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## **Communalism and Minority within the European framework**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article analyses the process of European integration and focuses on the principle of supplementarity. The old issue of social solidarity and collectivity, which has again come to the fore by the Maastricht Treaty in the form of a policy of decentralisation and redistribution of the Union's policy-making purviews in favour of the lower echelons, is analysed focusing on the vital question: Is the principle of supplementarity within the EU framework the communalism of our era or the alibi of centralism and bureaucracy? Within this framework a significant role is assigned to national minorities with regard to the course of integration of the nation states, and in this sense the national minorities of Europe are presented, analyzing their own particular forms of community organization, which may either lead to their integration within the main national corpus or to their marginalization

**Keywords:** European integration, European Union, communalism, minorities

**JEL Classification:** P1, P2, P5

### **Introduction**

In our introduction we will generally refer to the sociological phenomenon of communalism, which has been characteristic of the greater part of human history and whose main defining features include the collectivity of production and the absence of private property and exploitation of man by man. An objective and

scientific analysis of the social phenomenon of communalism presupposes a study of society itself. This will assist us in examining communalism in its historicity and thereby in avoiding a mechanistic transmission into contemporary society of a body of institutions and polities that were developed in entirely different historical frameworks. A classic example of such a mechanistic interpretation is the case of Ancient Greek democracy. Many invoke it, yet at the same time fail to place it within its specific societal structure. They thus reveal, unwillingly to be sure, both its limitations and the unattainability of its functioning under a capitalist regime. Thus contemporary communalism will be examined within the framework of the process of European unification and more specifically within the structure of contemporary capitalist society, instead of looking for it, in typical anachronistic fashion, in the lost paradises of humanity's remote past. We shall also try to study the necessary mediations between Community and Civil Society within the EU sphere. The question will be posed: Do international integrations of the EU type evolve according to a centralised mode of decision making or according to decentralised processes? Analysing the process of European integration we will focus on the principle of supplementarity. The old issue of social solidarity and collectivity, which has again come to the fore by the Maastricht Treaty in the form of a policy of decentralisation and redistribution of the Union's policy-making purviews in favour of the lower echelons, will be analysed with a focus on the vital question: Is the principle of supplementarity within the EU framework the communalism of our era or the alibi of centralism and bureaucracy?

Within this framework a significant role is assigned to national minorities with regard to the course of integration of the nation states, and in this sense we will try to present the national minorities of Europe, analyzing their own particular forms of community organization, which may either lead to their integration within the main national corpus or to their marginalization.

#### **From communalism to capitalism**

There is a huge theoretical and practical interest in the analysis of primitive communities in the societies before capitalism. How has the class society resulted from the primitive communist community? How has humanity fallen from the primitive "kingdom" of freedom, which covers the largest period of humanity's historic existence, to capitalist barbarity? A barbarity which the supporters of the end- of-mankind-history theory project to eternity? Is it feasible for humanity to return where it had begun and to be free again in a society where there is no exploitation among human beings?

These are basic questions which should be answered if anybody wants to comprehend not only the contemporary political economy but also the history of communalism without of course chasing lost paradises in the distant past but considering the modern communalism in its historicity.

Rosa Luxemburg, examining communalism, indicates:

“In the very remote past of humanity, there had to be large periods of time during which there was no class struggle because society was not divided into classes. There were neither rich and poor nor personal property.

[...] this was a community which was organized in a communistic way and within the bounds of which there were no rich and poor, lords and servants, lazy and hard-working and the common issues were settled with the free assembly and the unconstrained decisions of its members.

[...] personal property, exploitation among human beings and a public compulsory mechanism, the state, were born on the ruins of primitive communism and ancient democracy.

[...] primitive communistic society declined – because in the final analysis it was overcome by economic progress – and gave its place to new prospects of social evolution. This evolution will be represented for a long time by the cruel methods of class society until it, in its turn, is superseded and nullified by social progress.”<sup>1</sup>

In primitive “rural communism”, everything used to belong to the community. The existence of personal property was absent and every issue was settled by the decisions of the free assembly of all community members. The economic progress overcame the primitive community and on its ashes personal property and exploitation among human beings made its appearance while the state emerged as a public compulsive mechanism.

