)	4700	Raytheon (US)	3960
11	Martin Marietta (US)	4600	United Technologies (US)	3650
12	GEC (GB)	4280	Daimler Benz (Ail)	3350
13	United Technologies (US)	4100	Direction des Constructions navales (Fr)	3280
14	Rockwell International (US)	4100	Litton (US)	3030
15	Daimler Benz (AU)	4020	General Dynamics (US)	2930
16	Direction des Constructions navales (Fr)	3830	TRW (US)	2800
17	Mitsubishi (Jap)	3040	IRI (It)	2620
18	Litton Industries (US)	3000	Westinghouse (US)	2600
19	TRW (US)	3000	Aérospatiale (Fr)	2550
20	Grumman (US)	2900	Mitsubishi (Jap)	2430
21	Aérospatiale (Fr)	2860	Rockwell (US)	2430
22	IRI (h)	2670	Rolls Royce (GB)	2050
23	Westinghouse (US)	2330	Alcatel Alsthom (Fr)	2000
24	Dassault Aviation (Fr)	2260	Commissariat à l'Énergie atomique (Fr)	1740
25	Texas Instruments (US)	2120	Texas Instruments (US)	1740

The Cold War came to a head with the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a project for anti-missile bases in space launched in 1984 by President Reagan and whose major arms interests were expecting an abundant windfall. They reaped many benefits, but this project was never realized. A similar project covering European countries is currently under discussion, but there is no shortage of contradictions here too. Public pressure had led to certain arms limitations on anti-ballistic missile systems and the number of submarine missiles (SALT I agreements of May 1972) and offensive strategic weapons (SALT II of June 1979) between the United States and the USSR. Talks between the two powers were underway (START) when the first disarmament agreement on intermediate-range missiles in Europe (INF) was signed in December 1987 in Washington. The first START treaty had just been announced in July 1991 in London when the events of August in Moscow led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December and the end of the Cold War.

The arms race imposed by capitalism on its adversary has largely contributed to the latter's economic difficulties and thus prepared for its fall, although it is not the only cause. With the East-West tension gone, it was questionable whether the enormous accumulation of armaments and the ex-

penditure devoted to them would not gradually disappear, allowing peoples to receive the “dividends of peace”. It was a misunderstanding of capitalism. Although the Warsaw Treaty was dissolved in 1991, NATO continued to exist and expand to Eastern Europe. Global military spending, after reaching an all-time high of \$1 trillion in 1989, began to narrow from 1990 onwards and in 1996 hovered around \$700 billion.

NATO’s military spending (including France) fell by 31% between 1989 and 1996 but remains enormous. U.S. military research and development spending fell by 25 percent between those two dates, Germany’s by 21 percent, France’s by 19 percent, and Britain’s by 15 percent.

Table 27.6: Evolution of NATO military expenditure (in billions of US dollars at constant 1990 prices)

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
United States	331,2	323,9	320,4	306,2	269,0	284,1	269,1	254,0	238,2	226,4
Canada	11,5	11,6	11,5	11,5	10,4	10,5	10,4	10,2	9,6	8,8
Otan Europe	186,6	184,7	186,2	186,4	184,6	176,3	171,6	166,5	159,0	159,7
Otan total	529,3	520,2	518,1	504,1	464,0	470,9	451,1	430,7	406,8	394,9

The START I Treaty between the United States and Russia, signed in 1991 and limiting the number of strategic nuclear warheads owned by each of them to 6,000, entered into force in 1994. The START II Treaty, signed by the same in January 1993, provides for a reduction in the number of such heads to 3 000-3 500 for each country by 1 January 2003. Despite the difficulties of negotiations and ratifications, it is indeed treaties that restrict nuclear weapons between the two powers, both claiming to be capitalist. But, especially if we add the other official (France, Great Britain, China) or unofficial (Israel, Pakistan) owners of these weapons, there are still enough nuclear weapons at the end of the twentieth century to destroy the entire planet.

Various international agreements have also been concluded: the Chemical Weapons Convention was signed in Paris in January 1993, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely in May 1995 and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted in September 1996. These treaties have the dual character of taking desirable steps towards disarmament that men of peace can only approve, and of constituting limitations imposed by the capitalist Powers possessing nuclear weapons on those of the Third World which do not, while these Powers do not apply article VI of the NPT, by virtue of which they must move towards nuclear disarmament. In addition, seven capitalist countries (the United States, Great Britain, France, Federal Germany, Italy, Canada,

Japan) settled among themselves by creating the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 1987 to prevent other countries from accessing technologies to acquire strategic missiles (25 states now adhere to the MTCR). The countries of the South felt this discrimination, which led India and Pakistan not to sign the extended NPT without a time limit. The Gulf War in January-February 1991 and the control measures imposed on Iraq, which almost led to a new armed conflict in February 1998, stem from the same spirit of imposing the submission of the rest of the world to the great imperialisms. The United States intends to play the leading role in this unipolar world, as President Clinton periodically reminds us. The arms race continues with research, particularly in the United States and France through the simulation of more sophisticated nuclear weapons for the twenty-first century. Will imperialisms in the time of globalization continue to reach an agreement among themselves in the face of the peoples or will their oppositions prevail, their contradictions making the struggle of peoples easier but also increasing the danger of war?

## 27.7 Capitalism and the arms trade

Under capitalism, weapons are commodities but not commodities like any other. Indeed, any other commodity requires a market with a more or less large number of consumers. Arms producers have only one customer: the state. Whether they come out of the arsenals of the latter or — as is increasingly the case — from private companies, their recipients are primarily the armed forces of the country. Instead of exhausting themselves by finding customers in a large market, it is enough to convince those armed forces that maintain a close symbiosis with manufacturers — that is the whole meaning of the term “military-industrial complex”. Of course there can be competition between companies (for example in the United States between different models of missiles) but, as soon as there is the agreement of the armed forces, the goods are placed. Better still, the contract with the State may be subject to price increases, for example for in-process processing: experience shows that this is very often the case. Weapons are a wonderful commodity from this point of view too.

In addition to domestic use, we must add arms sales abroad by one State to another State because it is its ally or because it suits its geostrategic interests or simply because it promotes the balance of trade. All the capitalist states producing weapons market them. However, arms exports are subject to authorisation with various control procedures: in Germany the authorisation of the Bundestag is required; in France it is so far issued by the

government on the advice of the Interministerial Commission for the Study of Exports of War Material, and the a posteriori control by Parliament is most theoretical; in Britain the Arms Sales Department takes care of everything and the “Head of Defence Sales” is usually the leader of a large capitalist arms group, it’s more frank.

Sometimes a State refuses to sell a particular type of armament or any type of armament to a country, for example because the latter is subject to an embargo. In this case it is not uncommon for weapons allegedly sold to one country to end up in a second or third after more or less long journeys; these illegal diversions often lead to “cases” involving a particular industrial group that deceived the State (such as the Luchaire case for the delivery of shells to Iran in 1983, which was then subject to the embargo). Capitalist companies are legally engaged in the arms trade, the largest being Interarms in London, AGWAH in Düsseldorf, Levy Industries in Toronto, Firearms International in Montreal, Cogswell and Harrison in London. To this must be added the illegal trafficking carried out in a much more discreet way by pharmacies supplying themselves in the military surpluses of countries that are not too attentive, and whose methods are often more akin to gangsterism, including assassinations, than to the usual style of trade in capitalist countries.

But the arms trade as a whole, a trade in works of death, raises the strongest criticism from moral authorities, churches and politicians within the capitalist states themselves. Advocates of the arms trade justify this by saying that modern armaments are too expensive to be made for a single country; the argument is that “long series” are necessary for National Defence and that, in its interest, the largest possible amount of armaments must be placed abroad. But these sales promote local conflicts, cost Third World countries dearly, increase their debt and increase international insecurity. The capitalist countries do not, however, deprive themselves of selling their weapons to the South: this is even the bulk of their sales for many years.

The arms trade accompanied the entire career of the capitalist regime. Already at the end of the eighteenth century, Beaumarchais supplied rifles to the American insurgents. The Revolution sent them to its allies in Europe and England to the monarchies of the continent. During the nineteenth century weapons were sold by the producing countries of Europe, especially during the American Civil War. Colonial powers sometimes provided them to adversaries of competing countries as part of their rivalries. The capitalist states deliver them to the countries taking part in the Balkan wars or to their future allies in the war of 1914-1918 (they are sometimes the same). The 1920s and 1930s were the great period of the “cannon merchants”. The two Chaco wars of 1928-1929 and 1932-1935 between Bolivia and Paraguay, which were in fact wars between capitalist oil interests to exploit this territory,

allowed these merchants to supply both sides largely: they were particularly bloody. The role of these “gun dealers” was such that in the United States a special committee was created in 1934 by Senator George Norris to investigate with Gerald P. Nye the role of American ammunition manufacturers, while the famous special issue of *Fortune*, “*Arms and the Men*” and the book *Merchants of Death, Iron, Blood and Profits*, a title that deserved to be reported in this Black Book, having been chosen in the largest capitalist country in the world about armaments.

The Cold War gave an unprecedented boost to the arms trade on both sides. The Americans supplied them to western European countries as part of their policy of *containment* of the danger represented by the East. They supplied their allies in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, sending arms flows around the world called “military aid”. For their part, the other capitalist powers not only used their weapons in their own colonial wars (Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Kenya, Algeria) but delivered them for those of other states: Portugal fought with French equipment in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique from 1961 to 1974. The U.S. War in Vietnam led to strong arms flows to South Vietnam and neighboring countries until 1975. U.S. arms exports had increased sixfold from 1961 to 1975. What is remarkable is that they continued to rise rapidly after the Vietnam War with an exceptional peak in 1978 (13 times those of 1961) under the influence of the exacerbation of the Cold War.

Arms exports from capitalist countries, like those from around the world, after declining slightly in the late 70s, began to grow again, reaching peaks from 1982 to 1984 and in 1987. The 80s were marked not only by the maintenance of a high level of the Arms Trade of the United States but by an extraordinary surge in arms sales of the France, the amount of which sometimes exceeded 40% of American sales and even reached 70% to the countries of the South. This made France the world’s largest per capita arms exporter. The recipients were largely in the Middle East, so that at the time of the Gulf War, in early 1991, French public opinion may have feared that French soldiers would be killed by French weapons delivered to Iraq in previous years. The international *détente* from 1988 onwards explains a fairly rapid decline in the capitalist arms trade as well as its rival in the last years of the Cold War.

Table 27.7: Exports of major conventional arms by capitalist countries from 1982 to 1990 (in millions of constant US dollars in 1985)

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
United States	12 707	11 878	10 226	8 800	10 304	12 596	10 503	11 669	8 738
France	3 472	3 460	3 853	3 970	4 096	3 011	2 300	2 577	1 799
United Kingdom	2 065	1 077	1 908	1 699	1 500	1 817	1 401	1 816	1 220
West Germany	861	1 826	2 535	1 075	1 120	676	1 270	716	963
Netherlands	154	87	98	88	240	265	532	725	152
Italy	1 350	973	869	646	457	389	471	169	96
Other developed capitalist countries	818	1 565	1 250	850	1 232	1 740	1 363	1 341	312
Total developed capitalist countries	21 427	20 866	20 739	17 128	18 949	20 494	17 840	19 013	13 280
Total world	33 600	32 703	34 112	32 504	36 453	39 777	33 767	33 509	21 726

N.B.: Major conventional weapons include six categories of the most sophisticated and expensive weapons: tanks and armoured vehicles, artillery, missiles, military aircraft, warships and military electronics. Nuclear weapons, which cannot be sold because of the NPT, are obviously not one of them.

Table 27.8: Exports of major conventional arms by capitalist countries from 1991 to 1996 (in millions of US dollars at constant 1990 prices)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
United States	1 041	14 187	14 270	12 029	10 972	10 228
Russia	3 838	2 918	3 773	763	3 505	4 512
France	1 090	1 302	1 308	971	785	2 101
United Kingdom	1 156	1 315	1 300	1 346	1 568	1 773
Germany	2 505	1 527	1 727	2 448	1 549	1 464
Netherlands	453	333	395	581	430	450
Italy	360	434	447	330	377	158
Other capitalist countries	1 828	1 855	1 567	2 586	3 006	1 700
Total capitalist countries	24 272	23 871	24 787	21 054	22 192	22 386
Rest of the world	1 255	969	1 657	766	997	594
Total world	25 527	24 840	26 444	21 820	23 189	22 980

Based on Sipri Yearbook 1997 the trade in major conventional Weapons

The end of the Cold War was marked only by a certain slowdown in the arms trade. The Gulf War resulted in both new arms exports to the Middle East and a desire to “moralize” the arms trade, which led to the creation of a United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (1991), to which not all states make their contributions and which is very incomplete. The European Council adopted a code of conduct for arms transfers at its meetings in Luxembourg in 1991 and Lisbon in 1992. On the other hand, an “international code of conduct” was presented by Nobel laureates in 1997. These attempts at moralization in the era of globalization and neoliberalism may meet with some skepticism, regardless of the goodwill of the authors of these proposals.

Capitalism will continue to sell weapons where and when it seems profitable, if it does not come up against a vast movement of public opinion.

Sales in the capitalist countries still represented 92% of those of 1991 in 1996. The United States comes out on top, followed by Russia and the three major Western European countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom). The German arms trade increased during these years as a result of the frg's sale of GDR army equipment to various countries around the world. The United Kingdom has sometimes managed to surpass the France. The Gulf War was followed by an increase in orders from the Middle East. Following the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), there were "cascading" sales, with the most developed countries ceding their least sophisticated equipment to those that were moderately sophisticated and the latter in turn sending their old-fashioned equipment to the Third World. At present, the main recipient of sales from capitalist countries that engage in unbridled competition is no longer the Middle East (which still hosts nearly a quarter) but Asia (which receives half). What conflict will these weapons preside over? India-Pakistan, China Sea, Korea, there is no shortage of areas likely to ignite on this continent.

French arms manufacturers are concerned about the current evolution of the arms trade, despite the rise in exports in 1996, which place France third in the world. Among the most notable deliveries are that to Taiwan of 60 Mirage 2000-5 by Dassault-Aviation in 1996 and 6 La Fayette frigates by DCN carried out very discreetly at the end of January 1998, with advance settlement in order to avoid any blockage of mainland China. The armament of a potential conflict zone is thus strengthened. Another is increasingly emerging in the Indian subcontinent: Pakistan has secured the modernization of 40 Mirage 3 Dassault, the delivery of 3 Atlantic 1 aircraft and especially the supply of 3 Agosta submarines by the Directorate of Shipbuilding. This last market poses the problem of "compensations" since the third submarine is to be built in Karachi thanks to the transfer of French technology. Other cases include that of 30 AS 532 Cougar helicopters for Turkey, destined like the twenty others purchased in 1993 for repression against the Kurds, which Eurocopter has pledged to let Ankara produce. These "compensations" depriving them of an expected profit are one of the current concerns of the armaments capitalists. They are also concerned that the orders placed in 1996-1997 (e.g. 40 Mirage 2000 by Abu Dhabi to Dassault-Aviation, 12 helicopters by Saudi Arabia and 5 by Israel to Eurocopter, Mistral missiles to Matra by Indonesia and Exocet missiles to Aerospace by Oman and Qatar) will be insufficient to ensure activity in future years. The limited reduction in equipment and research appropriations linked to a certain staggering over time of the programmes of the 1997-2002 military programming law contributes to their pessimism.



The diversification of activities and reconversion protecting employment are desirable outcomes that the popular movement alone can impose on those who fear that they will not generate as much profit as the machines of death.

Capitalism continues the arms race and arms sales almost as if nothing had changed with the end of the Cold War. Not only have its leaders maintained NATO, but they are trying to extend it to the countries of Eastern Europe, which raises the protests of the new capitalist Russia. To justify the continuation of the arms policy, it is suggested to the West that a new danger could arise from the East and it is openly said that the main danger is in the South (the White Paper on French defense is clear on this subject as well as some statements by President Clinton). Will the peoples of the South continue to suffer the consequences of an arms race, a major obstacle to genuine development? Will they not find a way to join their efforts with those of the peoples of the North to move towards disarmament and peace? Capitalism, through its policy of excessive armament, has shed the blood of the peoples for two centuries. It would be good if the twenty-first century did not constitute a bloody new century or that it did not end prematurely with a nuclear catastrophe that is always possible in today's world. The answer does not belong to the masters of armaments, it belongs to the peoples.

**Yves Grenet**

Yves Grenet is an economist. He heads the National Committee for Independence and Development (CNID). He is a former member of the presidency of the World Peace Council.



## Chapter 28

# Globalization's undeads

**Philippe PARAIRE**

This is a fact, and it is no longer even disputed by the proponents of the globalization of capitalism: the worsening of lifestyle inequalities in rich and poor countries (called “social polarization”) and the adaptation of the entire planet to the free market (called “modernization”) are the consequence of an economic and political organization that no longer recognizes as a basis moral than the values generated by the necessities of this globalization. The economic and social damage therefore appears only as “dysfunctions” when in reality they are the product of a recolonization of the world by the dominant forces of the rich countries. This process, which corresponds at the end of the twentieth century to a strategic victory of capitalism over the socialist and non-aligned camp, is based on a murderous utopia, globalization, the first applications of which reveal a negative balance sheet, in all areas, for the future of the planet.

Indeed, the ecological crisis itself is clearly analyzed as a social crisis and the product of a system where abundance cannot be shared. To ensure the comfort level of 20% of humanity, it is already necessary today to divert cereal production from the poor world, to cut down its forests, to destroy its traditional ways of life, to deport expropriated or ruined peasants to the favellas and barrios of Latin America, the forbidden neighborhoods of South Asia, the suburbs of Manila, the slums of Dakar; we must organize a market for raw materials in the manner of the rapine that has thrown a billion human beings into extreme poverty. At the very bottom of the scale, one in six inhabitants of our planet has only one dollar a day to survive!

Economic globalization, the merits of which are constantly praised by the dominant ideology, is in fact only an ongoing process. It is neither completed nor final. Its weaknesses are great and numerous. Foremost among these are

the unfulfilled promises of shared wealth, which by definition capitalism, even globalized, cannot keep. Producing today more exclusion than well-being, more speculative wealth than authentic development, and infinitely more resentment than hope, this criminal system continues to manufacture suffering and ransack billions of lives by keeping a third of humanity at the standard of living of the European Middle Ages.

Because as we approach the year 2000, two billion men, women and children are maintained in the year one thousand by the law of profit. Half of them don't even know if she will be able to eat properly the next day.

## 28.1 1945-1990: recolonization, a prelude to globalisation

The globalization of capital, defined empirically and progressively in the context of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War, was one of the goals of the "Bretton Woods institutions." The strategy of these aid and cooperation agencies quickly became aggressive. With some adjustments and a few squeaks, these agencies have become tools of American hegemony. Although initially separate, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the GATT/WTO, now supplemented by the MAI (Set of World Trade Liberalization Agreements), have coordinated their overall policies with that of the G7. Since the break-up of the Soviet bloc and the gradual transition of China to capitalism, these institutions have acquired a status that is more structural than conjunctural and have gradually constituted a kind of center of reflection, meetings and decisions operating for the benefit of dominant capitalism.

The strategy of the WB/IMF/GATT Group has been evolving. We can distinguish four major phases since 1945, parallel to those of the American strategy in the world: initially, it set itself the goal of technical and financial dependence on poor decolonized countries through a systematic policy of development aid based on heavy equipment, urban concentration, major works and the industrialization of the countryside. This first phase lasted from 1947 (first loans from the World Bank and the IMF) to 1968 (arrival of Robert McNamara, former US Secretary of Defense, at the head of the World Bank). It has disrupted the initial fabric of production in poor countries in an authoritarian, rapid and irreversible manner. In many countries, this phase continues according to the same methods of interference. Loans continue to focus on "heavy projects," such as the 2,000 dams in India's Narmada Valley or China's Three Rivers Dam, without paying attention to the

millions of people who will have to be displaced at the time of watering. Systematic overruns make other loans indispensable, accentuating the country's financial dependence, which must then, each time a little more, give in to the blackmail of "conditionality", a pretty technocratic word fraught with threats for the over-indebted poor countries and for the 110 economies of the South that are officially declared by the World Bank and the IMF in a situation of "structural adjustment". This term refers to a set of binding measures accompanying a forced transition to a market economy through the dismantling of any regulatory function of the State.

After playing the comedy of financial and technical aid, the strategy then turned to the sending of debt, between 1968 and 1982, the year of the "great debt crisis" that followed the declaration of default of Mexico, the first debtor at that time. From 1968 to 1971, McNamara increased loans and investments sixfold. The fashion was then officially for a "quantitative" approach to development aid to poor countries. In 1971, the end of the convertibility of the dollar decreed by President Nixon transformed the IMF into a recycler of floating money. Monkey money, once loaned to the poor world, miraculously regained value: it became a debt to be paid. Private investment in speculative dollars was further multiplied by the oil crises of 1973 and 1979. At that time, the indebtedness of poor countries ended up reaching more than a thousand times that of the early 60s. The World Bank and the IMF then played the dual roles of public lenders and private collectors: the invention of "structural adjustment" in 1979 made it possible to provide private creditors in the event that the poor countries, which were recklessly indebted, showed a desire to stop paying, which was a foreseeable danger.

