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Marxism

Theses of resistance

- Features - Daniel Bensaïd archive -

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The text below, written by Daniel Bensaïd for the journal *Viento Sur* [Available here.]], represents a bold attempt to track the theoretical challenges faced by Marxism today. According to the author, the theoretical sterility of modern social democracy and other major political trends could result in Marxists sitting on their laurels and merely affirming orthodoxies inherited from the past. But, he insists, revolutionary theory must now attempt to come to grips with huge changes in the world since the collapse of Stalinism. His discussion ranges over modern imperialism, the balance sheet of the Soviet Union and similar countries, the class structure of contemporary capitalism, new nationalisms and community identities, social movements and political parties and postmodernist notions of difference and diversity - and much else besides. This is a dense and difficult text. We have made it available in English here because of its important insights into the weaknesses of and challenges to modern Marxism, and because of its significant signposts for future research and reflection; despite its difficulty, it will interest and provoke many of our readers.

“We are faced with a double responsibility: the transmission of a tradition threatened by conformism, and the exploration of the uncertain contours of the future”.

In the course of the last decade (since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and German unification), something came to an end. But what? Was it the “Short 20th Century” of which Eric Hobsbawm and other historians speak, beginning with World War I and ending with the fall of the Berlin Wall?

Or is it the short period that followed World War II, marked by the twin superpowers of the Cold War, and characterized in the imperialist centres by sustained capital accumulation and “Fordist” regulation?

Or again, is it the great cycle in the history of capitalism and the workers' movement, opened by the capitalist development of the 1880s, subsequent colonial expansion and the blossoming of the modern labour movement, symbolized by the formation of the Second International?

The great strategic analyses of the workers movement date to a large extent from this period of formation, before World War I: for example the analyses of imperialism (Hilferding, Bauer, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Parvus, Trotsky, Bukharin); the national question (Rosa Luxemburg again, Lenin, Bauer, Ber Borokov, Pannekoek, Strasser); party-trade union relations and parliamentarism (Rosa Luxemburg, Sorel, Jaurès, Nieuwenhuis, Lenin); strategy and the road to power (Bernstein, Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky).

These controversies constitute our history as much as those of the conflicting dynamics between revolution and counterrevolution inaugurated by the world war and the Russian Revolution.

Beyond the often intense differences over orientation and options, the workers' movement of that time displayed a relative unity and shared a common culture. What remains of this inheritance today?

In a very unclear editorial in the first issue of the relaunched “New Left Review”, Perry Anderson estimated that the

world has not been so lacking in alternatives to the dominant order since the Reformation. Charles-André Udry is more definite, arguing that one of the characteristics of the present situation is the “disappearance” of an independent international workers' movement.

We are then in the middle of an uncertain transition, where the old is dying without being abolished, and where the new is making an effort to emerge, caught between a past which has not been transcended and the increasingly urgent necessity of an autonomous research project, which would allow us to orientate ourselves to the new world opening before our eyes. Because of the weakening of the traditions of the old workers' movement there is a danger that, given the theoretical mediocrity of social democracy and other opponents to our right, we could resign ourselves to just defending old theoretical conquests, which today are of limited value. Certainly theory lives off debate and confrontation: we are always to a certain extent dependent on the debates with our adversaries. But this dependency is relative.

It is easy to say that the great political forces of what is called in France the “plural left”, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Greens, are not very stimulating in their approach to fundamental problems. But also it is necessary to remember that, in spite of their naiveté and sometimes their youthful excesses, the debates of the far left of the 1970s were much more productive and enriching than they are today.

We have then begun the dangerous transition from one epoch to another and we are in midstream. We must simultaneously transmit and defend our theoretical tradition, even if it is threatened by conformism, while at the same time boldly analysing these new times. At the risk of appearing shocking, I would like to face this test with a spirit I would describe as “open dogmatism”. “Dogmatism”, because, if that word gets a bad press (according to the media's common sense, it is always better to be open than closed, light than heavy, flexible than rigid), in all matters of theory, resistance to voguish ideas has its virtues. The challenge of versatile impressions and the effects of fashion demands that serious refutations are made before a paradigm is changed). “Open”, because we should not religiously conserve a doctrinaire discourse, but rather enrich and transform a world view by testing it against new realities.

I would propose then five theses of resistance; their form deliberately emphasizes the necessary work of refusal.

1 Imperialism has not been dissolved in commodity globalization.

2 Communism has not been dissolved in the fall of Stalinism.

3 The class struggle cannot be reduced to the politics of community identities.

4 Conflictual differences are not dissolved in ambivalent diversity.

5 Politics cannot be dissolved into ethics or aesthetics.

I think these theses are demonstrable propositions. The explanatory notes explain some of their consequences.

THESIS 1: IMPERIALISM HAS NOT BEEN DISSOLVED IN COMMODITY GLOBALIZATION

Imperialism is the political form of the domination that corresponds to the combined and unequal development of capitalist accumulation. This modern imperialism has changed its appearance. It has not disappeared. In the course of recent centuries, it has undergone three great stages: a) that of colonial conquest and territorial occupation (the British and French colonial empires); b) that of the domination of financial capital or the “highest stage of capitalism” analyzed by Hilferding and Lenin (fusion of industrial and banking capital, export of capital, import of raw materials); c) after World War II, that of the domination of the world shared between several imperialist powers, formal independence of former colonies and dominated development. [1]

The sequence opened by the Russian Revolution has come to an end. A new phase of imperial globalization which resembles financial domination as it appeared before 1914, is what we have moved into. Imperial hegemony is now exerted in multiple ways: by financial and monetary domination (allowing control of credit mechanisms), by scientific and technical domination (a quasi-monopoly on patents), by the control of natural resources (energy supplies, control of trade routes, patenting of living organisms), by the exercise of cultural hegemony (reinforced by the huge power of the mass media) and, in the last instance, by the exercise of military supremacy (obvious in the Balkans and two Gulf Wars). [2]

Within this new configuration of globalized imperialism, the direct subordination of territories is secondary to the control of markets. From this results a very unequal and very badly combined development, new relations of sovereignty (disciplinary mechanisms like the debt, energy, food and health dependency, military pacts), and a new international division of labour.

Countries that seemed to be on the path of economic development until twenty or thirty years ago are again caught in the spiral of underdevelopment.

