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Letter from the editor

This tenth issue of *Workers of the World – International Journal on Strikes and Social* is being published after a long time hiatus for which the pandemic situation and its procession of miseries is partially, although not solely responsible. However, we would like to associate this "renaissance" of our journal with the full recovery of Sjaak van der Velden, member of our Editorial Board, who for many months struggled with Covid 19 and its effects, for a long and healthy life.

Along this path, we were forced to replace the *dossier* previously announced for this issue with another one, coordinated by Raquel Varela and Roberto della Santa, focused on the history of revolutions in the 20th century, with a particular emphasis on what we can call history from bellow and people's history. To this dossier also contributed Verity Burgmann (University of Melbourne), Attila Melegh (Corvinus University, Budapest), and Michael Seidman (University of North Carolina Wilmington). The issue is completed with articles by David Mandel (University of Québec at Montreal) and Eddie Cottle (Rhodes University, South Africa) – a real journey around the world, although it certainly took us more than 80 days to complete it.

We are also pleased to announce the Fifth International Conference on Strikes and Social Conflicts, which will take place in Rotterdam at the headquarters of the Dutch Trade Union Confederation in 22-24 June, 2022. It will be focused on the lessons learned from the approaches and strategies of trade unions and social movements in terms of responses to the social and economic changes that accompanied globalisation. See you there!

Workers of the World is the journal of the International Association Strikes and Social Conflicts.

Articles for *Workers of the World* should be sent to the executive editor at workersoftheworld2012@yahoo.co.uk.

António Simões do Paço
Executive Editor

Introduction: The Twentieth Century Revolutions[1]

Raquel Varela and Roberto della Santa

This issue of *Workers of the World* has a dossier focused on the history of revolutions in the 20th century, with an emphasis on what we call *history from below and people's history*, in particular on four central revolutionary processes – the Russian revolution of 1917, the 1930s, the May 68 revolution, and the 1980s revolutions and counterrevolutions. But before getting to our main subject let us return for a little while to Walter Benjamin's last days in Portbou, Catalonia, near the French border.

Benjamin reached this village fleeing Nazi persecution in 1940. Behind him, the mighty Pyrenees; in front of him, the dazzling cliff falling into the Mediterranean. France on one side; Spain on the other. The monument that the artist Daniel Karavan built, "Passatges", is a powerful "lieu de mémoire". It consists of a rusty staircase, covered by a steel tunnel, which descends from the old cemetery gate to the ocean, reaching a sheet of glass, on which we can read a thought of the philosopher: "*The construction of history is consecrated to the memory of those who have no name.*" Shortly before being handed over to the Vichy regime and the Gestapo by Francoist officers, he has penned one of the briefest, sharper, best-known

[1] Parts of this text result from Raquel Varela's habilitation appliance at NOVA University Lisbon (2021) and her research for *A People's History of Europe. From World War II to Today* (Pluto Press, London, 2021), as well as from the Public Competition at Univ. Federal of Rio de Janeiro (2018) by Roberto della Santa and the research carried out in the scope of his Post-Doctoral Internship in Modern and Contemporary History (UNL, BPD CAPES Abroad, Process No. 88.882.306195/2018.02).

theoretical essays and most controversial works ever written about the concept of history.

If Marx's famous comparison of social revolution as the locomotive of history appealed to the imagination in the golden age of the railroad, Benjamin's thought revolutionized the prevailing main idea of historical progress itself. The well-known allegory of the locomotive implied a teleological vision of history, the idea of the acceleration of historical time, and a robust sense of the future. A new social concept of the industrial reserve army in formation and the re-evaluation of the technological apparatus in the development of the productive forces were at the heart of this revolutionary imaginary. We can think of either the maneuvers of the iconic Red Army armored train or the action of railway workers disrupting circulation by sabotaging the railways during the Mexican Revolution. All of this ended abruptly at midnight in the 20th century, during World War II, when this essay appeared as a profane illumination.

In the preparatory notes to *On the Concept of History* (1940) Benjamin makes frequent reference to Karl Marx, but at one important point he adopts a critical distance from the Old Moor. "Marx says that revolutions are the locomotives of world history. But the situation may be quite different. Perhaps revolutions are not the train ride, but the human race grabbing for the emergency brake."[2] Implicitly, the image suggests that if humanity follows a dizzying rush towards disaster, applying the emergency brake is the saving measure. With this Benjamin gave us another canon.

The emergency brake applied against the "war of wars" gave place to the "revolution of revolutions". The equation "nation equals state and state equals people", which for the historian Eric Hobsbawm was the centre of the constitution of bourgeois nationalism after the French revolution,[3] will shift sharply. The war would no longer be preponderantly among nations, but fundamentally between the internationally united working class against the bourgeoisie of their own nations and abroad — a class struggle against imperialist war. Of course, by this we do not mean that there is a debacle of nations or even of nationalism – that would be an anachronistic mark of a naive "national nihilism".[4] Contrary to the spirit of a peculiar

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[2] Walter Benjamin, GS I, 3, p.132. This is one of the preparatory notes to the essay, which does not appear in the final version. The passage is referred in *The Civil War in France*.

[3] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nações e Nacionalismos desde 1870,* São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 2ª edição, 1998, p. 32. Benedict Anderson, *Comunidades Imaginadas: reflexões sobre a origem e a expansão do nacionalismo,* Lisboa, Edições 70, 2005; Gopal Balakrishnan, *Mapping The Nation*, London, *New Left Review,* 1996.

[4] Isaac Deutscher, Correspondence, 1965 *apud* Perry Anderson, In: *English Questions*, London: Verso, p. 4-5, 1992.

experience in the late 1930s and 1940s, during the Spanish Civil War and World War II, the central axis in the late 10s and 1920s was revolutions and internationalism: more than avoiding fascism, building a new order. The continuum of world history would never be the same after this event.

This awareness that workers have a decisive role in history acquired an unusual dimension in Europe between the late 19th and the first three decades of the 20th century. If the revolutions of 1848 had already set in motion the workers of France and Germany, if the Paris Commune had shown the way for a non-proprietary class to seize power, at the dawn of the twentieth century, “working men and (to a much lesser extent) women made their presence felt in the public arena of most European countries”[5] – in the first Russian revolution of 1905, in the anarchist uprising of Barcelona in 1909, which became known as the “tragic week”, in Italy’s “red week” in June 1914, in widespread strikes in France, Germany and England (there were 500 industrial conflicts in France between 1900 and 1915). In England there was an unprecedented wave of strikes in 1911 and in Germany one million workers took part in strikes in 1912. In 1914 the English and German unions had more than two million members, which would then correspond to 30% of the male working force.[6] In Portugal the vigour of the workers’ press at the end of the monarchy and the beginning of the republic is unique in the country’s history, with hundreds of regular workers’ newspapers and magazines published in this period. The French Socialist Party, first constituted as the French Section of the Workers’ International, to highlight the party’s internationalism, had 1,5 million votes in 1914.

It was a historical form of social awareness that added to its own collective organization and lived experience, or rather, a new social subject, who entered the stage of history. However, the international climate of the world of capital was changing. A turbulent world, in continuous transformation, combining the growth of monopoly capitalism in Western Europe and an imperial expansion overseas with the vigorous technological and scientific advance, the expansion of capital accumulation, the increase in profit rates and an increasing political-military rivalry among imperialisms. These objective social conditions are very different from those of the relatively quiet stage of capitalist development during the long recession – from 1874 to 1894 – after the defeat of the Paris Commune and before the outbreak of the first inter-imperialist conflicts in the Anglo-Boer, American and Russian-Japanese wars.

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[5] Dick Geary, *European Labour. Politics From 1900 to the Depression*, New Jersey, Atlantic Highlands, 1991, p. 1.
[6] Robert O. Paxton, *Europe in the Twentieth Century,* Orlando, Harcourt, 1997, p. 27.

However, not the entire labour movement was socialist. On the eve of the war there was a battle in Europe between a reformist way, based on parliamentary institutions and the state, and the revolutionary way, driven by parties strongly influenced by Marxism, with the defence of the insurrectionary way based on organizations independent from the state.[7]

The First World War would further divide the wings of the social democratic movement in Europe, in such a radical way that it would cause the split of the workers' movement as a whole. In the new conditions of the imperialist era, inaugurated with the new century, they nevertheless constituted a relatively homogeneous and rich medium for discussions and communication, in which the greatest authors of the most important groups of the Second International in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where critical Marxism was now concentrated, knew each other's works first hand (or second), a medium in which criticism knew no boundaries. Thus, when the war broke out in 1914, the resulting split did not operate between the different national groups of theorists who dominated the political scene before the war, but rather crossed them all across.

Capitalism allowed, by breaking down the barriers of the closed feudal or semi-feudal system, to introduce competition, the internal market, wage labour, driving the greatest leap in the development of the productive forces of all mankind.[8] However, in the late third of the 19th century, the first great depression (1870) was already showing signs of a clutched engine: "By showing the existence of an absolute surplus of capital without objective conditions to feed the valuation circuit, the burning of wealth becomes an imperative of capital metabolism,"[9] that is, war and barbarism, production for destruction will be the main and most catastrophic fact of the 20th century – two world wars killed 70 to 80 million people, in a violent political process of "liquidation of value" – "the destruction of wealth is the only means of restoring the conditions for the resumption of the accumulation process".[10] As Chris Harman reminds us, imperialism is not just a stage in history in which there is a dispute for colonies, it is "a system whose logic was total militarisation and total war, regardless of the social dislocation this caused."[11]

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[7] Robert O. Paxton, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, Orlando, Harcourt, 1997, p. 28.
[8] See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875,* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1975; and Eric J. Hobsbwam, *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1987.
[9] Osvaldo Coggiola, *As Grandes Depressões*, São Paulo, Alameda, 2009, p. 10-11.
[10] Osvaldo Coggiola, *ibidem*.
[11] Chris Harman, *A People's History of the World*, London and Sidney, Bookmarks, 1999, p. 409.

The twentieth century will still be marked by three major depressions: 1929, when world capitalism succumbed and sought salvation in World War II; 1970-73, with the end of Bretton Woods; and 2008, when state intervention saved the world's largest banks and industries of major countries, including the US, England, Germany and France, leading to a real wage drop of between 25% in the US and 30 to 40% in southern Europe.[12]

But this economic characteristic of the capitalist mode of accumulation in the twentieth century – the inevitable and successive crises – will go hand in hand with the political and social revolutions.

The twentieth century was the most revolutionary century in all of human history: Russian Revolution of 1905, Republican Revolution in Portugal, 1910, Mexican Revolution of 1910, Irish Revolution of 1916, Russian Revolution of 1917, "Bolshevik Triennium", Spain 1917-1920; Red Biennium, Italy 1919-1920, Hungarian Revolution of 1919, German Revolution of 1919, German Revolution of 1923, Austrian Revolution of 1934, Spanish Revolution of 1934-36, Indonesian Revolution of 1946-49, Chinese Revolution of 1949, Bolivian Revolution of 1952, 1953 uprising in the German Democratic Republic, Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Cuban Revolution of 1959, all anti-colonial revolutions, most importantly Vietnam, France's May 68, the Prague Spring of 1968, the Hot Autumn of 1969 in Italy, the Portuguese Revolution of 1974-75, the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979, the Iranian Revolution of 1979…

The twentieth century is the century of the greatest number of revolutions and counter-revolutions in the whole of human history, as Karl Marx had predicted in the pamphlet he wrote with Friedrich Engels for the founding of the International, *The Communist Manifesto*[13] – never a century had seen so many revolutions happen, democratic and social, as the twentieth century.[14]

But the twentieth century had more "February" revolutions (that changed political regimes), than "Octobers" (revolutions that questioned the bourgeois state).[15] There were many revolutionary crises after the "Februarys" that were similar in dimension to the Russian October, with divisions within the military, dual power with the creation of workers' councils, occupation of factories and expropriations – but in most of them

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[12] Michael Roberts, *The Long Depression,* Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2016.
[13] Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, translated by Samuel Moore, first published in London, 1848.
[14] Valério Arcary, *As Esquinas Perigosas da História. Situações Revolucionárias em Perspectiva Marxista,* São Paulo, Xamã, 2004.
[15] Valério Arcary, *ibidem*, p. 104.

the workers did not seize power. And in the countries where they did, class struggle receded and gave way to new forms of hierarchy or, in isolated cases, scarcity incompatible with socialism, as was the case in Cuba.

Valerio Arcary argues that

> the revolutionary processes that triumphed and went to expropriation of the bourgeoisie (Yugoslavia, Albania, China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba) contradicted three predictions of classical Marxism: 1) the proletariat was not their main social subject; agrarian revolutions were predominant, with strong peasant protagonism; 2) plural self-organization or direct democracy did not exist, the form of dual territorial power predominated, through revolutionary armies or militarily centralized guerrillas, and after the conquest of power, a uniform evolution towards one-party dictatorial regimes; 3) the internationalist strategy had no greater importance; on the contrary, intense nationalism prevailed, except for the Cuban revolution in its early years.[16]

But revolutions, the author goes on, are crucial in explaining the reforms:

> Only when seriously threatened by the revolutionary danger – as the Paris Commune or the two revolutionary waves following the October Revolution in Russia – did the capitalists agree to compromise ... The historical project of capitalist reform has failed again and again and again.[17]

This statement is particularly brutal today when 1% of the population has the same wealth as the remaining 99%.[18] The Russian revolution succumbed to the Stalinist Thermidor, but one cannot mix revolution – until 1927 – with counterrevolution. All was open in the 1920s Europe, the germs of the dictatorship that consolidated, the restoration of capitalism that followed – but also the seed of an equal and free society. It remains open, i.e. historical today.

The Making of the English Working Class[19] was a milestone for history. This work, first published in 1963, offered the social history of

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[16] Valério Arcary, *ibidem*, p. 98.
[17] Valério Arcary, *O Encontro da Revolução com a História,* São Paulo, Sundermann, 2006, p. 296.
[18] "1% da população global detém mesma riqueza dos 99% restantes, diz estudo" (One per cent of world population has de same wealth as the remaining 99 per cent, study says), In *BBC News*, 18 January 2016, http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2016/01/160118_riqueza_estudo_oxfam_fn accessed on 29 de July 2017. About social inequality, see Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2014).
[19] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* London, Penguin, 2013.

labour a model that it had long needed. Once his message was assimilated, E.P. Thompson's great book, by emphasizing culture and social awareness, transformed the history of labour into the *history of the working class*. Nowadays, there is a wide scientific consensus on the nature of this historiographic transition: the "old" labour history had a more institutional propensity, focused on the organizational description of developments, political debates, and on leaders and forms of collective action such as strikes. It was represented by Sidney and Beatrice Webb[20], the Wisconsin school of John R. Commons,[21] among others, but also by Marxists like Philip Foner.[22] The new history of labour tried to put workers' social struggles into context. As Eric Hobsbawm stated in *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour* (1964), the new history of labour emphasized the working classes as such and the technical and economic conditions that allowed or prevented effective labour movements. Edward Palmer Thompson presented, in *The Making of the English Working Class*, a perspective that came to be called *history from below*. The subaltern social groups – the "barefoot poor", "out-dated" farmers, "obsolete" weavers – are, from the social and historical point of view of the British New Left, coming from the Communist Party of Great Britain Historians Group,[23] a kind of axiological – and cognitive – centrality with regard to a "writing" (and "listening") of social history against what they considered the official history of the winners.[24] An expanded conception of the social class concept was made possible thanks to Thompson's diligent attention and care with regard to the historiographical reconstruction of what he calls dying traditions, community ideals and insurrectionary conspiracies regarding, for example, the "moral economy of the English crowd" or the long duration in the making of the English working class.[25]

In *History from Below*, Jim Sharpe[26] analyses the perspective of the *Annales* school, whose main exponents were Ferdinand Braudel, Marc

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[20] Angela Woollacott, "Beatrice and Sidney Webb: Fabian socialists", *History of European Ideas,* 8:2, 1987, pp. 231-233.
[21] Malcolm Rutherford, "Wisconsin Institutionalism: John R. Commons and His Students", *Labor History,* 2006, 47:2, pp. 161-188.
[22] Philip Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States.* In 10 volumes, 1947–1994, New York, International Publishers.
[23] Roberto della Santa, "English Marxism, Anderson translation & integral journalism of New Left Review (or an international world-Marxism in the street-fighting years of Western Europe". PhD Thesis in Social Sciences, UNESP, 2015.
[24] Roberto della Santa, "English Marxism, Anderson translation & integral journalism of New Left Review", op. cit.
[25] Marcelo Badaró Mattos, *E. P. Thompson e a tradição de crítica ativa do materialismo histórico*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora UFRJ, 2012.
[26] Jim Sharpe, "A História vista de Baixo", In Peter Burke, *A Escrita da História*, Novas Perspetivas, pp. 39-62, São Paulo, UNESP, 1991, p. 26. (Published in English in "History

Bloch and Lucien Febvre. According to Burke himself, at least six historical-cultural coordinates characterize this new current of diffuse, broad and heterogeneous thought: 1) the expansion of the strictly “political” history to a “total” history; 2) the shift from a “history of men and events” (*histoire événementielle*) to a “structural” history, or from “short cycles” to “long term” (*la longue durée*); 3) a “history from the top” for a new “history from below”; 4) the change from the more classic canons of consubstantiation in official evidence to the search for unofficial documents; 5) from the predominance of “historical individuals” to the importance of anonymous masses and, finally, 6) the questioning of the world view typical of the distinction traditionally exposed in the links between objectivity and subjectivity, in a great antipositivist refusal.

The *people's history* is a type of historical writing that tries to explain historical events and processes from the perspective of ordinary people and not their leaders. There is an emphasis on the non-privileged, the oppressed, the poor, the nonconformists and other marginal groups. Its authors, typically aligned to the left, have a certain Marxist historiography in mind, as in the approach of the History Workshop movement in Britain in the 1960s.[27] Lucien Febvre[28] used the phrase “*histoire vue d'en bas et non d'en haut*” for the first time in 1932, when he praised Albert Mathiez for trying to tell the “*histoire des masses et non des vedettes*”. It was also used in the title of A. L. Morton's 1938 book, *A People's History of England*.[29] However, it was EP Thompson's “History from Below” essay in *The Times Literary Supplement* (1966)[30] that took the phrase to the forefront of the historiography scene from the 1970s onwards. It was popularized among non-historians by the book of Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (1980). Their critics object to them for resorting to supposedly idealized and / or insufficiently sophisticated notions of nation-people, attributing to them allegedly innate progressive values. In the past two decades, *people's histories* have spread widely beyond the Anglo-Saxon universe, after Howard Zinn had a sudden and unexpected success with his work.[31] It would be something different from the classic social history, something more like a renewal of the histories of those “below”, as

from Below”, in *New Perspectives in Historical Writing*. ed. / Peter Burke. Oxford : Polity Press, 1991. p. 24-41.

[27] Roberto della Santa, “Otimismo da vontade, pessimismo da razão”, op. cit.

28 Lucien Febvre, “Albert Mathiez : un tempérament, une education”, *Annales* Année 1932, 18, p. 573-576.

[29] A. L. Morton, *A People's History of England,* London, Left Book Club Edition, 1938.

[30] E. P. Thompson, “History from Below,” *The Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April 1966.

[31] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States,* New York, Perennial (Harper Collins), 1999.

Hobsbawm might have said. [32] If Howard Zinn said that people's histories would be like "the voice of the people", the voice of those who had no voice, Chris Harman, author of *A People's History of the World*,[33] called it the "skeleton" of history. This approach to historiography is directly opposed to methods that tend to emphasize great unique figures in history, *great* men, *great* events and *great* dates; it argues that the determining factor in history is the daily life of ordinary people, their class and social origin and profession/activity.

