

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/Daniel-Bensaïd-and-permanent-revolution-old-and-new-questions>



Marxism

# Daniel Bensaïd and permanent revolution, old and new questions

- Features - Daniel Bensaïd archive -



Publication date: Friday 24 April 2026

---

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

---

**This article, originally presented at a seminar in Amsterdam in January 2012 commemorating the work of Daniel Bensaïd [1],** examines the French Marxist philosopher's contributions to the theory of permanent revolution. Pierre Rousset traces how Bensaïd and his generation reappropriated and reformulated this foundational concept of revolutionary Marxism, moving beyond rigid orthodoxy whilst maintaining its strategic relevance.

Rousset explores several key dimensions: how the theory of permanent revolution served as a crucial point of differentiation for the revolutionary left in the 1960s; how Bensaïd's generation broke with purely sociological interpretations by centring attention on the role of revolutionary parties; how Bensaïd analysed Stalinism as counter-revolution and developed nuanced understandings of transitional societies; and how his later work on “discordance” and “open history” enriched Marxist strategic thinking.

The article addresses pressing contemporary questions: does the emergence of new powers like China invalidate the theory? How should revolutionaries understand the relationship between “objective” and “subjective” conditions in periods of crisis? Rousset argues that whilst the theory requires rethinking in light of changed circumstances, its core insights about the interconnection of democratic and socialist struggles, and the international character of revolution, remain indispensable for today's activists. [5 January 2026, AN]

I should like, without naming her,  
To speak to you of her  
As of a well-beloved,  
Of an unfaithful one,  
A girl very much alive  
Who awakens  
To tomorrows that sing  
Under the sun.

She is the one who is bludgeoned,  
Who is pursued and hunted.  
She is the one who rises up,  
Who suffers and goes on strike.  
She is the one who is imprisoned,  
Who is betrayed and abandoned,  
Who gives us the desire to live,  
Who gives us the desire to follow her  
To the end, to the end.

I should like, without naming her,  
To pay her homage,  
Pretty flower of May  
Or wild fruit,  
A plant well planted  
On her two legs  
And who plots in freedom  
Wherever it pleases her.

She is the one...

I should like, without naming her,  
To speak to you of her.  
Well-beloved or ill-loved,  
She is faithful  
And if you wish  
For me to introduce her,  
She is called  
Permanent Revolution!

She is the one...

“Sans La Nommer” by Georges Moustaki. [2]

Daniel was an original thinker and – equally – one of the emblematic figures of a collective political history. [3] I should like to address from both these angles his contribution to, or his relationship with, the question of permanent revolution. It seems to me, however, that in this domain, Daniel’s conceptions, the “angles of view” from which he treats it, express an experience, priorities and preoccupations, work that was shared. It quite often seems rather futile to seek individual paternity for a “new” idea: it takes shape through successive touches.

This “we” to which Daniel belongs, in interaction with which he thinks, has multiple facets... The founding team of the Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire (JCR) then of the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LC/LCR) in France [4], the new generation of cadres of the sections of the Fourth International [5] (and particularly of its majority current) or that of organisations outside the FI but with which he collaborated. [6] The great historical experiences from which he validates and reformulates the theory of permanent revolution are worldwide (the Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Algerian, Vietnamese revolutions...; the Indonesian counter-revolution of 1965, the Chilean of 1973...; the perpetual Palestinian struggle...). But it is in Latin America that he forged dense militant relationships and followed day by day the fortunes and misfortunes of the struggles of our time. The ordeal and lessons of the present.

Of course, Daniel’s writings are scattered with references to the Chinese revolution, to Vietnam... He knew enough about China and Mao to be able to understand the Maoist side of Alain Badiou [7]. But it seems to me that his tropism was above all European and Latin American, as illustrated by this passage from *Le Pari mélancolique* where he recalls the dice thrown for the struggle:

How many times have the dice been rolled?

In the night of 8-9 Thermidor? On the cobblestones of June 1848? On the last barricades of the rues Haxo or de la Fontaine-au-Roi, in May 1871? On the steps of the Winter Palace in 1917? In 1923, on the rooftops of Hamburg? In May 1937, on the Ramblas of Barcelona? In August 1949 on the slopes of Mount Grammos? In 1957, on the beach of the Granma landing? In some lost corner of Bolivia, on a certain 9 October 1967? Or again, against all probabilities, against all statistical reasons and the resignations of an obscure time, on 1 January 1994 in San Cristóbal de las Casas? [8]

Here we touch on one of the main limitations of the contribution I can offer here. Asia is to me what Latin America was to Daniel. I know only very superficially countries, movements and experiences which played a key role in his political reflection. Moreover, he wrote relatively little on these countries, naturally leaving the pen to Latin American organisations. It would be good for another contribution to address the themes I am dealing with, but seen from Latin America, from Daniel in relation to Latin America.

More generally, this introduction is not the conclusion of a long archival work on Daniel’s writings and speeches. It must be taken for what it is: an initial contribution, “in progress” as they say optimistically (“work in progress”), inviting criticism, but which draws on a shared history beyond varied geopolitical polarities.

If I have chosen to follow a chronological rather than thematic plan of exposition, it is not from biographical concern; it is a political choice. Depending on the moments or periods, the question of permanent revolution appears central in Daniel’s intervention, or quite marginal, even disappearing to a large extent from the screen. It is addressed in its foundations and principles or in the concrete forms in which a historical process is embodied. In doing so, Daniel proves himself indeed a “marker” of this collective history evoked above.

# Revolution in duration and space...

I cannot summarise here the theory of permanent revolution, its ins and outs; I refer on this subject particularly to the contributions of Michael Löwy [\[9\]](#). Leon Trotsky's "Theses" (1929) present a synthesis which has the advantage of brevity, but the disadvantage of being written in the political language and polemics of the time, unfamiliar to today's militants [\[10\]](#). This theory constituted in 1933, Daniel recalls, one of the four main programmatic references of the International Left Opposition – Marxist and anti-bureaucratic [\[11\]](#) – that is to say of the "Trotskyism of origins" which Daniel rightly traces back to the struggle against Stalinism, and not to before 1917. [\[12\]](#)

The theory of permanent revolution links the revolutionary struggle in space and in duration. "The image of revolutions and revolutionaries", notes Daniel, "is associated with a slow locomotive. That of Mao with his long-distance marchers. That of Budyonny and Zapata with their horsemen. That of Che mounted on his mare. In the middle, that of Trotsky and Pancho Villa with their armoured trains." [\[13\]](#). So, in the era of "the technology of speed", "revolution would no longer keep pace"...