For example, Argentina is again mainly an exporter of raw materials (Soya has become its main export product). Egypt, which when ruled by Nasser's Arab nationalism in the 1950s boasted of its recovered sovereignty (symbolized by nationalisation of the Suez Canal), its successes in literacy (providing engineers and doctors for the countries of the Middle East) and the beginnings of industrialization (like Algeria under Boumedienne) is today becoming simply a paradise for tourist operators. After the two debt crises (1982 and 1994) and integration into NAFTA, Mexico appears, more than ever, as the dominated backyard of the “Northern colossus”.

The metamorphosis of the relations of dependency and domination is reflected in particular through the geo-strategic and technological transformation of war.

During World War II, it was no longer possible to speak of war in the singular and of a single line of fronts, but of several wars overlapping with others. [3] From the end of the Cold War, the nature of the conflicts prevents any approach in terms treating the sides simply good and bad. All recent conflicts, with their unique combinations and multiple contradictions, show the impossibility of a simplistic response.

At the time of the Falklands War, opposition to the imperial expedition of Thatcher's Britain in no way forced Argentine revolutionaries to support the military dictators. In the conflict between Iran and Iraq, revolutionary defeatism in both countries was justified in face of two forms of despotism. In the Gulf War, international opposition to operation “Desert Storm” did not imply any support for the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein.

Globalization also has consequences in the structure of conflicts. We are no longer in the era of wars of liberation and relatively simple oppositions between dominator and dominated. From this results an intertwining of interests and a rapid reversibility of positions. It is an obvious reason to make a detailed balance sheet and to draw some lessons from the doubts, the errors (sometimes), and the difficulties that we could locate within the conflicts of recent years.

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Reducing conflicts to an opposition between the simply “good” and the simply “bad” underlies much of the discourse of “human rights imperialism” which justified NATO's intervention in ex- Yugoslavia.

COROLLARY 1.1: INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE DEMOCRATIC SOVEIGNTY OF NATIONS CANNOT BE DISSOLVED IN HUMANITARIAN ETHICS

Even though the function of the nation-state as it was constituted in the 19th century has undoubtedly been transformed and weakened, the era of interstate international law has nevertheless not arrived. Paradoxically, Europe has in the last 10 years seen more than 10 new formally sovereign states with more than 15,000 kilometres of new borders emerge. The vindication of the right to self-determination for the Bosnians, Kosovars or Chechnyans, is obviously, a vindication of sovereignty. It is this contradiction that is obscured by the pejorative notion of “sovereignism” under which nauseous nationalisms and chauvinisms are confused with legitimate democratic aspirations to a political sovereignty that offers resistance to the pure competition of all against all.

International law is still called upon to articulate two legitimacies: that, emergent, of the universal rights of human beings and citizens (of which certain institutions like the International Criminal Court constitute partial crystallizations); and that of interstate relations (whose principle goes back to the Kantian discourse about “perpetual peace”), on which institutions such as the United Nations rest. Without attributing to the UN virtues that it does not have (and without forgetting the disastrous balance sheet of its performance in Bosnia, Somalia or Rwanda), it is necessary to state that one of the aims pursued by the powers involved in operation Allied Force was to modify the architecture of the new imperial order in favour of new pillars, namely NATO (whose mission was redefined and extended during its 50th anniversary summit in Washington) and the World Trade Organization.

Emerging from the relationship of forces that emerged after World War II, the UN must undoubtedly be reformed and democratized (antiparliamentarianism does not prevent us supporting democratic reforms of the mode of scrutiny like proportionality and feminization), to the benefit of the General Assembly and against the closed club of the Permanent Security Council. Not in order to confer on it an international legislative legitimacy, but to ensure that a certainly imperfect representation of the “international community” reflects the diversity of interests and viewpoints. In the same way, we urgently need to develop a reflection around the European political institutions and the international judicial institutions like the Hague Tribunal, the emergency criminal tribunals and the future International Criminal Court.

EXPLANATORY NOTE 1: To update the notion of imperialism, not only from the point of view of the relations of economic domination (obvious), but as global system of domination (technological, ecological, military, geo-strategic, institutional) is of capital importance, precisely when seemingly intelligent people consider that this category became obsolete with the collapse of its bureaucratic foe in the East, and that the world is now organized around an opposition between democracies without adjectives (putting it another way, Western) and barbarism.

Mary Kaldor, who was, in the early 1980s, together with EP Thompson, one of the leaders of the campaign for nuclear disarmament against “exterminism” and the deployment of Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe, now says that “the characteristic distinction of the Westphalian era between internal peace and foreign war, ordered domestic law and international anarchy, ended with the Cold War.” We have now entered, it is argued, an era of “regular progress towards a global legal regime”. It is what some call, without fear of the contradiction in terms, an “ethical imperialism”, what Mary Kaldor calls “a benign imperialism”.

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THESES 2: COMMUNISM WAS NOT DISSOLVED IN THE FALL OF STALINISM

The ideology of neoliberal counter-reform, as well as trying to dissolve imperialism into the loyal competition of commodity globalization, tries to dissolve Communism into Stalinism. Bureaucratic despotism would then be the simple logical development of revolutionary adventure, and Stalin the legitimate son of Lenin or Marx. According to this genealogy of the concept, the idea leads to the world. The historical development and the dark disaster of Stalinism are potentially there already in the notions of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” or the “vanguard party”.

In reality, of course, a social theory is never more than a critical interpretation of an epoch. If we should seek gaps and weaknesses that make it lose its force in the face of the evidence and of history, that theory cannot be judged according to the criteria of another epoch. In this way, the contradictions of democracy, inherited from the French Revolution, a confusion of people, party and state, the decreed fusion of the social and the political, blindness in the face of the bureaucratic danger (underestimated in relation to the main danger of capitalist restoration), were propitious to the bureaucratic counterrevolution in 1930s Russia.

There are in the Russian Thermidorian process elements of continuity and discontinuity. The difficulty in accurately dating the triumph of the bureaucratic reaction relates to the asymmetry between revolution and counterrevolution. The counterrevolution is indeed not the reverse fact or the inverted image of the revolution, a sort of revolution in reverse. As Joseph de Maistre put it very well with regard to the Thermidor of the French Revolution, the counter-revolution is not a revolution in the opposite sense, but the opposite of a revolution. It depends on its own timescales, where ruptures are accumulated and complement each other.