In Defence of History

In this dossier you will find the rejection of what Walter Benjamin called a "progressive" conception of history[34]: i) the uneven and combined development, "by leaps", of epochs and continents; ii) the reciprocal reducibility or translatability between the theory of labour history and the history of Marxist theory; iii) the benefit of the inventory of the explosion of the time-space *continuum* that conceals past, present and future, and, iv) the premise of the centrality of the class that lives from its own labour wages for human vital activity are some of its most fundamental corpus of premises. Political Stalinism was a blind zone for the development of Marxist history.[35] It does not diminish the admiration we feel for many masters to show their very limits. There are many ways to overcome these barriers. We believe that this text offers one. The interplay between the historical political making itself and the intellectual craftsmanship of the historian – *Histoire* & *Geschichte* – is found right here in the dialectization of open Marxism and an endless History. The recognition of what is the evident greatness of the main "*popular historians*" of the past does not bypass through the blind eye to their limitations here. A new *people's history* facing revolutionary processes of the present time in social

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[32] Eric Hobsbawm, *Sobre História*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1997.

[33] Chris Harman, *A People's History of the World,* London-Sidney, Bookmarks, 1999, iv.

[34] Michael Löwy, *Walter Benjamin: aviso de incêndio. Uma leitura das teses "Sobre o conceito de história"*, São Paulo, Boitempo Editorial, 2012; Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin rumo a uma crítica revolucionária*, Fortaleza, Omni, 2010; Jeanne-Marie Gagnebin, *Historia e narração em Walter Benjamin*, São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1999, Walter Benjamin, *Obras escolhidas*. Vol. 1. Magia e técnica, arte e política. Ensaios sobre literatura e história da cultura. Preface by Jeanne Marie Gagnebin. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1987.

[35] Ellen Wood, John Bellamy Foster (eds), *Em Defesa da História. Marxismo e Pós-modernismo*, Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar Editores, 1997; Ellen Meiksins Wood, *"The Retreat of the Intellectuals", Socialist Register, 1990. Republished in Jacobin (*https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/01/ellen-meiksins-wood-gramsci-socialism-capitalism-intellectuals-postmodernism-identity/ *acesso em 2 de Fevereiro de 2018. (Tradução Lavra Palavra 2016).*

upheavals of the 20th century, rather than a subject marker is a declaration of principles. The very concept of agency meets the "spectrum of self-determination." In many ways, one could argue that, at least in this sense, this is an inheritance due to *oeuvres* mostly penned by William Pelz,[36] Chris Harman,[37] Colin Barker,[38] and, last but not least, Kevin Murphy.[39]

The sound empiricism of the sources should give way to a mutual overlap between concepts and evidence, or rather, the actual vigour of that historically typical Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship should come closer to the strength of revolutionary Marxist Continental social political theory, impregnating itself with its social political lexicon to involve such notions as duality of powers, social relation of political forces and revolutionary crises, junctures, epochs and/or situations. The contextual reification of the national borders would gain a new world of its own in giving way to a renewed "methodological internationalism", which, in the case studied by us in *A Peoples's History of the Portuguese Revolution* points to the indissoluble connection with the anti-colonial struggles in Africa, the "Red Mediterranean" interlinking lived experience of Spain and Greece freedom-fighters and the perceived experience of Brazilian and Latin America social resistance in the 1980s. The very concept of the making of history, as an act of social popular self-determination, finally, would win new continents by expanding itself in scope and in spectrum until it fully incorporated the very form of social and political revolutions "from the bottom up". Bringing the *people´s history* to the revolutions is also bringing the revolution to its own hard core. The history of the "old world" resistants, rebels and/or dissidents is a part of the fundamental history for understanding the course of events in the 20th and 21st centuries. However, like Marx himself, we believe that those "from below" should learn to scoff mercilessly off their historical failures. That is, of course, a social history of those who live on their own labour wages.

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[36] William Pelz, *História do Povo na Europa Moderna*, Lisboa, Objectiva, 2016.
[37] Chris Harman, *A People's History of the World*, London and Sidney, Bookmarks, 19
[38] Colin Barker, "O movimento social como um todo", In Revista *Outubro,* n. 22, 2º semestre de 2014, Colin Barker (ed), *Revolutionary Rehearsals,* London/Chicago, Bookmarks, 1987.
[39] Kevin Murphy, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, New York/Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2007.

The Crisis of 1929, the Revolutions of the 1930s and Nazism[1]

Raquel Varela

‘For the ruling class of Germany, their support for fascism was not merely a response to crisis, it was rather a way of utilizing the crisis. Big business, the army and other remnants of the German Empire gave the Nazis power and a job to do. The problem was the German fascists got carried away, started a war and then lost it.’

William Pelz, *A People’s History of Modern Europe*[2]

The crisis of 1929

Sixty years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, capitalists literally fell off Wall Street buildings. They were suicidal, throwing themselves off from the buildings where the stock exchange activity of New York is concentrated. This image is still part of the memory that remained of the crisis of 1929. Following the crash of 2008, protesters wielded a poster that read, ‘Jump you Fuckers!’ And the same slogan would be adopted by the anarchist musician Gene Burnett in the Occupy Wall Street Movement against the global financial system, which mimicked the occupations of hundreds of thousands of people for several months in Tahrir Square in January 2011, following the Egyptian democratic revolution against Hosni Mubarak.

[1] After this article was approved for publication in *Workers of the World*, a version of it was published as a chapter of the book *A People’s History of Europe. From World War I to Today* (Pluto Press, London, 2021).

[2] William Pelz, *A People’s History of Modern Europe* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), 141.

On 24 October 1929, New York Stock Exchange shares fell by 50 per cent in just one day.[3] In the 1920s, the USA had become the lenders of the world. In 1925, more than half of the gold stocks were held by them, thus stealing the top spot from England, which eventually suspended debt repayments following the 1929 crash, when the USA withdrew its credit to Europe.

Shortly before, England had experienced the most important strike in its history. In 1926, the labour movement rose with a force unheard of since the Chartist struggles in a major general strike. The ruling classes were forced to accept, albeit reluctantly, an alliance between the Labour Party and the local bourgeoisie to deal with the effects of the general strike of 1926, which began with the demand for wage increases among the miners, but took insurrectional proportions by reaching 1.7 million workers across the country and involving dockers, transport workers, etc.[4]

The economic cycles of capitalist production, described in Marx's *Capital*,[5] which occurred in the nineteenth century roughly every ten years[6] (they are mapped by the US Department of Commerce),[7] can be described as follows: crisis, expansion, peak of accumulation, new crisis. The origin of cyclical crises is the tendency of the rate of profit to fall due to the need to increase constant capital (capital invested in plant, equipment and materials) vis-à-vis the variable capital (wages).[8]

Simply put, in the competitive struggle of capitalism – which is opposed to a planned economy – all capitalists must increase their investment in technology, machinery, etc. That represents a cost. The origin of value is work. The profit, following this ratio between investment and wages, tends to fall. There is deflation in prices. There comes a time when capitalists put their goods in the market below the desired average profit rate

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[3] Osvaldo Coggiola, *As Grandes Depressões* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2009), 154.
[4] H. Pelling, *The History of British Trade Unionism* (London: Macmillan, 1987); and C.J. Wrigley, 'The Trade Unions between the Wars', in C.J. Wrigley (ed.), *A History of British Industrial Relations 1914–1939* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987).
[5] Karl Marx, *O Capital*, Book I, (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2001).
[6] Michael Roberts, *The Long Depression* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016).
[7] US Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions. The National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. Cambridge MA 02138, www.nber.org/cycles.html (accessed 2 February 2018).
[8] Vide Jorge Grespan, *O Negativo do Capital* (São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2012), 183–189.

– or even with losses. The expression of this is the fall in the real value of property in general. A fall in the value of companies on the stock market is not the source of the crisis, but is a symptom of it. Shares fall when stockholders withdraw their investments because they consider that they do not have an acceptable average rate of return.

In the capitalist mode of production, crises are due to overproduction of capital rather than scarcity, as they were in the Middle Ages, when due to bad weather, agricultural plagues, diseases, etc., societies were sometimes ruined, without the means to react. In capitalist crises post-1820, when the cost of labour, the only source of value, rises against constant capital, there is an increasing devaluation of property, the average rate of profit drops. That is the crisis – of excess, not of scarcity. Part of the society, workers, small entrepreneurs, peasants, are called to pay the 'way out of the crisis' with brutal measures that imply reduction of wages, unemployment and concentration of capital by elimination of the most fragile competitors.

In 1929, shares fell by up to 80 per cent. Between 1929 and 1932, workers' income in the USA fell by half. Governments abandoned the gold standard, many betting on the devaluation of the currency and, in the early years, on protectionism. All these measures only worsened the crisis. It quickly spread to Europe – in 1932, world production had fallen by 33 per cent and world trade by 60 per cent. And there were more than 30 million officially acknowledged unemployed people, a figure far behind the reality.

In 1933, automotive production had been cut by 80 per cent and a total of almost 107,000 companies in the United States had failed – not counting the banks, which actually did fail later. With the new wave of strikes, protests and demonstrations having an epicentre in the USA, Britain, Austria and Spain, there was a radical shift from these protectionist policies to Keynesian policies, the New Deal – the capitalist state became 'hoarder, banker and producer'.[9]

The Keynesian proposals focused not only on social protection, which was largely unknown until then, but also and mostly in fixing prices, in the mandatory allocation of labour power to some sectors and national agreements on conditions of production – it was a planned capitalist economy. This was associated with public works, which in turn were based on a controlled deficit.

[9] Coggiola, *As Grandes Depressões*, 150–154.

However, contrary to what is commonly and mistakenly mentioned, these measures did not solve the crisis. By 1937, the decline in the average rate of profit had returned. The 1929 unemployment rates were only reversed when the United States entered the Second World War in 1941. It was the war economy, which turned unemployed people into soldiers and productive forces in factories for the production of destruction machines that reversed the crisis of accumulation.

Both Keynesian and monetarist theories failed:

> In 1937, however, the economy was under the threat of a new sinking, the New Deal became, in the words of Art Preis, the War Deal, with the amputation, in 1938, of US$800 million for social security and public works, and an increase in defence spending ($200 million more in 1938, $400 million more in 1939). Since 1939 the European states bought arms from the United States – and the USA also armed. The war economy was actually the way out of the crisis.10

Howard Zinn also recalls the limited impact of the New Deal measures. The new political agreements were decisive. With the change from the Communist International's 1935 policy of class against class to the 'popular front', the US Communist Party supported Roosevelt in the second election and helped to appease the greater confrontational situation with the workers the ruling classes had experienced, sit-down strikes in the automotive industry.[11] The New Deal succeeded only in reducing unemployment from 13 million to 9 million, but managed to involve the main unions – during the war, the CIO and AFL pledged to call no strikes, thus 'weaken[ing] the old labour militancy of the thirties because the war economy created millions of new jobs at higher wages.'[12]

Everything seemed to have been invented at the turn of the century: transatlantic crossings became faster due to new steamships, the Wrights took to the air in 1903; Henry Ford invented and democratised the automobile. The war, however, exposed the harsh reality of the limits of this optimism and, for the first time, questioned whether industrial development would always be synonymous with progress. The fact is that, for all the

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[10] *Ibid*, 164.
[11] John Newsinger, *Fighting Back: The American Working Class in the 1930s* (London: Bookmarks, 2012).
[12] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 402.

propaganda that was made to the 'God of consumerism', accumulation tended to absolute pauperisation, that is, to the inability of the working class to consume.

It would be Walter Benjamin, a German philosopher, unlike Marx, to conceive of revolution not as a locomotive of history, but as its emergency brake,[13] to stop the history of capitalism, claiming the idea that progress is not synonymous with well being. We can walk forward towards a cliff.

But until 1914, it was unthinkable to question this Enlightenment notion. Man seemed capable of controlling nature, owing to the unusual scientific impulse brought by the Industrial Revolution. The crisis of 1929 shook as never before the belief not only in progress but also in capitalism itself. Marx was reborn due to the strength of this reality – ranks of starving people in countries that dumped production to avoid falling profits, oranges being thrown away to avoid the fall of its price. In Brazil, coffee was used as fuel for the locomotives. Maintaining profit meant the destruction of wealth.

In 1932, American businessmen commissioned the Mexican painter Diego Rivera[14] to paint a mural, which would be installed at the Rockefeller Foundation, and to show the capacity of technique and science to overcome the problems that were posed to humankind. Jack London in *The Iron Heel*, published in 1908, anticipated the emergence of a tyrannical oligarchy against the revolutionary socialists.[15] For the Rockefellers, technology was the answer to the problems that arose at the crossroads of 1929. But Rivera painted the mural responding to the crisis of 1929 with … class struggle. The mural shows on its right side, below, the figure of headless fascism, severed by the workers. Today, it is among the main works of art of the twentieth century, exhibited in the Museum of Fine Arts in Mexico City, but at the time the Foundation had it destroyed because, although in the centre of the mural was the atom, science, technique, alongside were the Bolshevik leaders – Lenin, Trotsky and a white and a black worker holding hands, representing class struggle.

[13] Walter Benjamin (Gérard Raulet, Über den Begriff der Geschichte. Band 19) (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 7–20.
[14] Andrea Kettenmann, *Rivera* (Cologne: Taschen, 2001).
[15] Jack London, *The Iron Heel* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006).

Crises do not give rise to revolutions, but they open up that possibility. Without crises, there are no revolutions.[16] They are the most critical point in the history of capitalism. In the words of Fernand Braudel:

> In the clock of the European world the fateful chimes sounded five times, and every time they sounded the displacements took place through consecutive struggles, confrontations and strong economic crises. In general, it is an economic storm that finally destroys the old centre, already threatened before, and confirms the emergence of a new one.[17]

Tom Joad, the main character in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*,[18] is a young peasant who, due to land dispossession, becomes a proletarian (under-employed or unemployed). Along the mythical Road 66 in the USA, in the midst of the crisis of 1929, he transforms himself from Okie (a derogatory nickname for the peasants from Oklahoma) into an immigrant in California, from common criminal into political prisoner, from peasant into wage earner. Beliefs die, doubts awaken.

Expropriation, unemployment, dehumanisation … each day the Joad family lives the capitalist march and gradually becomes aware of it. One of the key parts of this path to class consciousness is the role of the state throughout this journey. The Joad family, on the brink of misery, expropriated by bankers, deceived by labour recruiters, exploited by bosses, humiliated, runs into the state exclusively as the police: inspecting labour migration, infiltrating workers' camps, arresting 'agitators', provoking riots in order to intervene without a warrant and finally trying to arrest Joad because he killed a policeman who, in front of him, had just killed a former preacher and trade unionist who was leading a strike.

When Joad leaves the Rooseveltian camp where his family is, he metaphorically goes in search of 'something'. Ford expresses the quest for socialism as an alternative for an important sector of the working classes:

> A fellow ain't got a soul of his own, just little piece of a big soul, the one big soul that belongs to everybody … I'll be all around in the dark – I'll be everywhere. Wherever you can look – wherever there's a fight, so

[16] Valério Arcary, *As Esquinas Perigosas da História: Situações Revolucionárias em Perspectiva Marxista* (São Paulo: Xamã, 2004).
[17] Fernand Braudel, *A Dinâmica do Capitalismo* (Lisbon: Teorema, 1992), 94.
[18] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

> hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever there's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad. I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry and they know supper's ready, and when the people are eatin' the stuff they raise and livin' in the houses they build – I'll be there, too.[19]

Nazism

One day before the inauguration of the 1940 Portuguese World Exhibition in Belém, where Salazar built an image of a single nation undivided by social classes,[20] a depiction allowed by the interdiction of workers' organisations achieved using state violence, the world saw France succumb to Hitler – in the very same place where Germany had surrendered 21 years before, after the First World War.

Today, it is clear to historiography that Nazism did not advance only by the force of military technique, where there were obvious failures,[21] but also through the political demoralisation of its opponents. One of Hitler's most potent tanks was the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, the end of hopes on the French popular front, the faltering German social democracy, the disastrous policy of the third period of the Communist International – the psychological environment that is not measured quantitatively. But there is no historical dignity without measuring the psychological impact, on the scale of millions, of political victories and defeats.[22]

The Second World War, like almost all historical facts that are politically central to societies, has been the subject of intense historiographical controversy, which rarely passes to the general public. Taking away recent works, such as *Apocalypse: The Second World War*,[23] (not by accident a co-production of the major countries involved in the war in different trenches and that in a rare way comes to break a mythological vision of the war), in general, the disclosure of historical facts is made

[19] John Ford (dir.), *The Grapes of Wrath* (film), 1940.
[20] Philippe Schmitter, *Portugal: do Autoritarismo à Democracia* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 1999); and Fernando Rosas and Álvaro Garrido (eds), *Corporativismo, Fascismos, Estado Novo* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2012).
[21] Michael Howard, *A Guerra na História da Europa* (Lisbon: Publicações Europa-América, 1997), 153.
[22] Arcary, *As Esquinas Perigosas da História*.
[23] *Apocalypse: The Second World War* (French: *Apocalypse, la 2e Guerre mondiale*) (2009) is a six-part French documentary by Daniel Costelle and Isabelle Clarke about the Second World War. The documentary is composed exclusively of actual footage of the war as filmed by war correspondents, soldiers, resistance fighters and private citizens.

against the science produced. It was utilitarian to the division of powers between the USA and the USSR during the Cold War. And it is now necessary to maintain the status quo as well as the balance of powers of the regimes and nations of the central countries. But memory is not history.

> Germany became a militarised society with a war economy, after having defeated its labour movement. Also to be taken into account as specifics of German imperialism: a newly unified country, without colonies, humiliated in the Treaty of Versailles, largely dependent on raw materials and energy from Eastern Europe and Russia and with the more organized working class of the world, which had attempted twice, in 1919 and 1923, a social revolution influenced by the Bolsheviks. All of these factors contributed to accentuate the accelerated reconstruction of the military industrial complex from the crisis of 1929 and, finally, from 1938, to the outbreak of a new world war.

Their labour leaders were the first to be imprisoned. Dachau, near Munich, was the first Nazi prison in 1933. Not by chance – the first Soviet republic (*Räterepublik*) had been founded there in April 1919, crushed by the Freikorps in May 1919, as we have mentioned.

Hitler, a soldier wounded in war who even won an Iron Cross, was described as a frustrated student who failed access to art school – and, shortly after, joined the ranks of the far right. In just one decade, he had risen to command one of the world's leading countries. But Nazism was not the work of one man. The idea of Nazism as an act of madness is closely linked to the revisionism of the 1950s, to the social pact, which sought to dissociate it from the crisis of capitalism, from the explicit support of the German bourgeoisie to the Nazi expansionist project[24] – and the inability of both the West and the USSR to prevent the war.

Munich, the Bavarian capital – which today is most easily be identified with the Oktoberfest, a beer festival created by King Ludwig of Bavaria in 1810, or its famous football club, Bayern – is a symbol of Germany in the 1930s. It represents the class tensions that foreshadowed the war: on the one hand, a powerful labour movement, one of the most

[24] See, for example, Dick Geary, *Hitler e o Nazismo* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2010); Robert O. Paxton, *A Anatomia do Fascismo* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2007); and T.E. Vadney, 'The German Problem', in *The World Since 1945* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 21–25.

important in the world, and the threat of revolution; on the other hand, an agrarian and traditionalist world surrounding the city.

But it was not only in the countryside that Nazism had support. The German industrial bourgeoisie feared that – after the Ruhr strikes and attempts to take power by the workers in 1919 and 1923 – a new crisis (1929) would bring the proletariat to power as in Soviet Russia. Years of economic stability in the Weimar Republic were dramatically left behind during the crisis, millions being unable to find work, and famine became widespread. There was deflation of production prices (falling prices in production) that combined with a gigantic inflation in distribution, in consumption. All this led to a miserable situation of the German proletariat, about two-fifths of whom were unemployed. In Britain, one-quarter couldn't find a job.