The difference between community and society is the fine distinction which separates the exploitative societies from communistic communities. In this sense, “contrary to the *Gemeinschaft* (community), the *Gesellschaft* (society) is fleeting and superficial. Consequently, the *Gemeinschaft* should be considered as an alive “organism”, while the *Gesellschaft* should be considered a mechanic whole or artefact”<sup>2</sup>. In other words, Tönnis “considers the community as an alive

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<sup>1</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, *Primitive Communistic Society*, Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, pp. 11,36,37,190.

<sup>2</sup>F. Tainis, *Community and Society*, Anagnostidis publications, Athens, page 22.

organism and society as a mechanic creation”<sup>3</sup>. Class society has ruined the warmth of human relations.

According to Marx “primitive communism”, which disintegrated only after the appearance of civilization, giving its place to personal property, was the cradle of a humanity which evolves towards civilization and the form of economic relations which accompanied this evolution through innumerable years, and did not decay but until the arrival of civilization, giving its place to personal property. But even civilization itself, through a quick decaying procedure, will return to communism under the superior form of socialist society.”<sup>4</sup>

Rosa Luxemburg analyzing the primitive community from a Marxian angle adds: “some decades ago strange remnants of villages and houses were discovered in some regions in Germany, in Iceland and in the Scandinavian countries. These discoveries were leading to the thought that in these territories there had to be at some time a common land property, a rural communism. [...] The form of the common property of land did not appear for the first time at the end of the middle ages, but it was the primary, typical and general form of property of the Germans when they settled in Europe, and is as old as the existence of the German tribes themselves [...] So, two thousands years ago and even more, in the depths of the German tribes history, when there was still no written history, a completely different state of things from the contemporary one was reigning in the German tribes. There was neither a state with written and compulsory laws nor a division of people into rich and poor, into lords and servants”<sup>5</sup>.

Rosa Luxemburg’s research led her to the conclusion that the existence of common ownership and the absence of private property in ancient German society was a rule. In corroboration of her conclusions she adds: “ancient Germans had no idea of what personal property meant. For a small period of time and within the bounds of strict equality, a piece of land after a draw was allocated to each and every member of the tribe. All economic, legal and more general issues of this community, which often consisted of no more than a hundred people who were ready for war at any time, were settled during the assembly of its members, in which they elected a headman and other organs of the community.” [...] Germans were living in scattered farms nevertheless forming communities between them, where at least fields, meadows, forests and

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<sup>3</sup>Spiros Koutroulis, *Nationalism and Communalism*, Alternative Publications, Athens, 2004, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Luxemburg Rosa, op.cit., p.48.

<sup>5</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, op.cit. Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, pages 11-13.

grazing lands were common property of the village, and all common matters were dealt with within the framework of these communities.”<sup>6</sup>.

As it was mentioned above, communalism is the rule for all primitive communities. The “civilized” Europeans destroyed the American Indians’ communities to their foundations. Besides, “according attestations by the Spaniards themselves, the number of Indians who were exterminated by them within a few years after America was discovered, comes to about 12 to 15 millions.”<sup>7</sup> The Spaniards with their beastly and inhuman conduct were murdering Indians indiscriminately including women and children.

Making due allowances, something similar happened as well in the communities of Tsarist Russia where “the Russian peasant’s flogging from the members of his own community, which were entering thus into the service of Tsarist Absolutism, is a cruel conviction of history within the narrow bounds of primitive communism and is the most striking proof that this social form has followed the law of dialectic too: What used to be reasonable becomes unreasonable and what used to be beneficial becomes catastrophic.”<sup>8</sup> Yet the catalyst for the disintegration of the primitive community was the development of capitalism, “the primitive community’s contact with European culture resulted in the death of the ancient society. In this way, capitalism succeeded in doing what the wild conquerors from the East were trying to do for millenniums: it managed to make this social form disintegrate by itself, to break the traditional bonds of its members and to transform this society to a heap of amorphous ruins.”<sup>9</sup>.