If Trotsky dated the beginning of the Thermidorian reaction to the death of Lenin, he says that the counter-revolution was not completed until the beginning of the 1930s, with the victory of Nazism in Germany, the Moscow trials, the great purges and the terrible year of 1937. In her analysis “The Origins of Totalitarianism”, Hannah Arendt establishes an apparent chronology that dates the coming of bureaucratic totalitarianism proper to 1933 or 1934. In Russia, USSR, Russia, Moshe Lewin brings to light the quantitative explosion of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state from the end of the 1920s. In the 1930s, the repression against the popular movement changed in scale. It is not the simple prolongation of what was prefigured by the practices of the Cheka (the political police) or the political jails, but a qualitative leap in which the state bureaucracy destroyed and devoured the party that believed it was able to control it.

The discontinuity demonstrated by this bureaucratic counter-revolution is central from a triple point of view. In relation to the past: the intelligibility of history that is not a delirious story told by a crazy person, but the result of social phenomena, conflicts of interests of uncertain outcomes and decisive events. With respect to the present: the consequences of the Stalinist counter-revolution contaminated a whole epoch and perverted the international workers' movement for a long time. Many paradoxes and impasses of the present (beginning with the recurrent crises in the Balkans) are not understandable without a historical understanding of Stalinism.

Finally, with respect to the future: the consequences of this counter-revolution, where the bureaucratic danger is revealed in its unexpected dimension, will still weigh for a long time on the new generations. As Eric Hobsbawm writes, “one cannot understand the history of the short 20th century without the Russian Revolution and its direct and indirect effects”.

COROLLARY 2.1: SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE SUBSUMED IN DEMOCRATIC

STATISM

To portray the Stalinist counter-revolution as a result of the original vices of “Leninism” (a notion forged by Zinoviev at the 5th Congress of the Communist International, after the death of Lenin, to legitimise the new orthodoxy of reasons of state) is not only historically erroneous, it is also dangerous for the future. It would be then sufficient to have understood and to have corrected the errors to prevent the “professional dangers of power” and to guarantee a transparent society.

If the mirage of abundance is renounced this is the necessary lesson of this disastrous experience that would excuse society from choices and arbitrations (if necessity is historical, the notion of abundance is strongly relative); if we abandon the hypothesis of an absolute democratic transparency, founded on the homogeneity of the people (or of the liberated proletariat) and the rapid abolition of the State; if, finally, we remove all consequences of the “discordance of time scales” (economic, ecological, legal choices, customs, mentalities, art identify different temporalities; the contradictions of gender and generation are not resolved in the same way and at the same rhythm as class contradictions), then we should conclude that the hypothesis of the weakening of the state and of law, as separated spheres, does not mean their decreed abolition, unless the result is to be the statization of society and not the socialization of power.

Thus bureaucracy is not the annoying consequence of a false idea, but a social phenomenon. It certainly had a particular form within primitive accumulation in Russia or China, but it has its roots in scarcity and the division of labour. It manifests itself in diverse forms and different degrees of a universal manner.

This terrible historical lesson must lead to the deepening of the programmatic consequences drawn from 1979 onwards with the document of the Fourth International, “Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, that specifically talks about political pluralism as a principle, the independence and autonomy of the social movements with respect to the state and to the parties, the culture of law and the separation of powers. The notion of “dictatorship of the proletariat” evoked, within the political vocabulary of the 19th century, a legal institution: the temporary emergency powers designated to the Roman Senate in opposition to tyranny, which was then the name given to arbitrary power. [4] Nevertheless it is too loaded with initial ambiguities and associated with too many bitter historical experiences to be still used. This note can nevertheless give us the chance to reframe the question of majority democracy, the relation between the social and the political, the conditions for the weakening of domination to which the dictatorship of the proletariat seemed under the form “finally discovered” of the Paris Commune, to have given an answer.

EXPLANATORY NOTE 2.1: The idea that Stalinism represents a bureaucratic counter-revolution, and not a simple more or less irreversible evolution of the regime arising from October, is far from meeting a general consensus. The opposite is true: liberal reformers and repentant Stalinists agree in seeing Stalinist reaction as the legitimate extension of the Bolshevik revolution. It is in effect the conclusion at which the “renovators” coming out of the orthodox Communist tradition arrive when they persist in thinking of Stalinism mainly as a “theoretical deviation” and not as a formidable social reaction.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36227a.jpg]
Eric Hobsbawm

Louis Althusser, in his “Reply to John Lewis”, characterised Stalinism as an “economistic deviation”. Many other theorists put the emphasis on theoretical error or deviation. This suggests it would be sufficient to correct this error to avoid the danger of bureaucratism. [5] The method of the “theoretical deviation”, in perpetuating the parenthesis in the political analysis of the bureaucratic counterrevolution, is committed to a search for the original theoretical sin and not only leads to a recurrent liquidation of “Leninism”, but, to a great extent, of revolutionary Marxism or the inheritance of the Enlightenment: from blaming Lenin, we quickly pass to blaming Marx... or Rousseau! If, as Martelli

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writes, Stalinism is primarily the fruit of “ignorance”, a greater theoretical lucidity would be sufficient to prevent the professional dangers of power. [6] It's excessively simple.

EXPLANATORY NOTE 2.2: The French publication of Eric Hobsbawm's “Age of Extremes” was welcomed by the left as a work displaying intellectual health, a retort to historiography in the manner of Furet and historical judicialization in the style of Stéphane Courtois. This well-merited reception nevertheless runs the risk of leaving unclarified the extremely problematic aspect of the work.

Hobsbawm certainly does not deny the responsibility of the Thermidorian gravediggers: but he diminishes it, as if what happened, had to happen, by virtue of the objective laws of history. He hardly glimpses what could have been different.

And thus Hobsbawm arrives at what he considers the paradox of this strange century: “the most lasting result of the October Revolution was to save its adversary in war as in peace, inciting it to reform itself. [7] As if it was a natural development of the revolution and not the result of formidable social and political conflicts, of which the Stalinist counterrevolution is not the least! This “objectivization” of history reaches the logical conclusion that, in 1920, “the Bolsheviks committed an error, that seen retrospectively, seems capital: the division of the international workers' movement” [between Communism and social democracy - ed]. [8]

If the circumstances in which the 21 Conditions for joining the Communist International were adopted and applied demand a critical examination, we can nevertheless better understand the division of the international workers' movement not as a result of ideological will or a doctrinaire error, but of the original shock of the revolution and to the watershed between those who assumed its defence (critical, like Rosa Luxemburg) and those who opposed it and were associated with the holy imperialist alliance.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36227b.jpg]
Rosa Luxemburg

If the inter-war period means for Hobsbawm an “ideological civil war on an international scale”, he is not talking about the fundamental classes, capital and the social revolution, but: progress and reaction, anti-fascism and fascism. Consequently he talks of regrouping “an extraordinary spectrum of forces”. Within this perspective there is little space for a critical balance sheet of the German revolution, the Chinese revolution of 1926/27, the Spanish civil war and the popular fronts.