The Weimar Republic had been marked in its final period by the crisis of the constitutional regime and the growth of National Socialism. In 1933, the Nazi Party (NSDAP) came to power. The absence of democratic consensus, the humiliation in the Treaty of Versailles, loss of territories and heavy damages – the defeat in the war, along with the German Revolution of 1919–23, created panic in the German ruling classes, the petty bourgeois masses or the lower middle class, and drove them to despair. That despair came to light in the country's suicide in 1939 – when these layers decided to support Hitler and militarism as a way out for the crisis of 1929 and the threat of revolution.

Two questions emerge, however, from these facts: what was the social basis of fascism? Did the economic crisis and the depression explain their rise?

The deterministic temptation is strong. There is, however, no automatic translation between this economic chaos and the speed and breadth of support that the Nazi Party has gathered in German society.

The issue is very complex. Many sought the roots of Nazism in the cultural depths of the German and French 'souls', the nature of men comfortably outside parliament, or in the 'entrancing refusal of democracy'[25] of French philosophical currents who hated the 'vote craze'.[26] Thomas Mann, born in Germany, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in

[25] Zeev Sternhell *et al.*, *Nascimento da Ideologia Fascista* (Lisbon: Bertrand Editora, 1995), 212.
[26] *Ibid.*, 170.

1929, seeks these roots further, in Luther, who defines 'the true German character', the man who began by criticising nobles and peasants and ended 'and with the most indomitable fury, simply condemning the peasantry'.[27]

The fact is that not all fascisms 'did work'.[28] Not all fascisms went from cutting-edge cultural currents to mass parties that seized state power.

The origin of the Nazi vote doesn't lay mainly in the working classes or in the transfer of the Social Democrat vote to Nazism. German society's degree of support and commitment with National Socialism is more complex, as revealed by a few dozen investigations in this area.[29]

Before this, however, a reminder: throughout the Nazi regime, 300,000 Germans were arrested, persecuted or killed for opposing Hitler. It is true that Nazism was defeated from the outside by allied forces but there was also internal opposition.

Another central debate, which does not fit here but must be remembered, is whether the German society that adhered to Nazism did so out of fear or ideological commitment. No one took this controversy as far as Primo Levi in his masterwork *The Drowned and the Saved*.[30] For him, a survivor of Auschwitz, German society has the historical burden of extermination camps because the fear they could have had does not justify the absence of action against the suffering in the work camps and in the extermination camps, where nothing could be done and there was no chance of resistance.

Bertolt Brecht, a socialist poet and revolutionary resistant to Nazism in his 15-year exile (an 'ambassador of doom', as he described himself), even wrote, reflecting on history and addressing the future: 'You who will emerge from the flood in which we have gone under … Think of us with forbearance.'[31] Brecht was not forgiving the Germans, nor necessarily

[27] Thomas Mann, *Um Percurso Político* (Lisbon: Bertrand, 2016), 164–165.
[28] Paxton, *A Anatomia do Fascismo*, 93.
[29] Dick Geary lists dozens of recent studies in this field and their differences, in *Hitler e o Nazismo* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2010), p. 36-45.
[30] Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017). This is the author's last work, written in 1986, a year before his death.
[31] 'Ihr, die ihr auftauchen werdet aus der Flut in der wir untergegangen sind (…) Gedenkt unsrer mit Nachsicht'. Bertolt Brecht, To those born later – An die Nachgeborenen, first published in Svendborger Gedichte (1939) in *Gesammelte Werke* (1967), Vol. 4, 722–725.

referring to them in these verses, but recognising that the dimension of defeat was at that time unrecoverable.

In 1939, the German labour movement, which had the potential force to organise itself to resist, was defeated, and its main leaders were dead or exiled.[32] Few were spared from Nazi terror – not even the Nazis in the end.

Let us get back to the Nazi Party and its electoral support. Still with another note: there is no automatic correspondence between social and electoral support in history. The two phenomena may be in disarray, a party can have much electoral support and little social support, and vice versa.[33] That is, elections are a measure of reality that must be viewed with a critical eye – they are not exempt from mediations:

> The reductionist conclusion that every people has the government it deserves is not Marxist. Nor is it a Marxist claim that each class, particularly the working class, has the direction that corresponds to their interests. This type of determinism is foreign to the theory that argues dialectically that political representation is the result of a struggle in which all classes influence each other, but the working classes are more vulnerable to the dominant ideology of their day. Governments come to power as a result of a battle between interests in society, in which some interests are winners and others are losers, being therefore the product of a social and political relationship of forces … Every struggle contains uncertainty and indecisiveness. Marxism is not fatalism.[34]

The NSDAP mobilises votes but also organised social support – and military might; and in Protestant rural districts, more so than in the Catholic ones; in small towns, more than in big ones; among rural workers more than among industrial workers; and among bosses and white collars (about 20 per cent of the workforce then)[35] more than among industrial workers. It gathered support among the wealthy and proprietary classes. When in July 1932 its nationwide vote was 37.4 per cent, in the big cities it was 10 per cent lower.[36] In Berlin and Hamburg, the NSDAP incurred considerable losses. It is true that a number of polls show support among some sectors of

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[32] Pelz, *A People's History of Modern Europe*, 139.
[33] Valério Arcary, *O Encontro da Revolução com a História* (São Paulo: Sundermann, 2006), 253–275.
[34] *Ibid.*, 253.
[35] Geary, *Hitler e o Nazismo*, 38.
[36] *Ibid.*, 37.

the working class, but these, which represented 54 per cent of the German labour force, were under-represented in the NSDAP.

The majority of the unemployed did not support the Nazi Party. Areas where there was a high concentration of workers and unemployed, such as in the Ruhr region, saw the Communist Party obtain 60–70 per cent of the vote. According to Geary,

> the overall result of the factory council elections in 1931 elected only 710 representatives of the Nazi Organization of Industrial Cells (NSBO) against 115,671 free trade unionists (SPD-oriented) and 10,956 seats for Christian unions, predominantly Catholic. By January 1933, the NSBO had about 300,000 members, compared with one million Christian trade unionists and more than four million free trade unionists.[37]

Pelz goes further in the argument, and recalls that if in July 1932 the Nazis had 37.3 per cent of the vote, in the November elections they had lost more than 4 per cent and 34 seats in parliament. That they used terror – the Reichstag fire – to regain influence, and that at that time the reaction of the leftist parties was nil. Shortly afterwards, their vote goes up. Yet, if all other parties had joined against Hitler, they would have prevented his victory. But, as the American historian underlines, Hitler had generous financial backing from Krupp and I.G. Farben, the big companies that would be at the basis of war production:

> For the ruling class of Germany, their support for fascism was not merely a response to crisis, it was rather a way of utilizing the crisis. Big business, the army and other remnants of the German Empire gave the Nazis power and a job to do. The problem was the German fascists got carried away, started the war and then lost it.[38]

Dick Geary's conclusion is similar. We also share it because it refers to the centrality of politics – in other words, the existence of organisations and their leaders is decisive: 'The NSDAP was more successful where it did not have to deal with strong pre-existing ideological and organizational

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[37] *Ibid.*, 39.
[38] Pelz, *A People's History of Modern Europe*, 141.

loyalties.'[39] In the words of Pierre Broué, it was a 'gigantic defeat without a fight'.[40]

But if these loyalties were so strong and widespread in Germany, even though concentrated in large mining regions, working-class areas or larger cities, among a hostile rural environment, why was the Nazi path so fast, and, in a sense, easy?

Because of three factors: Nazism benefited from the lack of support by the USSR and social democracy to the revolutionary projects of the 1930s; it benefited from the active support of the German industrial and financial sector to its projects; and from the inaction, if not active complicity, of social democracy and its alliances with semi-Bonapartist powers before Hitler's rise to power.

Nazism counted among its supporters some of the biggest German capitalists, referred to above. They dominated the economy and bet on the war economy and territorial expansion through war.[41] Nazism was not a conservative and retrograde excrescence, a kind of feudal return, as the Third International already isolated in its 'socialism in one country' policy (that is, with the International transformed into a foreign policy instrument for Stalinism and not a for socialist revolutions),[42] has initially characterised, but a suicidal act of one of the most advanced world capitalisms. Even Robert O. Paxton, who does not share Trotsky's thesis that Nazism was 'the civil war against the proletariat' writes that Nazism was not *tout court* anti-modern*,* but an 'alternative modernity',[43] which was based on the most developed technique and science.

The Nazi state, observe this macabre example, was the first regime in the world to recognise the rights of dogs – in 1933. In the year Hitler opened Dachau for Communist, Trotskyist and Social Democrat prisoners and trade union leaders, he made inflammatory public speeches against cruelty towards animals, and in 1934, he banned hunting. In 1937, he regulated the transport of animals by road and, in 1938, by train, so that the animals should be transported in decent conditions – the same wagons

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[39] Geary, *Hitler e o Nazismo*, 41.

[40] Pierre Broué, *História da Internacional Comunista, 1919–1943, Vol. 1: Ascensão e Queda* (São Paulo: Sundermann, 2007), 684.

[41] Harold James, 'Banks and Business Politics in Nazi Germany', in Francis R. Nicosia and Jonathan Huener (eds), *Business and Industry in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 43–46.

[42] Broué, *História da Internacional Comunista, 1919–1943*.

[43] Paxton, *A Anatomia do Fascismo*, 33.

where the Jews would be shipped as pigs on their way to death. Hitler also banned scientific experiments with animals, but his regime made experiments with Jews accused of being non-humans for … practising a medicine that used animals for experiments.

The destinies of man were not therefore solved with the instruments of progress, as the Illuminists dreamed, because the central question of economics and society was: who is to use these instruments? What, how, who and for whom do we produce?

For this reason, during the last, declining phase of the Weimar constitutional regime, reactionary Bonapartist (semi-dictatorial) regimes ruled under the presidential government of Hindenburg (Brüning, Von Papen, Von Schleicher), which while negotiating with traditional bourgeois elites did contribute to the persecution of the labour movement, mostly by not suppressing the fascist gangs connected with Hitler, such as the Freikorps and the SA, the storm troopers led by Ernst Rohm and mobilised against the trade unions.

But let's get back to the first argument. If fascism results from a series of complex factors – defeat in the war, Weimar crisis and despair of the bourgeoisie facing the crisis of 1929 – no one questions today the disastrous role of the policy of the Communist International known as the 'Third Period'. Those who 'could be saved' indulged in a delusional policy that likened social democracy with fascism. As Felipe Demier, a historian of fascism, points out, the force of Nazism also came from the bewilderment of the pro-Soviet communist left and the German social democracy: Until the last moment the Stalinist leadership of the German Communist Party (KPD), intoxicated by its "third period" sectarianism, dogmatically refused to close ranks in any area of the anti-fascist struggle (in trade unions, parliament, any kind of organisation) with the reformist leaders of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which not only kept it away from the bulk of the working-class bases of social democracy, as it dangerously divided the forces of the German working class in a conjuncture in which fascism spread rapidly among the petty-bourgeois masses of the country.

Regrettably, Trotsky's gloomy predictions about how ephemeral and unstable German Bonapartism was proved to be right and the German proletariat, including its Communist and Social-Democratic leaders, would learn the hard way what were the differences between Bonapartism and

fascism,[44] the differences between dictatorship and civil war, between a state that fought against the labour movement and another that sought to physically annihilate it.

What was this so-called policy of the Third Period? In the absence of a united front against Nazism,

> The leadership of the Communist International considered that the balance of power regarding the possibilities of a world revolution entered its 'third period' after the Russian Revolution … meaning the final agony of capitalism that would inevitably lead to a new revolutionary rise of the masses … Given this characterization, the *Comintern* made an 'ultra-leftist' turn and directed its parties towards a policy of 'class against class'. In Stalin's words, Social Democracy, with its petty-bourgeois ideology, was branded as the 'twin brother' of fascism. This 'ultra-leftist' turn approved in 1928 was related to the reorientation of Soviet internal politics adopted in the same year. Breaking with Bukharin's line of 'socialism at a tortoise pace', Stalin abandoned the alliance with the Kulaks (considered as the bourgeois of the countryside, but who in fact were just relatively wealthy peasants), initiating the violent process of forced collectivization of agriculture.[45]

The German proletariat, led by two powerful mass organisations, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), became disoriented due to the policy of the Third Period:

> In the interpretive view of the German Stalinists, practically devoid of political nuances, an eventual victory of Hitler would only entail another fascist government which, like the preceding ones, would seek to save the crumbling capitalism of the country. This vulgar characterization of the national political reality, in which 'all cats were grey', led to an absolutely sectarian antifascist strategy, which rejected the possibility of building a united front with the SPD, labelled as 'social-fascist'.[46]

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[44] Felipe Demier, *O Que é Uma Revolução?* (with Varela and Arcary) (Lisbon: Colibri, 2016); and Felipe Demier, *O Longo Bonapartismo Brasileiro 1930–1964* (Rio de Janeiro: Maud, 2013).
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] In 1932, Trotsky referred to the KPD leaders' view of the German political situation at the time: "Unfortunately, the Communist Party was also completely taken aback by the events. The Stalinist bureaucracy could not foresee anything … Different varieties of fascism take power from one another through 'fascist' coups. Is it not evident that the

The united front, which had its origins in the decisions of the Communist International's Sixth Congress in 1928, implying a front with other currents of the labour movement, was replaced in the Seventh Congress with the famous report presented by Dimitrov, where a policy of broad alliance between the working class and some sectors of the bourgeoisie is endorsed. As historian Carlos Zacarias Sena Jr. puts it, 'the popular front policy that foresaw broad alliances with sectors of the bourgeoisie considered progressive became the privileged tactic of the communist parties in the conjuncture of rising fascist or philofascist dictatorships throughout the world in the 1930s.'[47] The popular front was first tested in Blum's France with the Socialists and then with the Radical Party. Spain followed and after that it was generalised.

The aim was, as Pierre Broué in the *History of the Communist International* (2007) states, to mobilise the communists for a policy of alliances with sectors of the bourgeoisie for the coming war.[48]

The popular front policy was generalised and strengthened far beyond the end of the war, through the 'peaceful transition to socialism', the 'détente', the 'peaceful coexistence', and becoming an 'old Soviet project of pan-European agreement for peaceful coexistence',[49] culminating in Helsinki in 1975. In colonial or semi-peripheral countries, the popular front tactic was broadened to a 'national front' encompassing all 'sincere democrats', or 'honest Portuguese', in a local version, whether they were Social Democrats, Liberals, Republicans or even Monarchists.

Back to 1928, it was not only the communists loyal to the USSR who had a disastrous policy. The SPD, seeking an intermediary route between Nazism and Bolshevism, wanted to defend the Weimar Republic, and at the same time, it supported Brüning's deflationary policy and his Bonapartist governance by decrees. They also supported Hindenburg, who appointed Hitler as chancellor, for the presidency of the Republic.

Stalinist theory was created expressly to clog the human brain?" Leon Trotsky 'O único caminho' ['Bonapartismo e fascismo']. *The History of the Russian Revolution*, 283–284.

[47] Carlos Zacarias Sena Junior, 'Frente Única, Frente Popular e Frente Nacional', In *Anais Cemarx*, V Colóquio Internacional Marx Engels, Unicamp, November 2007, 5–6, at: www.unicamp.br/cemarx/anais_v_coloquio_arquivos/arquivos/comunicacoes/gt7/sessao3/Carlos_Zacarias.pdf.

[48] Broué, *História da Internacional Comunista, 1919–1943*, 843.

[49] Massimo Salvadori (ed.), *A Nova Ordem Mundial*, Vol. 17, In *História Universal*, (Lisbon: Planeta DeAgostini, 2005), 126.

Again, nationalism had spoken louder. Hard Bonapartist or overtly fascist regimes did not seek political conciliation in the face of the economic disaster brought about by private property. This is how Hitler rises to power and performs the German miracle with massive public investment and stimuli to production, nationalisation of part of production, control of inflation and currency, and social protection. In 1938, the investment in armaments represented 21 per cent of the GDP.

Putting the war economy to work, while maintaining democratic regimes in their homelands (not in the colonial territories, where dictatorships were cherished) was also the path of Great Britain and the USA. Unemployment in the USA only returns to the figures of 1927, when in 1941 the inactive factories are reconverted for the production destined to war. The substantial difference was that the United States had emerged from the First World War as winners and creditors, and Britain and France had reserves because they had colonies. Preparation for war, carrying out nationalisations, controlling wages and even militarising the labour force were possible while maintaining democratic regimes. But in Germany, to put it in a brutal and simple manner, there was no money either to contain the struggles between fractions of the bourgeoisie or to calm the working class – so the German war industry miracle comes with the massacre of the workers' parties and trade unions, the expropriation of Jews and others, while maintaining private property.

The cartelisation of factories promoted by Hitler was not obtained through the expropriation of goods, but through its organisation by the State while keeping profits private. This is how the labour and concentration camps were specialised in different sectors of production. In Mauthausen, for example, whose complex comprised 40 more sub-camps, there was not only a large quarry, munitions factories, mines, arms factories, but also a market for selling disinfection products for prisoners. It was barbarism.

'*A las barricadas*': The revolution again

It's 22 November 1936. Half a million people have marched on the streets of Barcelona in what is considered the greatest funeral in Spanish history – compact lines of people looking sad, singing songs. '*A las barricadas!*' 'To the barricades for the triumph of the Confederation!' – the anthem of anarchist National Confederation of Labour (CNT). It was not the king who was being veiled, but the most famous anarchist of the country, Buenaventura Durruti.

A romantic revolutionary born into a family of nine, this worker, an anarcho-syndicalist militant of the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) had been sacked during the 'Bolshevik triennium' (the strikes of 1917–19, which occurred in Spain influenced by the October Revolution) and had immigrated to France in the early 1920s and then to Latin America.

He was part of the group *Los Justicieros* (The Avengers) to fight *Pistolerismo*, the hiring of assassins by bosses, clerics and landowners to persecute and assassinate trade unionists, mostly anarchists. As in Italy during the *Biennio Rosso* (Red Biennium), gangs of fascists or militias whose modus operandi was the assassination of union leaders spreads. Durruti will be one of the organisers of resistance to these methods of terror against the labour movement.

With the Spanish Civil War and the Spanish Revolution (how many times do historians forget the revolution, referring only to the civil war?), Durruti became a leading figure in the barricades of Barcelona. He would be assassinated in Madrid, shot on his back in November 1936, in circumstances which have never been clarified. His decisive role lies not only in the romanticism of the anarchist bank robber – which Brecht expressed so well when he asked: 'What is the robbing of a bank compared to the founding of a bank?'[50] Durruti defends the workers, but from a strategic conception that isolates him even within the anarchist movement, a polemic that will mark the whole Spanish Revolution and the Spanish Civil War and that can be summed up in this idea: we make the revolution to win the war, or we must win the war first?

The contradictions of an unstable regime between 1933 and 1936 set the framework of the Spanish Civil War that started in 1936, with the military pronouncement of 18 July. The Spanish Civil War would end in April 1939 with the victory of Francoism and 1 million dead. The Portuguese Estado Novo was also one of the protagonists in this event, helping Franco during the Civil War.[51]

Anarchists and Trotskyists argued that the war could only be won if revolution were to take place – with land distribution and control of the factories; the USSR, Communists and Republicans did not want to question

[50] Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera* (1928); Macheath, Act 3, Scene 3, 92.
[51] César Oliveira, *Salazar e a Guerra Civil de Espanha* (Lisbon: O Jornal, 1987).

private property in order to have moderate republicans as allies. This strategy prevailed during the war – and it lost the war.

In 1933, Casas Viejas main square was the centre of the village and the centre of power, a reflecting mirror of Spain: a church, a barracks and the large dwellings of the landowners. In the upper part of the village, the old houses that baptised the village were home to workers, day labourers and shepherds. Spain was a country where, in the 1920s, after the First World War, capitalism had had a strong impulse; by 1930, those engaged in agriculture had dropped to under half the working population.[52] Proletarianisation was accelerated; peasants were moving to the cities, which became concentrations of industrial workers, those who would become, together with rural day labourers, the basis of the Spanish Revolution – one of the most romantic conflicts of the twentieth century, immortalised by the photographer Robert Capa, the writers George Orwell, André Malraux, Ernest Hemingway and many others.