End of revolutions then? Or change in their tempo, stretching out in duration, new conjugation of eventful suddenness and processual duration? For Trotsky, October was conceivable only as 'the first stage of the world revolution which unavoidably extends over decades'. According to Lenin, political revolutions should not be understood 'as a single act', but as 'a period of [...] revolutions and counter-revolutions'." [\[14\]](#)

"Permanent revolution" brings together in a single algebraic formula three temporal registers: that of the sudden passage from democratic revolution to social revolution; that of the prolonged passage from political revolution (change of power) to cultural revolution (change of mores); that of the passage from national revolution to world revolution. These passages and transitions are thought under the dialectical terms of 'uninterruption' (Mao) or 'transcroissance' (Trotsky). Contrary to any evolutionist vision of history, 'uneven development' consists precisely in the "skipping of stages". For institutions and mentalities do not modify themselves as molecular evolutions of society proceed. Ideas and social relations are 'chronically behind' new circumstances and technical innovations. A brutal adjustment, fruit of this discordance of times, revolution is therefore "a surge of ideas and passions". [\[15\]](#)

Of the three "fields" of the theory of permanent revolution, I shall dwell here above all on the analysis of revolutionary processes in "dominated" countries. I shall also return to the post-political revolution transition, but I shall only incidentally evoke the question of the international extension of revolution and the history of internationalism. [\[16\]](#)

## Phase I: Strategic delimitations

Our generation entered into activity at a very particular historical moment where new possibilities were opening in the developed capitalist countries, where bureaucratic domination was cracking in Eastern Europe and was being imposed, unstable, at the cost of a major crisis (1966) in the Chinese East, where the actuality of revolutionary struggle was asserting itself in the South, where an arm-wrestle with imperialism continued in Vietnam.

The international extension of revolution was then perceived by our current as the "convergence of the three sectors

of the world revolution”; a perception of internationalism which obviously differentiated us from the Stalinist CPs, but also from currents too narrowly third-worldist.

A new geography of the far left was being drawn during the 1960s. Unlike today, programmatic delimitations played a very large role in the affirmation of the currents composing it. Political and theoretical polemics intertwined daily. Reference to permanent revolution then occupied a choice place for us. Together with the critique of Stalinism, it inscribed us from the outset in an internationalist and anti-bureaucratic Marxist lineage. It offered a coherent interpretation of the Russian revolution (that common heritage which the entire French far left disputed), of ongoing revolutionary struggles (Vietnam...) and of contemporary counter-revolutionary disasters (Indonesia, Chile...).

Thus, the theory of permanent revolution armed us to engage in polemic or dialogue even on the privileged terrain of competing revolutionary currents. Daniel notably intervened in a large Paris meeting on the Chinese revolution, a question, we said, “too important to leave to the Maoists alone”. [17]

## Phase I bis: reappropriations and redefinition

The time of our engagement was thus a moment of intensive reappropriation of a historical heritage transmitted by the Left Opposition to Stalinism, the Fourth International – with notably Ernest Mandel [18] – and its French section, with Pierre Frank [19]..., but also incarnated in the past by Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg... or in the present by Che. We were learning from several sources with the eyes of a new militant generation. Even when we thought we were being perfectly “orthodox”, we were beginning to give our own content to the heritage we claimed – which is not to betray and even constitutes a necessary condition (though not sufficient) of fidelity.

In this double movement of reappropriation and reinterpretation, Daniel’s role was important. Fervent defender of the theory of permanent revolution – our “Trotskyist” lineage –, he was also one of those among us who affirmed most forcefully our “Leninist” lineage on the question of the party [20]. Certainly, Daniel’s conceptions in this matter would evolve between two polarities: the time of “hasty Leninism” and that of “libertarian Leninism” [21], but that is another story.

The important thing, for what concerns us here, is that there is – obviously – a link between the conception of permanent revolution and the question of the parties which conduct revolutionary struggles; a question which the “Leninist point of view” forced us to take seriously. A link which was then at the heart of the polemics traversing the Fourth International. Impossible to be satisfied with traditional qualifiers such as “centrist” to define organisations which, far from wavering and hesitating, show over time much constancy in the face of very difficult political and military ordeals.

The polemic was frontal with the proponents of the international minority tendency, represented first and foremost by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the United States. Whilst they showed openness towards the 26th of July Movement of Cuba which was constituted outside Moscow’s sphere of influence (and against the Cuban CP), they considered that the Chinese or Vietnamese Communist Parties were merely Stalinist formations, therefore counter-revolutionary. For several decades, the masses would thus have pursued a struggle without quarter not only in the absence of any revolutionary party, but against the policy of the parties at the head of their struggles and without allowing the development of alternative parties [22] This polemic has little retrospective interest, except to understand the history of the Fourth International.

With regard to the subject treated here, let us note that by posing as we did the question of the role of parties in the process of permanent revolution, we also introduced an element of rupture with the approach previously developed

by Ernest Mandel – but of this we were less conscious.

Certainly, Mandel had himself engaged in the 1950s a vigorous polemic against the sectarian currents within the FI who recognised neither the authentic character of the Chinese revolution nor the active role played in it by the CCP [23]. But the terms of his analysis deserve to be recalled. He titled an article of 1954: “The world revolution, from its empirical phase to its conscious phase” [24]. The “initial” phase of the world revolution, incarnated by Yugoslavia and China, was “dominated by the spontaneity of the masses and the empiricism of the leaderships”. This was the “phase of centrism”. Terms he takes up again in 1969: “the international revolutionary rise from 1949 is characterised by the dominance of *half-consciousness*, of centrism”. A “new phase” had begun with the radicalisation of the 1960s in the imperialist centres, “marked by a much greater weight of the industrial proletariat, by a higher level of consciousness”. [25] Thus, after the European defeats of the 1920s-1940s and Stalinism, the world revolution, “a proper organic process” would have made a “historical detour” by recentring in the third world. It was to find its “normal” course with the radicalisation of class struggles in the proletarian centres.

We took our distance from a “fatalist sociological” vision of permanent revolution by centring attention on the question of parties and the place of the political. This gave rise to many abstruse, Talmudic debates on the “nature” of these parties, but it also opened the way to an important effort of concrete analysis of revolutionary movements in their diversity, starting from their history and not from a definition (petty-bourgeois party, Stalinist...) from which everything would follow.