So inevitably, the slow but steady increase of labour productivity was in collision with the communistic social organization. “The passage from common land property to personal property is connected with the intensification of labour. We see everywhere that forests and meadows remain a community property for a much larger period of time than fields which are cultivated more intensively and open the road to the partition of land and to inheritable property.”<sup>10</sup>

General conclusion: “Whatever angle one picks to examine the issue, what played the fatal role in the destruction of primitive social relations is the

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<sup>6</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, op.cit. Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, pages 14-15.

<sup>7</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, op.cit. Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, page 134

<sup>8</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, op.cit. Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, page 174.

<sup>9</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, op.cit. Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, pages 175-176.

<sup>10</sup>Rosa Luxemburg ,op.cit,Korontzis publications, Athens, 1976, page 177.

penetration of European civilisation. The European conquerors were the first to aim not only at the economic oppression and exploitation of the natives but also at the grabbing of the means of production and land. By doing this, European Capitalism destroys the primitive social system from its foundations. Worse than any oppression and exploitation is complete anarchy, as well as a purely European phenomenon: the insecurity of society's existence. The subjugated population destitute of its means of production, is considered before the eyes of European capitalism as nothing more than labour power, otherwise it is exterminated. We have seen to what great degree this method was implemented in the Spanish, French and English colonies. Before the inroads of capitalism, the primitive society, which survived during the previous phases of historical development, retreats. Its last traces are brushed away from the face of the earth and its constituting elements- working class and means of production- are absorbed by capitalism"<sup>11</sup>

It is impossible not to cite Morgan whenever we refer to the primitive community<sup>12</sup>. This great American scientist spent quite a big part of his life living among primitive Indians. He studied meticulously their life and he came to exactly the same conclusions with those of Marx and Engels, although he set off his survey from a different starting point. The following is the main idea that arose from Morgan's research: "The time that has passed since the appearance of civilization is just a small piece of the past life of humanity. Society's disintegration is rising determinately before us like the end of a historic evolution whose only final goal is wealth. Because such a denouement of society contains inside it the elements of its own destruction. Democracy in administration, fraternity in society, equality in rights and general education will inaugurate the next superior stage of society, toward which experience, logic and science constantly tend. *This stage will be a resuscitation- but in a superior form- of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the old clans.*" (Morgan: The primitive society).

### **Communalism and Supplementarity in the European Union**

Communalism's humanistic values could find a privileged application ground in the principle of supplementarity, which has been legislated with the European Union Treaty (Maastricht). Certainly, the principle of supplementarity is temporally located in classical Greece and more specifically in Aristotle's

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<sup>11</sup>Rosa Luxemburg, op.cit., Korontzis publication, Athens, 1976, page 190.

<sup>12</sup> Morgan, Louis Henry, (1818-1881). American ethnologist, one of the exponents of the evolution theory in social anthropology.

thought and philosophy. We must then add here this historic “detail”, namely that this idea dates back to Aristotle and to Thomas Aquinas. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this term was introduced by Pope Pius the IX with a Circular in 1931, which concerned the relations between the State and the social groups, and it is to be found in Enzyklika «Quadragesimo Anno». According to it “justice is violated, when a wider and superior organization undertakes what can be successfully accomplished by smaller and lower social groups”<sup>13</sup>.

The principle of subsidiarity is gaining more and more political and scientific interest after the Maastricht Treaty. It is often mentioned as a privileged field of expression and of highlighting a series of problems based on the European Union’s integration course or as a field of social conflict for the defending of the interests of these countries and social groups whose social and national interests are directly offended. Article 3B of the European Union Treaty (Maastricht) provides for the institutional content of the principle of subsidiarity where it stipulates: “The community acts within the confines of the purviews which are allocated to it, and within the targets that are stipulated, by the present treaty. To the fields which are not assigned to its exclusive purview, the community acts according to the principle of subsidiarity, only if and to the degree that, the aims of the prescribed action are impossible to be achieved by the member states and are thus possible, because of the dimensions or of the results of the prescribed action, to be achieved better at a community level. The community’s action never exceeds the necessary limits for the accomplishment of the aims of the present treaty”<sup>14</sup>.