But 'Spain did not experience a classic bourgeois revolution in which the structures of the *ancien régime* were shattered.'[53] In Casas Viejas, peasants lived as in most of southern Spain, where 2 million landless day labourers, the *braceros*, worked on average only half of the year in the large landed estates, the *latifundia*.

Women also worked in agriculture, with lower salaries, but also as seamstresses or raising chickens. Boys did not go to school, they had to keep cattle from when they were little; and girls served in the farms (*fincas* and *cortizos*) of the landowners. The family wage provided food – it was a subsistence wage, which meant that at times of unemployment, which were not uncommon in agricultural work, very much conditioned by the moods of the seasons, families went hungry.

To give an idea, in December 1933, there were 1,437,000 agricultural and forestry wage earners in Spain and almost 300,000 were unemployed. In the municipality of Medina Sidonia, 42 landowners possessed more than 61 per cent of the wealth. The inhabitants of Casas Viejas had the same level of education as the rest of Spain – almost none. They had old peasant traditions and religious dogmas. According to the 1931 Population Census, there were 113,290 members of the clergy in a population of 23 million.[54] Most children and youngsters did not learn to

[52] Andy Durgan, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Palgrave, 2007), 8.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Ibid.*

read unless they entered an anarchist-libertarian group and there, of course, they read the libertarian press. In Andalusia, the average life expectancy was ten years lower than among the urban workers, which was already low.[55]

Between 1814 and 1923, there were 43 *pronunciamientos*, or military coups, some not victorious, and most to preserve the monarchy in agony – the last of which was led by Captain General Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1923 to rescue Alfonso XIII.

In an interview with a French journalist on 16 November 1937, Franco, the *caudillo*, declared:

> our war is not a civil war … but a Crusade … Yes, our war is a religious war. We who fight, whether Christians or Muslims, are soldiers of God and we are not fighting against men but against atheism and materialism.[56]

Even today, some Spanish bishops express themselves in these terms referring to the 'crusade of 1936'.

Anarchists had a very strong presence among the industrial and rural workers – a fact that was evident in Andalusia. Small villages such as Casas Viejas, among many others that experienced insurrections, had a local organisation of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour) or the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation). Already in 1874, there was a local federation of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) in Medina Sidonia, which took a stand for Bakunin's ideas and broke with the Marxist sector of the First International. Some of these workers, led by the anarchists, would even oppose the agrarian reform: after all, they were for the collectivisation of the land, not for its distribution.

Anarchists are an embarrassing presence in the republican government, because it is they who led the majority of the very strong social movement of Spain in the 1930s. The misery of this period, the worsening unemployment and the failed Republican promises are the breeding ground for countless movements that burst throughout Spain in the form of insurrections, general strikes and occupations.

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[55] Jean-Pierre Barou, *La guerre d'Espagne ne fait que commencer* (Paris: Seuil, 2015).
[56] Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), 290.

In January 1933, the CNT called for a general strike of the railways, which was to spread through Spain and take on an insurrectional character throughout the territory. The CNT at the time might have had about 1 million members. The anarchists of Casas Viejas were prepared to seize power and so they did in the night of 10 January 1933. The next day, they went to the village *alcalde* (mayor) and reported that the civil guard was to be dismissed and marched through the village carrying the red and black flag of the CNT. In the ensuing hours, three civil guards were killed in a confrontation with the anarchists. Reinforcements were called in. The family of an anarchist involved in the clashes, known by the nickname 'Six Fingers', took refuge in his house. At night, 90 assault guards, at the orders of the Republican government, shot the rioters and burnt the rest of the family by spraying the house with gasoline.

La Mañana daily newspaper, in its edition of 11 January 1933, states 'the Council of Ministers examined in detail the public order situation in Spain, subverted in these days by the anarchist plot.' The newspaper, sided with the Republican government, which had ordered the summary firing of the anarchists, writes that this plot did not have the support of the majority of the working class and that public order was promptly restored. *La Mañana* leaves a warning, which is already a clear demonstration of the class war that will extend to all Spain in 1936: 'The government will be inexorable and will make sure that all state institutions are as well.' This critical tone is common to almost the entire republican press in the days that follow. But news slowly begin to reveal the police brutality and injustice of the shootings, until it becomes a national issue that will contribute to Manuel Azaña's fall in late 1933.

The Republicans, victorious in the elections, had as their fundamental objective the institutionalisation of a liberal democracy that would carry out some social reforms. It was a matter of avoiding the discontent of the workers and peasants. But the regime was beset by its own contradictions: the economic depression that led to the revolutionary uprising of the Spanish popular strata in 1930 was the same that prevented Republicans from making reforms and social concessions that might appease the popular movement.

On the other hand, the republican regime had very little support among the working class and the peasantry, heavily influenced by anarchism. Republican support laid in urban sectors and some intellectualised middle classes. But not all of it: important sectors of the middle classes of that time adhered to communist and anarchist ideas. Let us

not forget that Europe of 1933 is the Europe in which Hitler rises to power and that more than ever the option between social revolution and fascism is present. The Republic could only have survived with the support of the people. But to win it, it took much more than good words.

The political right, aggrieved by the possibility of an agrarian reform, even if shy, does not wait for what it considers to be republican inefficiency and reinforces its structures. In 1933, José Antonio Primo de Rivera founds the Spanish Phalanx, the party that will support Franco's regime.

The Spanish Phalanx (*Falange Española*) was founded at the Teatro da Comédia in Madrid on 29 October 1933 by the Madrid lawyer José Antonio Primo de Rivera y Sáenz de Heredia. Son of Miguel Primo de Rivera, the dictator who ruled Spain between 1923 and 1930, José Antonio, Marquis de Estella, was an aristocrat, linked to the landowners and the most conservative military circles. Shortly after the fall of his father's dictatorship, José António becomes deputy secretary of the National Monarchical Union party, an organisation where some of the Fascist principles of the *Falange* are already clear: exaltation of national identity, creation and maintenance of a military corps who pledge to maintain the prestige of Spain 'one and indivisible', the preservation of discipline, order and conservative values. Shortly after an unsuccessful run for the 1931 elections, he is arrested in 1932 and accused of supporting General Sanjurjo's attempted *coup d'état*. He doesn't spend much time in prison though, and in 1933 he founds the Spanish Falange, that in 1934 will join the JONS (*Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista*), a fascist party created in 1931 by Onésimo Redondo Ortega and Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, to form the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS*.

The Spanish Civil War is one of the major events of the twentieth century. Symbol of the political and social contradictions of the world between the wars, which emerges from the rubble of the crisis of 1929, in Spain some of the most important political projects were in confront: democratic Republicans, revolutionaries, nationalist and fascist movement. It is also a war of great international impact. In it, thousands of international volunteers fought to defend the Republic mostly in the International Brigades. A few thousand Portuguese also fought on both sides.

The Spanish Revolution and the defeat in the civil war were the antechamber of the Second World War, painted by Picasso in *Guernica*. Its importance ran the world due to the militant international involvement in this war and to the scale of the revolution in Aragon and Catalonia, where workers controlled the production; due to the external interference of the Axis and the USSR and the ambiguous relationship of France and England, it was interpreted as the first conflict of the Second World War.

This is not a unanimous opinion among historians. Did the Second World War begin in Poland in 1939 or before, in the Spanish Revolution? Nor is it unanimous among the allies. They reject, in a struggle for memory, that the fact that they did not help the Spanish Republic opened the doors to Nazism. Franco told Adolf Hitler in 1941: in the Second World War, 'the first battle was won here in Spain'. An American anti-fascist volunteer wrote the same: 'To me, World War Two started on July 18, 1936. That's when the first shot was fired in Madrid.'[57]

Less well known but equally vital to the destinies of Europe was the revolutionary situation that opened in France between 1934 and 1937, during the 'popular front'. For Pierre Broué,[58] a Marxist historian and a Trotskyist militant with a remarkable work, a revolution was under way, slowed down by the 'popular front' with the complicity of the communists under the pressure of the USSR and its policy of 'socialist in one country' – meaning that the foreign policy for the communist parties outside the USSR should be in the first place the defence of the USSR, avoiding conflicts with the national bourgeoisies of each state where they were inserted. For Serge Wolikow, historian of the Communist International and a member of the French Communist Party, the 'popular front' was responsible for important social achievements but was doomed to failure because the Communist Party was caught between the mobilisation of the working masses and the middle classes who supported the Government of Léon Blum[59] and feared social radicalisation.

In 1934, Paris was experiencing an intense conflict with the threat of the organised extreme right, moralised by Hitler's victory the preceding year in Germany. In February 1934, they summon large demonstrations against

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[57] Donny Gluckstein, *A People's History of the Second World War: Resistance versus Empire* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 15.
[58] Pierre Broué and Nicole Dorey 'Critiques de gauche et opposition révolutionnaire au Front populaire (1936–1938)', *Le Mouvement Social* 54 (January–March 1966): 91–133.
[59] Serge Wolikow*, Histoire de l'Internationale communiste* (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2010).

the left and centre, the bourgeois government of Edouard Daladier's Radical Party. Still in line with the 'third period' politics, on 5 February 1934, the Communist paper *L'Humanité* declared that the choice between the fascists and the government was between 'plague and cholera'.[60] The General Confederation of Labour (CGT) calls a general strike in response to the far right demonstrations for 12 February, the Socialist Party joins in a separate demonstration and later the Communist Party also joins, with yet another separate protest. Although many feared that everything would end in a confrontation among factions, when the demonstrations meet the population, many thousands, rejoice shouting: 'Unity! Unity!'

From here, the political situation evolves at the speed of light. Unitary antifascist committees are created, electoral agreements are under debate. The USSR takes a turn refusing to support any social-democratic party and defending alliances even with the bourgeois Radical Party. In May 1936, the general elections give a majority to the Radical Party, the Communists and the Socialists. The Communist Party remains outside the Government but supporting it.

Paris is effervescent, commemorating the Paris Commune (1871) with half a million people on the streets to pay tribute to those who fell defending the Commune. In May, the Renault plant at Billancourt, Paris, struck and occupied. By the end of the month, 70,000 workers were involved[61] (the same year the automotive industry sit-down strikes started in the USA,[62] the largest ever in the history of the country). There were almost 700,000 workers on strike in France these days. Then they were joined by the dockers of the port of Le Havre – the commercial outlet of the most powerful industrial zones of France. In the Nord *département* alone, 1,144 workplaces were occupied, involving 254,000 workers.[63] There is, in fact, a situation of workers' control in many factories, which are under the direction of the workers.

Fearful businessmen sign an agreement for salary increases, paid vacations, reduction of the working week to 40 hours, they accept collective bargaining and the election of workers' representatives in the factories with

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[60] Harman, *A Peoples's History of the World*, 494.
[61] Pierre Broué, *História da Internacional Comunista, 1919–1943*, 866.
[62] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 400–401.
[63] Harman, *A People's History of the World*, 496.

more than ten workers. Communist Party membership increased from 29,000 in 1933 to 90,000 in February 1936 and 288,000 in December 1936. The Socialist Party grew from 131,000 in 1933 to 202,000 in 1936, and the CGT union federation from 785,700 in 1935 to around four million in 1937.[64]

Léon Blum had said in 1926 that it is dangerous to confuse the exercise of power with the conquest of power.[65] Ten years later, in 1936, his Government will face an insurmountable contradiction – it was not possible in the context of the crisis of the thirties to reassure business and landowners, guaranteeing the accumulation of capital, and at the same time allowing workers' control and a the maintenance of broad social rights for workers.

The Communist leader Maurice Thorez had declared that it was not time to seize power. Léon Blum's France declares non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War in 1937, disappointing the social basis of his government. In 1937, the crisis is back and the illusions of distribution of wealth, after all just a small interlude in the chaos of capitalist production, perish. But the chaos was there, with the fall of production in 1937 (which had also led the United States to backslide on New Deal policies). The government falls after a fiscal crisis still in that year. Workers are persecuted; some are killed during demonstrations with the complacency of the government that reacts to the 1938 strikes against rising prices of essential goods, with brute force. In 1938, there are mass sackings and the law limiting the working week to 40 hours is reversed.

In 1940, the Nazis occupy France. On the one hand, there is the collaboration of the right, fearful of the labour movement – the Vichy Government. On the other hand, the paralysis of the PCF tied to the 1939 non-aggression pact between Hitler and Stalin. And the initial apathy of the population, who had seen their rights recede and hope in the popular front government fail. Léon Blum will be imprisoned by the Vichy Government and incarcerated in Dachau and Buchenwald.[66]

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[64] *Ibid.*, 499.
[65] Helen Graham and Paul Preston (eds), *The Popular Front in Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987).
[66] Tony Judt, *Post War: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 81.

The government's class reconciliation policies failed and cleared the way for the defeat of the nation in face of the Nazi invasion and occupation in 1940.

This is not Hobsbawm's opinion as enunciated in a famous text published in *Marxism Today*, the theoretical journal of the Communist Party of Great Britain:

> The point I wish to make here is that the Popular Front strategy now adopted was more than a temporary defensive tactic, or even a strategy for eventually turning retreat into offensive. It was also a carefully considered strategy of advancing to socialism. It was, in my view, the first, and so far still the only, such strategy evolved for countries in which the classical insurrectionary situations of the type of the October revolution or of other types were not to be expected, though not necessarily impossible. This does not mean that it was bound to succeed. … The search for the magic pill, certified by white-coated or red-flagged scientists, and absolutely guaranteed to cure cancer, cholera, rheumatism and the common cold or their political equivalents, belongs to the field of self-delusion and advertisement rather than to the field of politics.[67]

Pierre Broué has a different opinion: 'The party puts into circulation the following formula: "The popular front is not the revolution." Indeed, it was something else: in France in June 1936, it was the brake of the revolution, after having helped open its locks.' A few months later, when the military-civilian plot of the French Francoists christened '*cagoulards*' by those who want to minimise the case, is it not the strong man of the Popular Front, the radical Édouard Daladier, who decides to benefit all the military with total impunity, thus marking another point against the revolution?

It is also the Spanish government of the Popular Front that refuses to proclaim the independence of Spanish Morocco – something that might have destroyed Franco's shock troops, the *moors*. French militants such as Louzon and Rousset offered to act as intermediaries between the Spanish republican government and the Moroccans. The British and French

[67] Eric J. Hobsbawm, 'Forty Years of Popular Front Government', first published in *Marxism Today*, republished in *Australian Left Review* 61 (1977), 21.

governments voiced their opposition: that would mean the beginning of the collapse of the colonial empires. “As they bowed to this, socialists and communists of the Popular Front became the defenders of property and order, even of colonial order. How, in such conditions, to win the war of the poor and the oppressed?”[68]

In the same year of 1934, when Asturias rose in revolution and the popular front begins in France, Austria saw its short revolution crushed – in only two days, but it was an event that would remain in the memory of the country, with consequences to this day.

The dislocation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire following the First World War implied a demographic, political and territorial rearrangement of the city of Vienna. In a climate of penury and devastation, the Social Democratic Party, more progressive and radical than most of the European Social Democratic formations of the Second International, but still rejecting a revolution like those that had happened in Russia, Germany and Hungary, assumed power in the city. The Social Democrats institutionalised, promoted and financed a type of neighbourhood that the workers themselves had illegally built during and after the war and extended to the outskirts of the city, inspired by the garden-city model, with partly productive vegetable gardens as a strategy to escape penury.

The social housing programme of ‘Red Vienna’ was one of aid to housing and social rights of the working class. The neighbourhoods of Red Vienna had day-care centres, health services, collective laundries, cultural activities (cinemas, theatres, etc.), sports centres as well as community centres. Even today one of these neighbourhoods, the Karl Marx Hof, one of the largest, more than a kilometre in length, has gardens and Laundromats. Between 1923 and 1934, 64,000 dwellings were built, housing 200,000 residents in a universe of 2 million inhabitants, the population of the city at that time.

On 12 February 1934 begins the Austrian civil war. The fighting begins in the industrial heart, in Linz (which Hitler will have among his favourite cities), following the opposition of the Socialists to a series of indiscriminate prisons. But the most dramatic moments are experienced at the Karl Marx Hof, where thousands of workers barricaded themselves to fight against the army, police and paramilitaries loyal to conservative and fascist politicians. They are definitely defeated four days later, on 16

[68] Broué, *História da Internacional Comunista, 1919–1943*, 868.

February. The government suspends the parliament and outlaws the socialists. More than 200 people die. A Bonapartist corporative state is born. The Nazi Party ascended to power, the workers fell under the boots of fascism, and Social Democrats were persecuted. Austria had its *Anschluß* (annexation/connection) on 13 March 1938, with large sections of the population celebrating on the streets the entrance of the Nazi troops into the territory, unopposed – the opposition had been defeated four years earlier.

Today, the central square of the Karl Marx Hof in Vienna is called 12th February Square. In the name of the memory of 12th February, and unlike the majority of the European left that adopted anti-militarist positions, even today the Austrian Left, including the Social Democrats, is in favour of the conscription, because it considers that the army must not be made up of professionals, so that it cannot turn against the workers, or at least to favour its crisis and division when there is a revolution. This subject came back to the pages of European newspapers after the crisis of 2008, in response to the growing American protectionism after Trump's election.[69]

[69] Connor Kilpatrick, Lester K. Spence, Liza Featherstone and Ethan Young, *Donald Trump and the Rise of the Nationalist Right, Essays* (New York: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2016).

Trade Unions and the Alter-globalisation Movement: a Lost Moment for Labour?

Verity Burgmann

> Large parts of the Western working class now seem to gather around right populists, demagogues and racists. They vote for reactionary and fascistoid political parties. They helped to vote the UK out of the EU, to make Trump president of the world's superpower.[1]

Statements such as this, representative of many similar comments, must be treated with caution. Middle-class liberals like to point to any regressive impulses within working-class ranks to fortify their own sense of righteous enlightenment—while ignoring evidence that workers remain less likely than other people to espouse reactionary views, and organized workers considerably less likely.

Such issues were brought to the fore by Donald Trump's upset win over Hillary Clinton in November 2016. Instead of acknowledging that Democrats' neoliberal policies had increased class inequalities and lost them working-class support—cemented by Clinton's failure to campaign in the "Rust Belt"—American liberals blamed those they had failed for the election of Trump. Adding insult to injury, they called such Trump supporters "deplorables."

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[1] Wahl, Asbjørn. "Reactionary working class?" First published in Norwegian in *Klassekampen*, 28 January 2017. Republished in English in *The Bullet*, Socialist Project E-Bulletin No. 1383, 16 March 2017. https://socialistproject.ca/bullet/1383.php (Last Accessed 15 June 2017).

Clinton lost the election in the upper Midwest, with its declining workforce participation and rising mortality rates, while CEO pay ratios roared and the stock market boomed.[2] Trump's promise to bring jobs back home, to scrap the Trans Pacific Partnership "free trade" deal helped win him States such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. Here, Bernie Sanders observed that Trump tapped into the anger of people "tired of working longer hours for lower wages, of seeing decent paying jobs go to China and other low-wage countries, of billionaires not paying any federal income taxes and of not being able to afford a college education for their—all while the very rich become much richer." Based on research by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, Sanders emphasised that the North America Free Trade Agreement—signed by Bill and supported by Hillary Clinton—had cost more than 850,000 American jobs.[3]

Sanders offered a coherent social-democratic critique of the free-market globalisation agenda that has sacrificed jobs and eroded wages and working conditions in developed countries. Yet most US trade unions championed Clinton over Sanders as presidential contender against Trump. Under the headline, "Disillusioned by Leadership, Many Union Rank-and-file Turned to Trump," Michael Lighty argues the refusal of union leadership to support Sanders' political revolution as alternative to the status quo helped set the stage for Trump.[4]

So, notwithstanding skepticism about liberals blaming allegedly prejudiced workers for supporting right-wing populists, labour movement adherents do need to consider whether the "de-socialdemocratisation" of their political parties—and the timidity of trade union officialdom—has contributed to a rise in right-wing populist attitudes amongst workers.