Avoiding any social analysis of the Stalinist counter-revolution, Hobsbawm is content with stating that, starting from the 1920s, “when the dust of the battles settled, the old orthodox empire of the Tsars resurged intact, in its essentials, but under the authority of the Bolsheviks.” For him, on the contrary, it is only in 1956, with the crushing of the Hungarian revolution, that “the tradition of the social revolution exhausted itself“ and that “the disintegration of the international movement that was faithful to it” constituted the “extinction of the worldwide revolution” like a .re that is extinguished alone. In short, “it is above all by organization that the Bolshevism of Lenin changed the world”. With this funereal phrase a serious critique of bureaucracy is avoided; it is simply considered as transitory, an “inconvenience” of the planned economy founded on social property, as if this property was really social and as if the bureaucracy was a small and lamentable expense rather than a counter-revolutionary political danger!

Hobsbawm's work has more the perspective of a “historian's history”, than that of a critical or strategic history capable of discovering the possible options in the great turning points of events.

In “Trotski Vivant”, Pierre Naville strongly emphasizes the reach of this methodological slant: “The defenders of the accomplished fact, whoever they are, have a much shorter vision than political actors. Active and militant Marxism is

predisposed to an optic which is often contrary to that of history."

What Trotsky called "prognosis", says Naville, is more comparable to prophetic anticipation than to prediction or forecast. The same historians who find the sense of the event natural when the revolutionary movement has the wind in its sails, look for disadvantages in it when things are complicated and it becomes necessary to know how to swim against the current. It is hard for them to conceive the political imperative of "outlining history in the wrong direction" (in Walter Benjamin's formula). Naville says that this gives history the possibility of unfolding its retrospective wisdom, enumerating and cataloguing the facts, the omissions, and the errors. But, lamentably, these historians abstain from indicating the correct route that would have allowed a moderate to lead a revolutionary victory, or, on the contrary, to indicate a reasonable and victorious revolutionary policy within a Thermidorian period.

EXPLANATORY NOTE 2.3: It would be useful to do something that our movement has neglected: to take a deeper discussion about the notion of totalitarianism in general (and its relations with the epoch of modern imperialism), and on bureaucratic totalitarianism in particular. Trotsky frequently used this term in his book Stalin, without giving precision to its theoretical status. The concept could be considered very useful in approaching simultaneously certain contemporary tendencies (pulverization of the classes in masses, ethnicization and tendencial deterioration of politics) analyzed by Hannah Arendt in her trilogy on the origins of totalitarianism, and the particular form that they could take in the case of the bureaucratic totalitarianism. This would also allow that a vulgar and over-flexible employment of this useful notion serves ideologically to legitimize the opposition between democracy (without qualification or adjectives, consequently bourgeois, actually existing) and totalitarianism as the only pertinent cause of our time.

EXPLANATORY NOTE 2.4: To insist on the notion of bureaucratic counterrevolution does not imply in any way closing off a more detailed debate on the balance sheet of the revolutions in the century. On the contrary, we need to reappropriate it from a renewed perspective thanks to a better critical reframing. [9]

The different attempts at theoretical elucidation (theory of state capitalism, from Mattick to Tony Cliff, the new exploiting class, Rizzi to Burnham or Castoriadis, or the degenerated workers' state from Trotsky to Mandel), while they could have important consequences in terms of practical direction, are all compatible, through corrections, with the diagnosis of a Stalinist counterrevolution.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36228.jpg]
Hannah Arendt

If Catherine Samary now proposes the idea that the fight against the nomenclature in power demanded a new social revolution and not only a political revolution, this is however not a simple terminological modification. According to Trotsky's thesis, enriched by Mandel, the main contradiction of the transitional society was between the socialized form of the planned economy and the bourgeois norms of distribution at the origin of bureaucratic parasitism and privileges. The "political revolution" consisted then in bringing the political superstructure into conformity with the acquired social infrastructure. Antoine Artous says that this forgets who "in the post-capitalist societies (not only in those societies that would be better not to describe as "post", as if they came chronologically after capitalism, when, in fact, they are determined by the contradictions of world-wide capitalist accumulation), the state is an integral part in the sense that it plays a determining role in the structuring of the relations of production; and it is by this slant that, beyond the common wage form, the bureaucracy, social group of the state, can be situated inside the relations of exploitation with the direct producers".

The continuation of this debate would have to call attention to the theoretical confusion related to the characterization of political phenomena in directly sociological terms, to the detriment of the specificity of the field and the political categories. Many ambiguities attributed to the category of "workers' state" arise from this. It is probably also the case with the notion of "workers' party", which tends to relate the function of a political force to a game of oppositions and alliances, to a deep social "nature".

THESIS 3: THE CLASS STRUGGLE IS NOT DISSOLVED IN COMMUNITY IDENTITIES

For too long a time, socalled “orthodox” Marxism attributed to the proletariat a mission according to which its consciousness would eventually meet with its essence, thus becoming the redeemer of all humanity. The disappointments of the following day are, for many, proportional to the illusions of the day before: by not having transformed itself into an “everything”, this proletariat is then reduced to nothing.

We should begin by remembering that Marx's conception of the class struggle does not have much to do with university sociology. If in practice he does not have a statistical approach to the question, this is not mainly because of the embryonic state of the discipline then (the First International Congress of Statistical Data was in 1854), but for a more fundamental theoretical reason: the class struggle is a conflict inherent to the relation of exploitation between capital and labour that governs capitalist accumulation and the result of the separation between producers and means of production. We do not thus see in Marx any reductive, normative or classificatory definition of classes, but a dynamic conception of their structural antagonism, at the level of production, circulation and reproduction of capital: classes are never defined only at the level of the production process (the face off between workers and employers in the enterprise), but determined by the reproduction of the whole when the struggle for wages, the division of labour, relations with the state apparatuses and the world market enter into play. (From this it is clear that the productive character of labour that appears notably in Volume 2 of “Capital”, with respect to the circulation process, does not define the proletariat. In their central aspects, these questions were dealt with and discussed widely in the 1970s, in clear opposition to the theses defended both by the Communist Party in its treatise on State Monopoly Capitalism, and inversely by Poulantzas, Baudelot and Establer.) [10]

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36229.jpg]
Nicos Poulantzas

Marx speaks generally of proletarians. In general, in the 19th century, people spoke of the working classes in the plural. The terms in German, “Arbeiterklasse”, and English, “working class”, stayed general enough, whereas the term “classe ouvriere”, current in French political vocabulary, entails a restrictive sociological connotation prone to ambiguity: it relates to the modern industrial proletariat, excluding employees in the services and commerce, although these undergo analogous conditions of exploitation, from the point of view of their relation to private ownership of the means of production, location in the division of labour or still more in terms of their status as wage-earners and the amount of their remuneration.