This crisis took place in 1982, marking a third phase in the history of the Bretton Woods institutions. The mining of the rear bases of the Soviet Union was set up by the forced "structural adjustment" (obtained by blackmail) of the Third World countries: between 1982 and 1987, these macroeconomic programmes concocted by the G7 Group, the World Bank and the IMF brought the poor countries back to the market economy under strict contractual conditions, which caused them to leave the Soviet orbit "de facto".

McNamara resigned in 1981, the year after Ronald Reagan came to power; for American geostrategy immediately evolved: from the concept of "containment" in vogue since the Truman Doctrine, perpetuated by the policies of peaceful coexistence - in confrontation - of Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Carter, we moved on to the strategic counterpart of the economic neoliberalism of the Reagan team: henceforth the official doctrine was radicalized into "reconquest" ("roll back"). During these years 82 to 92, "structural adjustment" became the key concept of an aggressive strategy that was the main exogenous factor in the political, economic, environmental and so-

cial collapse of the “adjusted” countries. The IMF, the World Bank and the GATT, officially associated since 1988, have brought the poor world to its knees. The Soviet Union, encircled and gradually deprived of allies, slowly dissolved into “glasnost” and “perestroika” and finally collapsed shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Then, in a few years, the “structural adjustment” (already globalized by the Baker plan in Seoul in 1985), finished to bring the last recalcitrants to heel: India ceded to the IMF in 1991, the new Russia did so the same year. Cuba and Vietnam opened up to mass tourism and China restored the market economy in the “special economic zones”. In early 1998, in the midst of the Asian crash, the Chinese state liberalized all prices except housing, health and transportation.

Today, in 1998, the 200 largest transnational corporations already control 80% of the world’s agricultural and industrial production as well as 70% of the world’s services and trade, more than two-thirds of the \$25 trillion in gross global product (barely \$1 trillion a hundred years ago).

Associated with the debates and decisions of the G8 summits, the “decision-makers” of the trusts (agri-food, oil or armaments) intervene directly on world affairs. In collaboration with the financial giants of global capital (pension funds, large transnational banks and institutionalized speculators), the agencies of the IMF and the WB elaborate their diktats, break economies, bring the recolonized states to heel. All these “managers” and all these “presidents”, for the benefit of the “top one” (the richest 1% in the world) organize the suffering of the “sixty bottom” (the poorest 60%) ...

Neoliberal ideology, radicalized by its strategic successes, also globalizes its targets: Launched into the reconquest of the entire world market, it aims at the establishment of a “universal structural adjustment”, which must bring to heel the emerging rival powers (NPI and Japan in particular), but above all obtain the destruction of the welfare states of the developed countries, by the dismemberment of the social and contractual policies obtained in a century and a half of fierce struggles. Deregulation and privatization, even in rich countries, are the most decisive objectives of the liberal offensive. A generalized decline in the rights of workers in developed countries following the impoverishment of those in the East and the enslavement of those in the poor world is the programmed goal of victorious capitalism. Deindustrialization of the poorest countries, lasting stagnation for others, deruralization of the South, concerted underemployment everywhere, wage labour of small production and distribution throughout the planet, reorientation of investments towards non-job-creating growth where the biggest profits are made on markets rigged by unequal exchange and speculation. The deadly effects of this system of predation are so destructive, so profound and important that they also come to have an impact on the great vital balances of our

global environment.

## 28.2 Ecological crisis, private profit and forced rural exodus

The ecological balance sheet of Europe's industrial development is well established: the old continent is showing definitive wounds: mowed down by intensive agriculture, soiled by urbanization, tied up by its network of highways, traversed by cesspools that once bore the names of rivers, this disfigured land bears the traces of a thousand years' struggle. But if North America has been cleared in a hundred years, the tropical forests of Brazil and Africa have left in thirty years, and soon there will be nothing left of the equatorial forests of Malaysia and Indonesia, which have only been exploited for twenty years. This acceleration is linked to the extension of the "free market".

It is a fact: the unequal organization of the world disturbs physical, chemical and biological balances. Perhaps for the first time, a more balanced distribution of resources among Men is called not by the generous dreams of some philosophy of sharing, but by a global threat: the planet is not defiled by industry, but by a productivist and destructive industrial policy, based on the private capture of profits at the global level. Soils are not destroyed by chemical fertilizers and pesticides, but by the unfair business strategies of transnational agribusiness firms. The forest is burning in the Amazon, in Africa, in Indonesia because impoverished peasants driven from their land seek to survive on itinerant crops, but even more so because this or that European or American fast food chain, this or that agri-food trust has decided to set up there a giant ranch or a plantation of bananas intended to produce for export to rich countries. The desert advances at the same time as poverty, the forest recedes at the same time as justice, the slums of poor countries grow at the same time as the profits of transnational corporations that seize the lands of the Third World, malnourished children are dwindling and dying in Africa while the middle classes of rich countries no longer know what to invent to lose their extra pounds.

By far, by far, the most polluting substance on the planet is inequality: much more than the toxic releases of the packed industries of the North and the South, of which it is at the origin, much more than the forest fires, wars, famines it produces, inequality destroys the planet with slums, plundering the green capital of poor countries that can no longer do anything else, for lack of capital, than to pay their debt in kind.

After all, what is the record of nearly half a century of liberal approach to

so-called “development aid”? It must be recognized that it is negative on all levels: not only is none of the economies of the poor world viable or independent, but economic dependence and ecological destruction are redoubled by an aggravated social differential: the collaborating “elites” of the countries of the South brutally put down the riots of hunger, the underpaid and corrupt civil servants divert public money, the decision-makers will take their orders in the cabinets of their Western counterparts or in the boards of directors of transnational corporations. Crushed by an unbearable external debt, poor countries literally finance rich countries (to the tune of more than one point of growth).

Thus the forced rural exodus fills the slums and red-light districts while misery feeds guerrillas who turn to simple banditry as in Liberia and Somalia or barbarism as in Algeria. The development of the “free market” was only an opportunity for a rationalized plundering of poor countries under the guise of technical assistance: the UN agencies have only been the vector of parasitic settlements, those of the agri-food trusts that exhaust the soils of the poor world to export to the rich countries, those of the cannon merchants who manufacture the foreign policy of all countries, large and small, those of financiers eager for profitable investments, who manipulate international institutions.

After fifty years of “assistance”, the South is ruined: nearly half of the inhabitants live below the poverty line defined by the United Nations. These countries are ecologically devastated, the populations of cities and countryside lead undignified lives. The famous “take-off” of Rostow did not take place: the Third World plane, crowded and stinking, rusts at the end of the runway, without a pilot or fuel. As for the famous ripple effect, the “trickle down”, which according to liberal economists was to enrich the poor after enriching the rich, it shows the limits of cynicism: Artificially plastered on economies and societies mutilated by colonization, western-style development revenues have only organized more rationally, by modernizing them, the ancient forms of colonial transfer of capital and raw commodities.

Despite the cascading crashes (Thailand, Korea, Hong Kong and even Tokyo), our liberal economists persist in manipulating notions that mask the reality of the countries of the South: Exhausted and polluted China sells one of its provinces, Guang Dong, to private investors, to prepare the ground for economic reforms aimed at restoring the market economy and anticipating opening up to large Japanese and American companies. India is torn by gigantism and corruption, by intolerable social gaps, with its legions of beggars, its clusters of miserable children clinging to the arms of tourists, their hands outstretched, their eyes imploring. Mexico, so polluted, so devastated, is so colonized that people shop in dollars, with the greenbacks of the big



neighbor to the north. Korea imitates Hong Kong, Singapore, where in the “sweat shops”, thirteen-year-old workers are deprived, thirteen hours a day, of the beauties of life, the joys of adolescence. Thailand, the world’s largest exporter of rice, is a country where one could therefore believe that everyone has enough to eat; but one can buy a little slave five hundred dollars and the rental of a “girlfriend”, does not cost more than three hundred dollars a week. Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil? Forests burned and ransacked, destructive industries; everywhere and always, with the “new industrialization”, the procession of the benefits of capitalist society: red light districts, girls for rent, slums, drugs, smoke, Coca-Cola, automobiles, fast foods, neon, delinquency and... Phones. This allows all liberal experts to explain that there is in India, for example, a new middle class, with 200 million consumers. We forget, as if by chance, the remaining 700 million, two-thirds of which must survive on less than a dollar per person per day. This is probably the “Indian miracle”!

This is to forget all those whom “development”, as conceived by the agencies of the World Bank and the IMF (which serve as pilot fish for large private banks and giant trusts of heavy construction equipment and major works) has officially deported: the Singrauli dams in India, which began in 1962, forcibly displaced more than 300,000 people initially. The construction of coal-fired power plants (11 in total) plans to drive out an additional 150,000 people. Since 1970, India’s energy program, funded two-thirds by the World Bank, has deported, in addition to the victims of the Singrauli project, more than 200,000 indigenous people, who lived in self-subsistence in forests still untouched. The 2,000 megawatts of the new Dahanu power plant scared away more than 100,000 “adivasis” (the name given in India to indigenous peoples in little-explored areas) by draining the swamps and mangroves where they lived. Fishermen on the coast have been ruined by hot water discharges and sulphides. Officially, the “compensation” programs concern more than 10,000 artisanal fishermen. Despite these repeated disasters, the loans continue to literally water this concerted looting: 250,000 people displaced by the Upper Krishna dam in 1978 do not prevent the financing of the second phase of the work ten years later. The 120,000 deportees from Subernarekha did not raise eyebrows among World Bank experts, nor did the resistance of the Srisaïlam deportees, who nevertheless obtained through their struggle the resettlement of 64,000 people out of 150,000.

In China, the pharaonic Three Rivers Dam, which will be the largest reservoir in the world (on a seismic zone, let’s not forget!) will only be built thanks to financial support provided by the World Bank and the IMF. In the situation of complete non-transparency that characterizes the pro-capitalist regime of the current leaders of the People’s Republic of China, it is estimated

that more than two million people are being displaced off-site. In addition, the potential danger will force the Chinese state to empty the downstream of the dam of any inhabitant for at least two hundred kilometers. We arrive at three million deportees in all... Work has already begun. The revolts that took place were put down and camouflaged as "inter-ethnic incidents"!

The full list of forced displacements due to "major works" is impossible to keep. A large number of international organizations and local resistance groups have sought to alert world opinion to the plight of rural populations or ethnic groups around the world who have swelled the ranks of those excluded from the big cities for the sole benefit of the large lending organizations and trusts that finance and carry out all the major projects in the world.

The most astonishing thing about this case is that this enormous human waste, coupled with real ecological disasters, took place for nothing, in terms of result, even in the technical sense of the term: two successive internal World Bank reports, written by expert groups led by specialists appointed by the Bank itself, established in the early 90s that only 43% of the works undertaken and financed with the Bank's assistance were functioning. Sand-blasted dams, unfinished roads, dry wells. What a picture!

The money, on the other hand, is actually gone, and it is the people who are being asked to repay, through new sacrifices! More than thirty years after this technological invasion, Latin America is undergoing deadly structural adjustments to pay the debts contracted during the construction of the huge works of Grande Arajás, polonoreste, which drowned the territory of 30,000 Amazonian Indians. The giant Yacerita reservoir has displaced more than 50,000 people in Paraguay and Argentina. In Brazil, Itaparica; in Thailand, Pak Mun and the Sirindhorn; how can we take into account these works of art that have destroyed living environments, shattered millions of existences, disorganized millennial production systems for the simple profit of imperialism? Worsening of the debt with dirty money thus recycled and increased political blackmail, tens of millions undoubtedly of people forced into internal exile or emigration by the destruction of the traditional economic and ecological fabrics, with at the end of the count malnutrition (nearly two billion men at the end of the twentieth century): the bill is rather heavy. For the impossible toll of starvation deaths directly attributable to the brutal re-conquest of the former colonies since 1950 amounts to perhaps half a billion in half a century. The number of men and women to whom extreme poverty grants only a shortened existence reaches one third of humanity. Capitalism kills, it's not new. It is slowly murdering the billion survivors of his reconquest. It would take a new Dickens to describe the extraordinary amount of suffering it produces.

This forced rural exodus has hit at least half a billion people in half a

century. In the space of two generations, the destruction of rural or wild environments and the destruction of traditional modes of production has resulted in a reverse polarization of the city-country relationship. Now peasants are no longer in the majority in the poor world: some countries are rapidly moving towards proportions that define the situation in Europe or North America. A world without peasants, a very high-yield agriculture on land empty of men and owned by trusts, this is the social and economic model imposed by modern capitalist agriculture.

In contrast to concepts such as “food self-sufficiency” and “self-centred development”, a system based on deruralization and underemployment is being set up, the objective of which is not to feed populations but to produce excessively to export to rich countries, regardless of the local human and ecological cost.

In China every year since its implementation in 1990, the new policy has pushed 20 million poor peasants to the cities. The state abandons the surveillance of the self-centered system of the “people’s communes”, allows private profit to resettle to the depths of the countryside, thus disrupting local exchanges based on the barter of goods and services. However, this process of exchange, regulated by the counters of the state, worked quite well for more than thirty years, preserving China from its annual famine, an old plague of the old feudal regime. But the arrival of experts from the World Bank and the IMF, the invasion of the South by foreign speculators are producing the same effects as in India. Peasant refugees in the cities work for less than half an hour and those who do not have jobs live on the streets: with a million homeless people in the cities, ex-communist China is slowly sliding towards an “Indian-style” situation. The subcontinent, strongly deruralized in a generation, has seen more than ten million peasants flock to its big cities ruined per year during all the 70s, and nearly twenty million during the 80s and 90s. Brazil, which now has only 35% of rural people, and Mexico, which privatizes the “ejidos”, the collective farms of the Zapatista era, are very far from being able to manage the mass of development refugees. Since 1950, how many peasants have been ruined by expropriations, the pollution of their waters and the diktat of the prices imposed by the London and Chicago Stock Exchanges, which set agricultural prices around the world? The classic capitalist colonial scheme is therefore simply being resettled.

### 28.3 “Structural adjustment” is waging war on the poor

In 1998, 45 countries around the world were officially declared food imbalances: the daily ration was between 73 and 95% of the FAO standard (2,345 calories per day). In Sahelian Africa after three decades of development aid and ten years of structural adjustment, the average daily food ration is 1,730 calories (exactly half the average in the United States!). India, with 2,200 calories, is barely approaching the proper ration. However, given the social gaps, it can be seen that below 95% of the FAO standard on a national average, almost a third of the population is malnourished. 85% of them start “hunger riots” or civil wars. At 75% appear episodic famines...

Between 1965 and 1980, the average annual per capita income in the countries of the North (excluding Eastern countries) increased by more than \$900; at the same time, the annual per capita enrichment of the countries of the South (excluding OPEC) did not exceed 3 dollars! Rich countries, whose demography is controlled and economic instruments sharpened despite the crises, experienced a tremendous rise in living standards from 1950 to 1980. The countries of the South, during the “glorious thirties”, experienced successively a decade of economically paralyzing political unrest, a decade of financial and technical invasion on the occasion of the “Green Revolution”, and a decade of stalemate in the external debt, with a sudden halt to all technical equipment and social progress. The 90s finished subduing the recalcitrant, cancelling by blackmail to the debt of the sometimes hard-won independences. Thus destructive interference in equipment and agriculture has turned the food selfishness of rich countries into an accepted morality and domination by hunger into a system of government on a global level. Then structural adjustment dealt the final blow to economies plagued by the technical and financial dependence organized by the first phase of recolonization. Its human cost is enormous, incalculable with precision; to satisfy the thirst for profit of a handful of decision-makers won over to the philosophy of ultraliberalism, millions of men died prematurely of malnutrition or diseases contracted because of the weakening due to lack of food. A billion living dead, whose almost animal existence is directly attributable to the strategic choices of contemporary capitalism, add to the catastrophic toll of the globalization of capitalism.

Traditionally, a “structural adjustment” programme is accompanied by “high-conditionality” loans; this means that if the government concerned does not move fast enough in its reforms, supplementary loans are not granted. India, Egypt, Côte d’Ivoire, Zambia and Algeria have suffered from this

### 28.3. “STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT” IS WAGING WAR ON THE POOR<sup>429</sup>

blackmail several times recently. France itself was ordered by the IMF not to rescue the CFA franc or the Algerian dinar in 1994. Prices have soared on the spot and poverty has taken a giant leap forward in the countries concerned...

The first principle of “structural adjustment” is the limitation of public expenditure. In order to bring profitable public services into the competitive sector, the State must dismiss civil servants, limit its social, health and education expenditure, in order to provoke the emergence of new paying users of these services. At the same time, the state must abandon all forms of direct control in agricultural and industrial production, as well as in high-tech services (telecommunications, television and radio). Everything must be privatized.

More than 110 countries that are now officially in a situation of “structural adjustment” have put into practice the first principle, to which the World Bank and the IMF add a second: general deregulation of prices and wages. The abolition of the “maximum price” of a few high-necessities throws millions of poor families into malnutrition. The “minimum wage” is also disappearing, aggravating the phenomenon. Price and wage controls are presented by the World Bank and the IMF as an “anti-economic” tool, undermining “competitive dynamics”. In fact, the adjustment is only intended to call for relocations.

In order to generate a satisfactory mass of products not consumed locally because of their new high cost, the IMF has imagined finally forcing any adjusted country to an immediate devaluation of its currency and an increase in interest rates. As domestic consumption soars due to rising prices, many commodities and products are reserved for export to rich countries. Poverty thus finances the repayment of the debt. The circle is closed with this third measure.

Needless to say, this “shock treatment” (the official expression used by the drafters of the Baker Plan) applied to weakened postcolonial economies is in fact a disguised form of war against the poor.

The first “adaptation” loans granted by the World Bank and the IMF date back to the mid-70s. The aim was to finance compensation premiums in countries where privatization of public services might be too unpopular. Then the term “structural adjustment loans” began to describe heavier financing systems designed to accelerate the transition to the “free market”. The first “structural adjustment programme”, consisting of a veritable package of successive measures, each accompanied by adequate loans, hit Turkey in 1980 and was supplemented by a special drawing right in IMF funds in 1981 and again in 1985 to the tune of one and a half billion dollars. Then the World Bank added another long-term loan in 1985, in view of the progress of the adjustment measures taken by the Turkish government.

Nearly 20 years later, where does Turkey stand? The rural exodus has destroyed subsistence agriculture, Istanbul has grown by 600%, in conditions that are unsustainable in all respects. The Turkish state has failed in its task of economic support (turning its back on Kemalism), and under the military dictatorship has made its liberal turn. Successive devaluations caused catastrophic price increases while the minimum wage was abolished, as well as price controls. Thrown into misery, overwhelmed by the dictatorship, the Turkish people have gradually allowed themselves to be caught up in fundamentalist propaganda, which constantly castigates businessism, social polarization and the decadence of morals. Pretty much Iran's worst-case scenario, with the mullahs succeeding the Shah's "White Revolution," who had applied to his country the shock treatment of rural modernization and unbridled urbanization.

Yet it was as a result of this serious Iranian failure that the thinkers of the World Bank and the IMF understood the need to provide financial support in poor countries for the destruction of social protection, the decline of labour rights and the destruction of public services, at the same time as the concentration of land and the displacement of populations.

After the Cancun Conference and the Baker Plan, which marked the transformation of "structural adjustment" programs into a real weapon of penetration of economies and states still escaping the free market, the 1980s were one of chaos for "adjusted" countries. For the brutality of privatization suddenly inflated the level of poverty, underemployment and malnutrition. But no structural adjustment programme was ever carried out without funding for the renovation of equipment and the training of the law enforcement apparatus. From the beginning of the 80s, structural adjustment provoked the "hunger riots" that local observers call "IMF riots". The level of protests against the adjustment to capitalism of the state-owned economies of the poor world has continued to grow even if it is true that the poorest workers and unemployed in these already poor countries could be tired of excessive bureaucratization and the many dysfunctions (for example, a shortage of tomato sauce in Algeria, this is unacceptable!) nationalized systems. It is also certainly true that the announcement of the dismantling of states of directed capitalism, synonymous with frequently incompetent "national societies", may have met for a time with popular approval. But it was a little quick to forget less palpable results, which the governments of poor countries had managed to achieve in just twenty years: massive literacy, support for agricultural prices and distribution subsidies, reduction of health costs, control of drug prices, almost free transport. From the first years of adjustment, the awakening was very hard: the abolition of all state support, imposed by adjustment programs in the name of the religion of price, productivity, com-

petitiveness, economic efficiency, modernization, produced explosive social situations. These have resulted in an upsurge in spontaneous urban violence (looting of supermarkets, attacks and looting of banks and office buildings) and more organized rural resistance: revolutionary maquis like the "Shining Path" in Peru, peasant revolts in India, Mexico, persistence of maquis in the Philippines, Indonesia, Turkey, fundamentalist terrorism in Egypt, Algeria, separatist maquis in Senegal, not to mention the vertiginous growth of delinquency pure and simple.

More than a hundred states involved in structural adjustment programmes have been imposed these "high-conditional" loans. Totally infiltrated by world bank and IMF experts, they have frequently used weapons to prevent an Iranian-style slippage. It must be made clear: "structural adjustment" has been done, in any case, weapon in hand.