Norwegian welfare campaigner Asbjørn Wahl regrets that workers' exploitation, their increasing powerlessness and subordination now hardly have a voice in public debate. For Wahl, left parties have "failed their constituencies." They are "not seen as usable tools to defend the interests of

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[2] Watkins, Susan. "Beating the Beadles." *New Left Review*, 119, September/October 2019, p. 155, 158.

[3] Quoted in Scott, Andrew. "Left Right Out: It's Always Been About Jobs and Equality." *newmatilda.com*, 26 February, 2017 (Last Accessed 10 April 2017), p. 2.

[4] Lighty, Michael. "Disillusioned by Leadership, Many Union Rank-and-file Turned to Trump." *The Real New Network*. 9 November 2016. http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=17644 (Last Accessed 27 January 2017).

those who have the least power and the least wealth in today's society" because:

> Rather than picking up the discontent generated in a more brutal labour market, politicize it and channelling it into an organized interest-based struggle, middle class left parties offer little else than moralizing and contempt. Thus, they … push large groups of workers in the arms of the far-right parties, who support all the discontent and do their best to channel people's rage against other social groups (immigrants, Muslims, gays, people with different colour, etc.) rather than against causes of the problems.[5]

Scape-goating attacks on other victims, such as refugees and migrants, are much more noisily articulated than condemnations of corporate power. Labour is denounced and reviled if it crosses borders in desperation, while capital globetrots at the whim of increased profit, destroying working-class communities in the process. It is far-right populist politicians, rather than centre-left parties, that have capitalised upon working-class discontent with neoliberal globalisation. Criticism of neoliberal globalisation has thus become associated with xenophobia, racism and nationalism.

The support bases of right-wing populist parties are predominantly "petty bourgeois," but their electoral viability has been facilitated by working-class voters reacting angrily to the "de-social-democratisation" of parties such as the British Labour Party under Tony Blair, the French Socialist Party, the German Social Democratic Party and the Australian Labor Party.[6] Their embracing, to varying degrees, of free-market principles in the era of globalisation has alienated traditional working-class supporters, ensuring the right-wing populist response to corporate globalisation has gained far greater political traction than its left-wing critiques.

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[5] Wahl, Asbjørn. "Reactionary working class?" First published in Norwegian in *Klassekampen*, 28 January 2017. Republished in English in *The Bullet*, Socialist Project E-Bulletin No. 1383, 16 March 2017. https://socialistproject.ca/bullet/1383.php (Last accessed 15 June 2017).

[6] See: Moschonas, Gerassimos. *In the Name of Social Democracy: The Great Transformation from 1945 to the Present*. London: Verso. 2001; Scott, Andrew. *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labour Parties*. Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000; Seymour, Richard. "Bye Bye Labour." *London Review of Books*. 23 April 2015, p. 22.

The alter-globalisation movement

Yet twenty years ago, it was a vibrant, left wing movement that was seriously challenging globalisation—and seen as its foremost opponent. Terminology varied but the most common descriptions of the new movement were "anti-capitalism," "anti-corporate", "global justice" or, simply, "anti-globalisation." In later years, particularly in academic circles, "alter-globalisation" also became accepted usage.

The left political orientation of these protests was obvious. Its principal slogans were: "Human Need Not Corporate Greed" and "Our World Is Not For Sale!" Typical placards waved were: "Capitalism destroys all life" and "Stop exploiting workers." Crowds sang: "We don't need no corporations, We don't need no thought control." Renowned for creating carnivalesque spectacle in "a global carnival against capital," protesters crafted huge puppets, such as a ten-foot rolling "pyramid of corporate power." Naomi Klein's *No Logo,* the unofficial manual of the movement, took clear aim at the "brand bullies."[7] Leaflets explained the reasons for such collective anger, for example:

> Countries must compete for corporate investment. They must remove environmental protection. They must drive down wages and conditions. They must cut government expenditure and corporate taxes. It's a race to the bottom and we all lose.[8]

Arguably utopian in inspiration and aspiration, it insisted that "Another World is Possible."[9]

The principal targets of this significant turn-of-the-millennium social movement were the transnational institutions that manage the common affairs of the international ruling class. In a dramatically effective form of protest known as "summit-hopping" or "summit-storming," demonstrators besieged meetings of these institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Economic Forum (WEF), the World Bank,

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[7] Charlton, John. "Talking Seattle." *International Socialism* 86, Spring 2000, pp. 4-10; http://seattle.indymedia.org; Bila-Gunther, Gaby. "Tram Ride from S11." *Overland* 162, Autumn 2001, p. 85; Klein, Naomi. *No Logo, No Space, No Choice, No Jobs: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. London: Flamingo, 2000.

[8] S11. "From Seattle to Melbourne. Stand Up for Global Justice. Why Protest?" Leaflet. Melbourne. September 2000, p. 2.

[9] McNally, David. *Another World is Possible. Globalization and Anti-Capitalism*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2002.

the International Monetary Fund, the G8, and so on.[10] Each summit-storming episode named itself after the month and day it commenced, for example "N30," the spectacular "Battle of Seattle" from 30 November to 4 December 1999.

This naming practice indicated that the episodes were connected; and implied that protests would continue into the future. And the movement seemed unstoppable, until derailed to a large extent by the dire impact of extremist fundamentalist Islamic terrorism that commenced in September 2001 in response to US-led Western incursions in the Middle East. A week after 9/11, Russ Davis, a labour organizer with Massachusetts "Jobs with Justice" told an interviewer of its effect on anti-capitalist politics: "The labour movement's pulling out, students will go off to form a new anti-war movement, and community-based groups will go back to local organizing. I don't know if there is a movement now."[11]

While it persisted, the summit-storming strategy was a stroke of brilliance on the part of left-wing forces that had for years been battling with a seemingly all-powerful and impregnable enemy.[12] The WTO, IMF, World Bank and WEF manoeuvred in various ways to placate the left critics of globalisation. For a time prior to 9/11 there were serious gains made by anti-capitalist agitation.[13]

Chris Carlsson maintains that summit storming also reversed much of the effects of the co-option of social movements new and old in the previous two decades. The quiescence of those decades he attributes to the success of ruling-class policies in dismembering working-class communities that had a memory of resistance and the know-how to carry it out, and in encouraging divisions between trade unions and social movements such as environmental and feminist groups. Such policies had demobilised social opposition. "The Seattle/WTO meeting brought all these diffuse and fragmented constituencies back together in a unified front against the most

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[10] For details, see McNally, David. *Another World is Possible*. Op. Cit., pp. 13-14; Bircham, Emma and Charlton, John (eds). *Anticapitalism: A Guide to the Movement*. London/Sydney: Bookmarks Publications, 2001, pp. 340-341.
[11] Quoted in Couch, Jen. "This is what Democracy Looks Like: The Genesis, Culture and Possibilities of Anti-corporate Activism." PhD diss., Victoria University, Australia, 2004, p. 204.
[12] Starr, Amory. *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalization*. London: Zed Books, 2000, p. 223.
[13] For examples, see Burgmann, Verity. *Power, Profit and Protest. Australian Social Movements and Globalisation*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003, pp.317-321.

tangible and obvious expression of global capitalist governance." At Seattle, Carlsson witnessed:

> a profound unity among people fighting for decent lives as workers, people fighting for a healthy relationship to global ecological well-being, people fighting sweatshops and child labor, people fighting to save old-growth forests and stop toxic waste dumping, people fighting to save subsistence agriculture and family farms, and so on.[14]

The protesters were internationalists who were not objecting to global connectedness, but aspiring to transnational solidarity in order to challenge the exploitative and undemocratic nature of neo-liberal globalisation. "We are the real globalists," concluded a leaflet from the S11 mobilisation in Australia in 2000.[15] S11 participant-observer David Glanz objected to the characterisation of the protesters as backward-looking, insular and nationalist.[16] "Nothing could be further from the truth," insisted the S11 organisers:

> S11 was an internationalist mobilisation. We welcome the free movement of peoples, above all of refugees. We welcome the sharing of culture and knowledge. We welcome the growing solidarity between US unionists, European environmentalists and Third World farmers. But we are bitterly opposed to a system that guarantees only one kind of global freedom—the freedom of corporate capital.[17]

Neoliberal globalisers like to present a false dichotomy: supposedly progressive cosmopolitan embrace of the global market or regressively xenophobic and protectionist nationalism. However, the strength of anti-capitalism at this moment contested this deceitful distinction and demonstrated that critique of globalisation was compatible with cosmopolitanism and technological progress, and indeed internationalism and working-class solidarity across national borders.

[14] Carlsson, Chris. "Seeing the Elephant in Seattle." San Francisco, January 19, 2000, Version 1.4, from ccarlsson@shapingsf.org (Received 7 February 2000).
[15] S11. "Think Globally, Act Locally." Leaflet. September 2000.
[16] Glanz, David. "Opposed to the Global Freedom of Capital." *Australian Options* 23 November 2000, p. 7.
[17] Quoted in *Melbourne Indy Bulletin*. Issue #04. Monday, 11 September 2000, p. 3.

Unions in the heyday of the alter-globalisation movement

The "Blairite" de-social-democratisation of centre-left political parties contributed to the rise of right-wing populism, because it betrayed natural working-class constituencies and undermined capacity to inspire new constituencies, thereby encouraging some workers to express their grievances through reactionary channels. However, in the debates around de-social-democratisation, little attention has been paid to the behaviour of trade unions as the industrial wing of the labour movement.

Amory Starr's groundbreaking, early study of the anti-globalisation movement argued at the time that the labour movement, rapidly globalising its capacities, was positioned as the "natural leader" of "globalization from below".[18] Did the labour movement assume this natural leadership role? Or did trade unions, like centre-left parties, hesitate in articulating the discontents of globalisation? This article focusses on the conduct of unions during the heyday of the alter-globalisation movement. How were unions involved in this popular upsurge against neoliberal globalisation? Did unions participate in the blockading of the citadels of corporate global power? With particular attention to participant observations, it takes as case-studies four summit-storming mobilisations, in Seattle, Melbourne, Québec City and Genoa.

N30: The Battle of Seattle, 30 November-4 December 1999

It was fitting that a city with a rich history of militancy[19] should host the mobilisation regarded as the "coming out" party of the anti-corporate movement, because this movement's composition was clearly different from earlier new social movements when, by and large, the working class and labour unions were not involved.[20] In Seattle the largest contingents were from that constituency. According to Carlsson's internet diary of his direct experience of the N30 mobilisation, the essence of this battle was that: "Working people came together to contest trade policies being negotiated behind closed doors." He insists:

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[18] Starr, Amory. *Naming the Enemy*. Op. Cit., p. 84.
[19] Levi, Margaret and Olson, David. "The Battles in Seattle." *Politics & Society* 28 (3), 2000, pp. 309-29; Winslow, Cal. "Company Town? Ghosts of Seattle's Rebel Past." *New Left Review* 112, July/Aug 2018, pp. 131-143.
[20] Danaher, Kevin and Burbach, Roger. *Globalize This! The Battle Against the World Trade Organization and Corporate Rule*. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2000, p. 8; Charlton, John. "Talking Seattle." *International Socialism* 86, Spring 2000, p. 6; Cockburn, Alexander, St Clair, Jeffrey and Sekula, Allen. *5 Days that Shook the World*. London: Verso, 2000.

> Although the idea of class, especially working class, is not widely understood or accepted in U.S. culture, the movement that discovered itself in Seattle is fundamentally a working class movement. The people in the streets may identify themselves more formally with their cause, whether it be ecological or human rights or what have you, but you can be sure that few if any of them are anything in their daily lives but wage workers.[21]

Wolfe and Curtis maintain that organised unionists provided "the bulk for the demonstrations" at Seattle.[22] The Seattle Coalition brought together 30,000 demonstrators organised by labour groups with 20,000 from environmental and other movements, according to Hurd, Milkman and Turner, who claim that "in this high-profile campaign, American unions showed a strong capacity to mobilize members and to build broad coalitions addressing the very nature of the new global economy."[23] Carola Frege and John Kelly also emphasise that union movement participation at Seattle was significant as an example of coalition-building with other social movements, serving to broaden the range of interests and agendas that unions seek to represent and thus broaden their appeal to poorly represented segments of the labour force.[24]

In solidarity with the protesters, on 30 November 1999, more than 9,600 dockworkers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union shut down every port on the west coast and staged a rally at San Francisco's Ferry Building. Hundreds of Seattle port workers joined in blockading the doors of the WTO's conference centre. Union spokesman Steve Stallone said "The union feels the free-trade policies of the WTO destroy workers' rights, environmental protection and democracy."[25] A massive labour rally and march, sponsored by the AFL-CIO, was the highlight of

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[21] Carlsson, Chris. "Seeing the Elephant in Seattle." Op. Cit.
[22] Wolfe, J. and Curtis, J. M. "The WTO in the Aftermyth of the Battles in Seattle" in M.A. Molot and F. E. Hampson (eds), *Vanishing Borders? Canada Among Nations*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000.
[23] Hurd, Richard, Milkman, Ruth and Turner, Lowell. "Reviving the American Labour Movement: Institutions and Mobilization." *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 9 (1), 2003, p. 114.
[24] Frege, Carola M. and Kelly, John. "Union Revitalization Stategies in Comparative Perspective." *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 9 (1), 2003, p. 9.
[25] DelVecchio, Rick and Finz, Stacy. "Dockworkers Shut Down Oakland Port." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 December 1999. https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Dockworkers-Shut-Down-Oakland-Port-2893654.php (Last Accessed 24 April 2018).

this first day, according to Doug Henwood, who describes the scene enthusiastically:

> Togetherness was the theme of the labour rally—not only solidarity among workers of the world, but of organised labour with everyone else. There were incredible sights of Teamster president James Hoffa sharing a stage with student anti-sweatshop activists, of Earth Firsters marching with Sierra Clubbers, and a chain of bare-breasted BGH-free Lesbian Avengers weaving through a crowd of machinists.

He notes that the change in US union rhetoric over the preceding five years had been amazing: the nationalist rhetoric had largely gone, replaced by a rhetoric of international labour solidarity.[26]

However, other observers provide more nuanced accounts. Jeff St Clair emphasises rank-and-file unionists' rejection of the moderation of their own officials. Of this march of organised labour led by the AFL-CIO, St Clair explains that labour's legions—a predicted 50,000—were to march from the Space Needle to the Convention Center and peacefully prevent the WTO delegates from assembling.

> It never happened. Instead, the labour chiefs talked tough but accepted a cheap deal. They would get a Wednesday meeting with Bill Clinton, with the promise that, at future WTO enclaves, they would get 'a seat at the table'. So, instead of joining the throngs bent on shutting down the opening of the WTO, the big labour rally took place at noon around the Space Needle, some fifteen to twenty blocks from the Convention Center where the protesters on the front lines were taking their stand. When the labour march finally got underway around 1 PM, its marshals directed most of the marchers away from the battle zones down by the Convention Center.[27]

The protesters kept asking. "Where are the labour marchers?" They were expecting thousands of longshoremen and teamsters to fortify them in the fray.

> The absent masses never came. The marshals for the union march steered the big crowds away from the action and the isolation of the street protesters allowed the cops to become far more violent. Eventually, several phalanxes of union marchers skirted their herders and headed up

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[26] Henwood, Doug. "A Daily Report from the World Trade Organization Summit, Seattle." *Left Business Observer*. 30 November 1999. http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/SeattleTuesday.html (Last Accessed 27 April 2017).

[27] St Clair, Jeffrey. "Seattle Diary: It's a Gas, Gas, Gas." *New Left Review* 238, November/December 1999, p. 86.

> 4th Avenue to the battlegrounds at Pine and Pike. Most of them seemed to be from the more militant unions, the Steelworkers, IBEW and the Longshoremen. And they seemed to be pissed off at the political penury of their leaders. Randal McCarthy, a longshoreman from Kelso, Washington, told me: 'That fucker, Sweeney. No wonder we keep getting rolled. If he were any dumber, he'd be in management'.[28]

Carlsson agrees that, in spite of organised monitors attempting to turn the union march away, thousands of rank-and-file workers poured into the streets to reinforce the front-line blockaders in their efforts; this surge of new people into the streets during the afternoon consolidated the day's victory and made possible the victorious retreat in the evening, in spite of the dubious directives from national union leaders.[29] Charlton concurs: AFL-CIO bureaucrats attempted to keep the union forces away from the battle zone by forcible detouring of the labour rally; despite these machinations, many rank-and-file militants defied their lieutenants to join the troops downtown:

> Tens of thousands of union members marched downtown to join the protest. Having shut down all the ports along the Pacific coast from Alaska to San Diego, union members chanted and waged picket signs as their ranks filled the streets as far as the eye could see. Each union's members marched together, each with its own colour jacket or T-shirt, each carrying banners and hundreds of signs printed for the occasion.[30]

The unions identified as present included: steelworkers; electrical workers; teachers; bricklayers; longshoremen; painters; Stanford workers; service employees; teamsters; sheet metal workers; marine engineers; transit workers; boilermakers; plumbers; steamfitters and refrigeration workers; public service workers of Canada; cement masons; pulp, paper and wood workers; nurses; Canadian airlines workers; carpenters; autoworkers and machinists. Charlton claims these sections of labour were in a close and harmonious relationship with the "natural" constituency of demonstrators, such as students, environmentalists of several stripes, 1968 veterans and their children.[31]

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[28] St Clair, Jeffrey. "Seattle Diary." Op. Cit., p. 89.
[29] Carlsson, Chris. "Seeing the Elephant in Seattle." Op. Cit.
[30] Charlton, John. "Talking Seattle." Op. Cit., p.6.
[31] Ibid., pp. 7-8, 17.