The EU interprets the principle of subsidiarity according to its hard core interests. On the one hand, the principle is regarded as an allocation of duties only between the following two levels: the European Union’s organs and the member states. On the other side, it applies it according to the principle of effectiveness and not according to the principle of need. Namely, it refers to the principle of subsidiarity in order to find a formula which will assign to it more purviews and tasks, using the argument that its organs have better means to cope effectively with problems than the member states themselves<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>see E.Schmidt - Jortzig/A. Schink, *Subsidiaritätsprinzip und Kommunalordnung*, republished, 1982 page 5.

<sup>14</sup> Article 3B, European Union Treaty, *Rizospastis, special edition*, 28.6. 1992, page 36

<sup>15</sup>see Waldemar Hummer -Sebastian Bohr, "Die Rolle der Regionen im Europa der Zukunft: Subsidiarität, Föderalismus, Regionalismus in vergleichender Betrachtung" in: Fischer, Frey, Paziorek (Hrsg.) *Vom Lokalen zum Globalen. Die*

The principle of supplementarity, as it was previously mentioned, originated from the Catholic Church and is considered to be the most interesting effort of resistance against centralization. Therefore “it is not mere luck that the government of Catalonia demands insistently constitutional commitments for the implementation of the principle of supplementarity (a request on which the Bavarian government is pretty insistent too), the self-administration of the peripheral regions and their participation in the configuration of national policy in matters which concern the peripheral regions (something which was imposed by the German statelets through the amendment of article 23 of the German constitution). Adjustments in Belgium present a greater interest. The administrative regions of this country co-stipulate the synthesis of their national-state delegations in the interstate organs of the EU.”<sup>16</sup> The principle of supplementarity means that at all levels of the state’s and society’s function a lower functional level must - in relations to the very next higher level- have the right to deal autonomously with the cases it can judge and review because of its closer encounter with the relevant issues. The higher level has the right to intervene only if the lower level does not possess the necessary qualifications for the confronting of problems.<sup>17</sup>

### **Communities and Minorities in the European Union**

In what follows we will examine the minority mosaic within Europe. Kosovo's recent independence and secession from Serbia may serve the interests of the US foreign policy and of some of its allies, yet it induces at the same time great concerns regarding peace in Europe and in other regions of the globe. If there is a prevailing of the general principle that every ethnic minority, which considers itself to be oppressed, can proclaim the particular region where it constitutes the majority of the population an independent state, utilizing at the process some sort of foreign military aid, then Europe and the world will become an inferno of sanguinary conflicts and of state disintegrations with a permanent redrawing of frontiers.

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*Kommunen und ihre Außenbeziehungen innerhalb der EG.* Beiträge aus Politik und Wissenschaft Landeszentrale für politische Bildung NRW, Beckumer Hochschultage 1989 p.75

<sup>16</sup>Kotzias Nikos, *European Union, system in the becoming*, Delfini publications, Athens, 1995, p.102.

<sup>17</sup>Rudolf Hilf, *Regionalismus als Gegengift Nationalitätenkonflikte und Staatenzerfall*, 1993, p. 894.



Since then the Kossovar-Albanians have proclaimed their independence, it follows naturally that the FYROM-Albanians possess the same “right” as well-all the more so since in 2001 they engaged in armed conflict with their Slav compatriots.

According to this logic an even greater right to secession should be granted to the Bosnian Serbs. The Croats of Bosnia-Herzegovina have also the same right as they prefer to form their own statelet or to be annexed to Croatia itself rather than have any dealings with the Bosnian Muslims and the Serbs. What about then the Albanians of the Presevo region, in Southern Serbia, who call their land “Eastern Kosovo”? Don't they have the same right with the Kossovar-Albanians? Isn't it also the same case with the Hungarian minority of some regions of the Serbian province of Voivodina?