Returning to the historical controversies within the Trotskyist movement, Daniel underlines:

The subordination of the CPs to the Soviet bureaucracy was not the result of some kind of Stalinist essence turned into a metaphysical abstraction, but rather of a specific historical process that one needed to study in each concrete case. As such, the Stalinization of the French CP – completed in the early 1930s – was different from that of the underground Italian CP in exile, or that of the Spanish CP which faced competition from the anarchists and the POUM [Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification]. A Communist Party that led a mass struggle for the conquest of power against Kremlin instructions could not strictly be characterized as Stalinist, doing otherwise would have meant giving more weight to ideological criteria, at the expense of social and historical analysis. This had been the case of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, whose conflictual relations with the Kremlin from 1941 onwards and resistance to the division of the Balkans decided at Yalta only became known later. This had also been the case of the Chinese Communist Party which, having learned the lessons of the tragedy of 1927, refused to subordinate itself to the Kuomintang in the anti-Japanese resistance and, unlike the Greek Party, refused to hand over its arms [...]. It was not known at the time that there had been conflictual relations from the 1930s onward between the Maoist leadership of the Long March and the Stalinist cadres trained in Moscow. But numerous documents and eyewitness accounts have since shed some light on these conflicts. [26]

Similarly, in searching in Marx for the origins of a conception of “revolution in permanence”, we went back to the Russian debate and his famous response to Vera Zasulich concerning Russia’s future (1881): “it depends”. A fine example of “historical crossroads”! [27]

The work conducted on the question of permanent revolution is obviously not the only angle from which our perception of history has been modified, but it contributed strongly to it, as witnessed by a 2003 text by Daniel which “ties” his conception of “open history” around the theme of the “permanences of revolution” [28]. This text is important, because it shows the interaction, in the evolution of Daniel’s thought, between his conceptions of permanent revolution and of history. It breaks, notably, explicitly with a vision of permanent revolution which would

preserve “a remnant of belief in an announced end of history.”

I refer on this subject to thesis 38 of Daniel’s text:

Merleau-Ponty nevertheless wonders whether there might not remain in the theoretical statement of ‘permanent revolution’ a remnant of belief in an announced end of history. Everything depends on the manner in which this concept articulates with a theory of history. If it is inscribed in a genetic philosophy, ‘permanent revolution’ can prove to be the false nose of a belief in a rigorously programmed becoming between origin and end. The ambiguous dialectical notions of ‘supersession’ or ‘transcroissance’, or that of a revolution ‘whose every stage is contained in germ in the preceding stage’ (The Permanent Revolution) can support such an interpretation. But, contrary to a mechanistic evolutionism (illustrated by the chronological succession of modes of production in Stalinist vulgate), ‘permanent revolution’ can also take on a programmatic and politico-strategic meaning: that of the necessary link (in the sense of hypothetical and conditional necessity) between democratic revolution and social revolution (national liberation and socialist construction); that of an extension of the revolutionary process spatial (the horizon of world revolution) and temporal (‘which necessarily extends over decades’); that finally of a cultural deepening, of a ‘continual internal struggle’ of democratic constituent power against instituted bureaucratic authority.

Concerning the theory of history and as in many other domains, we originally relied on the contributions of Ernest Mandel (and other authors) in the 1950s-1960s debate on multilinear history [29]. But, as Michael Löwy noted, there was no necessary passage between a conception of multilinear history (in the past...) and the conception of “open history” (including in the present...) [30]. Daniel was, with Michael, one of those who went fastest and furthest in this fundamental reworking, quite a few of us dragging our feet a bit, it must be admitted. All this leading to the formation of a Marxism “after Mandel”, in conjunction with many other questions (ecology, feminism, etc.) [31]

## Phase II. The point of irradiation – learning from experience

Over the years, after having “read” the theoretical heritage with the eyes of our generation, we began to rethink it from our own experience.

The conception of permanent revolution is thus integrated into a fundamental work of theoretical elaboration. From other angles, however, we have not systematically taken up the “raw material” of this theory. We adopted it, as we adopted the theory of class struggle; we noted its political and strategic indispensability; we verified how many great historical events confirmed it and we noted that its field of application was vaster than one might have thought in time (nineteenth-century Russia) and in space (Chinese revolution...).

Of course, Daniel has the particularity – with a few others, like Charles-André Udry – of not only having read Marx, but of having worked and reworked him; of having thus returned to the “raw material” of the theory of classes and of permanent revolution with the work which led to the publication of two of his major works, appearing in 1995, *Marx l'intempestif* (published later in English) and *La Discordance des temps* [32].

In fact, we have produced few systematic works on the question of permanent revolution, the most recent best-known work in this domain being that of Michael [33]. We have had recourse to useful categories in

differentiating the notions of (dominant) “mode of production”, abstract and concrete social formation. We have studied numerous historical examples past or contemporary of revolutionary processes. But it seems to me that we have not gone very far in a “theorisable” reflection concerning social formations, classes and social layers in dominated countries without which a dynamic of permanent revolution would be impossible: we have only very marginally integrated the fundamental debates on the peasantry or on the “informal sector” and its relationship to the “formal” sector, the multiplicity of “intermediate” social statuses and their effects on consciousnesses, etc. There remains here something unfinished as witnessed by the treatment of the peasant question, still sometimes perceived in the light of debates from the beginning of the last century (a class doomed to disappear) and not as (a) class(es) (evolving and differentiated) of the future for many reasons multiplied by the ecological crisis [34].

We have developed a “strategic thinking” and a “historical thinking” which do not claim to provide recipes or deal in “ready-to-wear”, but which have nourished a collective “intelligence” of these domains, an agility permitting reflection on the political without remaining prisoner of rigid schemas or sinking into eclecticism. We owe this enormously to Daniel. But I do not think we have constructed in the same way a collective “thinking” of social formations. Certainly, we take note of the particularities of societies where capitalism subordinates pre-capitalist social relations as much as it replaces them, giving birth to social formations of great complexity. We mention what must be mentioned and we integrate fragments of this essential domain into our writings, but often without deepening or collectivising a “knowledge”, without yet fully profiting from the experience of our own organisations. We have done systematic analytical work on the “strategic combinations” proper to each revolutionary experience and compared them. We have not done the same in matters of social formations and work of social organisation. [35]

The question of permanent revolution has nevertheless operated as a “point of irradiation”, pushing reflection in multiple directions. I have just mentioned Daniel’s contribution to the development of an “intelligence” of the strategic question. Let us note two dimensions where his contributions seem to me particularly notable:

**1. The variable articulation of sectors and forms of struggle in a process of permanent revolution** – in Daniel, this reflection was nourished in particular by the experiences contemporary to us of El Salvador and Nicaragua (with Cuba, China and Vietnam in the background). This leading to a radical enrichment of “strategic thinking”, breaking with confinement in “models”, in favour of a conception of strategy as “concrete”, “combined” and “evolving”, to be defined according to periods and the result of previous struggles; and not only according to social formations and programmatic objectives.