The December 1983 riots in Tunisia marked the beginning of the Maghreb's resistance to the imposed adjustment. The hundreds of arrests and disappearances that followed could not deter other rioters in Morocco from taking to the streets to protest the following month. The army fired on the crowd and officially killed 400 people. In April 1984, rising prices in Santo Domingo pushed the demonstrators towards the beautiful neighborhoods. Nearly 186 shot dead, 500 wounded, thousands of arrests of "looters". Each year brings its share of structural adjustment deaths, to the point that a Democratic senator in 1985 raised the problem of the use of World Bank funds before the United States Congress. But nothing changed: in Zambia, the army fired on the "hunger rioters" and officially killed 180 people, including many housewives who came to protest against the rise in food prices following the second wave of privatization. That same year, in the violently "readjusted" Sudan, troops suppressed the invasion by the poor of the central districts of the capital. There are thousands of deaths. In September 1988, the youth of Algiers took to the streets to protest against rising prices, unemployment and housing speculation. A manhunt lasting several hours in bab el Oued occupied militarily ended with more than 300 young people murdered and nearly a hundred others completed in the alleys of the old medina. In Venezuela, led by politicians who claim to be social democrats, but who have applied a very brutal structural adjustment, suburban workers are demonstrating with their families against a tripling of the price of public transport, and a shortage of food and medicine. The police shoot at the crowd: 500 dead, officially still. The following year in Argentina, the strict application of adjustment measures caused daily unrest and demonstrations in all cities of the country. On the said day, the army attacks the hunger rioters, simultaneously, in the big cities invaded by the poor. Police report 20 deaths and 500 arrests. March 1990: The rioters of Abidjan are severely repressed. In Zambia, two months

later, the army killed twenty demonstrators. In Zaire, each year brings its quota of killed rioters...

Throughout the 90s, the same scenario of bloodily repressed “hunger riots” was repeated a hundred times, from Kinshasa to Jakarta, from Chiapas to Pakistan and India, always with the same epilogue.

Generally speaking, one does not take to the streets in front of the machine guns of the police without reason. They must have been pushed to the limit by an intolerable situation.

The deterioration of social protection and health systems, the breakdown of public services and the decline in school enrolment rates are certainly legitimate causes of protest. The workers of the rich countries themselves, who are also under this type of pressure, know something about it. The movements in defence of pensions in Italy followed by the movements of December 1995 in France, the revolt of precarious workers and the unemployed in 1998 show that the application of ultraliberal measures is painful, even for developed economies. But in poor countries, structural adjustment has pushed hundreds of millions of people into poverty. We are reaching a completely different dimension of the problem in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Two billion people today are officially malnourished, and another billion suffers episodically from starvation. All experts (even those of the World Bank, who insist on the “temporary” aspect of the phenomenon) admit that poverty has increased in severity, proportion and absolute figures since 1985. One of the clear signs of the savagery of adjustment is the fate of children in poor countries, including former Eastern European countries. In Argentina, for example, perinatal mortality reaches 50 children out of a thousand, 1.5 times more than in 1980. In Zambia, malnutrition killed 13 per cent of children under three in 1980. In 1998, the rate of 42% was reached, i.e. approximately the figure of the twelfth century in France. In the adjusted countries of Africa, six out of every thousand women die in childbirth. In Asia, four, in Latin America, 2.5. In the G8 countries, the rate is sixty times lower, but twice as high as in the early 80s.

The deregulation of economies is dragging down protective legislation: at a time when young French students were protesting in the streets against Édouard Balladur’s “SMIC jeunes”<sup>XLIV</sup>, Indian children were taking to the streets to demand equal pay for equal work. When the IMF suggested that the Rao government lower the minimum working age and repeal the minimum wage, the Indian state, working on behalf of ultraliberal experts from the IMF and the WB, imposed the plan and sent its police to break the strikes. To date, no international convention has succeeded in concretely resolving the

---

<sup>XLIV</sup> A nickname given to a work contract for people under 26 at 80% of the minimal wage



problem of the exponential increase in child labour, which amounts to slavery authorized by the States concerned.

## 28.4 Conclusion: Crime will not always pay

An unknown number of deaths, killed by famine or the diseases of poverty; a worsening at the planetary level of the polarization of wealth; nearly half a billion poor peasants driven from their land by speculation, major works, big landowners or the army. In the name of the dynamics of the “free market”.

At least 200 million children working for free in relocated factories, twenty million sex slaves worldwide.

Two billion men and women and children living below the poverty line that ultraliberal capitalism promises to eradicate! In the midst of these destitute, a billion undernourished, and 20 million starving deaths in fifty years of development aid.

An unknown number of deaths among resistance fighters for forced adjustment. Since 1980, at least ten thousand people have been killed worldwide during the “hunger riots”.

Pollution of continental and marine lands and waters to produce more and more, to repay more and more, to enrich the same ones. Unquantifiable.

Felling of half of the surface of tropical and equatorial forests to repay the debt of development aid that has only helped the increase in profits of large transnational corporations. Incalculable damage caused by unequal exchange.

Decline in school enrolment and access to care in all adjusted countries; under concerted employment, abolition of labour rights, global progress in crime and organized crime, generalization of prostitution as a solution to poverty, multiplication of ethnic conflicts, rise of nationalisms, development of arms trafficking. Impossible to assess.

The macabre accounting of the cost in human lives of recolonizing the poor world and invading ex-communist countries may be difficult to do, but it is easy to judge. Forced alignment with the rules of globalized capitalism has been able to kill a billion people in fifty years and devastate the planet to the point of posing the ecological problem in terms of survival. No matter the quantity?

The globalization of capitalism is above all that of an ethical bankruptcy that reduces humanity to the rank of the beasts devouring themselves around their prey, it is the failure of philosophical constructions based on the legitimization of sickly selfishness and the will to power. By attempting to dissolve the very idea of a human community bound by a shared interest, the crim-

inal ideology that underlies capitalism places itself outside the natural law by endangering the entire species. Ultraliberal capitalism does not create its own gravediggers. It digs its own grave.

### Philippe Paraire

Philippe Paraire is the author of *L'environnement expliqué aux enfants* (The environment explained to children), Hachette-Jeunesse, 1990, coll. "Réponses aux petits curieux"; *Comprendre l'environnement* (Understanding environment), Hachette-Jeunesse, 1991, coll. "Echos" ; *L'Environnement* (The environment) (collective work), Hachette-Jeunesse, 1992, coll. "Géant"; *L'Utopie Verte, écologie des riches, écologie des pauvres* (Green Utopia, ecology of the rich, ecology of the poor), Hachette, 1993, coll. "Pluriel"; *Le Village monde et son château, essai contre le FMI, l'OMC et la Banque Mondiale* (The World Village and its castle, an essay against the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank), Le Temps des Cerises, 1995.

## 28.5 Bibliography

François Chesnais, *La mondialisation du capital* (Capital's globalization), Syros, 1994.

Susan George, *crédits sans frontières* (Credits Without Borders), La Découverte, 1994.

René Dumont, *La croissance... de la famine!* (Growth...of starvation!), Seuil, 1975.

Eisa Assidon, *Les théories économiques du développement* (Economic theories of development), La Découverte, 1992.

Pascal Arnaud, *La dette du Tiers Monde* (The Third World's debt), La Découverte, 1984.

## Chapter 29

# Capital's globalization and root causes of barbarity's threats

François CHESNAIS

Here we are in the era of the globalization of capital. In the coming years, the facts to be recorded in the *Black Book of Capitalism* could be among the most terrifying in its history. Philippe Paraire began the work in his contribution. I will come back later on the conclusions of Claude Meillassoux's last book. My task here is to try to define the new configuration of imperialism and the particular regime of accumulation that corresponds to it.

But first some political reminders are essential. The freedom that both industrial and financial capital regains to deploy worldwide, as it had not been able to do since 1914, is of course due to the strength it has recovered by the very fact of the long phase of uninterrupted accumulation of the "glorious thirties" (one if not the longest in the history of capitalism). However, capital could not have achieved its goals without the success of the "conservative revolution" of the late 1970s. The triumph of the "market" could not have been achieved without the repeated political interventions of the political authorities of the most powerful capitalist states, relayed by the most important international capitalist organizations, the IMF and the GATT/WTO in the lead. These interventions started long before 1989 or 1991. They begin ten years rather at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. This is where the most anti-working class political forces in OECD countries began the process of liberalization, deregulation and privatization. But the way has largely been prepared for them. The anti-working class policies could never have succeeded in their enterprise if the Brejnévian counter-revolution had not previously crushed the Prague Spring and the movement of the Polish

proletariat of the same period, if the leaderships of the communist parties of France and Italy in particular had not intervened from 1968 to 1978 to contain and repress the truly democratic potential, and therefore anti-capitalist, the great social movements - workers and students - that marked the decade 1968-1978 in Europe, as well as in the United States and Latin America.

On the other hand, the current victory of capitalism is all the more complete because even among those who fight its effects, there are many people who no longer use the term. They call it “neo-liberalism” and they have to oppose it only the hope, which I believe chimerical<sup>361</sup>, of a return to more humane forms of capitalist society. Some would certainly be surprised, if not shocked, to be told that by retreating from the word capitalism, they are giving their support to all those who affirm – on the strength of the overwhelming balance sheet of “real socialism” that the collapse of the USSR has finally revealed – that “the victory of democracy and the market” signals “the end of history” or the “unsurpassable horizon” of variants of political and social organization based on private ownership of the means of production. The use of the term neo-liberalism is often associated with the idea that it would still be possible to combat the effects of globalized capitalism without attacking its foundations. This is not the case. A historical period is over. It is not only the one where, on a world scale, there reigned the illusion of a model of society rival to capitalism, socially superior to it, “coexisting peacefully” with it, while being able to counterbalance it militarily if necessary. It is also the one where, in Western Europe in particular, capitalism seemed to have been “domesticated”, bordered by political relations between the constraining classes and irreversible institutions, all resulting from the great struggles constituting the contained, that is to say frustrated, revolution of the end of the Second World War. In France, the terrain of the great struggles of 1936 and 1945, there have long been particularly strong illusions about the ability of these relations and institutions to provide the basis for a continuous improvement of the situation of the working class as well as of broad layers of society. Pierre Bourdieu, for whom I also have the greatest respect, is wrong to dismiss the question of capitalism and its overcoming and to focus on neo-liberalism. But he is far from being the only one on the left to mourn the death of a “civilization of public service” specific to our country, extended at most to a few countries in Europe.

---

<sup>361</sup>See the conclusion of Ellen Meiksing Woods' important book, *Democracy against Capitalism*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

## 29.1 The topicality of the notion of parasitism

The title of Chapter VIII of *Imperialism, the Supreme Stage of Capitalism*, “the parasitism and putrefaction of capitalism” has always greatly embarrassed the theoreticians of the Western communist parties. That was true yesterday. At the time the “peaceful coexistence” with capitalism, as well as its various avatars, could hardly be based on the sole defense of the “socialist homeland”. Even dominated by “American imperialism”, the system with which coexistence was defended had to have something, however limited, of “positive”; that it still seems likely to offer the working class and its allied social strata some prospects for improving their material and moral conditions of existence. The “embarrassing” nature of Lenin’s analysis is obviously even more so today for what remains of these parties. However, the historical segment corresponding to what is called “globalization”, or the “globalization of capital”, is most certainly the one where a set of tendencies analyzed by Lenin with the help of Hobson reaffirmed themselves on an even more gigantic scale than on the eve of the First World War.

For a time, in the 1950s and 1960s, industrial capital – the one that Marx specifies, in Chapter 1 of Book II of *Capital*, is “the only mode of existence of capital where its function consists not only in appropriation, but also in the creation of surplus value, in other words of surplus product” – seemed to dominate the advanced capitalist economies again. The “layer of rentiers, that is to say, the people who live on the ‘mowing of coupons’, people whose idleness is the profession” (Lenin, chap. VIII) seemed to have disappeared, to have only a theoretical existence. Similarly, placed under the aegis of industrial groups (transnational corporations), imperialist domination over neo-colonial or “dependent” countries seemed to be somewhat conducive to progress, since it was accompanied by an extension of capitalist relations of production and the formation of an indigenous working class. Imperialism did not seem to be able to define itself in a pithy way as “an immense accumulation of capital-money in a small number of countries”, namely the countries identifiable as “rentier states” (*ibid.*). Production seemed to prevail over appropriation, industry over finance, profit (largely reinvested) over financial rent. Focusing largely on the existence of the figure of the rentier, Chapter VIII of Lenin’s pamphlet was among those on which it was possible to pass very quickly.

Today, from this point of view, things are even worse: there is obviously no possible alignment with a social democracy that has itself become social-liberal if Lenin’s analysis is not silenced, even if it means saying that it was valid in the past, but would no longer be valid today. Unfortunately, this is not the case. At the end of the twentieth century, world society is once again

placed under the rule of a capitalism dominated by rentier layers and traits, a capitalism whose greed and ferocity in exploitation are all the stronger because it is parasitic. It is both in the sense of Lenin, that is to say organized around institutions (the financial markets) and states (the United States and the United Kingdom in the first place) whose only possible characterization is that of rentier, and in that of Marx, that is to say marked by forms of accumulation that are oriented more towards appropriation than towards the creation of surplus value. A little later in the same chapter of Book II, Marx indeed writes something whose scope has gone virtually unnoticed until today: "It is because the silver aspect of value is its independent and tangible form that form A ... A', whose starting point and end point are real money, expresses in the most tangible way the idea of 'making money', the main engine of capitalist production. The process of capitalist production appears only as an inevitable intermediary, an evil necessary to make money. This is why all nations devoted to the capitalist mode of production are periodically taken by the vertigo of wanting to make money without the intermediary of the process of production." Today, the big capitalist states have done more than give in to this vertigo. By putting the "markets" in control, they have put the world economy, that of their own countries as well as that of the entire globe, in the hands of people whose vision of the world is precisely this.

## **29.2    An accumulation corresponding to the priorities of money-capital**

In its present configuration, the movement of the world capital system is commanded above all by the reconstitution of powerful and new forms of concentration of money-capital (the large savings and financial investment funds), as well as through the transfer to the financial markets in central countries of important income distribution functions and essential economic regulations long controlled by States. Large industrial groups have a leading role, but they are not the ones who control the movement of accumulation as a whole. This is ordered from the gigantic transfers of value and surplus value made to the benefit of the living silver capital of dividends and interest on loans<sup>362</sup>.

The promotion of the financial sphere to the rank of "autonomous force" on the part of people who know nothing about the "shortened" cycle of capital

---

<sup>362</sup>I would like to refer to the second structured and amplified edition of my book, *La Mondialisation du Capital* (The globalization of Capital), Éditions Syros, Paris, 1997.

(A-A') as well as the analysis of the fetish character of finance, has had the function of obscuring the role played by the states themselves in the genesis of "the tyranny of markets". It makes it possible to veil the mechanisms through which the financial sphere, before being able to set up closed circuits of internal distribution of purely financial gains and losses, feeds on quite concrete transfers of wealth. Capital that develops itself in the financial sphere was born - and continues to be born - in the productive sector. The development, or "fruiting", of most of the real resources captured by financial institutions takes the form of investments in bonds and shares, i.e. debt securities on future economic activity.

These securities, known as financial assets, have a fictitious double dimension. They have a life of their own in secondary securities markets, where they experience processes of increases in value that are only valid as long as valuations or agreements between financial operators relating to this value persist. Their stock market value can therefore collapse and then have little more value than "paper rags". As the experience of the 1930s has shown, claims on future activity may, overnight, be worthless. But as long as accumulation is not interrupted by serious crises simultaneously shaking production, trade and financial markets, or as long as major political events leading to a moratorium or even repudiation of state debts do not take place, capital belonging to the category of "loan money capital" or "financial capital" benefits from a flow of income nourished by "real" drains on primary incomes constituted in production. of new values and wealth.

Two traits inherently characterize money-capital. The first is the conviction, which it is imbued with, that the funds it invests in the form of assets tradable on the financial markets, that is, it invests financially, have the "natural property" of "producing returns". It is the one whose owners Marx once said that for its holders, assets had to produce income (dividends and interest in the first place) "with the same regularity as the pear tree produces pears" (Capital, III, Chapter XXIV). The second trait, intimately linked to the first, is that of being the bearer of what is called in current jargon a "patrimonial approach"<sup>363</sup> which develops in any holder of financial assets the propensity to maintain a stock of wealth rather than taking risks to increase it. Regardless of the "speculative" operations to which it may engage, the characteristic of this capital is to be located in places and to have distinct horizons of valorization and very far from where the activities of investment, production and marketing take place (these ensuring the indispensable closure of the

---

<sup>363</sup>See Georges Maarek, *L'économie de l'enlisement : intérêt, change, emploi dans les années quatre-vingt-dix* (The stalemate economy: interest, change, employment in the nineties), Economica, Paris, 1997.

cycle of development of productive capital). Distance is not simply physical; it is ideal. Lenin rightly speaks of the rentier layer as “people quite isolated from participation in any enterprise.” This characterization remains accurate even when the representatives of the rentier money-capital sit on “audit committees” from where they exercise their “government over the company”. Institutions that operate in financial markets have their own representation of the world, starting with that of the economy. They need regular income streams from their investments, safe returns at the lowest cost. The maturity periods of the vast majority of productive investments are completely outside their horizon. Among financial investments, public debt securities, especially those of the States with the highest financial credibility, occupy a prominent place. The security and regularity of returns make them the choice par excellence of contemporary concentrations of financial capital whose function is to ensure permanent and stable income streams. But the dividends received as a drain on the profits of industrial groups have become increasingly important. It is the level and regularity of dividend flows that audit committees are tasked with relentlessly monitoring.

### **29.3    The original features of contemporary rentier money-capital**

In contemporary times, the unprecedented economic and social power acquired by this capital is inseparable from the place taken by private pension systems (or “pensions”)<sup>364</sup>. In the most central and financially powerful countries of the world-system of imperialism, they capture large employee savings for the benefit of the financial markets. The category of capital defined as rentier by Marx, but also later by Keynes (the deep incompatibility of the rentier with an economy oriented towards investment and employment leads him to advocate its disappearance “by euthanasia” in the last chapter of the *General Theory*) has been qualitatively reinforced today by the formation and growth of these funds. Already the payment of the pensions of tens of millions of people, corresponding to quite significant fractions of GDP, is taking place by means of common drains on the wealth created, of which the financial markets are the intermediaries. The material existence of these pensioners depends on the health of the “markets”. For fifteen years now, the payment of pensions has been based in particular on the system of positive real interest rates. However, these are the direct cause of the snowball growth of public debt, which is the spearhead of the destruction of public

---

<sup>364</sup>See the article I published in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1997.



social protection systems and the dislocation of the economic capacity of States. The second component of pension and investment fund resources are dividends deducted from profits. Taken hostage by finance capital, former employees have therefore also become a social layer that is for the moment “objectively interested” in ensuring that the rate of exploitation of employees at work is as high as possible. Lenin would say that rentier money-capital undertook and perhaps partially succeeded in attracting part of the working-class aristocracy to its side. In some countries, employee representatives on the supervisory boards of the pension systems of large groups or corporations have begun to be concerned about how their savings serve as an economic, political and social firepower for the benefit of the financial markets. But their concern rarely extends beyond the borders of their own country. It is rare to see them question the function of so-called “emerging” markets, that is to say countries or political territories that have a financial center where foreign capital can come to lay the foundations for resource flows to imperialist metropolises.

The ecumenical propensities of the “plural left” in all its components are giving rise to a certain leniency towards funded pension systems. Is it not the system of some of the “neighbors and partners of France” that would require our respect? This leniency is not appropriate. Employee savings investment funds are associated with deeply pernicious wealth transfer mechanisms. They are an integral part of the whole process leading to a low level of investment, the accelerated deterioration of labour market conditions and the wage ratio, as well as the global consolidation of rentier-type subordination relations between States.

The articles of the most prestigious financial press of the Anglo-Saxon countries have the great interest of being of an absolute frankness on all these issues. This is the case with the Financial Times, from which I will quote a lengthy editorial of 6 March 1998. Under the title “Dr. Pangloss’s Perspective on Globalization,” this editorial questions the long-term viability of a system under the command of money-capital. It expresses its concern that there are “in the West financial investors who are high in the idea that they would be the risk-takers of last resort and that they would thus have a right of divine origin to the spoils in dividends of the results of companies of companies in the industrial sector”. Speaking of the mechanisms by rentier states to capture global resource flows, the editorial is also concerned that the Asian economic and financial crisis is not seen as a warning: “Dr. Pangloss was an early proponent of globalization, with his claim that everything was going well in the best of all worlds. Yet the essence of Voltaire’s tale, *Candide*, relates to the permanent violation of human and property rights. It is possible, of course, that Western pensions will be paid on the basis of the labor of

the Chinese masses. But for now, all is certainly not well in the world of global capital. And the political risks of globalization are being speciously minimized.”

## **29.4 Industrial capital in a context of rentier-dominated accumulation**

Industrial groups have been the main beneficiaries of the liberalization of investment and trade so vaunted by the champions of globalized capitalism. They have used it to pose to their employees both the threat and the effective implementation of relocation of production to countries where labour is cheap and employees have little or no protection. They use trade liberalization both to establish supply and subcontracting networks where costs are lowest and to compete unevenly with lower-productivity firms in countries whose markets are being forced to open. But the strength acquired by finance has also marked, ever more strongly, the strategies of industrial capital. Since the transition from free competition capitalism to monopoly capitalism a century ago, the industrial group is without exception “a predominantly industrial financial group”. The German scenario that serves as an example to Hilferding and Lenin, in which bank capital establishes its dominion over industrial capital, has never been the only form of this interpenetration. In the United States, the Carnegies and Rockefellers pioneered organizational forms in which the “industrialist”, to keep his autonomy against the “banker”, formed himself as a group (the “corporation”) and became as much financial as industrial.