Unfortunately, matters are far worse since the ethnic, minority and secession problems and movements are anything but limited to the Balkans or the ex-Yugoslavia. Since the Kosovo Albanians have proclaimed their independence on the criterion that they are the majority in the region they inhabit, why not the great compact Hungarian minorities inhabiting Romania and Slovakia not do the same? Doesn't the same right to independence apply to the Russians who inhabit Transdnesteria and would like to “disjoin” it from Moldavia or to the Russian and pro-Russian populations of Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia, who have de facto seceded from Georgia? And if this line of thinking concerning the regulation of minority issues prevails why should not Moscow reexamine, on this basis, the issue of the large Russian minorities in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania which today are NATO and EU member states, bringing also to the “help” of these minorities the Russian army, as NATO did in Kosovo where it still retains 16000 troops, with dramatic consequences for the world peace?

Let no one think that these problems concern solely the “backward” countries of the ex-existing socialism. Kosovo independence is bound to affect the solution course of similar problems in Scotland, in the Basque Country, in Catalonia, in Galicia, in Corsica, in Bolchano (according to the Italians)/Southern Tirol (according to the Austrians) and in numerous other cases.<sup>18</sup>

Minorities, as a rule, bring out in support of their claims their cultural characteristics and above all their language. Besides, one of the basic features that define a nation is a common language. Yet at the same time the establishment of a common language for all in the era of globalisation is a

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<sup>18</sup>Giorgos Delastik, *The End of Balkans*, Livanis publications, Athens, 2008.

possible contingency. Naturally this prospect is at complete odds with the notion of nation-states. But planetary powers try to enforce their own language and their own culture on a global scale.

In the EU of the 27 member states 22 languages are officially spoken. English, while being spoken only in Britain and Ireland, is taught in all educational grades while parents, without being enforced to do so, try to ensure that their children are taught the English language. It is commonly acknowledged that the English language tends to become the universal language “and this is correct because the needs of economic circulation will always force the ethnicities which live in the same state (as long as they want to live together) to learn the language of the majority. The more democratic the Russian regime, the more possible, quicker, and wider will the development of capitalism be and the more insistently will the needs of economic circulation push the various ethnicities towards learning the most suitable language for the common affairs.<sup>19</sup> Capitalism's course eloquently indicates that through the concentration and centralisation of capital everything small turns into something big. Big corporations, big fatherlands, hegemonic languages. The law of accumulation and the profit chase transforms small thing into big ones.

The imperialist states, in order to accommodate for the needs of economic circulation, always force the ethnicities which live in the same state to learn the language of the majority. In the USA all ethnicities speak English and get unified under the powerful auspices of the dollar. The same happens in the UK, Germany, France etc. Consequently powerful nation-states try to become planetary powers by enforcing their own language and their own culture. For example, the American way of life in our age strives to become universal and this is only driven by the needs of production which gets increasingly socialised and at the same time universalised.

Within this context, the “scientific” supporters of capitalism, such as the wise bourgeois professor of Heildelberg, Max Weber,<sup>20</sup> who rejected the socialist alternative<sup>21</sup>, state it openly: “the continuing peace and war struggle for power

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<sup>19</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Critical Notes on the National Question. For the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Sigxroni Epoxi publications, Athens, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *op.cit.*, p.127.

<sup>21</sup> Mihalis Kipraios, *Introduction to : Max Weber, Sociology of the State. Sociology of the rational organisation of the state and of contemporary political parties and parliaments. Communities*, Kentavros publications, Athens, 1996, p.22.

between the competing national states created the grandest possibilities for the western capitalism of recent years. Each state had to compete to secure the munificence of capital, which designated its terms to the state, if it [the state] wanted it to help it acquire power. From the mandatory coalition between the national state and capital, the national stratum of the bourgeoisie was formed, that is the bourgeoisie, in the contemporary meaning of the term. It was then the integrated national state which guaranteed to capitalism the potential of continuity. As long as the nation state is not superseded by a global empire, capitalism will last.”<sup>22</sup> Weber's great haste to defend a moribund capitalism leads him to defend with great force this “sheepfold” of the bourgeoisie, i.e. the nation-state, which rimes the proletariat and milks it of its surplus value. There is nothing left to us than to “agree” with Weber and disagree with the enthusiastic supporters of the EU, who in their effort to justify capitalism, appear to exterminate the nation-state. Weber's “Grande Nation”, the liberator of mankind from feudal servitude,<sup>23</sup> has lead us into capitalist barbarity. The only way out is socialism. Nothing else.