Perhaps the term “proletariat” is theoretically preferable to that of “working class”. In the developed societies it represents indeed between two thirds and four fifths of the active population. The interesting question is not its predicted disappearance, but its social transformations and its political representation, taking it as understood that the strictly industrial proletariat, even though it has undergone an effective reduction in the course of the last 20 years (from 35% to 26% more or less of the active population), is still far from the extinction. [11]

The real situation of the proletariat is revealed from an international perspective. Then what Michel Cohén calls “the proletarianization of the world” becomes evident. Whereas in 1900, wage-earning workers were around 50 million of a global population of 1,000 million, nowadays they are around 2,000 out of 6,000 million.

The question is then of a theoretical, cultural and specifically political order rather than strictly sociological. The notion of classes is in itself the result of a process of formation (see the introduction to EP Thompson's “Making of the English Working Class”), of struggles and of organization, in the course of which the consciousness of a theoretical concept and a self-determination born out of struggle is constituted: the sentiment of belonging to a class is as much the result of a political process of formation as of a sociological determination. Does the weakening of this consciousness, then, mean the disappearance of classes and their struggles? Is this weakening conjunctural (linked

to the ebbs and flows of the struggle) or structural (the result of new procedures of domination, not only social but also cultural and ideological, what Michel Surya calls “absolute capitalism”), with the discourse of post-modernity representing its ideological expression? In other words, if the effectiveness of the class struggle is widely verified in everyday life, do post-modern fragmentation and individualism allow us to conceive the renewal of shared collectivities? Given the generalization of commodity fetishism and consumerism, the frenzy for the ephemeral and immediate, can durable political and social projects appear again, beyond moments of intense fusion without future?

One of the high-priority theoretical tasks has to be not only related then to the sociological transformations of the wage-earner, but to the transformations underway in the wage relation in terms of regime of accumulation, as much from the perspective of the organization of work as of the legal political regulations and what Frederic Jameson calls “the cultural logic of late capitalism”.

The critique of ultra-liberalism, in reaction to the counter-reform of the Thatcher- Reagan years runs the risk of being mistaken in its goal if, obsessed by the image of a commodity jungle after unrestrained deregulation, it does not measure the reorganizations and the attempts at re-regulation taking place. The domination of capital, as Boltanski and Chiapello note, could not last under the naked form of an exploitation and oppression without legitimacy or justification (there is no lasting imposition without hegemony, said Gramsci).

EXPLANATORY NOTE 3.1: What is on the agenda then is the redefinition of a global structure, a territorial organization, legal relations, based on the present productive forces (new technologies), the general conditions of accumulation of capital and social reproduction. It is in this framework that we see crises of transformation of the traditional political forces, Christian democracy, the British Conservatives, the French right, and the questioning of the function that they fulfilled since the war within the framework of the national state; and it is also in that framework that the transformation takes place of the Social-Democratic parties, whose elites, through the privatization of the public sector and the fusion of the private elites with the state elite, are increasingly organically integrated with the ruling strata of the bourgeoisie.

Given the weakness of the traditional bourgeois formations in the midst of reconversion, social democratic parties are often called often to assume temporary responsibility for the modernization of capital, dragging into their orbit the post-Stalinist parties without a project and most of the Green parties who lack the doctrinal wherewithal to resist accelerated institutionalization.

What it is outlined then, whether in the manifesto for a third way from Blair-Schröder, the projects for a social Europe of minimums, debated at the European summit in Lisbon, or the manoeuvres of the French employer's association on the subject of “social refoundation”, is not a liberalism without rules, but a new wage relation in a framework of a previously unheard-of form of liberal-corporatism and liberal-populism. It would be dangerously short sighted to think that the only possible form of populism in the future will be the kind of backward-looking sovereignism of people like Pasqua and Villiers in France.

The crusade for wage-earning shareholders, private pension funds (to the detriment of solidarity), and the “refeudalization” of the social link (denounced by Alain Supiot) through the legal primacy of the individual contract (often synonymous with personal subordination in strongly unequal societies) over the impersonal relation with the law; all this outlines a new capital-labour corporative association, in which a small coterie of winners exist to the detriment of the mass of victims of globalization. In certain situations, this tendency is perfectly compatible with convulsive forms of national-liberalism in the manner of Russia's Putin or Austria's right populist leader Jörg Haider.

On the other hand, it is inoperative and possibly deceptive, to deal with the Haider case by analogy with the fascist movements of the 1930s, instead of linking it to the contemporary and probably unprecedented forms of the rightist danger. If it is right to participate in the mobilizations against Haider (without forgetting, nevertheless, the

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complacency of some of his affluent detractors towards Berlusconi, Fini, Millon, Blanc and others) we should not forget that Haider is firstly also a product of thirteen years of coalition between conservatives and Social Democrats, the lack of democracy in the EU and austerity policies that allowed him to arrive where he is.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36230a.jpg]
George Lukacs

It is important to consider the singular forms that reactionary threats can assume in today's world, the role of regionalisms in European reconfiguration, and the marriages between nationalism and neoliberalism. In his way, Haider is not lacking in black humour when he says “Blair and I against the forces of conservatism”. [12] Our two parties “want to escape the rigidities of the beneficent State without creating social injustice “. Both want “law and order”. Both consider that “the market economy, on condition that it is made flexible, can create new opportunities for wage-earners and companies.” The Labour Party as well as the FPÓ has then a non-dogmatic approach “to that world transformation in which we live”, where “the old categories of left and right have become irrelevant”: “Are Blair and Labour right to accept the Schengen agreements and strict legislation about immigration?” Haider asks. And he responds, “If Blair is not an extremist, then Haider isn't either”.