This harmonious relationship continued the following day, the March for Environment day. The Earth Island Institute had prepared hundreds and hundreds of turtle costumes for marchers to wear. The symbol of Seattle was the sea turtle, because the WTO tribunal had ruled that the US Endangered Species Act, which requires shrimp to be caught with turtle-excluder devices, was an unfair trade barrier. The broad coalition brought together rank-and-file workers, especially militant trade unionists; greenies; "people in poverty"; lobby groups, such as Non-Government Organisations; and church groups.[32] This cross-class alliance inspired the popular motto: "Turtles and Teamsters Together at Last." St Clair describes this march:

> In the first display of a new solidarity, trade union members from amongst the steelworkers and the longshore-men showed up to join the march ... The throng of sea turtles and blue-jacketed union folk took off to the rhythm of a chant that would echo down the streets of Seattle for days: "The people united will never be divided!"[33]

Amongst the direct-action warriors on the front lines was the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment. This new enviro-steelworker alliance ran an advertisement in the *New York Times*, asking "Have You Heard the One About the Environmentalist and the Steelworker?" Because of its spread, global capitalism, they found, was bringing them together in spite of themselves. They discovered they had a common enemy: Charles Hurwitz, the corporate raider. Hurwitz owns the Pacific Lumber Company, the northern California timber firm that was slaughtering some of the last stands of ancient redwoods on the planet. At the same time, Hurwitz was also controlling Kaiser Aluminium, which had locked out 3,000 steelworkers at factories in Washington, Ohio and Louisiana. David Foster of the United Steelworkers of America explained: "The companies that attack the environment most mercilessly are often also the ones that are the most anti-union. More unites us than divides us."[34]

In an upbeat commentary in the wake of the Battle of Seattle, Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff hailed "a new internationalism." One of the most important developments in "this period of growing rebellion" has been "the partial revival of the labor movement that is finally showing signs of attempting to chart a new course." They considered the AFL-CIO's "central role" in the anti-WTO protests in Seattle a concrete indication of this new

[32] St Clair, Jeffrey. "Seattle Diary." Op. Cit., p. 88.
[33] Ibid., p. 83.
[34] St Clair, Jeffrey. "Seattle Diary." Op. Cit., pp. 83, 86, 88 92-93.

course, providing hope that organised labour was at last rising phoenix-like from its ashes, the decline in membership would be reversed and the way opened to “a broader labor internationalism.”[35] Halil Hassan likewise insisted that the Battle of Seattle revealed “a willingness on the part of organized labor to engage in what have been for its leaders fairly unconventional struggles, and there appears to be a growing basis for a coalition of forces against neoliberalism and globalization.”[36]

The behaviour of AFL-CIO officials at the Battle of Seattle suggested this degree of optimism was unwarranted. What was undeniably true is the extent to which working-class people were active in the encounter and many union activists crucial to the success of the mobilisation. This was a truly significant development. Barbara Ehrenreich has commented that the vision of a working-class and middle-class alliance in opposition to corporate power is “almost the defining dream of the American left”.[37] Seattle—and other summit-storming episodes—provided glimpses of such a vision. But it was union activists—largely in opposition to their union officials—who dared to dream. Jeff St Clair went to sleep on the last night of these five days with the words of a locked-out steelworker in his head. “The things I’ve seen here in Seattle I never thought I’d see in America.”[38]

S11: Melbourne 11-13 September 2000

At this summit-storming down under, Australian protesters blockaded the Asia-Pacific Economic Summit of the WEF at Melbourne’s Crown Casino. The WEF was obliged to meet behind wire fences and was protected by 2,000 police, its participants ferried in by helicopter, while sit-ins and sound systems, puppetry and protest mingled outside.[39] With delegates physically prevented from attending the Summit, Kurt Iveson and Sean Scalmer noted how the S11 protesters “transformed Crown Casino into a place from which they could *contest* corporate capital’s domination of global space.”[40] Melbourne University newspaper *Farrago* reported that:

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[35] Sweezy, Paul M. and Magdoff, Harry. “Editorial: Towards a New Internationalism.” *Monthly Review* 52 (3), 2000, pp. 2-3.
[36] Hassan, Khalil. “The Future of the Labor Left.” *Monthly Review* 52 (3), 2000, p. 62.
[37] Quoted in Rose, Fred. *Coalitions across the Class Divide. Lessons from the Labor, Peace and Environmental Movements*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 5.
[38] St Clair, Jeffrey. “Seattle Diary.” Op. Cit., p. 95.
[39] Rundle, Guy. “Now, S11.” Editorial, *Arena Magazine* 49, October/November 2000, p. 2.
[40] Iveson, Kurt and Scalmer, Sean. “Contesting the ‘Inevitable.’ Notes on S11.” *Overland* 161, 2000, p. 12.

"Only one quarter of WEF delegates attended…while outside crowds swelled to more than twenty thousand people, as union members marched from Trades Hall to join the blockade."[41]

Observers agree that the union contribution to the amalgam of protesters was substantial. However, as at Seattle, ambivalence on the part of union officialdom was evident. Unique to S11 in Melbourne, there were even organisational ties between unions and those hosting the WEF Summit, because the Labor Party, to which the vast majority of unions are affiliated, was in government in the State of Victoria at the time.

Tom Bramble and John Minns depict the unions as an occasional, rather than an organised, part of the anti-capitalist mobilisation.[42] According to some commentators, the union movement hierarchy prevented full union support of the S11 blockade; according to others, union leaders also ordered unionists not to prevent delegates attending the WEF meeting. S11 organiser David Glanz thought unions were hesitant due to pressure from the State Labor Government and the police officers' union, distrust of the far left organising the protest, and concern that the media would use the event to accuse unions of violence.[43] Trades Hall Secretary Leigh Hubbard was critical of the S11 organisers, complaining that they did not approach the unions for support until after the event was planned.[44] Left-wing Electricians' Union state secretary Dean Mighell explained: "It's not a matter of not supporting the cause, it's a matter of having confidence in the way things will be conducted, because the first people to be blamed for any disasters will be us." He was particularly annoyed that workers attempting to do their jobs at the Crown Casino were hassled by the protesters: "Our people were called scabs and spat at. Our people just wanted to go to work."[45]

Nonetheless, unionists turned up in large numbers, both inside and outside of the union rally on 12 September, the second day of the three-day

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[41] *Farrago*, 2000, p. 21.
[42] Bramble, Tom and Minns, John. 2005. "Whose Streets? Our Streets! Activist Perspectives on the Australian Anti-capitalist Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 4: 2, September 2005.
[43] David Glanz, Interview with Joshua Roose, quoted in Roose, Joshua. "'Shades of Red'": The Political Relationship between the Trade Unions and Socialist Organisations in Melbourne, Australia." Honours diss., School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University, Australia, 2002, pp. 50-51.
[44] Leigh Hubbard, Interview with Joshua Roose, quoted in Roose, Joshua. "'Shades of Red.'" Op. Cit., p. 50.
[45] Dean Mighell, Interview with Joshua Roose, quoted in Roose, Joshua. "'Shades of Red.'" Op. Cit., pp. 1-2.

siege. Participant-observer Barrett-Lennard testifies: “Many working people were in attendance, including trade union members who had taken un-paid or holiday leave and were attending as individuals and were not connected with the official union rally.”[46] At least 10,000 unionists marched from Trades Hall, headquarters of the Victorian Trades and Labor Council, to the Casino Complex, but, rather than formally and obviously joining the blockade, these unions staged their own rally alongside the blockade.[47] However, significant numbers of unionists attending the union rally then joined the blockade at the conclusion of the union rally.[48]

Barrett-Lennard argues the union contribution to S11 was “somewhat of a balancing act”: the march was staged so as to minimise conflict with the police, due to police union pressure; and the right faction of the Labor Party pressured Australian Council of Trade Unions officials to oppose S11. He concludes:

> If union leadership had been at all serious in shutting down the WEF, it probably could have done so by initiating strikes by airline crews and those involved in the hospitality industry. Union leadership had absolutely no intention of taking such a course of action; they are far too beholden to their political masters to consider it. Union support was warmly welcomed at S11, but in substance little was achieved by it.[49]

Other commentators are more upbeat about union involvement in S11, stressing the significance and novelty of a sizeable and official union presence at an anti-corporate protest event. According to Tracey Mier, the union movement’s “mass display of solidarity added to the inclusiveness and cohesiveness of the S11 alliance,” and proved to be the first time in twenty years that unions en masse had joined such a project.[50] S11 activist Jeff Sparrow asserted that, despite the equivocations and hesitations of Trades Hall Council, S11 forged a much closer relationship between left activists and the union movement.[51]

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[46] Barrett-Lennard, B. *Anti-Globalisation*. Melbourne: Beach Box Books, 2001, p. 123.
[47] Ibid., p. 117.
[48] Mier, Tracey. “The Impact of the Anti-Corporate Globalisation Movement S11.” Honours diss,, Political Science Department, University of Melbourne, 2001, p. 23.
[49] Barrett-Lennard, B. *Anti-Globalisation*. Op. Cit., p. 129.
[50] Mier, Tracey. “The Impact of the Anti-Corporate Globalisation Movement S11.” Op. Cit., pp. 23, 36.
[51] Sparrow, Jeff. “The Victory at S11.” *Overland* 161, Summer 2000, p. 20.

Québec City, 19-21 April 2001

At the Québec City mobilisation in April 2001, the Declaration of the Second People's Summit declared:

> We are … the voices of the unions, popular and environmental organizations, women's groups, human rights organizations, international solidarity groups, indigenous, peasant and student associations and church groups. … We reject this project of liberalized trade and investment, deregulation and privatisation. This neo-liberal project is racist and sexist and destructive of the environment. We propose new ways of continental integration based on democracy, human rights, equality, solidarity, pluralism, and respect for the environment.[52]

Approximately 70,000 demonstrators were opposing the Summit of the Americas to plan the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The FTAA was seen as a threat to labour and environmental standards, the quantity and quality of jobs, and democracy. *Our Times* correspondent Laurie Kingston witnessed thousands of concerned citizens coming to Québec City "to participate in an exchange of experiences, hopes and alternative visions to the corporate-led drive that threatens the very foundations of democracy."[53] Not just North Americans, but summit-stormers from around the world attended. For example, leader of the Narmada Bachao Andolan movement in India, Medha Paktar, stressed the diverse transnational connections of the growing movement: "All you are part of the puzzle, in your workplace, company, union and community…Each part is not only necessary, but also needed."[54]

Again, ambivalence and hesitation characterised official union involvement. Kevin MacKay refers to "the important, yet contradictory, role that workers play within the current politics of anti-capitalist mobilization."[55] He argued there was great variation *among* unions in terms of their participation in anti-capitalist summit-storming, but that a more important conflict highlighted by Québec City, Seattle and other such

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[52] Quoted in MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest: Lessons for Labour from the Québec City Summit of the Americas." *Labour/Le travail* 50, Fall/Automne 2002, p. 31.
[53] Kingston, Laurie. "Our world at a crossroads: a Quebec City Diary [Summit of the Americas]." *Our Times*. 1 June 2001. https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-372476721.html (Last Accessed 30 April 2017).
[54] Quoted in Couch, Jen. "This is what Democracy Looks Like." Op. Cit., p. 169.
[55] MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest." Op. Cit., p. 22.

demonstrations was the conflict between the executive and rank-and-file *within* unions. In Québec City, as in Seattle, rank-and-file unionists went against the official position of avoiding confrontation. "These recent demonstrations speak to the persistence of grassroots radicalism among workers, in which they are able to move beyond conservative structures and connect directly with their own power to resist, and with the concerns of other movements."[56]

Much of the conflict between labour and newer social movements, MacKay argues, can be attributed to the conservative, bureaucratised structure of unions. In Québec City, the division between unions and other movement groups was highlighted by labour's big event, the People's March, being directed away from the scene of direct action, the 3.9 kilometre chain link and concrete fence erected around the old city to keep Summit delegates protected from the protesters.[57]

Brendan Myers, a rank-and-file activist in Local 3913 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), describes how union presence was both immense, yet deliberately concealed; and how the unions dealt with the issue of the approach to the fence. His first impression on arrival was: "There are already hundreds of people there, and most of them labour, and most of the labour people are steelworkers, as we can tell by the distinctive yellow flags. We soon notice the blue of CAW and the white of CEP, but the CUPE flag in my own hand is the only burgundy that anyone can see." He describes how he and his comrades join the march that the Federation du Travail du Québec (FTQ) had organized: CUPE has lined up behind the CAW, who appear to be at the front, and CEP is behind us; people with whatever affiliation are everywhere; he could not see more than about twenty feet in any direction because of the density of the crowd, so it was impossible to estimate how large it was; he could only see the people, and above them the colourful flags, balloons, banners, puppets, and signs. FTQ marshals, he tells us, inform the crowd that there is a break-off point along the march route, and at that place, those who do not want to go to the fence can continue marching one way, and those who do can go the other way. Significantly, he recalls:

[56] Ibid., p. 35.
[57] Ibid., pp. 22-23, 26, 33.

> Then we get to the break-off point. An FTQ marshal asks me to get rid of my union flag. I understand this—the unions don't want to be lumped together with the molotov cocktail throwers by the media. I stuff the flag in a friend's backpack …We group together somewhere to prepare for the confrontation with police that we know will happen: we can already see the thick clouds of tear gas wafting among the buildings less than a kilometer in front of us.[58]

MacKay maintains that the many unionists who broke off from the sanctioned march and confronted the fence provide evidence of serious divisions within the union movement, between rank and file and union leadership, and among unions from different sectors.[59] More activist-oriented unions, such as CUPE, wanted to take the march towards the fence; a radical CUPE contingent refused to follow the direction of the People's March and instead marched to the fence. Thomas Walkom described the fence as dividing ideals at the summit.[60] Union activist Paul Jones wrote:

> Where was labour? That is an angry question that I cannot answer. The process of expedience and concession that came up with the plan to avoid the fence is beyond my understanding. It was as if the Second World War generals, who were preparing to drive the Nazis out of Europe, turned around and launched an attack in the direction of Baffin Island. The presence of individual workers at the fence on Saturday was no compensation for the mistaken union decision to avoid meaningful protest in the first place.[61]

Ken Davidson, co-chair of the CUPE International Solidarity Committee, stated after the mobilisation: "We can't leave it up to the youth. We have to take it on ourselves. Once our members understand how trade deals affect their jobs, they'll be willing to engage in civil disobedience."[62]

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[58] Myers, Brendan. "Le Carnival Contre le Capitalisme." http://frightlibrary.org/citizen/quebec.htm#dave (Last accessed 8 November 2019).
[59] MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest." Op. Cit., p. 23.
[60] Walkom, Thomas. "'My city is broken': the fence divides economics, ideals at the summit." *The Toronto Star*, 22 April 2001. B.02. WAB. http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/thestar/offers.html?url=%2Fthestar%2Fdoc%2F438278992.html%3FFMT%3DFT%26FMTS%3DABS%3AFT%26type%3Dcurrent%26date%3DApr%2B22%252C%2B2001%26author%3DWalkom%252C%2BThomas%26pub%3DToronto%2BStar%26desc%3D%2527My%2Bcity%2Bis%2Bbroken%2527%2B%253B%2BThe%2Bfence%2Bdivides%2Beconomics%252C%2Bideals%2Bat%2Bthe%2Bsummit (Last Accessed 30 April 2017).
[61] Jones, Paul. "Going to the Wall [Summit of the Americas]." *Our Times*. 1 June 2001. https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-372476741.html (Last Accessed 30 April 2017).
[62] Quoted in Kingston, Laurie. "Our world at a crossroads." Op. Cit.

Other unionists defended the move away from the fence, crediting the large numbers in the People's March with assurances from Québec unions that it would be safe for more moderate workers and their families.[63] For example, Morna Ballantyne argued critiques of the labour movement's role centred too much on how close union members and unions were to "the wall" and to the route of the march and gave insufficient credit to the fact that the People's March mobilised 60,000 people "many of whom are union members but many of whom aren't—to take part in a protest against free trade: this in a province where popular support for free trade is much, much higher than anywhere else."[64]

MacKay hoped that the experience of the Québec City mobilisation suggested that, in the fluidity and intensity of mass direct-action protest, the rigid structures of conservative institutions are more easily broken down. With rank-and-file unionists exposed to the solidarity-building and radicalising effects of civil disobedience, these effects might consequently ripple up the union hierarchies. "The resulting organizational changes could then lead to greater democratization within unions, and stronger connections between workers and other movement groups."[65] However, Dave Marshall, who attended the mobilisation along with a busload of "Rise Up!" anarchists from Toronto, was left with the impression: "If the unions were there at all, they kept a low profile."[66]

Genoa, 18-22 July 2001

The protest in Genoa in July 2001 is often regarded as the highpoint of alter-globalisation mobilisation. The G8 Summit meeting of leaders of the world's eight richest countries (including the European Union) attracted more than 200,000 protesters, a doubling of the numbers that amassed in Seattle.[67] This Genoa protest is also renowned for the extraordinary brutality meted out by the Carabineri, including the killing of 23-year-old Carlo

[63] MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest." Op. Cit., p. 34.
[64] Ballantyne, Morna. "Going on a march [Summit of the Americas]." *Our Times*. 1 June 2001. https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-372476731.html (Last Accessed 30 April 2017).
[65] MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest." Op. Cit., p. 37.
[66] Marshall, Dave. "Quebec's Peaceful Revolution." http://frightlibrary.org/citizen/quebec.htm#dave (Last accessed 8 November 2019).
[67] This was surpassed at an alter-globalisation mobilisation on 16 March 2002 in Barcelona with the media reporting 300,000 and organisers claiming 500,000. However, by this time, media obsession with the threat of Islamic terrorism deprived the protests of the intense and occasionally sympathetic coverage given prior to 9/11.

Guiliani and the serious injuring of hundreds of protesters, and the state-sanctioned use of agents provocateurs to discredit the protests.[68] In an award-winning German documentary about the protest, Carlo Guiliani Senior, identified as a proud trade unionist, expresses his grief. "To lose a son is against the order of nature."[69]

There was strong local feeling voiced against the Berlusconi Government's excessive, money-wasting security measures, from Genoa's mayor to cafe-worker Stefano, who told media: "We feel like rats in a cage." Many Genovesi, including the mayor's Left Democratic Party, intended to participate in the protest; most seemed sympathetic to the protesters.[70] Representatives from unions in general announced they would take part in the protests.[71] Local contingents were augmented significantly by summit-stormers from around the world. For example, an Irish anarchist wrote online about the experiences of himself and other members of the Workers Solidarity Movement, who travelled to join this gathering of kindred anti-corporate souls. His narrative attests to the tensions evident from the outset between the moderate Genoa Social Forum and radical Italian unionists organized in COBAS.[72]

COBAS is a radical, syndicalist rank-and-file trade union grouping formed in the late 1980s by unionists dissatisfied with the moderation of the three main Italian union confederations.[73] Around the time of the Genoa protests it advocated the formation of a new front stemming from "the fundamental terrain of trade unions ... extended into the more general political terrain," to oppose "the aggressive dynamics of capital, which invades all aspects of human activity."[74] A few days before the Summit, the

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[68] "Genoa: 300,000 rock G8 Summit." *Global Action* 1, 31 July-7 August 2001, p. 1.

[69] *Gipfelstürmer—die blutigen Tage von Genua*. 2001. 34.53 minutes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpk5EfLY2lY (Last Accessed 10 May 2017). See also *"Generation Genua" oder "Ein Tag mit Folgen."* 2001. 53.08 minutes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33VxKYWBBPc&feature=youtu.be (Last Accessed 10 May 2017).

[70] Johnston, Bruce. "Genoa on war footing to beat G8 protests." *Telegraph*. 19 July 2001. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/1334590/Genoa-on-war-footing-to-beat-G8-protests.html (Last Accessed 12 June 2017).

[71] Johnston, Bruce. "Bomb blast raises fears for Genoa summit." *Telegraph*. 17 July 2001. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/1334344/Bomb-blast-raises-fears-for-Genoa-G8-summit.html (Last Accessed 13 June 2017).

[72] "Four Days in Genoa." 2001. http://struggle.ws/wsm/news/2001/genoa.html (Last Accessed 12 June 2017).

[73] "Confederazione dei Comitate di Base." 2017). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederazione_dei_Comitati_di_Base (Last Accessed 13 June 2017).

[74] "Confederazione Cobas: chi siamo e per cosa lottiamo." *COBAS—Giornale della Confederazione COBAS*, 2002, No. 12 Supplement, quoted in Gamble, Andrew. *Labour,*

Government closed the Brignole railway station, making it difficult for visiting protesters to arrive. Mainstream unions, along with the Genoa Social Forum, merely condemned the closing of the station; COBAS, however, announced national strikes because of the station's closure, saying they would halt high-speed trains.[75]

Information about the composition of the protests was obtained by researchers working amongst the 200,000 demonstrators in Genoa. They distributed questionnaires at the various meeting points of the networks that co-organised the protest, weighting them according to organisers' estimates of the number of participants, subdivided by political coalitions.[76] According to this data, one quarter (24.5 per cent) of the protesters were "dependent workers," one tenth (9.7 per cent) were "autonomous workers," one tenth (9.7 per cent) were unemployed or underemployed, and just over half (56.1 per cent) were students. The protesters were disproportionately young. Only one tenth (10.3 per cent) were born before 1956 and nearly half (44.1 per cent) were born after 1977; the average age was calculated to be about 28.[77]

Global labour markets have dealt harshly with most young adults in developed countries, so the age profile of the demonstration is predictable. The proportion of tertiary students is lower than in the new social movement protests of the late 1960s to 1980s, but still more than half. However, it is no longer appropriate to equate tertiary student status with privilege in an era when a greater proportion of the age group attends university and when tertiary qualifications are no longer the passport to well-remunerated and secure employment. Students are aware that their prospects are grimmer than those of their forebears who mobilised in the new social movements and could afford, therefore, to emphasise issues apart from economic ones. The white-collar employment to which the tertiary educated aspire is not

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the State, Social Movements and the Challenge of Neo-liberal Globalisation. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 210.