**2. The institutions of revolutionary power.** Daniel engaged the same work aiming to “concretise” thinking concerning the institutions of a nascent revolutionary power, which are necessarily conditioned by the political traditions of a country, the variable paths of the revolutionary process and the ways in which the situation of dual power emerges; and not only by programmatic objectives or theoretical principles.

I confine myself to mentioning here these two points which should be taken up again from a knowledge of Latin American history (and of Daniel in relation to Latin America) which I do not have.

Daniel’s work on the Russian revolution offers another entry point on the questions evoked here (State, society, institutions and revolution), as witnessed by his “article-preface” written about Lenin’s work, *The State and Revolution* [36]

## Phase II bis: after the political revolution...

Concerning transitional societies issuing from the revolutions of the twentieth century and the second aspect of the

theory of permanent revolution, Daniel firmly maintained course on two essential questions:

**The analysis of Stalinism as a counter-revolution.** He notably takes up the analogy with Thermidor in the French Revolution [37] which leads not to the Restoration, but to the Empire, “a long grey zone where revolutionary aspirations and the consolidation of the new order mingle”. “In both cases one witnesses the formation of a new hierarchy (imperial nobility and nomenklatura). In both cases, one observes the Bonapartist exercise of power [...] In both cases, finally, totalitarian logic is at work”. “One better understands, through the lasting fascination for Bonaparte, as if the radiance of the revolutionary initial still filtered through him, why the Little Father of the People [Stalin] could hypnotise many of his contemporaries”. [38]

Without understanding the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism’s victory, the history of the last century becomes unintelligible. “**Before**, one can still speak of error to be corrected, of alternative orientations within the framework of a same project. **After**, these are forces, projects, antagonistic choices which are irreducibly opposed. [...] As Guefter writes, rigorous periodisation ‘allows historical consciousness to penetrate into the political field.’” [39]

**The analysis of the bureaucracy as a dominant layer, but something other than a fundamental class.** Noting that if Trotsky uses the term “caste” to underline its “shut in character, its arbitrary rule, the haughtiness of the ruling stratum”, he also readily recognises that “this definition does not of course possess a strictly scientific character”. “Beyond the terminological quarrel”, continues Daniel citing Trotsky, “it is a matter of knowing whether ‘the bureaucracy represented a temporary growth on a social organism, or whether it had already transformed itself ‘into a historically indispensable organ’ with the ability to create of founding a new mode of production thereby opening a third way between capitalism and socialism in the history of humanity.” And to conclude: “If the Stalinist bureaucracy survived longer than foreseen, its decomposition, its final collapse and its mafia-style conversion, confirm the negative answer.” [40]

**The process of counter-revolution in a transitional society.** Daniel nonetheless contributed to renewing rather radically the debates on the counter-revolutionary processes at work in the USSR and the specificity of these transitional societies in his “refusal” to “date” the counter-revolution from a “Capital E Event”:

In reality, if symbolically the fall of the Berlin wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union mark the end of the historical cycle opened by the Great War of 1914-18, and by the October Revolution, the defeat of the great hopes of emancipation doesn’t date from 1989 or 1991. That was only the second death of a corpse. Because already, a long time before, an interminable Thermidor had devoured the revolution.

How long ago exactly? That’s the whole question. A litigious and controversial question. Many sincere communist militants have obstinately denied the fact of a bureaucratic counterrevolution on the pretext that they didn’t find an event with a capital ‘e’ which was the perfect symmetry of October, the clear reversal of the process of which it was the initial act, a strict return to what existed before.

That is in reality an illusory search. More perceptive, the reactionary ideologue Joseph de Maistre had understood following the French Revolution, that the counterrevolution is not “a revolution in the opposite direction”, but the “opposite of a revolution”, a reaction that is rampant, asymmetrical, advancing in stages, sometimes pausing.

It is in this sense that the analogy with Thermidor, used by oppositionists in the Soviet Union from the 1920s onwards, was perhaps more pertinent than they themselves had imagined: a reaction which is not a reversal of time, a return to the past, but the invention of unforeseen historical forms. [41]

Daniel was thus one of the first to affirm clearly that the process of counter-revolution proper to such transitional societies, in the world context of the era, was not the inverted mirror of the process of revolution: there is generally no “turning point”, datable like October 17 or October 49. “Between [revolution and counter-revolution], no symmetry. They do not stem from the same temporality. One makes an event, a break, the other dissolves it in duration. One tears time, the other heals its wounds. One is interruption, the other, restoration and continuity.” [42]. This clarification is decisive for understanding, for example, what happened in China between the 1980s and today.

**The distinctive feature of a transitional society.** For each type of society, one must analyse how the various “instances” articulate... Daniel notes for example that for Marx, “the State takes specific forms in different modes of production. Historically determined by a given mode of exploitation, it indissolubly combines formal autonomy and real dependence”. [43] This relationship of autonomy and dependence is obviously very particular in a social formation where there is no stabilised dominant mode of production – which is the very definition of a transitional society.

A transitional society is marked by non-correspondence between the economic and social, state and political, ideological and cultural “instances”... Daniel, thinker of discordance, was well placed to grasp the implications of this situation of non-correspondence and to unblock certain debates, like the “date” of the bourgeois counter-revolution or the “nature” of their States. Conceptual approximations and reflection by analogy indicate, he notes, “an unresolved difficulty whose roots lie in the attempt to characterise political forms in an explicitly social manner”. [44].