The resurgence of concentrated money-capital and its taking over of the levers of control of the world capitalist system have been accompanied by two developments that make Lenin’s work both relevant and calling for a double actualization in terms of the forms of interpenetration that give rise to “finance capital.” The first is the accentuation of the process referred to as the “increasing financialization of industrial groups”. The expression does not have a strong conceptual value. Above all, it is a convenient way of expressing the fact that, in the context of financial globalization, the industrial group has considerably accentuated its traits as a financial group, if only because it has been subjected to both the imperative and the opportunities to make “pure” financial investments. Whenever they can, industrial groups struggle to decide for themselves the strictly financial, and often downright speculative, employment of a fraction of the “uninvested profit”. In a context of slow growth and industrial overaccumulation, they will have to focus on

short-term investment operations. We learn that Renault's return to "profitability" has been based on two pillars: mass layoffs, flexibility and "wage discipline", and large financial profits due to the "good health of the markets". The other major mechanism of new interpenetration is the entry of financial investment funds into the capital and management of groups. They provide purely financial profitability criteria that further aggravate the exploitation of employees, but which also undermine long-term investment.

It is not only in the process of financialization that the rentier traits of accumulation under financial domination manifest themselves in industrial groups. Many other mechanisms are working in the same direction and their strength has also increased as a result of financial liberalization and globalization. Mergers and acquisitions are typical of a deflationary economy, of which they are the consequence at the same time as an aggravating factor. They have the property that they do not aim at the extension of production by means of the creation of new capacities, but only at their restructuring with downsizing, as well as at the transfer to the acquiring group of the market shares of the merged groups or firms (this is one of the main objectives of the operations). We are thus witnessing an increase in the profitability of capital, sometimes significant, in the context of economies that are nevertheless experiencing low or very low growth. But the effects don't stop there. As a result of the increased concentration and centralization of capital resulting from these mergers, there has been a general and almost continuous increase in the "degree of monopoly". This in turn is at the origin of a considerable increase in the "gross business result" of the groups, of the element "appropriation of fractions of value produced by smaller firms or weaker in their negotiating capacity". The emergence of the so-called "network firms" has gone hand in hand with a profound process of "blurring" the boundaries between "profit" and "rent" in the formation of the operating profit of groups, as well as the growing weight of operations that fall under the appropriation of values already created by means of drains on productive activity and the surplus of other enterprises. The "paradoxical" growth of profits and self-financing capacities of industrial groups, in the midst of the quasi-stagnation of economies, is therefore also based on these mechanisms of capturing the emerging value of monopsony power in addition to those relating to the aggravation of the exploitation of labor by each industrial group taken separately.

But it is based even more centrally on changes in the relationship between capital and labour or wage relations, a key aspect of globalisation born of liberalisation and deregulation<sup>365</sup>. At rates and under conditions

---

<sup>365</sup>See Thomas Couterot's book, *L'entreprise néo-libérale, nouvelle utopie capitaliste?*

that have varied widely across OECD countries — as not all countries have implemented policies to liberalize and deregulate wages and employment conditions as quickly and sharply as the United States and the United Kingdom — industrial groups have taken advantage of rising unemployment and the reconstitution of the “industrial reserve army” to weigh on wages and hiring conditions, as well as exploiting new technologies to impose new labour standards in workshops and offices. They were able to do so all the more easily as liberalization led to a form of constitution of the industrial reserve army as a “world army”. Relocations, both in the form of direct investment and international subcontracting, allow industrial groups to draw on the world's reserves of diversely skilled workers, without having to emigrate them to metropolitan areas, but also using them to begin the process of internationally aligning wages with the lowest levels, with a given qualification.

## 29.5 Countries under imperialist domination within a shrinking system

On the basis of mainly political criteria, Lenin characterized imperialism as “reaction on the whole line.” He noted the presence of stagnation trends engendered by monopoly positions. But at the time of writing he did not yet detect the dominance of tendencies in the direction of the contraction of the capitalist system. Trotsky will be the first to identify behind the crisis of the 1930s, the existence of such tendencies. But the theory of “neo-capitalism”, of which the Italian Communist Party was the main laboratory, was later opposed to it. During the long expansion phase of 1950-1974, capitalism seemed to have returned to expanded reproduction. This ended with the recession of 1974-1975, which effectively saw the opening of what has been called “the crisis”, a term not precise enough, but not totally inappropriate either.

Today we are living in contradictory times. On the one hand, capitalism seems to triumph. In the context of globalization, it is completing the subordination of the regions and activities that had eluded it. But it is actually doing so in the context of a continuous slowdown over the long period of investment and growth; in the context of a situation marked by the presence of indicators reflecting the trend contraction of accumulation rather than its enlargement. Inspired by the classic distinction of the “Unpublished Chapter of Capital”, we can say that the subordination it imposes is a matter of mechanisms that recall formal submission rather than real submission. The

---

(The neoliberal enterprise, new capitalist utopia?), Éditions La Découverte, Paris, 1998.

mechanisms of “siphoning” value trump creation. The choice of indicators to assess a trend is obviously not neutral. It refers to theoretical and political postulates<sup>366</sup>. If we take the indicator of growth of world product per capita, which is a serious indicator of the state of wealth production before the conditions of its distribution intervened, we see that this annual growth rate was around 4% between 1960 and 1973, then fell to 2.4% between 1973 and 1980, it is only 1.2% between 1980 and 1993. Another indicator that many economists consider crucial is the level of private investment. However, in the OECD countries, i.e. the richest, the investment curve as well as the savings curve are tilted sharply downwards so that we are at the limit of a situation of enlarged reproduction. In 1994, the World Trade Organization (the already notorious WTO) published a long statistical series that shows the steady fall, beyond cyclical fluctuations, in the average annual rate of world growth. Over the period 1984-1994, this rate fell to 2 per cent and could be even lower at the turn of the millennium. The permanent creeping overproduction that turns into open overproduction with each crisis, as is the case today for Korea, Japan and soon Taiwan and China<sup>367</sup>, is only one of the most conspicuous manifestations of a regime of accumulation, in which the capitalist system as a whole does not produce enough value, even if it has returned to the exploitation of children on a vast scale, if, everywhere, it constantly increases the degree of exploitation of the workers it employs. Let me insist. The total mass of value created is not based solely on the rate of surplus value, but also on the volume of capital set in motion in production. However, it is declining tendentially.

It is in the context of this tendential contraction of the capitalist system in its centre that we must examine the fate of the countries on the periphery. The only countries interested in money capital are those with a financial centre sufficiently developed to aspire to the status of “emerging financial market”. Outside the OECD countries, there are less than twenty. And this interest is that of setting up mechanisms for siphoning resources to the central countries. For their part, the industrial groups of the imperialist countries are only very selectively interested in external countries. They do so in three ways. The first is as markets, under conditions where exports made by large industrial groups through their marketing subsidiaries have once again become the preferred option, direct investment in the strict sense being only a second-tier solution used in specific circumstances only. Production subsidiaries continue to be created when this form of direct market presence is

---

<sup>366</sup>See Chapters 1 and 12 of *The Globalization of Capital*, op. cit.

<sup>367</sup>See my article in *Carré Rouge*, n° 7, March 1997 (P.O. Box 125, 75463, Paris Cedex 10).

necessary due to the size of the market and the regional strategic importance of the country (China and Brazil); due to the long-standing presence of global rivals whose strategies must be countered locally; or the existence of local opportunities that cannot be exploited without direct investment. But otherwise, the productivity levels and industrial capacity reserves of the central capitalist countries push groups to prefer exports as a means of taking advantage of a market. Countries outside the Triad are also required as a source of raw materials. But only as long as they are not threatened by substitute products. Their third function is to serve in basic labour-intensive industries for off-site subcontracting operations requiring industrial labour that is both skilled (or even highly skilled), highly disciplined and very cheap. But here again, the number of countries that satisfies these conditions is all the more limited as the needs of capital are limited by the general weakness of accumulation.

It is in this context that the rise of hunger, pandemics and internal wars in many parts of the world is taking place. Black Africa, whose system rejects a large part of the agricultural raw materials produced within the plantation economy previously set up at the expense of food production, and whose workforce does not meet the many "qualities" of that of Southeast Asian countries is in this case. What has been happening there for fifteen years is no coincidence. This is the direct result, mediated by the political corruption peculiar to the rump states of neo-colonialism, of the marginalization of the majority of the continent's countries in world trade. The "contingent" translates the "necessity" of rotting capitalism. The UN has just recognized the Rwandan genocide as the third genocide of this century, after that of the Armenians and after the Holocaust. But if the former can still be analyzed without recourse to the theory of imperialism, the Holocaust cannot be. Even in a different way, the same is true for the Ruandan genocide. At the end of a meticulous work on Africa, Claude Meillassoux concludes that the law of the population of Malthus is reactivated by capitalism: "The control of the demography of exploited peoples, by demographic means (birth control, sterilization, etc.) has failed. A form of control through hunger, disease and death, more effective and cruel, is established under the pretext of 'economic rationality' and 'structural adjustment': the lesson of Malthus has been heard"<sup>368</sup>.

I will be told that these are typically "leftist" exaggerations. Maybe. But let no one come and tell us later "that he was not informed", that he had "not understood". This time the massive death chambers of capital are public and

---

<sup>368</sup>Claude Meillassoux, *L'économie de la vie* (The economy of life), Cahiers Libres, Éditions Page 2, Lausanne, 1997.

are shown in the reports, just as it is in full view of the whole world that the Gulag is perpetuated in China. But there are still few people who are ready to associate these facts with a serious characterization of this capitalism to which we are urgently invited to “adapt” since socialism would be at best a utopia, at worst the announcement of a new totalitarianism.

## 29.6 To conclude

It is more necessary than ever to continue to update the black book of capitalism, begun since the Americas fell under the double control of merchant capitalism and the Church. But this task cannot absolve us of responding to the formidable problems posed by the bankruptcy of “real socialism” and the extent of the rubble left after almost seventy years of undivided Stalinist domination over the country where the October Revolution took place. It also implies shedding light on the current configuration of rotting capitalism. Few people have yet come to contradict the apologists of the “new world order” under American domination since they declared, after the collapse of the USSR, that “the victory of democracy and the market” signaled “the end of history” or the “unsurpassable horizo” of private ownership of the means of production.

Class struggle has indisputably already begun to give them a formal denial in many countries, but this denial of “praxis” will only be complete if it advances head-on with immense theoretical work. This work presupposes that the work of the working class and the oppressed draw the balance sheet of the rise of Stalinism and its victory, as well as the lies, crimes and slanders carried out in its name outside the USSR and in France in particular. But it also requires to be nourished by analyses that do not erase the putrefaction of capitalism and that explain how a period is closed: one where capitalism had anything to offer humanity. This is the meaning of my participation in this welcome collection.

**François Chesnais**

François Chesnais is an economist, author of numerous books including *La Mondialisation du Capital*, Éditions Syros, Paris, 1997.





## Chapter 30

# Swiss bankers kill without machine guns

**Jean ZIEGLER**

Thanks to its banking secrecy, its numbered accounts, the law of free convertibility, the cynicism and the extreme technical competence of its bankers, Switzerland is today the safe deposit box of the world. In 1998, it was the first richest country in the world (per capita income, according to the World Bank's method of calculation). Around 40% of the world's private wealth managed outside their home countries is managed in Switzerland. Swiss banking fortresses and branches around the world not only host the spoils of cross-border organized crime cartels, the astronomical assets of Russian crime lords, but also the treasure of the propertied and despot classes of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

What is the relationship between the dirty money of organised cross-border crime and the illicit capital fleeing the Third World? Both are washed, recycled, by the same emirs, using identical banking techniques. It is often the same organizations that transport this capital, take it across continents, bring it into Switzerland. The same financial analysts, wealth managers, stock market advisors and stockbrokers reinvest the fleeing capital of the Third World and the dirty money of drugs.

Drugged teenagers on the streets of New York, Milan and London are dying from the works of the Crime Lords; they recycle and wash their profits in Switzerland. In the Philippines, Brazil and the Congo, thousands of children die of undernourishment, prostitution, abandonment and disease. Significant indigenous wealth, instead of helping to create local hospitals, schools and jobs, is taking refuge in Switzerland; they are recycled and reinvested in real estate speculation in Paris, Rome and Tokyo, or feed the Stock Exchanges

of New York, London and Zurich.

The financial plundering of the Third World and the drug trade are two works of death, causing similar social, psychic and physiological disasters. Both benefit from the recognized competence, expert assistance and effective complicity of Swiss bankers.

Here are examples referring to an analysis period of just over ten years.

### 30.1 Filipinos

In 1986, Ferdinand Edralin Marcos again rigged the national elections. One too many times... The popular insurrection sweeps Manila. At dawn on February 25, the American protector ordered to flee: helicopters of the United States Air Force landed on the grass of Malacanang Palace. They evacuated Imelda, Ferdinand and eighty-three of their parents and associates to the American base of Subie Bay Ferdinand Marcos died on Thursday, September 28, 1989 in a US military hospital in Hawaii.

The Asian despot has been, throughout his life, an almost ideal customer for the Swiss emirs: he is immensely rich, he is inhabited by a real mania for hoarding. The evacuation of the treasury poses no problem: the kleptocrat is himself in power. In addition, the man constantly plays a double game with his American and Japanese protectors. As he is, moreover, of extraordinary psychic complexity, he is vulnerable. The emirs can pluck him at will, impose draconian investment and recycling conditions.

Ferdinand Edralin Marcos was born in 1917 in a modest environment, at the extreme northern tip of the archipelago, in Ilocos Norte. The people of this province are taciturn, hardworking. Its main activity: smuggling with Taiwan and Hong Kong. The three names of the child indicate the drama of his birth: Ferdinand Chua, a wealthy Chinese merchant, fell in love with the very young Josefa Edralin. Josefa is beautiful, cheerful, intelligent, but poor. In addition, she is Filipino. The Chua clan vetoes marriage (Ferdinand Chua will marry a Chinese heiress of Fukien). It's the break. But Josefa is pregnant. His family belongs to the traditional Catholic milieu of the North, a bigoted, cruel milieu that does not forgive the "illegitimate" birth. She is desperately looking for a husband for the sinner... and a father for the child who will be born. A schoolboy from the village, poor like Job, aged fourteen, will do the trick: Mariano Marcos. The teenager is violent, cunning, ambitious. He will be the social model of the child who will grow up at his side.

The young Ferdinand and the one he will take a long time for his father belong almost to the same generation: an intense solidarity binds them.

1935: Mariano is a candidate for the deputation. He loses the election. The opposing candidate, a well-to-do merchant and smuggler of the place, humiliates his family: he even dares to walk a coffin under his windows. A few days later, the new MP for Ilocos Norte will be found on the side of a road, a bullet in the head.

Ferdinand, eighteen, is arrested, charged, convicted of murder.

Mariano had him released three years later: one of his friends, José Laurel, had meanwhile become a judge of the Court of Appeal. Laurel is himself a former defendant.

Ferdinand is handsome, agile, intelligent. He completed a brilliant law degree in Manila. He will be a sought-after lawyer.

Around his twentieth year, Ferdinand discovers the secret of his birth and makes contact with his blood father. His alliance with the powerful Chinese community of the archipelago opened a dazzling political career for him: deputy, senator, president of the Senate, then, in 1965, head of state.

Two episodes in Marcos' life deserve special attention. During the Japanese occupation, he led a group of outside the Japanese occupation. law called "Maharlika". The group practices anti-Japanese resistance, smuggling and arms trafficking. But Marcos is too clever to put all his eggs in one basket: As a Japanese agent, he betrays many of his fellow resistance fighters. Upon release, he was tried by the American authorities, escaped the execution pole... and becomes the protégé of the new occupying Power.

Second episode: in 1954, the young mp meets Imelda Romualdez. Imelda is an actress, singer and beauty queen. Granddaughter of a Catholic priest, she experienced a childhood and adolescence of humiliation and misery. His thirst for revenge is considerable. However, since the victory of American troops over the Spanish colonizer in 1898, an indigenous oligarchy of sugar cane planters, financiers and great merchants has ruled the archipelago. Ferdinand shares Imelda's hatred for the oligarchy.

Imelda and Ferdinand are a formidable couple: gifted orator, incendiary and demagogue, Marcos is adored by the crowds. The poor love Imelda, who distributes rice and clothes in the slums. Until 1972, Marcos was re-elected without problems. Then things go wrong: the hatred of the oligarchy blinds the couple. His passion for palaces, jewelry, money is unlimited, and the couple literally plunders the country. Marcos, slowly, turns into an Asian despot; Imelda, as Lady Macbeth. Marcos loves women; he is generous: Carmen Ortega and her three children — one of Marcos' many parallel families — are now among the wealthiest clans in Manila.

September 23, 1973: the despot decrees a state of siege (regularly renewed until 1986). General Ver, head of the secret services and Marcos' business associate, instituted torture and made opponents disappear. Putting pressure

on his American protectors who maintained, in the archipelago, their most powerful air, sea and land base in Asia, Marcos kept at the same time excellent relations with the Japanese nationalist right that he had served during the war. In short: its future seems assured. The Swiss emirs are certain to have bet on the right horse.

Let us go back to that morning of February 25, 1986, when the American protector dropped the kleptocrat and a woman of the oligarchy, Cory Aquino, widow of an opponent assassinated by Marcos on August 21, 1983, settled in the Malacanang Palace. Forcibly evacuated to Subie Bay, Marcos, his sister, his family are taken the same day to Hawaii, in the United States. As soon as they get off the plane in Honolulu, FBI agents advance towards Marcos and his relatives, confiscating their suitcases and briefcases that contain code names, numbers, the location of bank accounts distributed around the world. The FBI hands over these documents to the new president of the Philippines, Cory Aquino.

President Reagan's reasoning is as simple as it is convincing: three guerrilla armies, two of which are making rapid progress, threaten Ms. Aquino's fragile pro-American power. The success of this indigenous guerrilla, without any notable links with any foreign power, is essentially nourished by the abyssal misery of families in the semi-feudal countryside and proletarian cities. If Cory Aquino wants to survive, he must quickly make massive social investments in the city, a consequent agrarian reform, a reconversion of sugar plantations in the countryside. All of this will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. For President Reagan, there is no reason for the American taxpayer to pay these new and huge credits... while billions of dollars, stolen by Marcos and his family, sleep quietly in Swiss banks.

But, as we have said, against the emirs, the government of the Confederation can do nothing. He is more helpless than a newborn. Banks are impenetrable fortresses. No law allows the State, its government, its Parliament to obtain even information on the identity of the creditor, the amount of the deposit, the origin of the capital that feeds the numbered accounts.

The pressure from President Reagan, the FBI, the US Secretary of the Treasury is getting stronger and stronger. The Federal Council is trying to procrastinate, to explain its singular impotence: in recent years, the American authorities have shown great brutality towards Switzerland... The Reagan administration does not let itself be told and demands in an imperative way, threats of trade sanctions in support, the blocking, then the restitution of the billions stolen by the kleptocrat of Manila.

Cornelian drama at the Bern Palace: should we violate Swiss law, set the emirs against ourselves, please the Americans and therefore block the accounts? Or is it better to confront US sanctions, protect banking secrecy

and let Credit Suisse, the Union of Swiss Banks, etc., peacefully hand over their loot to Marcos and his courtiers?

On the night of Monday, March 24, 1986, the illumination occurred during the gala dinner offered by the government to the President of the Republic of Finland, Koivisto, in the great medieval hall of the Bern City Hall. The atmosphere on the side of the federal ministers is grim: American pressure - telephone calls, diplomatic demarches, increasingly precise threats on Swiss exports to the United States - increased further over the weekend. The guests sit at the table. Professor Mathias Krafft, Legal Adviser for Foreign Affairs, obtains from the security services the opportunity to enter the Great Hall. He goes straight to Pierre Aubert, Minister of External Relations, and hands him a paper. Aubert, beaming, leans towards the President of the Confederation, Alphonse Egli. As soon as the last speeches were made, the dessert swallowed, Egli gathered his colleagues in the lounge of the town hall, where dinner was held. The Federal Council decides to temporarily freeze, with immediate effect, all the assets of the kleptocrat, his family and his allies in all banks operating on Swiss territory. Earthquake: this is the first time in the country's centuries-old history that such a decision has been taken against the emirs. Officials call them the bad news that night. As for the stunned public, it will be officially informed by a press release on Wednesday, March 26.

The legal basis for this reckless decision? Simply the Federal Constitution. In its preamble, it invokes God, the supreme authority: "In the name of Almighty God, the Swiss Confederation wanting to strengthen the confederate alliance, maintain and increase the unity, strength and honor of the Swiss nation," etc. Article 102, paragraph 8, obliges the Federal Council to "look after the interests of the Confederation outside"; in particular, it must assume "the observation of its international relations"; it is "generally responsible for external relations".

Forced to choose between interests "from the outside" and those "from within", the Federal Council, in a fit of lucidity, opted in favour of the former.