We should add that the regional populist Haider is as much in favour of NATO as Blair, and even more partisan than he in relation to the Euro!

EXPLANATORY NOTE 3.2: The recent appearance of an unpublished text of Lukacs from 1926, in defence of “History and Class Consciousness”, invalidates to a certain point the ultra-Hegelian interpretations of Lukacs according to which the Party is the form finally discovered of the absolute Spirit. [13] Attacked for “subjectivism” by Rudas and Déborine during the 5th Congress of the Communist International, that of Zinovievist Bolshevization, Lukacs rejects the argument of Rudas, according to which the proletariat is condemned to act according to its “being” and the task of the party is reduced “to anticipating that development”. For Lukacs, the specific (political) role of the party arises from the fact that the formation of class consciousness constantly clashes with the phenomenon of fetishism and reification. As Slavo Zizek says in his epilogue, the party plays for him the role of middle term in the syllogism between history (the universal) and the proletariat (the particular), whereas for social democracy, the proletariat is the middle term between history and science (incarnated by the educating party) and in Stalinism, the party uses the sense of history to legitimize its domination over the proletariat.

THESIS 4: CONFLICTUAL DIFFERENCE IS NOT DISSOLVED IN AMBIVALENT DIVERSITY

As a reaction against a reductionist representation of social conflict to class conflict, now - according to postmodernism and similar theories - is the hour of plurality of spaces and contradictions. In their specific and irreducible singularity, each individual is an original combination of multiple properties. Most of the discourses of post-modernity, like certain tendencies in analytical Marxism, take this anti-dogmatic critique as far as the dissolution of class relations in the murky waters of methodological individualism. Not only class oppositions, but more generally conflictual differences, are diluted then in what Hegel had already called “a diversity without difference”: a constellation of indifferent singularities.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36230b.jpg]
Slavo Zizek

Certainly what passes for a defence of difference often comes down to a permissive liberal tolerance that is the consumerist reverse of commodity homogenization. As opposed to these manoeuvres of difference and individualism without individuality, vindications of identity on the contrary tend to freeze and naturalize differences of race or

gender. It is not the notion of difference that is problematic (it allows the construction of structuring oppositions), but its biological naturalization or its identitarian absolutization. Thus, whereas difference is mediation in the construction of the universal, extreme dispersion resigns itself to this construction. When one renounces the universal, says Alain Badiou, what prevails is universal horror.

This dialectic of difference and universality is at the heart of the difficulties that we frequently encounter, as illustrated by the discussions and the lack of understanding about equality or the role of the homosexual movement. Unlike the queer movement that proclaims the abolition of differences in gender to the benefit of nonexclusive sexual practices, up to the point of rejecting all logically reductionist lasting collective affirmation, Jacques Bunker, in his “Adieu aux norms”, outlines a dialectic of affirmed difference to constitute a relationship of force faced with oppression and its desired weakening in a horizon of concrete universality.

Queer discourse proclaims, on the contrary, the immediate elimination of difference. Its rhetoric of desire, in which the logic of social necessity is lost, advances a compulsive desire of consummation. The queer subject, living in the moment a succession of identities without history, is no longer the homosexual militant, but the changing individual, not specifically sexed or defined by race, but the simple broken mirror of his sensations and desires. It is not in the least surprising that this discourse has received a warm welcome from the US cultural industry, since the fluidity vindicated by the queer subject is perfectly adapted to the incessant flow of interchanges and fashions. At the same time, the transgression that represented a challenge to the norms and announced the conquest of new democratic rights is banalized as a constituent playful moment of consumerist subjectivity.

Parallel to this, certain currents oppose the social category of gender with the “more concrete, specific and corporal” category of sex. They claim to transcend the “feminism of gender” in favour of a “sexual pluralism”. It is not surprising that such a movement implies a simultaneous rejection of Marxism and critical feminism. Marxist categories would have provided an effective tool for approaching questions of gender directly related to relations of class and the social division of labour, but to understand “sexual power” and found an economy of desire different from that of necessity, it would be necessary to invent an independent theory (inspired by “Foucaltian” bio-politics).

At the same time, the new commodity tolerance of capital towards the gay market leads to the attenuation of the idea of its organic hostility towards unproductive sexual orientations. This idea of an irreducible antagonism between the moral order of capital and homosexuality allowed one to believe in a spontaneous subversion of the social order by means of the simple affirmation of difference: it was sufficient that homosexuals proclaimed themselves as such to be against it. The critique of homophobic domination can then end in the challenge of self-affirmation and the sterile naturalization of identity. If, on the contrary, the characteristics of hetero and homosexuality are historical and social categories, their conflicting relation with the norm implies a dialectic of difference and its overcoming, demanded by Jacques Bunker.

This problematic, evidently fertile when it deals with relations of gender or linguistic and cultural communication, is not without consequences when it concerns the representation of class conflicts. Ulrich Beck sees in contemporary capitalism the paradox of a “capitalism without class”. Lucien Séve says that, “if there is certainly a class at one pole of the construction, the amazing fact is that there is no class at the other”. The proletariat has seemingly dissolved in the generalized alignment; we are now obliged “to fight a class battle not in the name of a class but that of humanity”.

Either, in the Marxist tradition, this is a banal reminder that the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat constitutes, under capitalism, the concrete mediation of the struggle for the universal emancipation of humanity. Or, we have a theoretical innovation heavy with strategic consequences, for the rest of the book by Lucien Séve: the question of social appropriation is no longer essential in his eyes (it is logical, consequently, that exploitation becomes secondary with respect to universal alienation); social transformation is reduced to “transformations [of “disalienation”], no longer sudden, but permanent and gradual “; the question of the state disappears in that of the

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conquest of powers (the title, formerly, of a book by Gilles Martinet), “the progressive formation of a hegemony leading sooner or later to power in conditions of majority consent”, without decisive confrontations (from Germany to Portugal via Spain, Chile or Indonesia, this “majority consent” nevertheless has never been verified so far! We find the same tone in Roger Martelli, for whom “the essential is no longer to prepare the transfer of power from one group to another, but to begin to give to each individual the possibility of taking control of the individual and social conditions of their life”. The very legitimate anti-totalitarian theme of individual liberation ends then in solitary pleasure in which social emancipation is diluted.