Similarly, a transitional society is not simply “following” the preceding (capitalist) order, it is not inscribed in a simple chronological continuum. For Paul Virilio [45], underlines Daniel:

we have not yet assimilated in our daily behaviours the notion of space-time thought by contemporary physics. We would notably have the greatest difficulty accepting the ruin of the poorly chronological representation between a before and an after. The interminable debates of yesterday about the nature of the Soviet Union would tend to prove him right. In wanting to situate one type of society in relation to another on a linear chronological axis, one manages to imagine only an elementary movement of advance or retreat, of catching up or overtaking: the Soviet regime could thus only be conceived as ‘pre’ or ‘post’ capitalist, more or less advanced on the path of progress. The idea of a ‘post-capitalist’ Soviet Union appears today clearly empty of meaning. It is a matter in reality of thinking singular social formations in their specific articulation to a world space-time, to the original combination of unequal rhythms and spaces which it determines. [46]

Concerning “a society in transition between capitalism and socialism”, Daniel argues:

The weakness of this formulation is that it corresponds to a linear vision of history and presents a false dilemma *tertium non datur*, instead of promoting an understanding of very specific social reality. The definition of the USSR as ‘post-capitalist’ is likewise flawed. From the point of view of the totality of world social relations, the bureaucratic regime does not come ‘after’ capitalism; it is its contemporary, very much a part of its time and space and dependent on its imperialist logic. [47].

In summary, for Daniel, the controversies which agitated the Trotskyist movement on the USSR:

raise a number of questions about the structure of the bureaucratic counter-revolution and about directly social characterisations of political phenomena. On the one hand, looking for an event that is directly symmetrical to the revolutionary event – as if historical time were reversible – creates an obstacle to understanding an original process with new and unexpected developments. On the other hand, whether dealing with states or parties, applying the “workers label” attributes a social substance to them, – and evades the specificity of political phenomena which transfigure social relations. The directly social characterisation of political forms then becomes a dogmatic straitjacket paralysing all thought. [\[48\]](#)

From these numerous guiding threads – going from fundamental theory to the concrete forms of processes of revolution –, Daniel played the role that we know in the renewal of our historical, strategic and political thought. He did so within the framework and for a collective reflection, and this is not the least of his merits. The Amsterdam school, opened in 1982, served as a crucible for drawing the lessons of the first twenty years of militant engagement of our generation. [49] We there confronted theory and historical experiences; it is interesting to note that then, a good part of the reading material distributed to participants reproduced the writings of the actors of the struggles we studied (Cuban, Nicaraguan, Vietnamese, Chinese leaders...) and not only our own. Daniel is one of those who invested most in these sessions, often staying three weeks at a stretch to have time to collectivise with participants and other speakers (the school sessions then lasted three months...) [50]

## Phase III. Retrospective gaze, present questions

We have few debates today on the question of permanent revolution, even if it has probably been treated with more continuity across the Atlantic [51]. During this period of eclipse, Daniel nonetheless returns to it regularly when he retraces historical continuities [52] on the occasion of fundamental debates like with Negri [53] or when he deals with Marx [54]. He would never cease to recall what it costs to ignore its lessons – our generation remained haunted by the spectre of Pinochet. [55]

Today, it is rarely mentioned when one evokes, in our circles, the “return of the strategic question” that Daniel called for. I should like nevertheless to reopen this question from at least four angles.

**1. The retrospective validity of the theory.** Does the emergence of new powers (China, India...) invalidate the theory of permanent revolution? It does not seem so to me. On the one hand because a theory which would have been operational for a century can hardly be judged “invalid”. Then, because it permits thinking the new and preparing, if need be, its own supersession.

We knew since the nineteenth century that an imperialism could be born outside the West (the Meiji revolution in Japan) under at least two conditions: that the country was not under domination and that it had the necessary internal social resources (Japanese social formation would have been closer to European than that of China...).

What seems striking to me is that for so long, no other ruling class seized the occasion of a breach to give birth to a new imperialism. I think notably of decolonised Latin America on the occasion of the world wars (which loosened foreign control).

Conversely, one sees clearly how the first two “necessary conditions” were met in the case of China. The Chinese revolution broke imperialist dominations and endowed the country with a working class, qualifications, an industry and independent technology. The counter-revolutionary process begun in the 1980s permitted the encounter between bureaucratic elites and a transnational Chinese capital, giving much power to the emergence of a new capitalism.

It is interesting to note that three of the main “emerging” powers belong to the Asian ensemble with, besides China, India which – even without revolution – could lean on the USSR to distance itself from imperialisms, and South Korea where the United States accepted a strengthening of national capitalism to counterbalance the Chinese revolution and the Soviet bloc.

The case of Brazil – whose degree of independence of national capital is debated in our ranks – obviously derives from another regional context; a context I know too poorly to speak of.

I have not reworked Trotsky's original writings on permanent revolution to weigh retrospectively their present pertinence. Let us note however that his "theses" are cautiously written. He does not affirm that without revolution no significant transformation is conceivable in the "countries of belated bourgeois development", but that "the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." [56]

The revolutionary upheavals of the twentieth century modified imperialist dynamics and opened "possibilities" which would not have existed without them (which could not be thought in Trotsky's time). There is nothing surprising in this; just as there is nothing surprising in the fact that the implosion of the USSR created at the beginning of the 1990s conditions favourable to neoliberal globalisation properly speaking.

A third condition seems to me to pose newer questions. What permits the emerging Chinese power to deploy itself so freely on the international plane? This seems to me to refer to one of the traits of capitalist globalisation: the radical weakening of territorial control (therefore of alliances with local elites) compared to the colonial era or the period of "blocs". A question with multiple entry points which Daniel addresses, from a different angle of concern, in his *Eloge de la politique profane*. [57]

**2. The differentiations within the former "third world".** The "third world" was never a homogeneous reality and the question of differences or differentiations within it has been debated for a long time, but the "conceptualisation" of these differences seems aleatory. I refer on this subject to an article by Ernest on "semi-industrialised dominated countries" (1984) [58]. The problem is that one finds in the same category countries (there are seven) as different as South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, a micro-State (Singapore) and even Hong Kong (at the time a British colony) – but, strangely, not India. This article seemed to me to illustrate a problem evoked earlier: the little work devoted by our movement to in-depth analysis of social formations, particularly in the third world. [59]

Far from simplifying, the panorama of social formations seems to me as complex today as yesterday and perhaps more so, because differentiations within developed countries have perhaps deepened (is Greece still an imperialist country?). One deals with so many particular cases that I am not sure one should attempt precise conceptual classifications. Daniel evokes however some heavy trends: "recolonisation of the world" (but then in a form very different from the classical colonial order!), the "recompradorisation of indigenous ruling classes", whilst introducing a distinction between "bourgeoisies for whom the national market remains determining, as in Argentina or Brazil, and bourgeoisies (and bureaucracies) 'transnationalised', sucked into the global economy and integrated by co-optation into global governance, with as consequence their growing autonomisation in relation to their obligations of national legitimation." [60]

**3. The present pertinence of permanent revolution.** All this raises a great question, bearing on the "dialectic of the world revolution". A pillar of this dialectic has disappeared with the implosion of the USSR without rebound of processes of anti-bureaucratic "political revolution" (in the sense we understood it). The frontier between "proletarian revolution" in imperialist countries and "permanent revolution" in dominated countries seems more blurred today than yesterday both on the political plane (the slogans increasingly resemble each other at a time when illegitimate debt is at the heart of the European crisis!) and geographical, with countries "straddling" two worlds.