Ferdinand Marcos reigned twenty-three years in his palace in Malacanang. From 1973, it governed by the repression of trade unions, the Church, peasant organizations; by the systematic assassination of major opponents; by methodical torture, the frequent "disappearance" of men, women and teenagers challenging his megalomania, his despotism, his unfathomable corruption.

Here is how the kleptocrat organized the plundering of his people:

Every year, Marcos took sums equivalent to several million dollars from the coffers of the Central Bank and from funds intended for the secret services.

Within two decades, Japan, a former occupying Power, had paid the

Manila government hundreds of millions of dollars in war reparations. Marcos took his share from each payment.

The Philippines is one of the thirty-five poorest countries on earth. The World Bank, the specialized organizations of the United Nations, private mutual aid organizations have paid it tens of millions of dollars over the years and have invested millions more in many so-called development projects. Marcos, his court, his accomplices have used with great constancy on almost all these transfers, each of these projects.

Given the unfortunate insubmissiveness of the starving people, Marcos had to quickly declare a state of emergency and renew it from year to year. Concentrating in his hands almost all civil and military powers, he used the army to occupy and then expropriate hundreds of plantations, commercial companies, real estate companies and banks, belonging to his critics, to attribute ownership to his own generals, courtiers and henchmen. Many companies and plantations passed directly into the hands of his family and that of Imelda.

But Ferdinand Marcos, conceited, greedy and cruel, was also a man of foresight. He had few illusions about the feelings he inspired in his people. A consortium of Swiss emirs helped him evacuate his booty annually. One of them was even specially seconded to the satrap of Manila. He constantly advised him on the most discreet and efficient way to transfer his capital abroad and reinvest his capital there.

What is the total amount of loot hidden abroad, mainly in Europe and the United States? A serious estimate estimates the lump deposited with Credit Suisse and forty other Swiss banks at a sum between 1 and 1.5 billion dollars.

The camouflage of the booty of Marcos and his family obeyed a complex strategy. The emir who had been seconded to Manila and his staff were engaged almost full-time (since 1968) in the valuation and recycling of money. They managed to maintain daily contact with the kleptocrat, including when he was (from March 1986) interned at the AMERICAN air base at Hickham, Honolulu. Initially, these rivers of dirty money were directed to multiple numbered accounts at Credit Suisse in Zurich. First wash. Then the loot was transferred to the fiduciary company "Fides", where the stash changed its identity a second time. Fides belongs to the Empire of Credit Suisse. Finally, third wash: Fides opened its locks, the muddy rivers left, this time to Liechtenstein. There, they rushed into carefully prepared structures, the famous Anstalten (untranslatable term, specific to Liechtenstein, meaning approximately: establishment). At the present stage of the proceedings, eleven have been discovered. They all have poetic names: "Aurora", "Charis", "Avertina", "Wintrop", etc.

Picturesque detail: in 1978, in order to rationalize the transfer of capital, Marcos appointed Consul General of the Philippines in Zurich a director of Credit Suisse!

In his correspondence with the emirs, the code name used by Marcos is (as early as 1968) “William Sanders”; that of his wife, “Jane Ryan”. Swiss bankers will create dozens of investment companies in Liechtenstein, Panama, buy hundreds of properties in Paris, Geneva, Manhattan, Tokyo, process hundreds of thousands of stock market transactions on behalf of the mysterious Sanders-Ryan couple.

Despite the proverbial skill of the Swiss emirs, Sanders-Ryan’s American empire will only partially withstand the fall of the satrap. New York judges indict Ryan-Imelda. They accuse him of having made on American territory for more than \$ 100 million of private purchases, settled with money stolen from the Philippine Treasury. Dozens of buildings bought in the same way by Sanders-Marcos (or his shell companies) are sealed. Yankee judges - decidedly shameless! - even have Interpol arrest one of the most distinguished front men of the fallen kleptocrat: Adnan Kashogi, a Saudi billionaire. It was picked up one morning in May 1989 at the Hotel Schweizerhof in Bern. He will be incarcerated in Bern’s central prison, before being extradited to the United States.

But what happens to the loot hidden in Switzerland? The American pressure is massive. For the first time since the Swiss banking system operated, a major complainant has the exact documents proving the location, the criminal origin, the identity of the accounts. The usual and convenient defence of the Swiss authorities, invoking the inviolability of banking secrecy and pleading ignorance, is no longer enough. Glory to the Republican and reactionary administration of President Reagan! His brutality pays off. In five Swiss cantons, proceedings are opened for the return of stolen property at the request of the Government of the Philippines.

Cory Aquino, excellently advised by the American tutor, appoints three respected politicians and lawyers to recover the loot: Guy Fontanet, from Geneva, former State Councillor and National Councillor of the Christian Democratic Party; Zurich’s Moritz Leuenberger, National Councillor of the Socialist Party; National Councillor Sergio Salvioni of Locarno, a member of the Radical Party. These honest and experienced men are now exhausted. Because the tax advisors, the conveyor networks of the Swiss banking consortium have done an admirable job of camouflage.

Manila is the Asian capital of child prostitution (13’)<sup>XLV</sup>. Millions of sugarcane cutters live in complete destitution. Their children are trying to

---

<sup>XLV</sup> A typo that was supposed to be a footnote, but I did not find any footnote?

survive as best they can. Undernourishment, endemic diseases due to hunger ravage hundreds of thousands of families on the islands of Luzon, Mindanao, Vebu. In 1997 the gross national product amounted to just over \$40 billion. (It's about \$133 billion in Switzerland.) Two-thirds of the 58 million Filipinos live in what the World Bank modestly calls "absolute poverty".

Do these martyred children, women and men have the slightest chance of seeing the billions of dollars stolen by Marcos and his gang return to the country? Honestly, I don't think so. Regiments of capable and brilliant lawyers were mobilized in the service of Marcos and twenty-nine other holders of escrow accounts: they appeal after appeal against the least of the procedural decisions of the most modest of the cantonal judges (usually overwhelmed by the stakes of the battle).

In the spring of 1998, only a small fraction of the loot returned to the Philippines.

## 30.2 Haitians

Spring 1986: Another dictator falls. "Baby Doc" Duvalier is kicked out of his palace in Port-au-Prince like trash. The same scenario is repeated: Haiti's North American guardian seizes a large number of documents from the fugitive's luggage. He passed them on to the new satraps of Haiti. Duvalier, his family, his in-laws had drawn on the foreign exchange reserves of the National Bank, looted state-owned enterprises, sold import licenses for their benefit, etc.

June 1986: A request for international legal assistance arrives at the Federal Palace in Bern. Same embarrassment. Same American pressures. President Reagan demands the return of the spoils to the bloodless Haitian state after forty years of rule of the Duvalier clan. The Federal Council is forced – pushed by the courageous Socialist Finance Minister, Otto Stich – to order the provisional sequestration of the Duvalier et Cie funds in the Swiss banks.

This time, most of the loot is in Geneva. Multinational banking empires — the Union of Swiss Banks, the Swiss Bank Corporation, Credit Suisse, etc. — practice a judicious division of labour between their subsidiaries. Zurich attracts funds from Asia and the Middle East; Geneva, countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

The miserable people of the island of Haiti have, like the Filipino people, very little chance of returning to their possessions. Thanks to the fierce resistance of the banks — this is called "defending one's client by all means" — none of the multiple proceedings brought against Duvalier and his family



is on track to succeed. Meanwhile, “Baby Doc” and his clan sink a sumptuous retreat on the mild heights of Grasse. In 1998 they moved to Jura. In 1998, the Duvaliers’ fortune, the result of a fierce looting of several decades, still rests on the numbered accounts of major Swiss banks.

### 30.3 The Zairians, now Congolese

The Zairian people are beggars sitting on a pile of gold. The Zairian subcontinent, 2.3 million square kilometers large, is full of wealth. Multinational mining, banking and foreign commercial companies, in perfect collaboration with the local oligarchy, conscientiously plunder the country. In Kinshasa (more than 3 million inhabitants), Kisangani, Lubumbashi even, the families of civil servants eat only once a day. At the end of 1997, the external debt amounted to more than \$9 billion. In his native village of Gbadolite, on the high river, in the deep forest that, from the “Cuvette” (Basin) (Zaire), extends across the Bateke plains to Gabon and the Atlantic, Marshal Mobutu built a real Versailles of the jungle. 37,000 inhabitants, huts made of cob, clay... and boulevards illuminated day and night, a myriad of palaces, guest villas, swimming pools, a Coca-Cola factory, a gigantic hydroelectric dam (located 15 kilometers from the village, in Mobayi, on the Oubangui), a cathedral where Jesuit fathers teach Gregorian chant to the little geniuses of the tribe, an ultramodern airport where a Boeing 737 landing every day directly from Kinshasa.

The U.S. State Department estimated in 1997 that Mobutu invested \$5 billion in personal wealth abroad. As for the average per capita income, it is \$180 per year, making Zaire the eighth poorest country on the planet. Undernourishment, corruption, misery and police repression claim victims every day. Faced with the solid complicity of Western capital with the regime, on the one hand, and the weakness, corruption and intellectual indigence of the few groups of exiled or clandestine oppositionals, on the other hand, the horizon of the Zairian people is dark: it is reduced to the promise of new suffering, repeated humiliation, despair.

Mobutu, a former informer of the Belgian colonial police, was one of the most complex, cunning heads of state that the tumultuous history of decolonization has produced. He enjoyed strong foreign protections, and was willing to pay the price. He was an outstanding negotiator. Example: during one of his many “private” visits to Washington (February 1987), Mobutu concluded an agreement with the Pentagon by which he ceded to the United States, by a long-term lease, the Kamina military and air base in Shaba; it is now from Kamina that the Americans organize their logistical support to the

Angolan UNITA. In return (in addition to foreign currency payments as rent), the Zairian regime obtained, in May of the same year, a new rescheduling of its external debt. While the laxity of its economic policy is universally recognized, the regime snatches from the IMF, in 1987, a credit of 370 million dollars.

The so-called “internal security” system is formidable: the paracommando units trained by Israelis and French who guard Mobutu, his government, his family, are almost all from the “Cuvette”, of the former province of Equateur. With several presidential palaces, a sumptuous yacht, rest homes, etc., Mobutu prefers to sleep among his own: his place of work and ordinary stay is located in the heart of the camp of the paratrooper units of Kalina (western district of Kinshasa).

However, unlike most of his Middle Eastern, Asian or African counterparts, Mobutu carefully avoids colonizing the state and civil society by settling his relatives and friends there. It imposes a rotation of the cadres of the government, the single party, the economy: periodically, the entire management of Crown corporations, ministries, the party, provincial governors, etc., are dismissed and replaced by new teams, who believe that they are entitled, each in turn, to enrich themselves freely. Corruption, prevarication, looting of public funds (monopolization of import and export licenses, etc.) are thus erected as a method of government. This system ensures the sustainability of the supreme power. Every clan, every great tribe, every family network can hope to one day pass within reach of the public coffers. It just has to wait, remain docile and show a minimum of adherence to the regime.

Sometimes a little unexpected happens. Example: a Zairean protest student living in Europe, Nguzà Karl-i-Bond, is recruited as an ambassador and sent to Washington. Nguzà Karl-i-Bond became Prime Minister in 1977. Then he was deposed. As he could not stand his disgrace, he went into exile in Brussels, where he published an incendiary book against the “tyrant”, made contact with anti-imperialist European intellectuals, pretended to negotiate with the United States the constitution of a government in exile. At that time, he sent me a letter full of revolt, asking for an urgent appointment in Geneva and my help in denouncing the regime. A few months later, the fierce opponent decided to return to Kinshasa. A few wads of dollars brought by discreet emissaries, the prospect of soon driving again in an air-conditioned Mercedes, occupying a luxurious office villa and making a fortune have overcome his determination. Karl-i-Bond, recalled, became Minister of Foreign Affairs, then, again, Prime Minister.

I bring up a memory. One spring day in Geneva, the absolute master of Zaire, Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, disembarks from his private Boeing at Geneva-Cointrin airport. Red carpet, honeyed words of Swiss officials at the

foot of the footbridge. Wearing his leopard hat (suggesting filiation with the Mwami Kongo), dressed in a black vareuse of North Korean inspiration (reviewed and corrected by the expensive genius of Parisian couturiers), the fold of the impeccable pants, the marshal walks, followed by his courtiers with a creamy smile, towards the central hall, then towards the exit. His bodyguards jostle the annoyed Geneva gendarmes. The Column of Mercedes, several of which are armored, starts in the light of the spring afternoon. Head to the Noga-Hilton Hotel, Quai Wilson.

Mobutu, his sister, his guards, his wives are on a private visit. Two of his children studied at the University of Geneva. The marshal will stay a few nights at the Noga-Hilton, with his friend, the real estate developer, broker in African oil and cotton, Nessim Gaon. Then he will go to join, for a stay of "rest", his property of Savigny, huge stately home on the heights of Lausanne. But, for now, Mobutu receives his Geneva bankers. Meanwhile, his ministers, friends, officers and women rob the luxury boutiques of the rue de Rhône, the jewellery shops on the Quai des Bergues, paying for the rivers of pearls, diamond brooches, Rolex watches and gold rings with wads of 1,000 Swiss franc notes that the bank clerks have just slipped to their bodyguards.

In front of the hotel, leaning against the balustrade of the quay, a few dozen Zairian exiles hold signs clumsily painted with worn slogans: "Freedom for political prisoners", "Down with tyranny!", "No to the torture of our comrades". The Swiss walkers of this beautiful afternoon make a detour to avoid the cluster of exiles. Suddenly, from the entrance of the hotel, dozens of armed Zairean gorillas appear. They rush to the students. They are real professionals: young people try to flee, but the malabars catch up with them, one after the other. In teams of three, they surround them, throw them on the ground, trample them. The violence is such that a member of the hotel's security service, revolted, calls the Geneva police. Two gendarmes arrive. They do not intervene. Clinging to the trees on the dock, the students' jagged signs sway melancholy in the afternoon breeze.

The action of the marshal's bodyguards is completely illegal: the students were demonstrating peacefully on the public road. Several students later went to the police station on Rue Pécolat and filed a complaint for assault and battery. None of these complaints will succeed. As one passer-by said: "Negroes have beaten Negroes... "

Mobutu was at the time one of the richest men on earth: his immense country contained considerable deposits of diamonds, manganese, cobalt, uranium and copper. Since much of his fortune was in the basements of Swiss banks, the local emirs received juicy commissions annually from the treasury of the Zairian head of state. In short: the federal authorities have nothing to deny the respected customer of the big banks. A few days later,

some of these opponents will be pushed into a Swissair plane, handcuffed to the wrists throughout the flight. Direction: Ndjili Airport, Kinshasa. The Zairian secret police will receive the exiles when they get off the plane. Mobutu Sese Seko's vacation really started at that time.

When he left Switzerland three weeks later, the admiring newspapers told me that the marshal had had to rent a large truck in order to transport to his private Boeing the mountain of "gifts", purchases of all kinds, which his companions had accumulated during their stay on the shores of Lake Geneva.

In June 1997 the revolutionary forces of Laurent Kabila's AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation) entered Kinshasa. Mobutu and his family fled to Gabon and then to Morocco. The kleptocrat died shortly afterwards of cancer in Tangier. The new government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is asking the Swiss government to sequester Mobutu's property, his immediate relatives and his main accomplices. Accounts are blocked in Switzerland. But only those who bear the name of Mobutu (and his own). Ridiculous operation: because the financial empire of the kleptocrat, which for 38 years (reminder: Mobutu came to power in November 1965) benefited from the expert assistance of the best Swiss bankers, consists of 99% offshore companies, Anstalten of Liechtenstein, fiduciary accounts - in short: assets, only a tiny part of which are under the name of Mobutu. Switzerland is therefore only blocking \$6 million. The rest of the \$11 billion officially sought by the Kinshasa government's "Bureau des biens mal acquis" (Office of badly acquired goods) (official title) remain supposedly untraceable.

Let us conclude: In his *Research on the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith wrote in 1776: "Wealth like health is taken from nobody".

Error! The hundreds of billions of dollars from the Congo, the Philippines, Haiti and many other Third World countries, which sleep under the pavement of Zurich's Bahnhofstrasse, Lugano's Corso Helvetico or Geneva's Corratierie, or transit through fiat accounts before joining the stock markets of the West, are the blood, the misery of the peoples of the three continents. While in Africa, Latin America and Asia children prostitute themselves, die of hunger, families break up, men and women search in vain for shelter or work, the billions of corruption, tax evasion and looting held by the ruling "elites" of these countries are accumulating in Switzerland.

Chapter XVIII of the Book of the Levites (French edition of the Jerusalem Bible) mentions the strange and terrifying story of this Middle Eastern deity called Moloch. The Canaanites regularly sacrificed to him children taken from the imprisoned tribes, from the poorest families. In front of the huge and impassive bronze statue erected on a mountain in the middle of the desert,

a fire burned day and night. Every thirteenth moon, columns of children trembling with fear, miserable, hungry were brought before the monster; they had their throats slit, and then their butchered bodies were thrown into his mouth wide open.

Like Moloch, the Swiss multinational banking oligarchy feeds on the flesh, the blood of the captive peoples, bound to tribute, of the three poorest continents of our planet.

**Jean Ziegler**

Jean Ziegler is a Member of Parliament for Geneva in the Parliament of the Swiss Confederation; Professor of Sociology at the University of Geneva.

He has just published: *Les Seigneurs du Crime, les nouvelles mafias contre la démocratie* (The Crime Lords, new mafias against democracy), Éditions du Seuil 1998, 308 pages.



## Chapter 31

# An ad is worth a thousand bombs... Advertising's crimes in modern warfare

Yves FRÉMION

Some criminals act in a brutal way: they prefer the gun, the dagger, the bomb, the immediate violence, to end in the moment. Others, more cautious, prefer to take their time: poison is their favorite weapon. Discreet, insidious, invisible, slow and progressive.

For a long time, we believed that the world of merchandise, the one where everything is bought and sold, would remain confined within the limits of the commercial world. That the part of our life that escaped the market and financial logic would do it forever. That education, information, health, transport networks, energy supply, justice, security, telecommunications would remain in the hands of the community. We even thought that the quality of the environment, water or air, culture, would add to it naturally.

But the opposite has happened. In all rich and advanced countries, the dismantling of public services has shown the extent of the war waged underground for years. Aided by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Eastern Bloc, the world of merchandise has invaded everything.

It first invaded the countries that were little, but also, in the countries of the West, the sectors that until now escaped this grip. Education, health, information, everything has been delivered to profitability, market share, commercial success, immediacy. The armed arm of this colonial conquest is advertising, which prepares minds by its incessant bludgeoning and kills more massively than a bomb drop.

One of its main actors, Oliviero Toscani, whom his scandalous campaigns

for Benetton made famous, lists himself in his book *La pub est une charogne qui nous sourit* (Advertising is a carrion smiling to us) (Hoëbeke ed., 1995), where he willingly bite the hand that made his fortune: “Advertising now lines every street corner, every historic square, every square, bus stops, the metro, airports, train stations, newspapers, cafes, pharmacies, tobacconists, lighters, phone cards, it cuts movies on TV, invades radios, magazines, beaches, sports, clothes, even the footprints of the soles of our shoes, our whole universe, the whole planet! (...) It’s Big Brother, always smiling! I find it frightening that all this huge space of expression, exhibition and display, the largest living museum of modern art, a hundred thousand times Beaubourg and the Museum of Contemporary Art in New York combined, these thousands of square kilometers of posters plastered all over the world, these giant panels, these painted slogans, these hundreds of thousands of pages of printed newspapers, these hundreds of hours of television, of radio messages, remain reserved for this imbecile, unreal and misleading paradisiacal imagery... ”. And all this financed by the consumer, its cost being integrated into the price of the product (“Advertising is the first direct tax”).

Under various names: sponsorship, corporate sponsorship (remember that sponsorship is disinterested, so there is abuse of language), communication, bartering, advertiser, sponsorship, etc., advertising has introduced commercial interest everywhere. The following examples show the extent and coherence of this offensive.

## 31.1 Education

In the USA, the wiring of primary schools was not carried out by public authorities, but by private firms. They equipped the schools free of charge but, in exchange, the educational programmes with “Channel One” thus broadcast includes, for 10 minutes of program, two minutes of advertising for these firms. Throughout the year, students are intellectually harassed by the promotion of commercial products.

France is in turn affected by this phenomenon and the pressure is strong for it to pass the walls of our schools. For example, slipping into the vacuum of sex education, never really provided by teachers, the firm Tampax offers an “educational program” in colleges, for girls in 4th and 3rd grade. 60,000 adolescent girls already receive information on the body, health, hygiene... and of course on the products of the firm Tampax. These programs are taught over time and as part of biology courses, which teachers no longer provide. These courses are subtly given by nurses, transformed into “salespeople”, who distribute samples at the end of the course. Too happy to offload an education



that they generally wish not to do, the teachers have hardly opposed it, and neither have the parents. A representative of Tampax recently said in the press: “The professors welcome us willingly, even solicit us.” The National Education has blessed the operation: everything is free, a superior argument of any state reflection now!

A recent agreement between the National Education, authors’ societies and audiovisual producers authorized the broadcasting of television programs in schools: it is enough to sponsor these shows so that advertising easily enters a universe that was forbidden to it.