If there is certainly interaction between the forms of oppression and domination, and not a direct mechanical effect of one particular form (class domination) on the others, it remains to determine with more precision the power of these interactions at a given time and within a determined social relation. Are we merely dealing with a juxtaposition of spaces and contradictions that can give rise to conjunctural and variable coalitions of interests? In which case the only conceivable unification would come from a pure moral voluntarism. Or else, the universal logic of capital and commodity fetishism affects all spheres of social life, to the point of creating the conditions of a relative unification of struggles (without implying, nevertheless, to be so discordant to social times, the reduction of contradictions to a dominant contradiction)?

We do not oppose to post-modern restlessness a fetishized abstract totality, but argue that detotalization (or deconstruction) is indissociable from concrete totalization, that is not an a priori totality but a becoming of totality. This totalization in process happens through the articulation of experience, but the subjective unification of struggles would arise from an arbitrary will (in other words, an ethical voluntarism) if it did not rest on a tendencial unification of which capital, understood here under the perverse form of commodity globalization, is the impersonal agent.

THESIS 5: POLITICS DISSOLVES NEITHER IN ETHICS, NOR IN AESTHETICS

Hannah Arendt feared that politics would finally disappear completely from the world, not only through the totalitarian abolition of plurality, but also by the commodity dissolution that is its dark side. This fear is confirmed by the fact of having entered an era of depoliticization, where the public space is squeezed by the violent forces that accompany economic horror and by an abstract moralism. This weakening of politics and its attributes (project, will, collective action) impregnates the jargon of post modernity. Beyond the effects of the conjuncture, this tendency translates a crisis of the conditions of political action under the impact of temporal space compression. The modern cult of progress means a culture of time and becoming to the detriment of space, reduced to an accessory and a contingent role. As Foucault indicated, space becomes the equivalent of death, fixed, immovable, opposed to the richness and dialectical fecundity of living time. The diabolical rotations of capital and the planetary widening of its reproduction overturn the conditions of its valuation. It is this phenomenon that expresses the feeling, so intense for two decades, of reduction of the duration of the instant and disappearance of the place in space. If the aesthetization of politics is an inherent recurrent tendency to crises of democracy, the admiration for the local, the search for origins, the ornamental overload and the manoeuvres of authenticity undoubtedly reveal a distressed vertigo verifying the impotence of politics faced with conditions that have become uncertain.

That politics is, in a first approximation, conceived as the art of the shepherd or that of a weaver, implies a scale of space and time, in which the city (with its public place and the rhythm of elective mandates) is the form. Citizenship is spoken of much more than the city and the citizen becomes unavailable in the general disorder of scales and rhythms. Nevertheless, we live still “in a period where there are cities and where the problem of politics arises because we belong to this cosmic period during which the world is delivered to its luck”. Politics remains as the profane art of duration and space, of drawing up and moving the lines of the possible in a world without Gods.

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COROLLARY 5.1: HISTORY IS NOT DISSOLVED IN A PULVERIZED TIME WITHOUT TOMORROW

The post-modern rejection of the grand narrative does not imply only a legitimate critique of the illusions of progress associated with the despotism of instrumental reason. It also means a deconstruction of historicity and a cult of the immediate, the ephemeral, the discardable, where medium term projects no longer have space. In the conjugation of the misadjusted social times, political temporality is precisely that of the medium term, between the fugitive moment and the unattainable eternity. It now demands more a mobile scale of duration and decision.

COROLLARY 5.2: PLACE AND SITE ARE NOT DISSOLVED IN THE FRIGHTFUL SILENCE OF INFINITE SPACE

The misalignment of the geographic mobility of capital (money and commodity) with respect to the relative or very conditional mobility of labour appears as the present form of unequal development that allows transfer of surplus value in the epoch of absolute imperialism: the unequal development of temporalities complements and relegates that of spaces. Consequently a mobile scale of territories, the importance acquired by the control of flows, the outline of a world order supported by a mosaic of weak, auxiliary states subalterned to commodity sovereignty.

However, collective action is organized in space: the meeting, the assembly, the encounter, and the demonstration. Its power is exerted in places and the very name of the event is related to dates (October, July 14, July 26) and to places (the Commune, Petrograd, Turin, Barcelona, Hamburg...) as emphasized by Henri Lefebvre, only the class struggle has the capacity to produce spatial differences irreducible to the single economic logic.

COROLLARY 5.3: STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY IS NOT DISSOLVED IN ECONOMIC NECESSITY

The political sense of the moment, the opportunity, the bifurcation opened to hope, constitutes a strategic sense; that of the possible, irreducible to necessity; not the sense of an arbitrary, abstract, voluntarist possible, of a possible where everything would be possible; but a possible determined by an authority, where the propitious moment emerges for the decision adjusted to a project, an objective to be attained. Itis,at the end of the day, sensedfromtheconjuncture, the response adapted to a concrete situation.

COROLLARY 5.4: THE OBJECTIVE IS NOT DISSOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT, THE EVENT IN THE PROCESS

Post-modern jargon willingly conciliates the taste for the event without history, happening without past or future, and the taste for fluidity without crisis, continuity without rupture, movement without objective. In the post- Stalinist slang of resignation, the collapse of the future ends logically at degree zero of strategy: to live the moment without enjoying, without ties! The ideologists of the disappointing tomorrow are satisfied, consequently, with preaching a “Communism that is no more”, conceived as a “gradual, permanent movement, always unfinished, that includes

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moments of clashes and ruptures". [14] Advocating " a new concept of revolution" "a revolutionary process without revolution, a revolutionary evolution", or still more "to go further on without delay", towards an extra temporal immediacy. [15] Affirming that "the revolution is no longer what it was since there is no longer a single moment where evolutions crystallize", "there is no longer a great leap, a great decline, nor decisive threshold.' [16]

Certainly, there is no longer a single revolutionary moment, a miraculous epiphany of history, but moments of decisionand critical thresholds. But the dissolution of the rupture in the continuity is the logical counterpart of a representation of the power possible to obtain with individual disalienation:"the progressive formation of a hegemony that leads sooner or later to power within the conditions of majority consent", says Lucien Sève. That "sooner or later" that defines a politics outside time seems at least imprudent in the light of the century and its tests (Spain, Chile, Indonesia, Portugal). Above all it ignores the vicious circle of fetishism and commodification, the conditions of reproduction of domination.