How to define today the field of application of permanent revolution?

We have had other priorities to deal with, as Daniel's recent writings abundantly attest. However, I think that

fundamentally, the question remains actual or becomes so again as revolutionary processes are reborn (Nepalese revolution, Arab revolutions) and as “stagist” conceptions are probably still preponderant (even if latently) on the left in several regions of the world. The problems of political orientation pose themselves with acuity – see the question of the Lula government which had such importance for Daniel [61]. But is the “Lula” question so different from the “Prodi” question in Italy?

Thinking that the question remains actual does not imply “rising” immediately to the theoretical level to debate what one can or cannot understand today by permanent revolution in the countries of the South. I fear that before that, we need a fairly long time of accumulation of “partial” analyses and updates before attempting new syntheses.

To do this, Daniel’s last works can be of precious utility. For example, in *Eloge de la politique profane*, the way he introduces this “sliding scale of spaces” which would permit “articulating local, national and international interventions even more closely than the theory of permanent revolution did.” [62]; or when he evokes the consequences of “the shock of globalisation” and the effects “of uneven and combined geographical development”: “Strategic space can no longer be conceived consequently as a single space. Its occupation requires a sliding scale of times, spaces and alliances.” “More than ever, the class struggle is deciphered in space, and every spatial strategy contributes to defining social relations of force.” [63]

Or again, how he takes up the analysis of imperialism whose domination implies today “a double contradictory movement: the spatial expansion of capital on the scale of a world market ‘without frontiers’, on the one hand, and the territorial and state organisation of uneven development on the other”. [64]

Daniel evokes for a long time the “discordance of spaces” (even before being nourished by the Marxist geographer David Harvey), but I have not found a somewhat systematic exposition of the implications which this question holds for him in his view (if not the certainty that they can only be very important). One would have to assemble the fragments of ideas which scatter, on this subject, his writings to work this material.

The theory of permanent revolution was nourished by the analysis of uneven and combined development at the beginning of the imperialist epoch. The process of “uneven and combined development” is still at work, and how!, but whilst the modalities of imperialist domination have been modified; this is why there is no obvious answer to the question of the present validity of the theory founded by Trotsky. It must be rethought in the current context. Will it be necessary to keep its name or change it? Perhaps the question does not have great importance.

**4. “Objective conditions”, “subjective conditions” and strategic thinking.** If truly we enter a period where revolution (re)becomes a horizon – and not only counter-revolution a present, all the questions churned under the term of permanent revolution will regain their actuality and will again be part of our strategic interrogations. But we approach this period, opened by the capitalist crisis, with all the liability of the defeats of the end of the last century.

New radicalisms are asserting themselves, struggles and social movements manifest their inventiveness, we always have things to learn and things to do, we have drawn many lessons from past failures; but strategic unpreparedness for the ordeals of revolutionary struggle remains nonetheless great – both concerning mass consciousness, counter-ideologies and popular cultures, the capacity to make bloom an alternative hegemony of the oppressed, shared references and political baggage, the very “making” of organisations, their scope and “temper”... This judgement certainly deserves to be nuanced and certain revolutionary permanences are more actual in Asia, for example, than in Europe. But has the gulf between so-called “objective” and “subjective conditions” ever been deeper than today?

In the context of the capitalist crisis, the indispensable “return of the strategic question” must not be understood

reductively (contenting oneself with taking up debates on the articulation of forms of struggle and powers). This “return” also implies (re)thinking how the strategic horizon commands politics on a daily basis. Here one touches on Daniel’s repeated critique of the notion of “delay”: “Some people believed that the political defeats of the time could be explained by a vexing ‘delay’ of consciousness in relation to ‘objective conditions’ ripe to the point of beginning to rot.” And to specify in a note: While Trotsky combined an acute strategic sense of the conjuncture (amazingly so in his writings on Germany), the theme of delay played a growing role with some of his heirs, such as Ernest Mandel. The contradiction then became explosive, between objective conditions, which continued to ripen and a ‘subjective factor’, that fell ever more behind on the clock of history. [65]

Daniel notes elsewhere a critique made by Toni Negri according to which the “understanding of the crisis and its virtualities” could be lost in “an objectivist catastrophism” and notes: “Unjust towards Rosdolsky, the remark at least indicates an unresolved difficulty. One finds indeed in certain texts of Trotsky himself an extreme splitting between the reiterated confidence in objective laws and catastrophic prophecies on the one hand, and on the other the pathetic weakness of the subjective factor, decisive to the point that the crisis of humanity can be proclaimed reduced to ‘its crisis of revolutionary leadership’ (Transitional Programme). One finds in Ernest Mandel sometimes carried to its height, this disjunction between the hypermaturity of objective conditions and the desperately repeated failure of the subjective factor. Such an approach is heavy with insurmountable theoretical difficulties. [...] Thus posed, the circle of the objective and the subjective is desperately vicious.” [66]

The problem is particularly actual. The ruling classes remaining masters of strategic initiative, each victory remains very fragile, each popular surge is followed by a setback. The bitter observation of the “delay” of the subjective factor can then quite naturally lead to a posture of incantatory expectation on the one hand or, on the other, to an adaptation to the “real” – namely, in today’s conditions, to an impotent “radical-reformist” posture, whilst reformism is quite incapable of imposing any progressive reforms whatsoever.

The “vicious circle” of the objective and the subjective will not be easily or quickly broken. Just as the labour movement, the revolutionary movement is to be “reconstructed”, which is no small matter. But if one does not set about this task today, at the hour of the capitalist crisis, one will never do so. There is no question here of immobility. Even with very limited forces, it is possible to do things effectively useful to struggles, to movements, to “people”, and this all the more, that we benefit from the links offered by an International.