In this context, capitalist development in our days is better accommodated within the EU framework, since “the development of capitalism advances and will advance both within the unified multicoloured state, as well as within the separate national states. In both cases the wage worker will continue to be an object of exploitation, and if the struggle against the bourgeoisie is to succeed then the independence of the proletariat from nationalism is required, the complete neutrality, sort to say, of the proletariat with regard to the bourgeoisie's struggle for precedence. The slightest support by the proletariat of any nation for the privileges of its “own” national bourgeoisie will inevitably produce disbelief to the proletariat of another nation, will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers, and will split them to the gladdening of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>24</sup>

The national bourgeoisies of the EU member States are claiming a role of primacy and in this effort of theirs they unfortunately convince their class opponents as well, that is the workers of their countries. Is this not happening in the great motherlands of the EU? German workers for instance with their tortuous conscience, steeped as they are in German nationalism, naively think

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<sup>22</sup>Max Weber, *Sociology of the State. Sociology of the rational organisation of the state and of contemporary political parties and parliaments. Communities*, Kentavros publishers, Athens, 1996, p.25

<sup>23</sup>Max Weber, *Economy and Society. Communities*. Savvalas publications, Athens, 2007, p.92.

<sup>24</sup>V.I. Lenin, op.cit., p.72

that they “pay” the poor and “spoiled” people of Southern Europe while the English collect their returns from their participation in the Community Budget, and British and French workers at the same time fail to recognise the common enemy who is no one else than the multinational corporations. As Lenin comments on Marx, “there is no doubt that in comparison to the “labour question” the national question is of secondary importance. Yet his [Marx’s] theory is as distanced from ignorance of the national movements, as heaven from earth”.<sup>25</sup> This position by Marx is clearer with regard to the Irish Question as it is pointed out by Lenin: “Marx at first thought that Ireland would not be liberated by the national movement of the oppressed nation, but by the labour movement of the oppressor nation. Marx does not make something absolute out of the national movements, because he knows that only the victory of the working class will be able to bring the complete liberation of all nationalities”.<sup>26</sup> Lenin correctly indicates that while Marx does not ignore the national question, at the same time he visualises the solution of the proletarian problem as coming from the labour movement and not from the national movement. It is in this sense that against the international coalition of capitalists the workers advance the watchword stated in the *Manifesto*, “Workers of all lands unite!”

### **Conclusion**

The preceding analysis leads us to the evident conclusion that ancient communalism is neither encountered in our days nor a “resurrection” of it is possible within the historical framework of capitalism. In this sense our inquiry did not seek lost paradises in the remote past of humanity. On the contrary it criticised the mechanistic transmission of communalism to our days by the dominant powers, which after they extract communalism's communist content and thus render it a dead letter, they then use it for social integration. Yet the humanist, moral values of communalism continue to exist, running through all exploitative societies like a red thread and reminding us, like the Furies of the myth, the historical necessity of the abolition of exploitation of man by man. The ideas of communalism, deeply humanist and popular as they are, are used by the EU to the service of its own particular class interests. The EU extricates the deep humanist, classless content of communalism and supplementarity, thus rendering both notions harmless and then using them for the social integration of the masses in the system.

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<sup>25</sup>V.I. Lenin, op. cit., p.86.

<sup>26</sup>V.I. Lenin, op. cit., p. 90.

Finally, communalism and the supplementarity principle are continuously utilised by the dominant political EU powers as well as by other imperialist powers such as the US as a policy for the minorities. Communalism and supplementarity find a fertile ground in national minorities as alternative forms of social organisation, yet not for the solution of economic problems faced by these minorities, but as a means of expounding the variety of minorities, thus turning them against the nation state, but also vice versa. The bourgeoisie in general, by promoting the politics of irritation, turns one nation against the other, thus perpetuating the ancient dogma of all exploitative social systems: Divide and Conquer. (Divide et Impera)

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