[75] Johnston, Bruce. "Bomb blast raises fears for Genoa summit." Op. Cit.

[76] della Porta, Donatella. "Multiple Belongings, Tolerant Identities, and the Construction of 'Another Politics': Between the European Social Forum and the Local Social Fora." In Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow (eds), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, p. 179. See also della Porta, Donnatella and Mosca, Lorenzo (eds). *Globalizzazione e movimenti sociali*. Roma: Manifestolibri, 2003; Andretta, Massimiliano, della Porta, Donatella, Mosca Lorenzo, and Reiter, Herbert. *Global, Noglobal, La protesta contro il G8 a Genova*. Rome: Laterza, 2002.

[77] della Porta, Donatella. "Multiple Belongings." Op. Cit., pp. 181-2.

what it used to be. The new militancy of such occupations is encouraged by the proletarianisation of educated labour that has occurred in recent decades.

According to the survey of the Genoa protesters, one fifth (19 per cent) were trade unionists; and certain unions, such as the Federazione impiegati operai metallurgici (FIOM), were notable participants in the demonstration.[78] Another interesting statistic gathered at Genoa was in relation to "self-location on the left-right axis." Of the 683 demonstrators questioned at the Genoa mobilisation, 37.5 per cent identified themselves as "Extreme Left", 54.2 per cent as "Left", 7.3 per cent as "Center-Left", 0.6 per cent as "Center" and 0.4 per cent "Center-Right and Right."[79]

Donnatella della Porta, who led the research team, is unsurprised by the findings. She notes that the participation of "dependent workers" and trade unionists was even higher in percentage terms at the Perugia-Assisi March for Peace just after 9/11; at the European Social Forum, a "counter-summit" in Florence in November 2002; and at the International Day of Protest against the Iraq War on 15 February 2003 in Rome. In Florence, 44.3 per cent were trade unionists, compared with 63.4 per cent who identified with all the various new social movements in general. In Rome, only 32.6 per cent were students, while 40.7 per cent were dependent workers, 21.4 per cent autonomous workers and 5.3 per cent unemployed or underemployed.[80] Union buildings were targeted in the police raids that continued for a time after the protest.[81]

The data from Genoa and the other anti-capitalist protests in Italy confirm the strong working-class component of the alter-globalisation movement. While the literature on new social movements stresses the strong representation of educated professionals of the "new middle class," Della Porta emphasises that "the protest against neo-liberal globalization also increasingly involved workers and employees, especially from public service."[82] She alludes to the important role of public-sector unions in France, Italy and Germany, in seeking consensus in public opinion by claiming to defend public against private values rather than merely supporting old public sector employees' privileges. Aside from the participation of workers and trade unionists as individuals, she observes that

[78] della Porta, Donatella. "Multiple Belongings." Op. Cit., pp. 183-4.
[79] Ibid., p. 192.
[80] Ibid., pp. 182-3, 185.
[81] "27th G8 summit." 2017. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/27th_G8_summit (Last Accessed 28 April 2017).
[82] della Porta, Donatella. "Multiple Belongings." Op. Cit., pp. 180-81.

many trade union organisations in the North officially joined in protests against neoliberal globalisation.[83]

She alludes to the divisions within unions, apparent at the Genoa protest, which had developed over the preceding decade. Union federations in European countries had supported privatisation, deregulation and the "flexibilization" of labour, but opposition had also grown both inside and outside unions. In justifying their participation as organisations at the Genoa mobilisation, unions accused neoliberal globalisation of subordinating workers' and indeed citizens' rights to the free market, thus increasing the inequalities between North and South and within their own countries. She insists: "The forerunners of the Seattle protests can in fact be found, at least in part, in the world of work." The 1990s, she claims, saw a "transformation of labor action."[84]

A lost moment for labour?

Charlton argues the intensity of the anti-capitalist demonstrations of the fin-de-siècle period showed there was an "army" ready to respond to calls to mobilise against globalisation. "That there was speaks of an enormous depth of feeling—a raised consciousness across a significant swathe of society." He concluded from his interviews at Seattle:

> For workers across the Western world the past quarter of a century has been an experience of retreat and retrenchment, faced with declining wages, rising prices and severe discipline in the workplace. Joe B from Portland expresses it well: 'You go out to work—if you're lucky. Some trumped up bastard tells you the time of day. Your wages go up—but not at the rate of cabbages at WalMart. Then the plant shuts down.'[85]

Most of the Seattle demonstrators, according to William Tabb, "had the sort of class analysis which working people intuitively, if inchoately, often have … The proposals for confronting transnational capital are in class terms and, for the most part, inclusive."[86] Hassan insisted the lesson of Seattle was that the fight against global capitalism and neoliberalism had

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[83] Ibid., pp. 182-3.
[84] Ibid., pp. 182-3.
[85] Charlton, John. "Talking Seattle." Op. Cit., pp. 16-17.
[86] Tabb, William K. "After Seattle: Understanding the Politics of Globalization." *Monthly Review* 51: 10, March 2000, p. 2.

begun to emerge as a struggle of the American working class, despite pundits who believed such concerns were irrelevant to most workers.[87] For Robin Hahnel, the mobilisation emphasised "the pernicious effects of corporate sponsored globalization, including the terrible effects on U.S. workers and the U.S. labor movement."[88]

This was a vibrant, strong movement that articulated a left-wing critique of globalisation and expressed working-class discontent with its adverse effects. Evidence from the four case-studies of summit-storming episodes suggests strong working-class involvement, especially of white-collar workers from the public sector, and important contributions from union activists and particular radical unions as organisations, representing workers in all manner of occupations, white-collar and blue-collar, public and private.

However, mainstream trade union hierarchies were ambivalent about, absent from, or downright hostile to, these anti-corporate protests. These case studies indicate remarkably similar responses by most union officials, who manipulated union contingents to keep a safe distance from the centres of action. These incidents reveal much about the tensions within unions between militant, class-conscious activists and more co-opted and conservative officials. The result was that the contribution of unions to alter-globalisation politics was important, yet highly contradictory, as MacKay discovered in Québec.[89]

The internal divisions within the union movement, typified in the snapshots offered of the mobilisations at Seattle, Melbourne, Québec City and Genoa, had unfortunate consequences. With the exception of radical new unions like COBAS in Italy, union leaders mostly preferred the industrial labour movement shadow the rightward drift of the political wing of the labour movement in centre-left parties rather than throw its full-hearted support behind rank-and-file union activists who wished to embrace the growing left-wing movement against globalisation. Such prevarication did not present the union movement in the best possible light to workers aggrieved at the effects of globalisation. Did the hesitant, indecisive part played by union hierarchies in alter-globalisation campaigns contribute to

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[87] Hassan, Khalil. "The Future of the Labor Left." Op. Cit., p. 82.
[88] Hahnel, Robin. "Going to Greet the WTO in Seattle." *Z Magazine*, 1 November 1999. https://zcomm.org/zmagazine/going-to-greet-the-wto-in-seattle-by-robin-hahnel/ (Last Accessed 27 April 2017).
[89] MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest." Op. Cit., p. 22.

preparing the ground for right-wing populist opposition to globalisation? Was this a lost moment for labour?

Unlike the political wing of the labour movement, which was clearly making its peace with capitalism, the record of the trade union movement was marked by ambiguities rather than determined neglect of working-class interests. Union behaviour in these four summit-hopping episodes confirms the truism of union movement scholarship discussed by Ralph Darlington: the existence in unionism of the "universal tension" between the contradictory elements of "movement" and "organisation."[90]

Compared with other social movements, the trade union movement consists of organisations that are bureaucratic. In his analysis of the Québec protest, MacKay argues that the bureaucratised structure of unions creates conflict *between* the union movement and other social movements.[91] There is a clash of styles and culture at stake. On the other hand, many social movements also value the resources, institutional solidity and continuity often brought to campaigns by bureaucratised unions. More of an issue in exploring the role of unions in the alter-globalisation movement is not their bureaucratic nature as such, but the extent to which those who staff the full-time bureaucracy have interests at odds with the workers they represent.

Darlington emphasises the particular problem of trade union bureaucracy, a permanent apparatus of full-time union officials who specialise in negotiating the terms of compromise. While the rank-and-file of the union have a direct interest in fighting against the exploitation of employers and government, and stand to gain from fighting for the success of militant strikes, "full-time officials have a vested interest in the continued existence of a system upon which their livelihood and position depends, and so end up trying to reconcile the interests of labour and capital, which usually leads them to temper workers' resistance."[92] This structural contradiction within unions certainly helps explain the ambivalent responses to summit-storming episodes.

[90] Darlington, Ralph. "The Role of Trade Unions in Building Resistance: theoretical, Historical and Comparative Perspectives" in Maurizio Atzeni (ed.). *Workers and Labour in a Globalised Capitalism. Contemporary Themes and Theoretical Issues*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 133.
[91] MacKay, Kevin. "Solidarity and Symbolic Protest." Op. Cit.
[92] Darlington, Ralph. "The Role of Trade Unions in Building Resistance." Op. Cit., pp. 126-7.

Richard Hyman has written at length about the ways in which "institutional pressures create within unionism a perpetual ambivalence."[93] Unions create a means whereby workers can collectively win real improvements in their situation yet they provide a means by which workers' disaffection can be controlled and conflict can be contained in the interests of employers and governments. He insists there are "important limits to institutionalization," because a union which damps down workers' discontents too far destroys its own reason for existence.[94] When unions fail to represent working people, "to articulate seriously their members' grievances and aspirations," those whom they represent take it upon themselves to reform and re-form their representative organisations. Unionists will put their own house in order or face "the emergence of rival channels for the expression of workers' discontents".[95]

Hyman undoubtedly had in mind the development of more radical forms of collective working-class representation, such as COBAS in Italy. Such promising processes have been evident for a few decades now in response to globalisation, wherever existing union leaderships have ducked the task. These developments in working-class organisation and mobilisation around the world are explored, for example, in Issue 9 of this journal in 2018 and by this author in 2016.[96] There are, however, dangerous alternative "rival channels." To counter the drift of angry workers to right-wing populism—and stem their own decline as organisations—unions need to pay less heed to the "organisation" and embrace instead the "movement" inherent within unionism.

To change the world, unions must, as Hyman emphasises, change themselves.

> the struggle for the democratization of work and of the economy requires a new, imaginative—indeed utopian—counter-offensive: a persuasive vision of a different and better society and economy, a convincing alternative to the mantra of greed, commodification, competitiveness and austerity, a set of values which connects with everyday experience of the workplace.

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[93] Hyman, Richard. *Strikes*. 3rd edn. London: Fontana, 1984, p. 84.
[94] Ibid., p. 79.
[95] Hyman, Richard. *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction*. London: Macmillan, 1975, p. 200.
[96] Burgmann, Verity. *Globalization and Labour in the Twenty-First Century*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016.

The urgent need, therefore, is to regain an inspiring vision of unions as a "sword of justice," which many unions have lost; unions have to articulate a more humane, more solidaristic and more plausible alternative if they are to vanquish neoliberalism, finding new ways to express their traditional core principles and values and to appeal to a modern generation for whom old slogans have little meaning. "And since defending the weak is inescapably a question of power, unions have to help construct a new type of *politics*—in particular, by engaging with campaigning and protest movements … in ways which most trade unions have failed to do …"[97]–and which unions did not wholeheartedly do in the case of the great anti-capitalist globalisation movement.

[97] Hyman, Richard. "The very idea of democracy at work." *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 2015, 22 (1): 11-24, reproduced in LSE Research Online at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65573. 2016, p. 11.

The Betrayal of Workers. Counterrevolution in the 1980s: the Transitory Class and their Hegemony

Attila Melegh

Introduction

The dismantling of a socialist, non-capitalist mixed economy in Hungary followed a clear line of neoliberalism with an almost unconditional West-centrism. In this process intellectuals and expert technocrats played a specific role and actually we can argue that they formed a transitory "new class" as analyzed by Ivan Szelényi in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the book entitled "The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power".[1] The new (intellectual) class had no real option to practice property rights till the option was opened via the control of the state becoming an "auctioneer" state as Böröcz put it later.[2] In this process of forming a transitory class this control of the state was crucial and it was a non-repeatable historical moment. This historic opportunity was partially due to a global change of course, most importantly a new cycle of global capitalism, the freshly guaranteed free move of capital (the dramatic global rise of the share of FDI and its consequences in the labor markets). Altogether this led to and the exclusion of the "old" party elite which was blocking the formation of a new class of anti-communist intellectuals and technocrats. They could be completely delegitimized on the basis that

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[1] Szelényi, Ivan (1982) The Intelligentsia in the Class Structure of State-Socialist Societies. *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 88, Supplement: Marxist Inquiries: Studies of Labor, Class, and States, pp. S287-S326.
[2] Böröcz, József 1999: From Comprador State to Auctioneer State: Property Change, Realignment and Peripherialization in Post-State-Socialist Central Europe, in David A. Smith, Dorothy Solinger, and Steven Topik (eds.): States and Sovereignty in the Global Economy. London, Routledge.

How was transition a local class project?

In the 1970s and early 1980s Iván Szelényi (in the beginning together with György Konrád) made very important empirical and theoretical claims concerning the rise of a new class within the state socialist systems.[3] According to him part of the intelligentsia and part of the apparatchiks were on the way of forming a new class helped by two structural-historical preconditions, namely the existence of a "rational" redistributive economic system with a complex system of controlling production, allocation and reallocation processes and a pre-socialist social formation of Eastern European intelligentsia with its special social and political roles. It was portrayed as a new class and to be precise it was seen as a novel and special class in a number of respects. First it was new and special in the sense that the role of "knowledge" in social control was on the rise globally, but especially locally as a redistributive-bureaucratic system was in operation, which provided a new space for inequality mechanisms. Second this group relied not on formal rationality, but "substantive" rationality. That is to say, intervention into production and allocations in all phases of the production system in order to achieve certain social goals even disregarding formal constraints. Third it was an emerging class, as Szelényi put it, it was class *in statu nascendi*. Thus the formation was not completed, other alliances were also possible and actually formed between the apparatchiks and the actors of "market" or "private sector, most notably the so called second economy. Very importantly it was understood as a class "in itself" and not "for itself", thus it lacked class consciousness. These proposals were very important and here looking back at global-local history of Eastern European countries and most notably Hungary I would like to reflect on three aspects of the idea of a new class. If we accept that this "new class" was a fertile approach in understanding social structures and very importantly social change in the period. I think it is possible, and the concept of a new class actually might allow a much better understanding of social change in the framework of global-local dynamics. I will reflect on three aspects of Szelényi's analysis:

1. Szelényi argued that it was a class "in the making". I would add it was a transitory class in the sense of coming into being for a certain

[3] Szelényi 1982, op. cit.

historical period. In other words possible class relations of state socialism were only activated and played out during a certain global-local historic period when socialism was actually finished. This was when property ownership was reactivated and the system itself was reintegrated into a global capitalist system after the long period of being in a status of property vacuum as Böröcz put it.[4] In socialism it could only be *in statu nascendi* and it needed to be reactivated when global capital markets absorbed the state property only formally owned by the "workers". It later was reconfigured and we definitely cannot say that it remained the same.

2. Szelényi was right that in the beginning (in the 1960s and 1970s) this "new class" had no class consciousness. I argue nonetheless that the East/West or "Europe" discourse partially filled this gap during the transition starting from the early 1980s and this allowed to secure a discursive hegemony so much needed to form a transitory class position. This was a complex historical process and certainly we have to see this in a local and global interplay. I have to stress that that this process was not necessary or there were other options historically. But Szelény's ideas can enlighten how the "Europe" discourse was utilized and how it could become hegemonic in Eastern Europe and very importantly Hungary.

3. Szelényi also had another very important remark. He said that this "new" class was interested in inhibiting the emergence of "other class ideologies" and the formation of an "organic intelligentsia" on behalf of the "repressed classes". This I think is a key idea in understanding the development of ideas and discourses in Hungary and the particular hegemony that emerged and which has been later severely contested by new groups in the 2000s when the class positions were transformed.

The making of the class of the intelligentsia and the technocrats in the 1980s

According to Szelényi's analysis in 1982 there was a class conflict, a clash of systemic interests between the representatives of redistributive power and the direct producers. This clash of interests was much hidden or better to say it was just emerging during the 1980s. Remembering the current literature of reform economics analyzed among others by János Mátyás Kovács, this was exactly a period when the search for "real owners"

[4] Böröcz József 1992. Dual Dependency and Property Vacuum: Social Change on the State Socialist Semiperiphery. *Theory & Society,* 21:77–104.

was more and more on the agenda of intellectuals and reform apparatchiks.[5] At the beginning of this debate there was no room for any such clash of interests as the lack of a separate capital market did not allow more open conflict then just the bargaining within the state redistributive system in which managers of state socialist companies had to "sell" their interests within planning mechanism. This unequal bargaining of larger companies was aptly written down by Erzsébet Szalai at that time.[6]

This lack of autonomy of capital market was raised more and more intensively in public and most importantly in semi-public discussion and interestingly this articulation happened exactly when actually according to Szelényi there was a turn away from the process of a "new class" formation. I think Szelényi was right in saying that the alliances were more complex and in the end the redistributive system collapsed. So no complete new class was formed within state socialism, but I think his original observations can be useful to understand later dynamics.

And later developments are very important. The new class had no real option to practice property rights till the option was opened via the control of the state becoming an "auctioneer" state as Böröcz put it later.[7] In this process of forming a transitory class this control of the state was crucial and it was a non-repeatable historical moment. The state got paralyzed in defending the redistributive system and it could be captured symbolically, which also showed that a new era was starting even before the formal collapse. The debt crisis itself and the constant symbolic crisis-talk in discussions on economic processes were key elements (it is just to be noted that at that time our debt crisis was not worse than today, when nobody actually claims the end of this capitalist system, so it was socially constructed). In other words it was crucial to find grounds to practice effectively the otherwise hidden property rights. This historic opportunity was partially due to a global change of course, most importantly a new cycle of global capitalism, the freshly guaranteed free move of capital (the dramatic global rise of the share of FDI). This made the debt crisis a globally legitimized turning point. Altogether this led to end the exclusion

[5] Kovács, János Mátyás 2013: Ágyúval verébre? A kelet-európai közgazdasági eszmék történetéről (1917–1989), 2000 Irodalmi és társadalmi havi lap, 2013/5.
[6] Szalai Erzsébet (1989): Gazdasági mechanizmus, reformtörekvések és nagyvállalati érdekek. Budapest, Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.
[7] Böröcz, 1999, op. cit.

of the "old" party elite that was blocking the formation of a new class according to Szelényi. They could be completely delegitimized on the basis that they participated in the crush of various political revolutions in Eastern Europe.

Very importantly as we learn from the historical analysis of various party reports and related historical documents according to, among others, Eszter Bartha there was a suppressed but very clear animosity between intellectuals and workers throughout the transition and this conflict was very much about the introduction of private property and the interest of workers.[8] This was different in various Eastern European countries as for instance Poland was definitely a different case from Hungary.

But there were additional or related discursive changes which led to the transitory hegemony for the emerging class of apparatchiks and intellectuals providing them a period when they could actually openly play out their class position and the could achieve political control, till this group and formation was radically transformed.