How many establishments today include in canteen meals “sugary drinks” that are none other than Coca-Cola, under pressure from the firm; the same youth beverage companies (Coca, Fanta), install “free” distributors in these schools, without the establishments ever making a call for tenders or offering an alternative: it’s free...

It is the same for companies that “offer” football jerseys to school children, with their advertising on them naturally; but it is “free”, and therefore the public service forgets that it is the public service...

Christian De Brie, in *le Monde Diplomatique* wrote a few years ago: “Will we one day see the sponsored teacher in schools and the teacher, covered in badges, announce that the arithmetic lesson is ‘offered’ by a brand of electronic games and recreation by a soft drink with a taste of adventure?” At the time, De Brie was humorous, it is no more.

As for universities, it is common in the USA for chairs to be, especially in economics, financed directly by firms that appoint professors. As Susan George showed in a resounding article in the same *Monde Diplomatique*, prestigious French intellectuals have already benefited (one of the French champions of the historical revision of the Workers’ Movement, François Furet, in the lead). Operation Fukuyama, named after an American state official who wrote “The End of History,” artificially highlighted by a brilliant publicity stunt, was entirely organized by the chemical firm Olin; like that of the Heidelberg Appeal was fabricated by the pharmacy and asbestos lobbies to discredit environmentalists. Academics in need of funding have lent themselves in both cases, with great complacency, to these manipulations.

## 31.2 Culture and media

The American model, where 90% of culture is financed by private companies, has helped European countries dismantle their public funding in this area. Gradually, the state, in France as elsewhere, disengages financially, but also politically. 30% of French culture sponsored is sponsored by banks, insur-

ance companies and the agri-food industry, whose disinterestedness can be guessed. Who can believe that the content of the works thus framed does not change?

Almost all of the written information had been held financially for years only through alcohol and tobacco advertisements. The European directive banning all incitement to smoke, which became in France the “Évin law”, led to the fall of several publications and weakened the others. This gives an idea of the fragility that our media had reached, tied up by these firms and totally dependent: a simple change in the firm’s strategy or a “dir.com.”<sup>XLVI</sup>, and publications could stop overnight, ruined. Who can then be surprised that whistleblowers of the dangers of tobacco, one of the most addictive drugs, can never find an echo in the French press. (unlike hashish, which does not sponsor anyone and whose “dangers”, derisory in comparison to tobacco, make the headlines every week)?

For culture, a change of mentality is gradually revealed: many creators no longer rely on their success with the public, but on the sole satisfaction of the funder, on whom whether the work exists or not depends, with the consequences that we guess for its content.

*Sponsoring* now accounts for 75% of TV shows in France (including 20% for stupid games that occupy the most followed slots). It has gradually replaced, in the eyes of advertisers, advertising *stricto sensu*: it is a response to the zapping of viewers harassed by advertising, who change channels when it arrives. Now, impossible to escape, advertising is *in* the program! Worse, nearly 50% of France-Television’s budget comes from commercial revenues when in principle there should be 0%...

The climax is called “bartering”; they are simply entire programs offered to the channels, turnkey, already fully realized, with the advertising inside: soap opera, game, documentary show ... The channel has nothing to do, it does not need to pay a director, nor authors, nor technicians, nor animator, nor even the film or the studio, even less to think about how to seduce the viewer, it does not have to look for the money to produce, it just has to buy a cassette and broadcast it: a dream come true...

More and more, these sponsors want to get out of hiding and some blunders are revealing. The name of the sponsor is often larger than that of the artist on the posters, disfigured by the logos. For a writer, what is the value of an award where the name of the firm appears in the title, such as the Premio Strega or the AKO-Literatuurprijs? Is it rewarding to perform at the Belga Jazz Festival?

The firm Cointreau had sponsored at the Zenith of Paris an evening

---

<sup>XLVI</sup> Abbreviation of Communication director

“Young Dance”. But its logo in letters of fire, placed at the back of the stage during the performance of a well-known choreographer, was not well received by the audience, who booed the sponsor.

All this influences the content. For fiction, for example, the stories must be necessarily family (in the house, you can slip a lot of products); the ends are happy; politics, religion, reflection are banned; everyone must be able to attach themselves to the heroes, the villains are well identified. The songs are cheerful. The animators are mostly animators, preferably with big breasts. Ambitious or research works have no chance and the principle of “more of the same” reigns supreme.

More radically, companies fully finance channels, especially in countries too poor to produce their own programs. In Africa, for example, Nestlé is rampant, which is bludgeoning the unique thinking and dominant culture of the West triumphing over viewers who have no alternative or access to their own culture. Elsewhere, the major institutes of “studies” and scientific expertise, created by the firms themselves, feed the media with unique thinking, which is reluctant to look for information at the source. This is how the worst absurdities are repeated and perpetuated; to go in the same direction as what advertising imposes. The scandal of polluted air in Paris took ten years to penetrate our newspapers financed by the automotive industry; that of child labour in some countries as well: these children work for the main sponsors of our channels (Nike in the lead). The famous Jean-Pierre Coffe, although widely used by advertising, but who left television disgusted by what he saw there, recently confessed to the *Parisien Libéré* : “Try going to F2, F3 or a commercial channel and giving a review on a Danone Group product. It’s forbidden, you’re cut off. And since I am a free man, I do not want to submit. That is why I am doing something else.” The other animators did not have this modesty.

For zapping fanatics, who change channels as soon as the advertisement interrupts their film, the parade has been found: the ad is no longer in the advertising break, but in the film itself. The last chic is to buy a few seconds of a film from a “major company” and slip its propaganda into it. International hits (*Total recall*, *Back to the Future 2*, *Day of Turmoil*, all *James Bond*) are thus full of close-up products with the name of the brand, inserts designed by the firms themselves and no longer by the author, director or producer; the writers, on the other hand, have to adapt their story to this presence that sometimes happens like a hair on the soup. In France, the two “*Les Visiteurs*”, public triumphs, brought this principle to its climax, using the parody force of effect.

### 31.3 Sport

80% of the *sponsoring* of sport — actually competition and not sports practice — goes to motor sports and the sports programs that show them are sponsored... by the same firms.

Only one sporting competition, the Prix automobile de Monaco in 1992, saw the same name of a tobacco company appear on the screen... 1134 times, while it is forbidden.

The Pardubicka horse race in Czechoslovakia, deliberately intended to be very dangerous, offered viewers around the world spectacular horse falls; many had to be shot because of their fractured legs. This show, a real massacre aimed at a morbid audience, so moved animal lovers that a boycott campaign was launched against sponsors, including Martel cognacs, until they gave up.

Many sports competitions, which should have been banned for bad weather conditions for example, were maintained because of TV schedules and contracts with firms that were waiting for their passage on the air at these moments of prime listening. The high number of competitions multiplies the opportunities to promote brands, so it is in full inflation. Athletes are exhausted there, especially since sponsors demand records all the time. This has exploded the market for anabolics and other dopants, which have killed more than one athlete and distort the spirit of sport.

False conflicts have multiplied the “world authorities” of each discipline, which multiplies the championships (in boxing: four different). To arrange the cameras, schedules and rules are changed. We have seen marathon runners running in the heat for these reasons. As you can imagine, these practices have increased the pressure for all cheating. The Tapie case is only brought to light to better cover widely generalized methods<sup>XLVII</sup>.

Advertising doesn't just choose what to finance, it invents what exactly it wants. An exhibition as lamentable and colonialist as the Paris-Dakar was created from scratch by advertisers, it was not requested by sportsmen or rally enthusiasts. It has no other purpose than to sell products.

Television broadcasts of sporting events or events depend only on the sponsors, not on their actual importance or the taste of the spectators. Interesting events are not even mentioned, while golf, which interests only a few people in France, reigns everywhere. And for good reason: golf courses built everywhere have the juicy advantage of allowing to bypass certain legislative obstacles to real estate on protected land...

---

<sup>XLVII</sup> Bernard Tapie, A french businessman, actor and politician among other things, In this particular case, the author refer to Tapie rigging games in favor of a Marseille's soccer club

Berlusconi, the club boss, once demanded a “look” from F.C. Milan footballers that would allow them to appear on TV often. He chose blondes, rather beautiful kids, even less good players, but more media. Elsewhere, tennis players are asked to shorten their skirts, to move the consumer, male of course.

But the worst is yet to come, electronic sponsorship. A first attempt took place recently. This consists of adding virtual elements to the actual image. For example, in a football match broadcast, a 23rd player, entirely electronically made, taps into an equally electronic ball, covered with the advertising of a brand (Axe in this case). The experiment was refused, but for reasons that were at least light and temporary, according to the director of the French Football Federation: “We asked for cancellation, as nothing had been negotiated with us. The rights of virtual publicity belong to the F.F.F.” (*Liberation*, February 11, 1998). To these cynical remarks responds the attitude of the C.S.A., which, without qualms, had accepted.

How can we be surprised when we know that all the big bosses of Olympism or international federations have been or are linked to the big companies interested, and continue to be paid by them during their mandate. That juicy contracts are granted to these firms, while those that do not “spit” are ruthlessly eliminated. If one were to investigate seriously in this area, one would find that politics is comparatively much less corrupt than sport. We are less surprised then to see the great captains of industry, the kings of corruption in all directions (Tapie, Berlusconi, to name only the best known and convicted) have invested fully in the clubs of which they display themselves the leaders. “*sponsorship* is a legal way to launder dirty money,” said one European elected official, referring to the close links between sport and mafias.

## 31.4 Environment and solidarity

The most polluting companies compete with who will set up the “foundation” or the most dynamic association to help the quality of air, water, landscape, renewable energies or waste recovery. E.D.F., COGEMA or the chemical industry are all very active in these areas that they destroy on the one hand and help repair on the other, winning in both cases, in brand image or subsidies. E.D.F., the biggest river wrecker in France, never fails to help a fishing film festival or a kayak event, useful to neutralize associations in conflicts on the ground. It is all the associative work that is thus used, diverted, discredited.

Similarly, “humanitarian” NGOs are plagued by pseudo-NGOs. entirely assembled by agri-food or pharmaceutical companies, which make them bridge-

heads for their products. For example, pharmaceutical products banned in Europe or having exceeded expiry dates are sold, or juicy contacts are made in certain devastated countries whose elites are easily corruptible. The same, by rendering valuable “services” to more secret agencies, receive irreplaceable support from various governments. The “African policy” of the France has used this type of relay a lot, under both the right and the left.

### 31.5 Politics

The American and French public naively believed that President Clinton’s setbacks with his zipper were a matter of salacious jokes. Under its scabrous underbelly, the business is actually economic-financial. Sent by the powerful tobacco lobby, Kenneth Starr, the prosecutor who went after Bill Clinton, was their former lawyer. It was because the president’s health policy thwarted their interests, in particular by banning all advertising for their products, that the big companies launched this offensive. Puritan vogue has done the rest, and the picturesque that the mainstream media is more fond of than substantive analysis.

More seriously, it is trivial to say that foreign policies are more often carried out by a few oil companies than by states. Without Shell, whose interests were threatened by its public action, Ken Saro-Wiva would never have been hanged in Nigeria. Without Total, which has deported thousands of Burmese peasants obstinate to live on the territory of its pipeline project (75% of foreign investment in Burma), Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi would be free and... Prime Minister instead of military dictators. The examples are legion and the simple list of political crimes committed on the orders of Elf in Africa would hold pages.

We better understand the usefulness of advertising hype to silence (by buying the media), correct the image and pretend to be harmless traders.

### 31.6 Ideology

Everyone was able to make the comparison between advertising and propaganda, as if there were a difference in nature, while there is only a difference in object, which fades today when politicians (Bush, Gorbachev, Alexander Kwasniewski) praise products in spots, and when others are promoted (which does not mean “promoted”, no offense to the Academy) by famous advertising agencies.

The parallel with the propaganda of totalitarian regimes is obvious, for

example with the Nazi ideal. The characters shown conform to the dominant models, today as in the past. The men are well built, the blonde girls with generous breasts, all smile and are unanimous no matter what. The places are always the same: clean and beautiful cities, charming and sunny countryside, the sea or another place of enchanting tourism, the Third World is exotic and good-natured, as at club Méditerranée. The body is sovereign, the décor willingly futuristic, but a pleasant future, to which we aspire, competition seems to be the only engine of people, power and strength are exalted, the feat constantly evoked. This ideal of “Scout happiness” that Toscani denounces in his book, irresistibly evokes the images of Nazi magazines or their edifying films (Toscani shows how the image of Claudia Schiffer realizes the dream of the Hitlerjugend). But also those of Russian, Chinese or Korean socialist realism, in their propaganda for youth. Above all, like the slogan of the camps, joy is obligatory and the “natural” so forced that it would make the cinema laugh.

The dominant choices are also revealing: alcohol and tobacco, cars and speed, futile and expensive purchases, or low-quality food products presented as elite consumption. Advertising constantly plays on sexual desire, rarely with finesse, but rather with a grivoiserie without great variations.

It always reinforces the discourse against the environment, social rights, the real Third World, poverty, citizenship, except when it is necessary to sing them... It is the reign of absolute liberalism, which reinforces the unanimity of the economic editorialists of the media where it is broadcast. And of course the little touch of rebellion, so incentive to buy, and false novation.

This is the often denounced reign of the “housewife under 50 years old” supposed to represent the average consumer, whose dictatorship over the audience is responsible for the widespread rolling of quality. It sells, says Toscani, “a adulterated and hypnotic model of happiness” in which, with the proposed product, the consumer is supposed to buy eternal youth, power or energy, definitive health. And he adds this appalling summary of the vast majority of ads on our screens: “Ah how good it is to be 20 years old, to ride in 4 X 4 at the end of the world and to jump into the sparkling water with pretty chicks smiling ear to ear”. A bourgeois dream, colonizing, dominating, Western and white, proposed as a model of society, as a conception of the world instead of the great defeated ideologies.

As in the Nazi regime, deviants to this model are eliminated from the world that advertising transmits: those who do not look like Aryans, are not heterosexual, nor healthy, do not have the ease that money gives, are not aggressive in the face of the world, do not have the conforming physique, the unproductive, the protesters, the pacifists, the sick, the poor, the “losers”... As in any totalitarian propaganda, strength and power emerge from the mus-

cles of beer drinkers or vehicle drivers. Victory is omnipresent, whether the hero runs or flirts, pilots or confronts a boss.

Finally, it only plays with stereotypes and each time to push them even deeper into people's heads: male and female stereotypes, nationals, rural, young people, commuters, etc.

## 31.7 Numbers

For fun let's compare:

- In 1994, advertising (*stricto sensu*) spent 330.5 billion francs in Europe, 406.7 billion in the USA and 172 billion in Japan;
- These figures are the equivalent of 50% of the debt of all of South America, or 100% of Middle-East's or North Africa's debt du Moyen-Orient.
- In France by comparison, the budget of Culture is about 50 billion.

## 31.8 A crime against spirits

Like these modern bombs that kill everything that lives by preserving buildings and equipment, advertising kills all intellectual and civic activity by letting the individual live the only reflexes of consumption, like overconditioned Pavlov dogs. Doubt, thought, ideas, selflessness, spiritual and personal development, public interest, collective sense and solidarity, everything is swept away as an obstacle to the single thought: buying. Merchant culture is no longer distinguished from culture at all, as an advertising spot is no longer distinguishable from a short film or a music video: same characters, same references, same staging, same editing, same clichés, same aesthetics, same sitcom-like situation - and for good reason, the directors are the same.

With cultural regression helping, and passivity encouraged, advertising is often the only information available to some citizens, about products, foreign countries, or elements of knowledge. Young people are particularly affected by this phenomenon. Main plagiarist, especially of the cinema, the advertising lives only from what it apes or plunders, one would look in vain for an original idea from its ranks. This pumping, paid a hundred times more than the plagiarized work, is not worth the candle: so much "brainstorming" for a result so poor, so inefficient (its impact on sales is overall ridiculous), it is an unspeakable waste. But it maintains confusion.



For the average viewer, the difference between a show, documentary or fiction film, and advertising, is blurring. We believe as much the one who presents the television news as the comedian who praises a car or we believe him as little. As it is true that what has not been “seen on TV” does not exist (let us remember the Gulf War) and that what has been seen, even if faked, is accepted (same example).

Advertising is also the main vector of the virtual, whose promotion does not aim to make it compete with reality, but to replace it, as shown by the relentlessness of some products to pretend to be those, authentic and prestigious, to which they want to replace (example: the ads for Lipton tea shot in the Himalayas, or those for American rice shot in the rice fields of Asia that he will ruin).

The world of advertising, organized like a mafia, works like it, in the service of the most authoritarian ideology there is. The commercial harassment it unleashes even in the most remote parts of the world leaves its opponents no space to survive. We must therefore salute the new fighters of this anti-capitalism of the twenty-first century: Resistance to Advertising Aggression in France; London-Greenpeace led the lawsuit against McDonald’s for lying damaging to their brand image. And of course the “sub-commander Marcos of the antiadvertising”, Kalle Lasn, of The Media Foundation, who makes counter-spots, anti-slogans, dismantles advertisements by revealing their lies, and created the “Days without purchase”.

We must dismantle the world of advertising as we do for weapons of mass destruction, since it is one of them. Useless or harmful socially, environmentally, artistically, culturally, and even commercially (quality products are often sold without advertising), this “crime against intelligence, creativity, language” (Toscani again), which offers us a macho vision, racist, colonialist, totalitarian, Western and exclusionary, serves only those who lead us to the abyss.

A psychological weapon, it replaces conventional, nuclear or chemical weapons, because today capitalism must keep alive its victims, transformed into mere consumers: it no longer kills, it decerebrates. This generalized offensive of the commodity creates famines, ecological and health disasters, unemployment and exclusion. Its missiles are called advertising. The offensive is carried out through the new provisions of the WTO, the European treaties (Maastricht, Amsterdam), the globalization agreements (A.M.M., N.T.M.), and thanks to its instruments (IMF, World Bank, central banks). This first planetary war has now taken over from the two classic world wars: it has already caused more deaths...

**Yves Frémion**

Yves Frémion is a writer and journalist, author of more than 80 titles in all fields. He leads the workshops of Tayrac, associative edition. Vice-President of the Voltaire Network and of the Permanent Council of Writers. He directs the series “La Planète verte” (The Green Planet) at Hachette Jeunesse. An ecologist, he was an MEP and in charge of the Greens’ International Relations. He is currently a regional councillor for Île-de-France. Latest books published: *Deluge sur Monteyrac* (Deluge on Monteyrac) (Hachette), *Attention chien léchant* (Beware licking dog) (Audie), *Le Tueur* (The Killer) (Gallimard).

## Chapter 32

# Even if capitalism's abolition wouldn't be enough...

Monique and Roland WEYL

“Capitalism carries war like the cloud carries the storm”

Jean Jaurès

First an aphorism: “Come on! There have always been wars and there always will be”. And then its consolidation: “Look what happened in socialist countries”.

It is true, there have always been wars, wars between tribes or ethnic groups, between principalities, between states, the powerful imposing by force their domination over populations to conquer their lands, seize their wealth and enslave their men and women. War is never more than one of the means of domination of the weak by the powerful.

With capitalism, war takes on other dimensions, another meaning. It ceases to be localized to become global, planetary... what about tomorrow? Cosmic? It takes on a permanent character. It begins with economic war, ideological warfare, accompanied by blockade measures and also as other prerequisites “low-intensity” conflicts and serious local conflicts that can be generalized to the whole world. Once “over”, war continues as we have seen and we see with the Gulf War, the victorious United States imposing on the Iraqi population a blockade more deadly than the war itself. War permanently affects the world to such an extent that, like the temperature for disease, war now is measured in degrees: Hot War or Cold War, a new Cold War between the countries of the North and the Countries of the South having taken over from the old Cold War between East and West.

Finally, war (like localized wars) spares no one: millions of victims, military and civilian populations, including children (see the UNICEF report). The use of increasingly sophisticated weapons of mass destruction is not limited to military forces, nor to the blockade, the old method of siege that the United States already advocated in the last century over Cuba when it wanted to substitute its domination for that of the Spanish. The agenda sent in 1898 by Secretary of State for War Bekenbridge to General Miles commanding the American expeditionary force in Cuba deserves to be quoted again as it is indicative of the methods used to establish domination over peoples: “We must clean up the land, even if we had to resort to the means that Divine Providence had used in Sodom and Gomorrah. We must destroy everything within range of our guns. We must impose the blockade so that hunger and plague reduce the number of civilians and decimate the army.”

We need to go even further. War meets the needs of capitalism. A flourishing arms trade generates immense profits, illicit, criminal profits, which Fidel Castro, on the subject of the arms race, denounced in his speech at the seventh summit of the Non-Aligned: “This genocide by omission that humanity commits every day by sentencing thousands of human beings to death by the mere fact of allocating so many resources to developing the means to kill them in another way.”

For many supporters of capitalism for whom “war is better than unemployment”, it is an ideal means of reducing unemployment: it sacrifices useless workers, and, with peace restored, it is the source of new profits in reconstruction.

But war is also, and perhaps above all, in the intrinsic nature of capitalism insofar as it is an almost unavoidable instrument for the solution of conflictual competitions in the control of markets, where the constant reduction in purchasing power generated by the law of profit reduces the available outlets accordingly.