COROLLARY 5.5: THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE IS NOT DISSOLVED IN THE LOGIC OF THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36232.jpg]
Zygmunt Bauman

Between the social and political struggles there are neither Chinese walls nor watertight compartments. Politics arises and is invented inside the social, in the resistance to oppression, the statement of new rights that transform victims into active subjects. Nevertheless, the existence of a state as separate institution, simultaneously false incarnation of the general interest and guarantor of a public space irreducible to private appetite, structures a specific political field, a particular relationship of forces, a language of conflict, where social antagonisms are pronounced in a game of displacements and condensations, oppositions and alliances. Consequently, the class struggle is expressed there in a manner that is mediated under the form of the political struggle between parties.

Everything is political? Doubtless, but only to a certain extent and up to a certain point. In the "last instance", if you wish, and in diverse ways.

Between parties and social movements, more than a simple division of labour, there operates a dialectic, reciprocity, and complementariness. The subordination of the social movements to the parties would mean a statization of the social.

Inversely, politics in the service of the social would rapidly lead to lobbying, corporative, a summary of particular interests without general will. Since the dialectic of emancipation is not a long and tranquil river: popular aspirations and expectations are diverse and contradictory, often divided between the exigency of freedom and the demand for security. The specific function of politics consists indeed of articulating them and conjugating them.

EXPLANATORY NOTE 5.5: Commenting on the disappearance of distinctive authentic political choices and the fact that the confusion of class alternatives is translated, in the Anglo-Saxon countries, in the tendency to the elaboration of rainbow platforms, conceived as incoherent collages of slogans that seek to catch all and whose priorities are obtained from the opinion polls, Zygmunt Bauman examines the capacities of the social movements to contribute an answer to the crisis of politics.

He emphasizes the way in which social movements undergo the effects of post-modernity: a limited lifespan, weak continuity, temporary aggregates of individuals reunited by the contingency of a unique difficulty and dispersed again

as soon as the problem is solved. It is not the fault of programmes and leaders, says Bauman: this inconsistency and intermittency rather reflects the neither cumulative nor integrative character of suffering and shortage in these dissonant times. Social movements have then a poor capacity to demand great transformations and to pose great questions. They are poor substitutes for their predecessors, mass political parties. This impotent fragmentation is the faithful reflection of the loss of sovereignty of the state, reduced to a police station in the midst of commodity laissez faire. [17]

Zizek sees in the dispersion of the new social movements the proliferation of new subjectivities on the background of resignation, a consequence of the defeats of the century. This return to states, estates and bodies would be the logical consequence of detotalization and obscuring of class consciousness. Rejection of politics responds to the political limitation of the social made by the “political philosophies” of the last decade. However, the same gesture that tries to draw the limit between politics and non-politics and, to remove certain areas (beginning with the economy) from politics is “the political gesture par excellence”. [18]

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36233.jpg]
Ernesto Laclau

For Laclau, emancipation will indefinitely be contaminated by power, so that its complete realization would mean the total extinction of freedom. The crisis of the left would be the result of a double end to the representations of the future, under the form of the bankruptcy of bureaucratic Communism and the bankruptcy of Keynesian reformism. If a possible renaissance implies the “reconstruction of a new social imagination”, the formula remains very vague since Laclau does not face any radical alternative.

In the controversy that opposes them, Zizek insists, faced with the new domesticity of the centre left, in “keeping open the utopian space of global alternative, even if this space must be left empty while it waits for its content”. In effect, the left must choose between resignation and the rejection of the liberal blackmail according to which any perspective of radical change would have to lead to a new totalitarian disaster.

Laclau does not give up on the perspective of unification. He sees, on the contrary, in the radical dispersion of the movements, that makes unthinkable their articulation, the same failure of post-modernity.

Leaderless, reticular, decentred movements, forced by defeat to be cornered in a subaltern internalization of the dominant discourse? But also redeployment of the social movement in the different scopes of social reproduction, multiplication of spaces of resistance, affirmation of its relative autonomy and its own temporality.

All this is not negative if it goes beyond simple fragmentation and thinks about articulation. If this is not done, there is no another outcome than dispersed lobbying (the very image of subaltern as effect of domination on the dominated cf. Kouvelakis) or authoritarian unification by means of the word of the master, or a scientific vanguard, that would reduce political universalization to scientific universalization (a new avatar of “scientific socialism”) or an ethical vanguard that would reduce it to the universality of the categorical imperative.

Without, in either case, approaching the process of concrete universalization by means of the extension of the area of the struggle and its political unification. There is no another way out in this perspective but to go back to the universalising theme, capital itself, and the multiple effects of domination produced by commodity reification.

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[1] See Alex Callinicos, “Imperialism Today”, in “Marxism and the New Imperialism”, Bookmarks, London 1994.

[2] See Gilbert Achcar, “La Nouvelle guerre froide”, PUF, collection Actuel Mane, Paris 1999

[3] See Ernest Mandel, “The Meaning of the Second World War”, Verso, London 1986.

[4] See V, Garonne, “Les révolutionnaires du XI-Xe siècle”, Free Champ, Paris.

[5] Lucien Séve, “Commencer par les fins”, La Dispute, Paris l999.

[6] Roger Martelli, “Le communisme autrement”, Syllepse, Paris 1998.

[7] Eric Hobsbawm, “The Age of Extremes”, Penguin, 1994.

[8] Ibid, page 103.

[9] See the contributions of Catherine Samary, Michel Lequenne, Antoine Artous in “Critique communiste”, number 157, winter 2000.

[10] Nicos Poulantzas, “Classes in Contemporary Capitalism”, NLB, London 1975; Baudelot and Establet, “La Petite bourgeoisie en France”, Maspero, Paris 1970. See also the collection of magazines “Critique de l” économie politique”, “Critique communiste”, “Cahiers de la Taupe”.

[11] Stéphane Beaud and Michel Pialoux, “Retour sur la condition ouvrière”, Fayard, Paris 1999.

[12] “Daily Telegraph”, February 22, 2000.

[13] Rediscovered recently in Hungary, the Lukacs text has been published in English under the title “Tailism and Dialectic”, followed by an epilogue by Slavoj Zizek, Verso, London, 2000.

[14] Pierre Zarka, “Un communisme á usage immediate”, Plón, Paris 1999.

[15] Lucien Séve, “Commencer par les fins”, op. cit.

[16] Rober Martelli, “Le communisme autremement”, op.cit.

[17] “Letter from Zigmunt Bauman to Dennis Smith”, in Dennis Smith, “Zigmunt Bauman, Prophet of Post modernity”, Polity Press, Cambridge 1999.

[18] Zizek, op.cit., page 95.

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