To have a future, we must be useful today; but to have a future, we must also judge the effectiveness of present construction policies according to a finality, in this case, the reconstruction of a revolutionary movement in all its dimensions (consciousnesses, movements...). This relationship between ends and means refers to what Daniel names with a learned word, teleology – a teleology which is for us neither science nor theology, but strategic project. Speaking of historical judgement, he underlines that “It is not a matter of a factual observation, nor of a normative judgement, nor of a verdict. It is a matter of a judgement indexed on the ‘finality without end’ of historical development and on the rational anticipation of the process of humanisation and universalisation. This is what we call a strategic judgement.” [67].

The argument holds for what we do – ourselves and now.

The crisis is here. It is, notes Daniel, “inextricably a social, ecological and moral crisis. It places on the agenda the overthrow of the established order, without guaranteeing for all that the conditions of possibility of the other world that is necessary. Destruction and construction do not immediately coincide. The actuality of revolution, however, is that of ‘revolution in permanence’.” [68]

On the actuality, therefore, of permanent revolution, uninterrupted, in permanence.

January 2012

Translated by Adam Novak for [ESSF](#), January 2026. English references **International Viewpoint** April 2026.

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of *International Viewpoint*. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.

---

[1] See François Ollivier, "[A seminar on Daniel Bensaïd](#)".

[2] Born Giuseppe Mustacchi, Georges Moustaki (1934-2013) was an Egyptian-born French singer-songwriter. Born in Alexandria to Greek Jewish parents originally from Corfu whose household language was Judeo-Italian, he grew up in a multicultural environment with Arabs, Turks, French, Italians, Jews and Greeks. He became one of the most significant singer-songwriters of post-war French chanson. The original lyrics are available [here](#).

[3] On Daniel Bensaïd's life and work, see Michael Löwy, "[Daniel Bensaïd: a Marxism of bifurcation](#)", July 2020, ESSF.

[4] The JCR was founded in 1966. It was dissolved by the government, along with about ten far-left organisations, in May-June 1968 after the "events of May". Its members participated with those of the Parti communiste internationaliste (PCI, also dissolved), in 1969 in the constitution of a new French section of the Fourth International, the Ligue communiste (LC), in turn dissolved by the authorities in 1973 and which reappeared a year later under the name Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR). The latter dissolved itself voluntarily in 2009 to contribute to the birth of the Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste (NPA).

[5] The Fourth International was founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky and his supporters as a revolutionary socialist international opposed to both capitalism and Stalinist bureaucracy. On its history, see Ernest Mandel, "[The Reasons for Founding the Fourth International](#)", ESSF.

[6] Daniel's autobiography, *Une lente impatience* (2004, published in English as *An Impatient Life*, Verso, 2013) bears witness to these intense and militant dialogues which accompanied his human and political journey throughout.

[7] Alain Badiou (born 1937) is a French Marxist philosopher who has not renounced his Maoist commitment of the 1960s-1970s, even if the essential debates that Daniel may have had with him in the recent period bear on more "abstract" questions such as the relationship between event, political struggle and revolution.

[8] Daniel Bensaïd, *Le Pari mélancolique*, Fayard: Paris 1997, p. 296. The events evoked concern France (the revolution of 1789, the "June Days", the Paris Commune), Russia (the October Revolution), Germany (the revolution of 1923), Catalonia (the Spanish Civil War), Greece (the partisan struggle after the Second World War), Cuba (the 26th of July Movement), Bolivia (Che Guevara's final battle) and Chiapas (the Zapatista uprising).

[9] Notably, in English, Michael Löwy, "[The Marxism of Leon Trotsky's 'Results and Prospects'](#)", 2006, ESSF. See also his book *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution*, Haymarket Books: Chicago 2010.

[10] Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* [Chapter 10](#), Marxist Internet Archive. On the three aspects of the theory, see "[Three aspects of the theory of Permanent Revolution](#)", ESSF.

[11] See Daniel Bensaïd, "[The formative years of the Fourth International \(1933-1938\)](#)" *Notebooks of Study and Research* No.09, International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE): Amsterdam 1988, pp. 8-9; "Who are the Trotskyists," in *Strategies of Resistance*, Resistance Books, 2009, pp. 22-24.

[12] Idem.

[13] Alongside Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and Che Guevara (1928-1967), Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919) and Pancho Villa (1878-1923), figures of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, as well as Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny (1883-1973), one of the principal commanders of the Red Cavalry during the civil war which followed the October Revolution in Russia.

[14] Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* [Introduction to the German Edition](#), Marxist Internet Archive; Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, August 1915, Moscow edition, 1974.

[15] Daniel Bensaïd, *Le pari mélancolique*, Fayard, coll. "Idées": Paris 1997, pp. 73-74.

[16] On the history of internationalism, see notably Pierre Rousset, "[L'internationalisme et son renouveau à l'heure de la mondialisation](#)", 10 December 2008, ESSF and "[Occupy Together! The conditions for a new internationalism](#)", 1 November 2011, ESSF.

[17] On the Chinese experience and permanent revolution, see Pierre Rousset, "[The Chinese Experience and the Theory of Permanent Revolution](#)", ESSF.

[18] Ernest Mandel (1923-1995) joined the small Belgian section of the Fourth International in 1939. An economist, he was one of the principal anti-Stalinist Marxist theoreticians of the post-war period and one of the best-known leaders of the FI. See Alex De Jong "[Ernest Mandel Was One of the 20th Century's Greatest Marxist Thinkers](#)".

[19] Pierre Frank (1905-1984) was one of the first French Trotskyists. He joined Trotsky in 1930, in exile on the island of Prinkipo off Istanbul, becoming one of the members of the secretariat preparing the conferences of the International Left Opposition, then of the Fourth International founded in 1938.

[20] See notably the article "[A propos de la question de l'organisation : Lénine et Rosa Luxemburg](#)" written with Samy Naïr and first published in the journal *Partisan* no. 45, December 1968-January 1969.

[21] *An Impatient Life...* p. 110 and p. 317.

[22] Significantly, the "argument from authority" occupies in these internal polemics a disproportionate place. See for example regarding Vietnam the articles published in 1973-1974 in the journal of the SWP (United States), *International Socialist Review*, between Fred Feldman and Johnston, "On the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party", and Pierre Rousset, "[The Vietnamese revolution and the role of the party](#)", 1 November 1973, ESSF. It seems that Feldman and Johnson gave a caricatured image of the SWP's position, but their texts were then officially presented in the debates by its leadership. There existed other positions within the FI, more interesting than this one, defended notably by the Vietnamese Trotskyist group of Paris.