Isn't this all that Jaurès' formula implies? Even if its author, the first victim of the 14-18 war, could not know the abominable butchery, nor could he imagine the indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations, the burned towns and villages (the Oradour and the Lidice), the deportations and extermination camps, and the use of nuclear weapons on the populations of two cities of a Japan ready to capitulate. But it is probably extrapolating the sentence of Jaurès to get from it what he did not say, that to abolish capitalism would be enough to put an end to the relations of exploitation and domination and to ensure to individuals and peoples happiness, freedom and peace. It can only be said that war is inherent in capitalism, which does not mean that it has a monopoly on it. It simply means that in capitalism war is not eradicatable, whereas it can be eradicated once capitalism is ousted.

In these times of despair, in order to obtain from individuals and peoples that they resign themselves to the sustainability of capitalism, the construction of a world freed from the relations of exploitation over men and domination over peoples is presented to them as an unachievable utopia, and for this nothing is easier than to draw a line under socialism from the rout of an experiment, and from his slippages and mistakes, some of which have been tragic.

Admittedly, the often-repeated formula "Socialism is Peace" proceeded first of all from an overly simple *a contrario* reasoning: since capitalism generates war, the abolition of capitalism eliminates war by eliminating its cause. More substantially, it was consistent to consider that, since the ambition of socialism was to put an end to the relations of exploitation and domination, war, the extreme means of domination over other peoples and over one's own people, was a phenomenon alien to socialism.

In fact, the impregnation of human fraternity with the ideals of all the successive schools of socialism necessarily carried with it the corollary of pacifism, and it was this coherence that was to inspire one of the first acts of the Socialist Revolution in power when Lenin signed the famous "Decree on Peace", and its call for the intervention of peoples as opposed to secret diplomacy. No doubt subsequently, this solemn proclamation was often lost sight of, but it is still necessary to relativize the reasons, because it is inadmissible to close any ambition on the pretext of a disappointed ambition.

From this capitalism itself cannot be exonerated. First of all, it is necessary to underline the perverse role played by the war situation with which the Soviet Union was constantly confronted: the intervention of the former opponents of the 14-18 war against the young Soviet state considered a dangerous example (was there not the Spartacist revolution, the mutinies in the French army); then support for Hitler and fascist regimes as bulwarks against communism; then, after the defeat of the fascist regimes, thanks in large part to the sacrifices of the USSR, the Cold War with subversive actions against the USSR and its allies, the threat of using atomic weapons of which the United States until September 1949 had a monopoly; finally the crazy gear of the arms race.

It is therefore impossible not to place in this context everything that in Soviet policy has moved away from the spirit of the "decree on peace", to replace the pacifist investment in the Peoples' Movement with the option of military solutions and negotiations between powers, to hide its defensive impregnation, however bad an advisor it may be.

Certainly, it will be difficult for historians to arbitrate, even in the indisputable role played by the Soviet Union for the benefit of world peace and which greatly motivated the solidarities from which it benefited, which is due

to the coherence of socialist ideals or the concern for its security.

This does not preclude the need to recognise the whole positive aspect of the balance sheet, in particular the role played by the USSR in drawing up the new principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, making the right of peoples to self-determination, non-interference in their affairs and the negotiated solution of conflicts the rules of world relations. The capitalist powers, starting with the United States, accepted these rules only with their defending bodies, so that they never ceased to violate them and to work to eliminate them in order to return to the good old previous right, exclusively based on power relations.

The tragedy is that the USSR allowed itself to be attracted to this field by putting Peace dependent on chancellery negotiations and compromises between superpowers. Added to this are the damaging consequences of the ideology of the "fortress" which, like the security ideology produced internal phenomena of overstateization, was to generate a defensive psychosis in the responsibility for which one cannot comfortably ignore the role that the state of siege and the incessant provocations of capitalism may have played.

Curiously, paradoxically, the shift seems to have been with Khrushchev, when the logic of the Stockholm call, had given way to the strategy of the godasse on the tribune of the UN, then to the red telephone and the logic of the arms race, and the ideology of "fortress" that it generated, to the various SALT agreements, to the fatal trap of the Cheevernadzian illusion that the fate of the world was in the friend-friend of the two superpowers.

Nevertheless, history has shown that there can be armed conflicts between socialist countries where the explanation by the context of a capitalist environment is not necessarily convincing. We were already not far from it between the USSR and China, and it was necessary to take the step of painful realizations during the Chinese aggression against Vietnam. It was discovered, with heartbreak, that there could be wars between socialist countries. It was therefore necessary to revise everything, here too learn not to idealize: socialism too could carry war with it. Was this a denial of the fundamental antithesis?

We simply learned that socialism does not *ipso facto* eliminate war, just as we had (painfully) learned that it did not *ipso facto* eradicate delinquency, corruption, careerism.

Then? Did Jaurès fool us?

Is it because there was Chernobyl, because there were still accidents at work, alcoholism, thieves in socialist countries, that this exonerates capitalism of its intrinsic guilt in the massive character of the deviances it exudes?

One of the main mistakes of the ideologues of the socialist countries, and

more particularly of the thurifers<sup>XLVIII</sup> of the State, will undoubtedly have been to omit the transitory nature of the system they were in charge of, to lose sight of the classic distinction between a stage of society governed by a conflictual competition in the distribution of the available and a stage that is delivered from it.

Socialism does not put an end overnight to the dissatisfaction of all the needs of men, and it must be deduced from this that as long as there is conflictual competition for the distribution of the available, there cannot be no competition for mastery and therefore domination.

Why not then return to the simple idea that war is the ultimate means of domination?

It is in this that we can say that “*homo homini lupus*” but in this only, and therefore that war is not eliminated *ipso facto* by the abolition of capitalism, but will be when this abolition has allowed man to strip the wolf to flourish as a man.

The most elementary humanism therefore commands to reject the abominable aphorism of the fatality of war. If lucidity dictates that it is not enough to abolish capitalism to eliminate it, as long as the legacy and the after-effects are not expurgated, the truth also requires us to admit that to capitalism, and capitalism alone, because of its nature based on exploitation, war is intrinsic.

It is intrinsic to it because capitalism is based on competition in the appropriation of human resources, because its nature and its *raison d'être* are to confiscate them from humanity and for this to dominate it, if necessary with the new forms of domination that we know today. The widespread attack on peoples and their irruption in international affairs is working to force them to surrender their sovereignty to international or supranational institutions (IMF-EU-NAFTA) while waiting for exacerbated competition for markets to lead to armed war, which is never far from economic war.

Yes, intrinsic to capitalism, because its irremissible original flaw is that within it itself the competitions of domination and market masters, the mastery of spaces, and human livestock, are confronted in a process sharpened by the increasing reduction of consumption capacities.

### Monique and Roland Weyl

Monique and Roland Weyl are lawyers, authors of *Démocratie, pouvoir du peuple; Se libérer de Maastricht* (Democracy, Power of the People; Free yourself from Maastricht) (Temps des cerises).

<sup>XLVIII</sup>Someone who burns incense in a religious, particularly Christian, ceremony, but figuratively an *apologist of the highest order* in this context





## Chapter 33

# Capitalism and barbarity: Black table of slaughters and wars in the XXth century 1900-1997

- The last anti-Indian repressions in the USA, which saw the end of the genocide committed in the nineteenth century	100,000
- The Anglo-Boer War (for control of South Africa) 1902	100,000
- Victims of the colonial conquests of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (including the conquest of Korea by Japan, 1908)	500,000
- The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). The Battle of Mukden alone caused more than 100,000 deaths	300,000
- The repression of the 1905 Revolution in Russia	100,000
- The Italo-Turkish War for Tripolitania (1911)	50,000
- The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) Turkey, Serbia, Bulgaria	500,000
- Armenian Genocide in Turkey	1,000,000
- The First World War (1914-1918)	8,500,000
- The civil war in the USSR, famines and epidemics resulting from foreign interventions and the blockade by the West	6,000,000

- Repression after the revolutionary movement in the different countries of Europe, Finland, Baltic States, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria (1918-1923)	200,000
- The Greco-Turkish War (1920-1922) and more than 1,500,000 exiles	100,000
- Victims of fascism in Europe before World War II (1924-1939)	150,000
- The Franco-Spanish war against the Moroccans of the RIF (1925-1926)	50,000
- US military interventions in Central America, South America and the Caribbean (1910-1940)	50,000
- The Chaco War for its oil between Bolivia and Paraguay (1931-1935)	150,000
- Victims of famines and epidemics in India, China and Indochina (1900-1945) at least) (including 6 million for China alone)	8,000,000
- The massive repression and civil war unleashed by Chiang Kai-shek in China (1927-1937)	1,000,000
- The Japanese War of Aggression in China (1931-1941)	1,000,000
- The War of Italian Fascism in Ethiopia	200,000
- The civil war in Spain started by Franco supported by Hitler and Mussolini and facilitated by “non-intervention”	700,000
- The Second World War provoked by Hitler’s Germany and militarist Japan was also the result of the successive capitulations of the Western capitalist countries to Nazism in Europe and to Japan in Asia (1939-1945). Military and civilian casualties including deportees and the Holocaust	50,000,000
- The French War in Indochina (1946-1955)	1,200,000
- The American War in Vietnam (1956-1975)	2,000,000

- Post-war colonialist repressions including that of Madagascar (80,000 dead), Algeria (1945), Morocco, Tunisia, black Africa	500,000
- The war in Algeria (1956-1962)	1,200,000
- Anti-communist massacres in Indonesia after September 1965	1,500,000
- War and repression in East Bengal, Bangladesh, (according to Amnesty International)	3,000,000
- The Indo-Pakistani massacres following the partition of India (1948) (14 million displaced persons) (Some sources speak of 10 million dead)	300,000
- The four Arab-Israeli wars in the Middle East (1948-1956-1967-1973) including the Lebanon War dead and 700,000 Palestinians exiled	300,000
- Anti-Kurdish repression in Turkey, Iran and Iraq	200,000
- The war in Biafra (Nigeria) (1967-1970)	1,000,000
- Iran-Iraq War	600,000
- The Gulf War (1991), direct victims 200,000 plus the victims of undernutrition due to the blockade that still lasts	500,000
- Direct American or guerrilla interventions and paramilitary groups interposed in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic, etc.	200,000
- War in East Timor	200,000
- Repression in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, etc. generally supported by the American services	150,000
- Inter-ethnic conflicts in Transcaucasia and Central Asia following the dissolution of the USSR (1990-1995) including the war in Chechnya in 1995 (80,000 deaths)	200,000
- Wars in Angola (2 million victims), 2,000,000 and Mozambique (1 million)	1,000,000

- Massacres in Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda (anti-Tutsi genocide 500,000), Burundi, Sierra Leone, Congo/Zaire, Congo/Brazzaville etc. (1990-1997), in Apartheid South Africa. As far as Africa is concerned, we are taking into account the victims of famines (Sahel, Somalia, Ethiopia and those of lack of care, especially refugees)	4,000,000
- Inter-integration war in Afghanistan	700,000
- Ethnic wars and massacres in the former Yugoslavia caused by the disintegration of the country encouraged by Germany and other Western powers (1990-1996) (plus 1 million refugees expelled from their regions)	200,000
- Between 1990 and 1995 alone, wars caused five and a half million civilian deaths worldwide, three-quarters of them. (Europe 250,000, Asia 1.5 million, Middle and Near East 200 000, Africa 3,5 millions).	
Europe	250,000
Asia	1 500,000
Middle and Near East	200,000
Africa	3,500,000
- To this incomplete picture must be added the death from malnutrition of 6 million children in 1997 alone.	
- In 1997, there were forty million refugees and exiles.	

These figures - mostly taken from encyclopedias currently available and consultable by all - are obviously approximate and not exhaustive. They are presented here for information purposes only.

The victims of capitalism do not include the victims of mass repression in countries claiming to be socialist, in the USSR and China in particular, nor those of the Cambodian genocide. Estimates of the number of these victims, which can be found in several books, are also approximate and discussed.

**The publisher**

# Appendix A

## Les nouveaux mystères de Pearl Harbor

This is a copy of the text at [https://www.delpla.org/article.php3?id\\_article=15](https://www.delpla.org/article.php3?id_article=15) fetched 2022-09-04 via archive.org ([https://web.archive.org/web/20120418062723/https://www.delpla.org/article.php3?id\\_article=15](https://web.archive.org/web/20120418062723/https://www.delpla.org/article.php3?id_article=15)).

1995 / Inédit.

### A.1 Présentation du manuscrit

En deux heures, l'aviation japonaise détruit la flotte américaine du Pacifique. Après un demi-siècle, la querelle des responsabilités ne semble pas près de s'apaiser. Manque de vigilance des commandants locaux ? Cynisme d'un Roosevelt jouant à qui perd gagne ? Ces deux thèses s'affrontent avec d'autant plus d'énergie qu'elles sont l'une et l'autre d'une lourde invraisemblance. En 1991, le cinquantenaire a vu des manifestants réclamer la réhabilitation des officiers Kimmel et Short, limogés après la bataille, tandis que des juristes rooseveltiens prétendaient qu'en fait ils méritaient la peine de mort. Il est temps d'arrêter cette escalade passablement ridicule, et d'en venir à examiner les faits en dehors de toute polémique.

François Delpla, après avoir éclairé le jeu hitlérien à Montoire et à Dunkerque, reprend à zéro l'enquête sur Pearl Harbor. Il replace l'attaque dans le déroulement de la seconde guerre mondiale, analyse le jeu des différentes forces au Japon comme aux États-Unis et présente une explication entièrement nouvelle : Roosevelt a caché des choses, mais pas celles que l'on croit. Il voulait certes entraîner son pays dans la guerre, mais uniquement contre l'Allemagne, et il avait toutes chances d'y parvenir au début de 1942. Dans le Pacifique,

il ne cherchait donc qu'à calmer le jeu ; mais il avait déjà dangereusement dégarni les défenses américaines de ce côté et ne disposait plus, pour endiguer les ambitions du Japon, que d'une combinaison de sanctions économiques, de promesses, de menaces et d'habileté retardatrice. A ce jeu de toute manière dangereux, il a fini par se prendre lui-même, faisant au dernier moment une erreur de calcul, tant sur la résolution du Japon que sur son aptitude à frapper immédiatement. Il pensait disposer encore de quelques jours pour tenter de fléchir l'empereur, et n'entendait pas les gâcher en mettant les bases trop nettement sur le pied de guerre. Analysant la conduite du Japon, le livre fait justice d'une vision teintée de racisme, qui attribue à son peuple une agressivité et une duplicité congénitales -ainsi que des amalgames trop rapides avec l'Allemagne nazie. Il démontre que, tout comme en Angleterre et aux États-Unis, il y avait là un parti de la paix, dont les chances de l'emporter n'étaient pas négligeables, et que la politique de Roosevelt tendait à favoriser. La lutte serrée des bellicistes et des pacifistes avait permis aux premiers d'obtenir le départ secret d'une flotte d'attaque, que les seconds espéraient encore pouvoir rappeler.

Surestimant sa compréhension des milieux dirigeants nippons en général et de l'empereur en particulier, le président américain n'a pas fait les bons gestes aux bons moments. Mais il a tout de même gagné beaucoup de temps et, surtout, soulagé l'URSS, en pesant de tout son poids pour que le Japon n'attaque pas la Sibérie en juillet 1941, à la suite de l'attaque allemande en Russie d'Europe. Il a donc bien, en un certain sens, attiré la foudre contre son propre pays, d'une manière amplement justifiable par la nécessité de vaincre Hitler, mais difficilement avouable par les États-Unis pendant la guerre froide.

## A.2 Introduction

Le 7 décembre 1941, à l'aube, dans la rade de Pearl Harbor, la flotte de guerre des États-Unis subit l'assaut d'une nuée de bombardiers japonais, acheminés près de là par des porte-avions sans avoir été repérés. Un document, pouvant s'interpréter comme une déclaration de guerre, est remis au gouvernement américain par des diplomates japonais une heure après le début de l'attaque. Des centaines de livres ont été consacrés à cet événement.

Celui-ci est le premier en langue française, et l'un des premiers qui ne soient pas en anglais. A lui seul, ce fait mérite une explication. Le sujet a été traité avant tout sous l'angle de la politique intérieure américaine. Il s'agissait de savoir à quelle(s) carence(s) attribuer un succès aussi complet de la flotte combinée japonaise. Deux écoles se sont affrontées depuis le lende-

main du désastre : l'une brode sur les défaillances individuelles et collectives d'un système militaire américain en sommeil depuis 1918, qui tentait de se revitaliser depuis quelques mois, dans la situation créée par les succès des armées allemandes contre la France, la Grande-Bretagne et l'URSS.

L'autre école s'intéresse exclusivement à l'aspect politique des choses. Elle essaye de démontrer que le président Roosevelt, désireux d'entraîner dans la guerre un pays rétif, avait provoqué une agression japonaise pour y parvenir, et plus ou moins consciemment dirigé la foudre vers la base de Pearl Harbor, en sacrifiant celle-ci. On baptise cette école "révisionniste", et on parle à son propos de la *conspiracy theory*.

La controverse a pris de la vigueur en 1944 à l'occasion des élections, les uns espérant en finir avec le long règne de Roosevelt et de son parti démocrate, les autres défendant sa personne et son action. Les enquêtes et les procès se sont succédé tout au long de la campagne, mais la nouvelle victoire démocrate n'a procuré qu'un faible répit : le brutal décès du président, le 12 avril 1945, a incité certains républicains du Congrès à relancer la polémique. Au total, huit enquêtes ont eu lieu, qui ont jeté au public une masse de documentation, autorisant les conclusions les plus contradictoires et nourrissant jusqu'à nos jours la querelle. Tous les débuts de décennies, notamment, ont vu fleurir les ouvrages, lorsque les commémorations ravivaient les plaies.

Le sujet mérite d'être repris aujourd'hui en raison même des conditions dans lesquelles il a été jusqu'ici traité. Une bataille qui a mis aux prises deux pays ne saurait être éternellement racontée du point de vue d'un seul. A plus forte raison si cet événement prenait place dans un conflit planétaire. Il faut donc faire entrer en ligne de compte, et le point de vue japonais, et les rapports de forces entre toutes les grandes puissances. Peu d'hommes ont eu au même degré que Roosevelt la conscience des enjeux mondiaux de cette guerre. L'historien doit donc, pour mettre en lumière ses motivations, faire le tour du planisphère en se mettant dans la peau d'un président américain.

Quant à l'agresseur, sa politique est, le plus souvent, schématisée à l'extrême. Le Japon n'est pas présenté comme un pays, habité et gouverné par des hommes, mais plutôt comme une réalité physique, une sorte de gaz comprimé qui tend naturellement à l'expansion et à l'explosion. Tout au plus parle-t-on d'une tendance pacifiste dans le gouvernement, incarnée un moment par le premier ministre Konoye, mais vite débordée et neutralisée par des militaires tout uniment agressifs.

Ce tableau mérite pour le moins de fortes retouches. Mais, pour décrire avec justesse les spéculations de Washington et celles de Tokyo, il faut aussi franchir les continents et les océans. Le Japon a des relations privilégiées avec l'Allemagne : on l'a dit, et même un peu trop, en refusant de voir

à quel point le gouvernement nippon déçoit, sur des points fondamentaux, les attentes de Hitler. Précisément, à Pearl Harbor, il n'est pas aisé de démêler dans quelle mesure le Japon satisfait l'Allemagne et dans quelle mesure il la dérange. Quant aux Etats-Unis, leur partenaire principal est l'Angleterre et, là aussi, on a sous-estimé les contradictions et les conflits d'intérêts, particulièrement nets dans l'océan Pacifique, à propos duquel la correspondance entre Roosevelt et Churchill connaît ses plus beaux orages.

Une théorie est apparue récemment, suivant laquelle le rôle du premier Britannique a été déterminant dans la genèse de Pearl Harbor, soit qu'il ait par des informations spéciales entraîné le 26 novembre un raidissement de l'attitude américaine (version de Layton #1), soit au contraire qu'il ait caché ces mêmes informations et trahi Roosevelt pour mieux l'entraîner dans la guerre (version de Rusbridger #2). La deuxième théorie est manifestement fautive, la première plus digne d'examen, mais toutes deux ont le mérite d'attirer l'attention sur l'attitude britannique, direction de recherche jusque là trop négligée.

Le facteur soviétique, enfin, est déterminant. Pearl Harbor survient six mois après une autre attaque-surprise, celle de Hitler contre l'URSS, le pays immense, au régime politique honni de tous les autres, qui sépare l'Allemagne et le Japon. L'évolution de ce théâtre d'opérations, la perception qu'on a de son avenir et les souhaits qu'on formule à cet égard dans les diverses capitales ne peuvent rester sans influence sur les événements du Pacifique, et cependant peu d'ouvrages établissent un lien, ne serait-ce qu'entre l'expédition de Pearl Harbor et l'effort strictement contemporain de Hitler pour prendre Moscou avant l'hiver #3.

On peut dater de 1985 le début d'un renouvellement dans les études sur l'agression japonaise. Cette année-là, l'ouvrage de l'amiral Layton abordait de façon neuve, comme on l'a dit, le rôle de la Grande-Bretagne, mais il donnait aussi sur toute la crise américano-japonaise le point de vue argumenté d'une personne bien renseignée, qui avait vécu les événements à Pearl Harbor même et fréquenté par la suite les archives, notamment celles qui ont été ouvertes en 1979. En 1986, le livre regroupant les papiers du général Marshall #4, s'il s'avère peu éclairant sur les faits et gestes du chef suprême américain dans la période précédant l'assaut, a permis de préciser son état d'esprit, en donnant notamment le récit d'une réunion secrète entre lui et quelques journalistes, le 15 novembre 1941.

