

Willful Disobedience

Social War By Other Means

2001

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I believe it was Clausewitz who said that war was simply politics carried out by other means. I think that the reverse is a truer expression of social reality. Politics is simply the social war carried out using less bloody means. If we consider that it is always the ruling class and its lackeys who call for social peace, demanding that the exploited and excluded refrain from violence in dealing with their social condition, it becomes obvious that social peace is simply part of the strategy of the social war. For this reason, the peace movement must be rejected as a way of dealing with the current American call for war.

Examining real relationships of power

The peace movement is based on an ideology of nonviolence, a pacifist moral stance that ignores the reality of social relationships. Rather than examining real relationships of power, of domination and exploitation, it simply demands that the state continue to carry out its functions, but without violence, without bloodshed. But what are those functions? Are they not the maintenance of order, the protection of property, the enforcement (selective, of course) of the rule of law? And such activity could only be necessary if there are those who find that this social order does not meet their needs, does not offer them the lives they desire, puts them in the position of having to choose between resigned acceptance of often unbearable conditions or defiance of the rules and a constant battle of wits or arms against the dominant world. But these excluded ones did not begin this social war.

Behind the ballot there is always the bullet

The ruling class has always used violence or the threat of violence to lay claim to all of our lives. If the democratic regimes have managed to create a more sophisticated method of participatory domination, this does not change the fact that behind the ballot there is always the bullet to guarantee the maintenance of social peace, which is thus clearly the public face of the social war that keeps most of us passively in our places even claiming to be content with this obedience that is freedom. So whether the state goes about its activities peacefully or through blatant violence, it is still carrying out the policy of the social war that keeps us in our place.

pacifist protests become a farce

In this light, the pacifist protests become a farce. The demand that the American state and the states of the rest of the world carry on their current 'war against terrorism' peacefully assumes that the state should indeed exist, and thus that the violence implicit in the present social order should continue — the violence that kills millions daily whether from starvation like in Northern Africa and numerous other places, from poisoning by pollution and processed foods, accidents on the job, new, increasingly virulent diseases, the spiritual desolation of the culture of the market or the bullets of the state's uniformed guard dogs. The current 'war against terrorism' is nothing other than the continuation of the daily policy of low level terror used by the state to guarantee we stay in line. It matters little whether the state uses bloody or bloodless means. The result is the same: our lives are not our own and we die, sooner or later, without ever having really fully lived.

pacifism ultimately serves the state's ends

Opposition to the current war can only make sense as opposition to the entire social order from which it has arisen. Such opposition cannot spring from a movement dedicated to nonviolence. Pacifism ultimately serves the state's ends by making us blind to the nature of the state. Against the violence of terrorism, the violence of war, the violence of the state, it is necessary to embrace revolutionary violence — the complete upheaval of all social relationships that maintains the institutional violence of those who rule us. We want neither their war, nor their peace, but their destruction.

AGAINST PACIFISM
AGAINST MILITARISM
AGAINST TERRORISM
AGAINST THE STATE

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