[23] Ernest Mandel, "[The Third Chinese Revolution Part I](#)", "[The Third Chinese Revolution Part II](#)", Marxists Internet Archive.

[24] Ernest Mandel, "La révolution mondiale, de sa phase empirique à sa phase consciente (Remarques à propos du 4e Congrès mondial) (juillet 1954)", *Quatrième Internationale*, Vol 12, Nos 6-8, June-August 1954.

[25] Ernest Mandel, "La place du 9e Congrès mondial dans l'histoire de la IVe Internationale" *Quatrième Internationale*, No 38, July 1968.

[26] "Who are the Trotskyists?", op. cit., pp. 64-65.

[27] Vera Zasulich's letter to Marx, Marx's long draft reply and his brief final reply are notably presented in Teodor Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, pp. 105-137.

[28] Daniel Bensaïd, 2003, "[Fragments pour une politique de l'opprimé : événement et historicité](#)", ESSF.

[29] Ernest Mandel, "The Asiatic Mode of Production and Historical Pre-conditions for the Rise of Capital", in *The formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx*, Verso, London 2015.

[30] Michael Löwy, "[Histoire ouverte et dialectique du progrès chez Marx](#)", 2001, ESSF.

[31] Daniel Bensaïd, "[Thirty years after: A critical introduction to the Marxism of Ernest Mandel](#)", 25 July 2007, ESSF.

[32] Daniel Bensaïd, *Marx for Our Times: Adventures and Misadventures Of a Critique*, Verso: London 2020 and *La Discordance des temps. Essai sur les crises, les classes, l'histoire*, Les Editions de la Passion: Paris 1995. See notably the second part of *Marx for our Times*, "Struggle and Necessity: Marx's Critique of Sociological Reason" and the second part of "La Discordance": "La diagonale des classes et les figures du conflit".

[33] Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development. The Theory of Permanent Revolution*, Verso: London 1981. New edition: Haymarket Books: Chicago 2010. Michael is without doubt one of those among us who has displayed the greatest continuity in attention paid to this question. See also Paul Le Blanc, "[Permanent Revolution: Past and Future](#)", ESSF.

[34] Pierre Rousset, "[Se laisser questionner par l'enjeu écologique](#)" in Michael Löwy (coord.), *Ecologie et socialisme*, Syllepse, Paris 2005. 30 September 2004, ESSF.

[35] To a large extent, the remark also holds, it seems to me, for the developed capitalist countries if one leaves the field of "classical" trade union intervention.

[36] Daniel Bensaïd, "[L'Etat, la démocratie, et la révolution : retour sur Lénine et 1917](#)" 2007, ESSF.

[37] The overthrow of Robespierre in July 1794 (8-10 Thermidor according to the calendar of the era).

[38] Daniel Bensaïd, *Qui est Juge ? Pour en finir avec le tribunal de l'Histoire*, Fayard: Paris 1999, pp. 194-195.

[39] Idem p. 198.

[40] "Who are the Trotskyists?", op. cit., p. 43.

[41] Daniel Bensaïd, "[Stalinism and Bolshevism](#)", October 2005, ESSF.

[42] Daniel Bensaïd, *Le pari mélancolique*, Fayard: Paris 1997, p. 279.

[43] Idem p. 117.

[44] *Who are the Trotskyists?*, op. cit., p. 44.

[45] Paul Virilio, *Un paysage d'événements*, Galilée: Paris 1996.

[46] Daniel Bensaïd, *Le Pari mélancolique*, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

[47] "Who are the Trotskyists?", op. cit., p. 53.

[48] Idem p. 61.

[49] The International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE) in Amsterdam was founded in 1982 to provide political education for activists from Fourth International sections worldwide. See Pierre Rousset and Sally Rousset, "[The IIRE 1982-2007 — II — The first decade](#)", ESSF 10

September 2007

[50] See Pierre Rousset and Sally Rousset, idem.

[51] See for example the review of books by Paul Le Blanc, "[Permanent Revolution: Past and Future](#)", 13 June 2011 as well as his "[Uneven and Combined Development and the Sweep of History: Focus on Europe](#)", 22 October 2005, ESSF.

[52] As is the case in chapter 2 (Part I: "Permanences du spectre") of his work: *Le sourire du Spectre, nouvel esprit du communisme*, Ed. Michalon, Paris 2000. He thus opens this chapter on the "terrible lesson" of 1848 and the theme of "revolution in permanence". See "[Inventaire sans liquidation](#)", ESSF.

[53] Daniel Bensaïd, November 2002 "[Antonio Negri, pouvoir constituant et multitudes](#)".

[54] Daniel Bensaïd, "Inventaire sans liquidation", *Le sourire du Spectre, nouvel esprit du communisme*, op cit.

[55] Thus, in September 2003, Daniel took up again the terms of the polemics which had traversed the Latin American and European left on the lessons of the crushing of the Allende regime: "[Chili : Les souvenirs d'un amnésique](#)", ESSF.

[56] *The Permanent Revolution*, [Chapter 10. What is the Permanent Revolution? Basic Postulates](#), Thesis 2.

[57] Daniel Bensaïd, *Eloge de la politique profane*, Albin Michel: Paris 2008, pp. 253-262.

[58] Ernest Mandel, "Pays semi-coloniaux et pays dominés semi-industrialisés", *Quatrième internationale* no. 13, 1 April 1984. The seven countries are: Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong.

[59] Pierre Rousset, "A propos du texte d'Ernest Mandel sur les pays semi-industrialisés. Note pour introduire certains éléments de discussion sur l'analyse des formations sociales du tiers monde", 18 March 1988, mimeographed, 16 pp.

[60] *Eloge...*, op. cit. p. 250.

[61] Daniel Bensaïd, Francisco Louçã, Michael Löwy, January 2005 "[Letter to the comrades of the Democracia socialista \(DS-PT\), Brazil](#)", ESSF).

[62] *Eloge...*, op. cit., p. 263.

[63] Idem pp. 265-266.

[64] Idem, p. 246.

[65] *An Impatient Life...*, op. cit. p. 296.

[66] *La discordance...*, op. cit., p. 180 and note 30.

[67] *Qui est le juge ?*, op. cit., p. 221.

[68] *An Impatient Life ...*, op. cit. p. 306.