Pendant la même période, un historien américain d'origine japonaise, Akira Irye, a livré un travail de réflexion #5, alors que ses confrères japonais en étaient restés à l'établissement des faits. Mais deux publications toutes récentes ont apporté plus encore. Elles ont bouleversé le champ documentaire, jusque là écrasé par les quarante volumes des enquêtes officielles. Il s'agit



d'abord des Pearl Harbor Papers #6. Gordon Prange avait écrit l'ouvrage sur Pearl Harbor #7 qui présentait le mieux le versant japonais des choses. L'auteur avait pu l'étudier à loisir sur place dans l'immédiat après-guerre, recueillant beaucoup de documents et de témoignages.

Treize ans après sa mort, ses collaborateurs Donald Goldstein et Katherine Dillon se sont décidés à publier intégralement les textes qu'il n'avait fait que citer, signés notamment du concepteur et chef de l'attaque, l'amiral Yamamoto, et de celui qui avait mis au point tous les détails, le commandant Genda. Cela donne un livre passionnant et, à bien des égards, très neuf.

Le point de vue américain, lui aussi, a été renouvelé par un livre, celui du juriste Henry Clausen, chargé en 1945 d'une importante enquête, avec de grands pouvoirs d'investigation. Ses procès-verbaux figuraient dans l'un des quarante volumes officiels mais ils avaient été assez peu remarqués. En 1992, il publie un récit très vivant de ses interrogatoires #8, ajoutant beaucoup de détails sur l'état d'esprit des militaires américains qui en étaient l'objet. C'est là, enfin, le fil d'Ariane qui permet de se repérer dans le maquis des enquêtes de 1944-46, d'en lever les contradictions et de se faire une idée claire d'un certain nombre de faits, même si on ne partage pas toutes les conclusions de l'auteur.

Le présent livre est né de la lecture de ces travaux, et de la constatation qu'aucun ne parvenait à changer notre vision des choses - alors que tous fournissaient des matériaux pour cela. Peu à peu s'est dégagée une image nouvelle, et une explication inaperçue a pris forme. Elle ne lève pas toutes les interrogations et en suscite de nouvelles. Mon ouvrage ne se veut pas un jugement définitif, mais un jalon dans une controverse qui n'est pas près de se terminer, et une invitation à faire surgir de nouveaux documents - particulièrement au Japon et dans certains pays neutres comme l'Espagne ou la Vatican. On ne trouvera pas, ici, beaucoup de dépouillements d'archives inédites.

C'est que l'histoire de Pearl Harbor souffre plutôt, à cet égard, d'un trop-plein que d'un manque. A moins qu'il ne s'agisse de pièces qui pourraient être vraiment éclairantes, montrant les renseignements parvenus aux directions britanniques et américaines sur les mouvements de la flotte et de l'aviation japonaises. Mais elles semblent, du côté américain, avoir été détruites et, du côté britannique, rester hermétiquement secrètes.

Le gouvernement anglais a bien, en 1993, pour faire pièce aux accusations lancées contre Churchill, autorisé la consultation de nouveaux dossiers : ceux-ci ont été visités pendant la rédaction de ce livre et en ont enrichi certains aspects, mais sur les positions des forces armées japonaises ils sont parfaitement muets - ce qui veut dire qu'on nous cache encore quelque chose car, si le premier ministre ignorait la menace pesant sur Pearl Harbor, il était

certainement informé d'autres déplacements de soldats nippons.

Ce livre est, enfin, l'un des premiers à ne pas s'autoriser d'une participation quelconque de son auteur aux événements ou à leurs suites immédiates. En effet, de Morrison à Clausen en passant par Prange, Layton et la bibliographie britannique, les ouvrages de base ont presque tous été signés ou cosignés par des militaires, chargés de missions diverses sur le théâtre du Pacifique pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, ou juste après. Il est temps, sans doute, qu'une génération de purs historiens prenne le relais et que la participation aux événements cesse d'être un sésame.

Parmi les personnes qui m'ont aidé dans ce travail d'un conseil ou d'un avis, même et surtout critique, archivistes, historiens, éditeurs, journalistes, je tiens à remercier particulièrement ceux dont la fidélité a prouvé un attachement sans faille à la libre recherche historique.

Notes :

#1 Edwin T. Layton, Roger Pineau et John Costello, *And I Was There*, New-York, 1985. #2 J. Rusbridger et E. Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor / How Churchill lured Roosevelt into WW II*, New-York 1991, tr. fr. *La trahison de Pearl Harbor / Comment Churchill entraîna Roosevelt dans la guerre*, Pygmalion 1992.

#3 Une heureuse exception : Stanley Weintraub, *Long Day's Journey into War*, Truman Talley Books-Dutton, 1991. Le livre s'ouvre sur une carte du front russe et rappelle fréquemment ce qui s'y passe.

#4 *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, vol. 2 "We Cannot Delay", Johns Hopkins, 1986.

#5 particulièrement *The Origins of WWII in Asia and the Pacific*, New-York, 1987.

#6 *The Pearl Harbor Papers*, publiés par Donald M. Goldstein et Katherine V. Dillon, Brassey's, 1993.

#7 Gordon W. Prange, Donald M. Goldstein et Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981. L'édition utilisée est celle de 1991, avec une postface de D. Goldstein et K. Dillon, Penguin Books.

#8 Henry C. Clausen et Bruce Lee, *Pearl Harbor Final Judgment*, Crown Publishers, 1992 et Leo Cooper, 1993. cité par G. Chaliand, *Anthologie mondiale de la stratégie*, Laffont, 1990, p. 967-968. cf. Henry C. Clausen, op. cit., p. 189.

### A.3 Sommaire

Prologue, La base de Pearl Harbor

Chapitre 1, Deuxième guerre, première année (situations et personnages)

fascisme et agression / l'exception hitlérienne / vers la guerre / ouvertures de paix et diversion finlandaise / attaque au nord puis à l'ouest „ armistice en mai ? / l'Angleterre isolée / dirigeants de juillet 1940 : Churchill , Hitler , Pétain , de Gaulle , Staline , Mussolini

Chapitre 2, Contradictions américaines

Roosevelt / une politique changeante mais ferme / une pédagogie du signe

Chapitre 3, Le versant du Pacifique

la croissance japonaise / une histoire répétitive / la pause des années vingt / Roosevelt et le Japon / Catroux, Pétain et l'Indochine

Chapitre 4, Le terrible été 40

la fatale hésitation de Hitler / Négociation sur les destroyers et les bases / des Dominions contestataires / Accord sur les destroyers et les bases / genèse du pacte tripartite

Chapitre 5, Quelques pas avec l'Allemagne

Washington et le pacte tripartite / le mirage de la paix en Chine / 11 novembre : des fils se nouent

Chapitre 6, Quand Roosevelt penche vers l'Atlantique

le prêt-bail / Churchill-Roosevelt : les véritables débuts d'une entente / spéculations allemandes / Matsuoka à Berlin / l'étape moscovite / Matsuoka et l'Amérique

Chapitre 7, L'invasion de l'URSS et ses contrecoups

nouveaux dilemmes à Tokyo / antinazisme et anticommunisme / la réaction du Japon / témérité aux Philippines / vers la rencontre de l'Atlantique

Chapitre 8, La conférence de l'Atlantique et la chute de Konoye

pas encore alliés et déjà rivaux / fixer des limites au Japon / de Konoye en Tojo

Chapitre 9, Le modus vivendi ou la paix presque sauvée

l'opportune retraite du général Dill / le "modus vivendi" : volte-face à Washington / Explosion téléphonique / Le message de Yamamoto / un inédit révélateur

Chapitre 10, Pearl Harbor

Les War warnings du 27 novembre / Jeu de cache cache diplomatique / Roosevelt a-t-il ou non promis ? / la clé est-elle à Vichy ? / dernier message à l'empereur / Cependant, à Tokyo... / l'exécution

Chapitre 11, La manoeuvre des Etats-Unis

les points communs des versions rivales / la curieuse historiographie du 26 novembre / durcir le ton, et après ? / et si l'alerte avait été donnée ? / calme militaire et fébrilité diplomatique / l'espoir que Tokyo recule / un rapport de Halifax / les messages "Vent" / la disparition des porte-avions / mais enfin, que savait-on ? / les dessous du message à l'empereur

Chapitre 12 , Les attentes du Japon

décision à Tokyo ? / que cherche au juste le Japon ? / les ambiguïtés de Yamamoto / la mission de la force d'attaque / la "question Nagumo" / gros mensonge nippon à Berlin / les derniers jours

Chapitre 13, veillée d'armes à Washington

perspicaces et passifs / ce qui est clair et ce qui ne l'est pas / Circonscrire la zone de flou / Pearl Harbor, et après ? / les leçons d'un défaut d'alerte / petite force réelle contre grande force potentielle / l'alerte était adéquate...le 27 novembre / Justice pour Kimmel et Short ?

## A.4 Conclusion

Loin d'être une réussite de Roosevelt, l'attaque de Pearl Harbor est un raté de sa politique.

Les théories de la "conspiration" manquent de la rigueur la plus élémentaire. Elles amalgament des faits de natures et de dates diverses. Sans souci de la chronologie, elles mélangent le texte du 27 novembre qui exprime le souhait que les Japonais tirent les premiers, et l'attitude des dirigeants américains au soir du 6 décembre, peu pressés d'avertir leurs armées alors que le président vient de comprendre que la guerre est là. Les deux situations sont pourtant bien différentes.

Le 27, on est au début du processus de rupture et les Américains redoutent que le Japon, qui avait primitivement fixé au 25 la date-limite des négociations puis l'avait reculée au 29, ne réagisse violemment à la note abrupte qu'ils lui ont assénée le 26. De cette situation limpide, on passe en dix jours à la confusion la plus complète. En faisant attendre sa réponse, le Japon use les nerfs des dirigeants civils et militaires, dans les pays qui peuvent s'attendre à une attaque, et crée dans l'esprit de Roosevelt de nouveaux espoirs de compromis, à un moment où la puissance hitlérienne atteint son zénith, n'ayant pas encore reculé devant Moscou et venant d'obtenir, à l'autre bout de l'échiquier, un succès retentissant avec la mise à la retraite du général Weygand.

C'est pour sauvegarder les chances d'une paix au moins provisoire dans le Pacifique que le président se garde de tout geste belliqueux, dans une situation que le branle-bas des troupes japonaises fait apparaître plus dangereuse que celle du 27 novembre, même si, très vraisemblablement, personne à Washington ne voit venir le coup contre Pearl Harbor. L'improbabilité, et de l'audace japonaise, et de la progression incognito d'une pareille escadre pendant plus d'une semaine, reste à ce jour la seule explication plausible d'une surprise aussi complète, sur laquelle les Japonais eux-mêmes ne comptaient pas. Mais la passivité des Américains n'est guère moindre dans des

secteurs qu'ils savaient menacés.

C'est que Roosevelt spécule, plus que jamais, sur une victoire à Tokyo des éléments pacifistes. Il n'est pas pressé d'avertir ses bases car il est en correspondance, par diverses voies, avec l'empereur, et pour lui ceci exclut presque cela. D'où son emportement durable, et certainement sincère, contre la trahison de l'adversaire. Il est persuadé qu'il a été joué par une partie, au moins, des Japonais qui comme lui se démenaient au dernier moment pour obtenir un accord.

Ce calculateur, qui écrivait peu et se confiait moins encore, a emporté avec lui le secret de ses ultimes délibérations, mais on a toutes raisons de penser qu'il a adopté une attitude passive pour aider les pacifistes nippons. Son pays apparaissait à la fois épris de paix, peu armé, peu entraîné et soucieux de tourner ses forces contre Hitler, bref absolument pas prêt, dans le Pacifique, à une riposte. Mais de toutes ces faiblesses il se faisait une arme dissuasive, espérant faire mesurer aux Japonais à quel point une attaque de leur part, surtout par surprise, aurait un rendement négatif : ils avaient d'un côté l'espoir de détruire des équipements, pour la plupart, anciens, de l'autre la certitude de s'attirer les foudres de la première nation industrielle du monde, au moment précis où elle mettait en route une immense production d'armes, tout entière destinée à faire plier l'Allemagne.

Le Japon est, effectivement, bien hésitant. Ce qu'il faut à présent contester, c'est la théorie de la conspiration japonaise, qui n'a pas trouvé, elle, de Prange ou de Wohlstetter en travers de sa route. L'attaque de Pearl Harbor est conçue, imposée et menée par un adversaire de toute guerre contre les Etats-Unis, l'amiral Yamamoto. Ce n'est pas un pacifiste inconditionnel mais un chef clairvoyant, qui mesure l'impossibilité de vaincre l'Amérique et pense que son pays a des cartes beaucoup plus sûres à jouer. Son attaque est donc le résultat, non de son agressivité, mais de ses rapports avec les militaires bellicistes. Obligé de proposer quelque chose, il lance le défi le plus fou, espérant jusqu'au bout que le projet se brisera sur l'un des obstacles qui hérissent sa route. On ne peut donc parler d'une trahison des Japonais, en général. Ils sont entraînés par leurs luttes internes. Les éléments les plus agressifs sont précisément ceux qui préféreraient des attaques parfaitement prévisibles, au voisinage de la Chine, plutôt qu'un coup d'éclat contre la grande puissance d'outre-Pacifique. Les Américains, qui connaissent à peu près bien les rapports de forces à Tokyo, n'ont aucune raison de supposer que ce sont leurs amis qui leur préparent la plus amère des potions, et leur manque de vigilance à Pearl Harbor, alors qu'ils sont si attentifs dans la zone de l'isthme de Kra, s'explique avant tout par là.

En définitive, le responsable est bien Hitler... mais non pas en vertu d'une autre théorie conspiratrice, qui verrait partout la main de Berlin. Roosevelt,

angoissé et révolté par la progression nazie en URSS, a fait au deuxième semestre de 1941 des pas de géant vers la guerre, lui qui en faisait auparavant de si mesurés. Son principal engagement est dans l'Atlantique, et il laisse dans le Pacifique des forces bien inférieures à celles de l'adversaire éventuel. Le Japon est tenté d'en profiter pour régler enfin l'"incident chinois", en coupant toutes les voies de ravitaillement de Tchongking. Les Etats-Unis ne peuvent ni se désintéresser de l'affaire, ni y investir de gros moyens, d'où ce processus mêlant les négociations, les sanctions économiques et les cliquetis d'armes - processus dangereux qui conduit finalement à une explosion.

Le résultat n'est pas mauvais pour les Etats-Unis, si on regarde au-delà des premières pertes. Il a été obtenu par des moyens en partie inavoués - et, sur le moment, inavouables, par un jeu subtil auquel les membres sourcilleux du Congrès n'auraient pas souscrit sans des palabres qui auraient fait évaporer toute subtilité. En raison d'une particularité de la démocratie américaine, qui ne prévoit aucune possibilité de reporter les élections, même en temps de guerre, des enquêtes ont eu lieu très précocement, à un moment où on ne pouvait tout dire. Puis la mort subite de Roosevelt a fait disparaître le témoin principal et la seule personne qui, en assumant ses responsabilités et en expliquant sa conduite, aurait pu permettre qu'on fît toute la lumière. Le faire après son décès aurait relevé de l'ingratitude envers un mort, aurait fait passer le parti démocrate pour un ramassis d'opportunistes reniant leur sauveur, et aurait troublé la conscience nationale en jetant le doute sur la limpidité de l'entrée en guerre.

D'où la cristallisation du débat en deux écoles sectaires, chacune tirant parti des zones de flou du dossier - l'une pour privilégier une des rares responsabilités claires et distinctes, celle de Kimmel et de Short négligeant leurs défenses antiaériennes, l'autre pour prêter à Roosevelt et à Marshall un plan diabolique. Dans les deux cas aux dépens du Japon, dont tous présentaient l'agressivité comme une donnée constitutive. Il est temps de dépasser ces querelles enracinées dans la politique partisane, et d'écrire l'histoire en tenant compte de toutes les données : il y avait au Japon et dans le Pacifique, en novembre 1941, un entrelacement de forces dont l'attaque de Pearl Harbor n'était qu'un des résultats possibles.

La présente étude ne se veut pas, contrairement à beaucoup de ses devancières, un "jugement final", puisqu'au contraire elle avoue se heurter à de "nouveaux mystères". Ils portent sur les attentes exactes de Roosevelt, sur son probable dissentiment avec Marshall dans la nuit du 6 au 7, sur ses tractations de dernière minute avec les pacifistes japonais : la négociation initiée par le pasteur Jones est assez bien connue dans son versant américain, mais on ne sait rien de son traitement par les dirigeants de Tokyo. Il serait également intéressant de savoir pourquoi le message de Roosevelt à Hiro-hito,

qui devait passer par-dessus la tête de Tojo, est finalement porté par lui, avec une lenteur protocolaire qui l'empêche d'avoir le moindre effet sur le cours des choses aux îles Hawaii.

Certes, le surgissement de nouvelles archives sur les renseignements obtenus par l'Angleterre ou les Etats-Unis à propos des mouvements de la flotte japonaise ne saurait laisser l'historien indifférent - mais là n'est sans doute pas le plus intéressant qu'on puisse attendre, dans l'avenir, d'une plus grande transparence des gouvernements et des conservateurs. Car il paraît acquis que les militaires des deux camps ont fait consciencieusement leur travail de camouflage de leurs propres mouvements et d'espionnage de ceux de l'adversaire : il y a eu dans ce domaine des erreurs, mais aucune espèce de trahison. Sur le plan diplomatique en revanche, on a tout lieu de soupçonner un véritable jeu à trois, entre le gouvernement américain et les deux tendances japonaises. Jusqu'à quel point celles-ci se sont-elles séparées ? Jusqu'à quel point les Américains l'ont-ils cru ? La question du *modus vivendi*, en particulier, n'a sans doute pas fini de rebondir. Il est tout de même stupéfiant que cette recherche d'un accord provisoire soit initiée simultanément, au début de novembre, dans les deux pays, que des textes similaires ou proches soient élaborés jusqu'à la veille de l'attaque et qu'aucune mise en commun n'ait jamais eu lieu, à notre connaissance, sinon le 3 décembre par l'intermédiaire du pasteur Jones. Les pages caviardées du journal de l'ambassadeur Grew devraient contenir une bonne partie des chaînons qui, de toute évidence, sont actuellement manquants.

La "leçon de Pearl Harbor" a longtemps été tirée de manière étroite. On s'est demandé comment perfectionner les systèmes d'alarme et la coopération entre le renseignement et l'action - d'où, en particulier, la naissance de la CIA. On a projeté le cas du Japon sur celui de l'URSS, puis sur telle zone agitée du Tiers-monde, en se demandant comment réagir à temps si un adversaire foncièrement hostile, mais craignant la puissance américaine, jouait sa chance dans une attaque brusquée.

A présent, il est temps de se rendre compte que le problème est plus complexe, et plus intéressant. Loin de se réduire à la surveillance d'un agresseur potentiel, il consiste à maîtriser une équation aux inconnues nombreuses. Beaucoup de pays sont concernés, en dehors de l'agresseur et de la victime. La situation historique la plus ressemblante appartient en fait au passé : c'est le déclenchement de la première guerre mondiale, en juillet-août 1914. Cinq grandes puissances ont beaucoup joué à se menacer, puis au dernier moment leurs dirigeants politiques prennent peur, voudraient tout arrêter et se précipitent sur les freins, mais ils ne répondent plus, les forces armées ayant pris la parole et n'entendant pas y renoncer de sitôt. La différence est qu'en 1941 une guerre mondiale dure déjà depuis deux ans : les 90% d'habitants de la

planète, pour reprendre le chiffre de Roosevelt, qui n'y avaient aucun intérêt sont à présent bien forcés de s'en mêler, ou du moins une majorité d'entre eux, pour remettre en question le triomphe nazi.

L'apaisement dans le Pacifique avantagerait toutes les grandes puissances présentes dans cet océan. C'est le dernier succès de Hitler d'avoir, principalement au moyen du pacte tripartite, semé là-bas une zizanie que l'enchaînement des menaces, des sanctions et des préparatifs n'a pas permis, en définitive, de surmonter. Mais les paroles et les actes de Roosevelt, dissuadant le Japon d'épouser la cause nazie et d'attaquer l'URSS, aboutissent à ce qu'il lance une attaque-surprise, non concertée avec Hitler, alors que les négociations américano-nippones ne sont pas encore rompues. Or, à cette époque, la trahison est une spécialité allemande : la propagande américaine peut facilement attribuer l'attentat à l'influence de Hitler, et souder ainsi le pays contre l'ensemble des forces de l'Axe. Le dictateur allemand, en essayant d'utiliser le Japon pour fixer dans le Pacifique les forces américaines, a finalement attiré contre lui-même une foudre vengeresse.

**le 17 octobre 2004**

La mise en ligne du texte intégral aura probablement lieu fin 2005.



# Bibliography for the translated version

- [1] M. Canaby, “Le caoutchouc de cueillette à madagascar.” *Journal d’agriculture traditionnelle et de botanique appliquée*, vol. 12, no. 132, pp. 609–621, 1932.



This is the inside of the back.