Discursive change: the creation of hegemony

The coming of the Europe or a renewed version of the East/West discourse was related to the new cycle of globalization, but it was not completely dependent on that. I argue here that this discourse was an important factor in this process of class formation.[9]

In this respect two Hungarian political scientists, Kuczi and Csizmadia, have documented in detail changes to vocabulary, themes and subjects in political discourses in Hungary from the late 1970s to the early 1980s.[10] Political debates were less and less about the reforms of socialism

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[8] Eszter Bartha (2013) *Alienating Labour. Workers on the Road from Socialism to Capitalism in East Germany and Hungary,* Berghan Books, New York See also: Bartha Eszter 2011: *Magányos harcosok: Munkások a rendszerváltás utáni Kelet-Németországban és Magyarországon.* Budapest l'Harmattan Kiadó – ELTE BTK Kelet-Európa Története Tanszék; uő. 2009: *A munkások útja a szocializmusból a kapitalizmusba Kelet-Európában, 1968–1989.* Budapest, l'Harmattan Kiadó – ELTE BTK Kelet-Európa Története Tanszék.

[9] Melegh Attila (2006) *On the East/West Slope. Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe. New York* – Budapest, CEU Press. On hegemony see Gramsci in Forgacs, David 2000: *The Antonio Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916-1935;* with a new introduction by Eric J. Hobsbawm. NYU Press, p. 263-66.

[10] Kuczi, Tibor (1992): *Szociológia, ideológia, közbeszéd.* Budapest, Scientia Humana. Csizmadia Ervin (2001): *Diskurzus és diktatúra. A magyar értelmiség vitái Nyugat-Európáról a késő Kádár-rendszerben.* Budapest, Századvég, p. 41-71.

and more and more about how to adapt the country to the "West"—idealized as the focal point on the East–West slope.[11] Csizmadia has even shown that the emerging new discourse has been the basis of new constellations of social and political power into which new social groups could be incorporated in state-socialist Hungary: … the texts, debates, opinions dealing with the role of Western Europe first came together as a latent and then as a more and more public discourse and this discourse probably became one of the most characteristic traits of the 1980s… these views were not only written down or told, but they transformed public life and the whole system.[12]

As evidenced by massive qualitative analysis around the 1980s there was also a global discursive shift from the previous configuration of the competition of modernities in which the quantitative modernization performance game of "Eastern" and "Western" regions was played out and institutionalized. This older version could not have helped the fully fledged development of this transitory class hegemony as it allowed the autonomy of the "East" as an alternative modernity, thus Eastern European socialism was seen as a viable option, which then could be used as an alternative ideological possibility. This sense of alternative modernity had to die first and this happened well before the collapse of state socialism.

This was replaced by a new East-West discourse that reinvented qualitative geopolitical and geocultural hierarchies. Once I summed up the role of this discourse in the following way:

> The role of the East-West discourse and the East-West civilizational slope is to set the terms and rules of global and local positioning and to formulate cognitive perspectives and maps in which different actors can locate themselves, each other and their own societies in the late-modern capitalist world system or modern/colonial systems.[13]

In other words, the East-West slope was a dominant discourse for the articulation of identities and political programmes and the creation of institutions in the struggle for control and/or social or political recognition. It appeared in almost all areas of social and political life: individual careers, family life, institutional frameworks, scholarly works and major global

[11] Melegh 2006, op. cit.
[12] Csizmadia 2001, op. cit., p. 135; translated by A.M.
[13] Melegh 2006, op. cit., p. 196.

political programs, and it created a web of discursive arrangements "normalizing" our lives in the latest phase of world capitalism. Here I refer to the rise of "Europe" ideology in history writing, cultural studies and other social scientific areas. We can also recall the Central Europe debate, which symbolically made the whole region "passive" and basically "non-existent".

The (re)appearance of civilizational Europe discourses within and outside the region was very helpful for the rise of this class (once again I stress the process was not deterministic at all) and actually for a while it could become a class.

The key developmental issues were put on a cultural-civilizational ground and thus the role of the "intelligentsia" could be enhanced toward the larger segments of the society and also toward the other elite groups. This opportunity was quickly understood and grasped by the "intelligentsia". It was aptly observed by Szelényi that during and after the change of the regime cultural capital was a key in being part of the elite:

> Post-communist society can be described as a unique social structure in which cultural capital is the main source of power, prestige, and privilege. Possession of economic capital places actors only in the middle of the social hierarchy, and the conversion of former political capital into private wealth is more the exception than the rule. Indeed, the conversion of former communist privilege into a post-communist equivalent happens only when social actors possess the right kinds of capital to make the transition. Thus, those who were at the top of the social hierarchy under state socialism can stay there only if they are capable of 'trajectory adjustment', which at the current juncture means if they are well endowed with cultural capital. By contrast, those who relied exclusively on now devalued political capital from the communist era are not able to convert this capital into anything valuable, and are likely to be downwardly mobile.[14]

I can only agree with this and add that an overall cultural-civilizational discourse helped many intellectuals to "adjust their trajectories" toward more articulate elite positions. The "translation" of the knowledge of the "Western model" (legal system, historical processes, market mechanisms, etc. etc.) was a business for many at that time and such knowledge could make people get into very important positions.

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[14] Eyal, Gil, Szelényi Iván and Townsley Eleanor (1998) *Making Capitalism without Capitalists: Class Formation and Elite Sfrugg/es in Post-Communist Central Europe.* New York: Verso, 1998, p. 6.

This discourse also reshaped the understanding of history: pre second world war came to be seen as a part of normalcy due to the lack of European divisions while "non-European" or "less European" alternatives came to be seen as abnormalities, as sideway from the mainstream. This shift could be utilized by the children and grandchildren of prewar middle classes who, after considerable oppression in the early phase of state socialism, found a way to reinterpret their personal and social history and thus could make new claims to power after 20-30 years in social "parking orbits".[15] We have decent analyses on this period of "reinventing" previous and hidden identities.

It could disqualify (on civilizational and/or racist grounds) all other options then the one toward the West, and thus very importantly all preexisting links collapsed or got subordinated toward the progressive African and Latin American movements. Links between radical critique in the West and that of Eastern Europe also disappeared. This led to a focus on Europe and thus the postcolonial critique emerging in interplay between the "West" and that of the relevant parts of the "Third World" did not reach Eastern Europe or Eastern Europeans did not want to listen. Actually we know that senior intellectuals of the dependency school actually warned Eastern European colleagues point toward the lack of listening. This could be strengthened by the mechanisms Szelényi was writing about when he said the new intellectual-apparatchik elite was interested in silencing all other intellectual options on behalf of workers or the "wretched of the earth". It seems Bockmann and Gil Eyal made a very important point when they argued that neo-liberalism was not just something learnt here, but it was made here and got dominant.[16] The idea of a new transitory class can give a social explanation, why it could be successful.

The discourse was territorial and thus internal social conflicts were hidden and suppressed by this discourse (there were no separate groups within Eastern Europe, just Eastern or Central Europe as such), or if social divisions were seen then they were either portrayed as natural or as an issue to be solved later as it represented a local lack of "organic" development.

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[15] Szelényi Iván [1988] 1992: *Harmadik út? Polgárosodás a vidéki Magyarországon. özreműködött: Manchin Róbert, Juhász Pál, Magyar Bálint és Bill Martin.* Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó.

[16] Eyal, Gil, Bockmann, Joanna (2002) Eastern Europe as a Laboratory for Economic Knowledge: The Transnational Roots of Neoliberalism. *American Journal of Sociology*, AJS Volume 108 Number 2 (September 2002): 310–52

Unemployment was natural, problems disappear later when we become being properly European according to this ideological construct. The territorial logic also pushed up minority and ethnic issues, which reformulated social debates into ethnic ones. The territorial symbolism and the territorial understanding of development did promote the activation of the state as a territorial authority. Thus it did allow the state first to make property rights open (they could come over "property vacuum" via creating the technical possibilities of privatization"). Basically they created the first organizations to practice and basically invent property rights without any control by groups interested in rational redistribution (like workers).

In this process state organs and related "intellectual workshops" were very important organizations representing the class interests of the teleologically thinking, pro-market intelligentsia (very importantly economists) and related apparatchiks analyzed by Gagyi.[17] I do think that just beyond a colonial type of translation we have to integrate the idea of a new class into these interpretations. There was more force behind creating a pro-market hegemony, than just a learning from the West.

Conclusion

Altogether I argued that the idea of an emerging new class is better integrated into the critical writing on the transformation in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s and in case we combine relevant elements then new interpretative possibilities emerge. The pioneering work of Iván Szelényi is to be continued as it might help to understand why and how the "transition hegemony" was created, how the critical left was silenced and how and why this hegemony later collapsed. Probably there was a transitory class formation behind too, which utilized previous local developments of a redistributive economy and society in a dynamic relationship with global transformation.

In Eastern Europe in the established new liberal hegemonic discourse, after the collapse of the left and the decline of the transitory class, the key "enemies" were the non-liberal, non-pro-Western nationalists, who were already talking about conspiracies in handing out capital to the

[17] Gagyi, Ágnes (2016) "Coloniality of Power" in East Central Europe: External Penetration as Internal Force in Post-Socialist Hungarian Politics. *Journal of World-Systems Research,* Vol. 22 Issue 2 Pages 349-372 | DOI 10.5195/JWSR.2016.626 | jwsr.org

enemies of the nation inside and outside. Prime example was for instance the writer István Csurka, who in 1998 said the following:

> The final goal is the extermination of Hungarians. Not by weapons, not by lethal gas, but with financial policies, by robbing our opportunities in order to make place for others. This age in which we are living, but most importantly the one which is coming, the next century will be the age of wandering. People of color living in extraordinary poverty but growing rapidly will migrate from East to West and from South to North. Financial capital and banks promote this mass wandering, because it is in their interest.[18]

In the 1990s such nationalists were ridiculed, but actually this discourse could get into the mainstream by the 2010s with the help of Orbán, the previous superstar of pro-Western intelligentsia, who turned to be an archetype of radical nationalist in the 2000s. Probably in perverse manner he was the one who understood that Eastern European classes of the "liberal", market utopia loving intelligentsia once have to pay for the betrayal of workers in the late 1980s. He is taking revenge from a nationalist point of view, but historically this leads back to the change of regime and the counterrevolution of the so-called new class. This is why he could consolidate his authoritarian rule after decades of neoliberal economic policies and the collapse of the non-capitalist socialist mixed economies.

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[18] http://www.magyartudat.com/csurka-istvan-a-vegso-cel-a-magyarsag-kipusztitasa/ accessed 13 February, 2018.

May ’68 Fifty-One Years Later

Michael Seidman

As the fiftieth anniversary of May 1968 approached, commentators and historians of the events of that year continued to see it as a “revolution” and “rupture” (*brèche*).[1] Both rightist and leftist analysts persistently posed interpretations that emphasized discontinuity and asserted that the student and worker movements which forged the French 68 broke with the past. The students innovatively synthesized desires for simultaneous personal and social liberation. Without their revolts in the spring of 1968, workers’ strikes might have remained as isolated and localized as they were prior to the national work stoppages of May and June. By challenging the state and, at the same time, inciting its constrained but spectacular brutality, students triggered the greatest strike wave in French history.[2]

The stoppages involved seven million workers, and the major trade unions—the CGT (Confédération générale du travail) and the CFDT (Confédération française démocratique du travail)—articulated their traditional demands of more pay and less work, including retirement at 60 or

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[1] Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, and James S. Williams, eds. *May 68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke, 2011); Eric Zemmour, *Le suicide français*, (Paris, 2014).

[2] Dogkyu Shin, “La CGT Berliet à Vénissieux en mai 1968: la réactivation de la mémoire locale et les enjeux de la contestation autour des conflits de 1967-1968,” in Xavier Vigna and Jean Vigreux, eds. *Mai-juin 1968: Huit semaines qui ébranlèrent la France*, (Dijon, 2010), 38-39; Louis Gruel, *La Rébellion de 1968: Une relecture sociologique*, (Rennes, 2004), 41.

even 55. In line with the emphasis on rupture, some historians have assumed the revolutionary nature of this massive May-June strike wave and have resurrected the *gauchiste* (ultra-left) fantasy that the workers were "betrayed by the trade unions and the political parties."[3] Yet workers' control (*autogestion*), which was a major theme of the sixties throughout Europe and North America, remained largely absent from strikers' demands.[4] In other words, although *autogestion* was popular for those searching for an alternative to managerial capitalism, it remained a slogan that sprang from the top down.[5] Many rank-and-file workers shared an ambivalent attitude towards salaried labor which they considered both wage slavery but also a part of their social identity. Thus, the workers were both producers and refusers of labor. Although union militants called upon wage earners to occupy their factories, relatively few did since part of their class identity involved escaping the workplace. As one worker-intellectual put it, "occuper une usine est beaucoup plus ennuyeux que d'y travailler" ("occupying a factory is much more boring than working there").[6]

The 1960s democratized the expression of the refusal of labor which in previous centuries had been the monopoly of the old-regime nobility or bohemian intellectuals. During that remarkable decade, public questioning of work expanded from avant-garde groups, such as the Surrealists and Situationists, to a larger mass of students and workers. The movements of the 1960s may have been the first time that anti-work sloganeering attracted a large and public mass of followers, who included extreme leftists, hippies, and some workers.[7] In the late sixties the Italian workers repeated, "We

[3] Nathalie Rachlin, "Falling on Deaf Ears, Again: Hervé Le Roux's *Reprise* (1997)," in Jackson, *May 68,* 348.
[4] Cf. Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976*, (Oxford, 2007), 2; Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s*, (Princeton, 2010), 98, 139, 192, 214; Xavier Vigna and Jean Vigreux, "Conclusion," in Vigna, *Mai-juin 1968*, 298; Rebecca Clifford, Juliane Fürst, Robert Gildea, James Mark, Piotr Oseka, and Chris Reynolds, "Spaces," in Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, eds. *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt*, (Oxford, 2013), 167.
[5] Frank Georgi, "Selbstverwaltung: Aufstieg und Niedergang einer politischen Utopie in Frankreich von den 1968er bis zu den 80er Jahren," in Bernd Gehrke and Gerd-Rainer Horn, eds. *1968 und die Arbeiter: Studien zum « proletarischen Mai » in Europa*, (Hamburg, 2007), 260.
[6] Daniel Mothé, "L'usine, l'amphi et l'association de quartier: fermeture de trois espaces militants en mai 1968," *Esprit*, no. 344, (May, 2008), 37.
[7] Nanni Balestrini, *Queremos todo,* trans. Herman Mario Cueva (Buenos Aires, 1974); Jacques Guigou and Jacques Wajnsztejn, *Mai 1968 et le Mai rampant Italien*, (Paris, 2008),

want it all.” The refusal of work was radically antisocial and subversive, reflecting a larger legitimacy crisis.[8]

Students created an inclusive movement which was joined by the *trimards*, *katangais*, *zonards*, *loulous*, the rough French equivalent to the lumpenproletariat or vagabonds.[9] These marginals were not adverse to drinking, getting high, and, of course, living without wage labor.[10] *Trimards* expressed radically and consistently the transient unconventional character and partying of student life, as reflected in the emancipatory hedonism in French university dormitories (*résidences*).[11] They also committed acts of iconoclasm and vandalism. *Gauchistes* politicized the practice of petty theft through the “vol révolutionnaire” (revolutionary theft) which helped to ruin the most important Parisian leftist bookstore, La Joie de Lire.[12] A variety of progressives, including radical Christian democrats, were not averse to erasing barriers and integrating *trimards* into the movement. “Il ne pouvait pas y avoir de Mai 68 sans trimards ni anars amateurs de cocktails” (“The May 68 movement could not exist without the lumpen or anarchists with [Molotov] cocktails”).[13] Indeed, the *trimards* provoked and, in the eyes of counterrevolutionaries, justified police intervention in numerous universities throughout France. Thus, they became major players in a national drama.

Whereas the early twentieth century saw the extension of an obsessive work ethic to new communist and fascist elites, the late twentieth century experienced the rise of anti-work ideology. Absenteeism, slowdowns, lateness, faked illness, turnover, sabotage, and theft continued during “les années 68.”[14] These revolts against work integrated various components of the working class. Militants and rank and file, women and men, French and foreign could all participate in the guerrilla war against wage labor. While avoiding workspace and worktime, wage earners used the same vocabulary that they had employed in the nineteenth century and

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15; Serge Audier, *La pensée anti-68: Essai sur les origines d’une restauration intellectuelle*, (Paris, 2009), 11.

[8] Boris Gobille, *Mai 68*, (Paris, 2008), 6. These themes were elaborated in the journal *Révoltes Logiques* (1975-1981).

[9] Claire Auzias, *Trimards: ‘Pègre’ et mauvais garçons de Mai 68*, (Lyon, 2017), 32.

[10] Auzias, *Trimards*, 67, 154; Guigou, *Mai*, 25.

[11] Gruel, *La Rébellion*, 107, 117.

[12] Julien Hage, “Vie et mort d’une librairie militante: La Joie de Lire,” in Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, eds. *68: Une histoire collective*, (Paris, 2008), 536.

[13] Auzias, *Trimards*, 164.

[14] Xavier Vigna, *L’Insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68: Essai d’histoire politique des usines* (Rennes, 2007); Isabelle Sommier, *La violence politique et son deuil: L’après 68 en France et en Italie*, (Rennes, 1998), 13.

labeled their enemies—whether scabs or cops—"lazy" (*fainéants*). The long sixties also marked a renewed interest in labor history, which for the first time began to chronicle these everyday refusals of work.[15] The cultural revolution of the period with its critique of labor provoked studies of beggars, vagabonds, "work-shy" and "anti-socials," all of whom became more central to labor historiography.[16] A focus on resistance to wage labor helps link the French movement to others in Europe and around the world, even though the Gaullist government was much more effective in limiting refusals to labor than its Popular Front counterpart of the late 1930s and its contemporary Italian foil during the *maggio strisciante* of the late 1960s.[17]

The French work stoppages enabled the CGT and CFDT to win higher pay and fewer working hours, but these material gains resulting from the strikes should be placed in a larger context. The supposed revolutionary year 1968 was not exceptional and remained merely part of the general decline of the French work week which started near the beginning of the long sixties in 1962 (approximately 46 hours) and continued to the end of the century (generally 35-36 hours).[18] The stoppages of May-June revealed a solidarity between young and old and between students and workers which

[15] Antoine Prost, *La CGT à l'époque du front populaire: 1934-1939: Essai de description numérique,* (Paris, 1964); Rolande Trempé, *Les mineurs de Carmaux, 1848-1914*, (Paris, 1971); Michelle Perrot, *Les ouvriers en grève: France 1871-1890* (Paris, 1974); Yves Lequin, *Les ouvriers de la région lyonnaise (1848-1914)*, (Lyon, 1977). For the concept of the long sixties, see Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-1974*, (New York, 1998).

[16] Bronisław Geremek, *Les marginaux parisiens aux XIVe et XVe siècles*, (Paris, 1976). The original Polish version was published in 1971; Olwen H. Hufton, *The poor of eighteenth-century France*, (Oxford, 1974). With few exceptions, German historians began to tackle the Nazi treatment of "work-shy" and "anti-socials" beginning in the 1980s. See Julia Hörath, *„Asoziale" und „Berufsverbrecher" in den Konzentrationslagern 1933 bis 1938*, (Göttingen, 2017), 25. See also Christa Schikorra, "Schwarze Winkel im KZ: Die Haftgruppe der 'Asozialen' in der Häftlingsgesellschaft," in Dietmar Sedlaczek, Thomas Lutz, Ulrike Puvogel, Ingrid Thomkowiak, eds. *„Minderwertig" und „asozial": Stationene der Verfolgung gesellschaftlicher Aussenseiter*, (Zurich, 2005), 108. In societies where wage labor is unquestioned and even glorified, the unprecedented irrationality and brutality of the elimination of potential workers—especially Jews, Soviet POWs, Gypsies, and political prisoners—will raise more concern than the fate of "anti-socials."

[17] Marcel van der Linden, *Transnational Labour History: Explorations*, (Aldershot, UK, 2003). Cf. Zancarini-Fournel, "L'épicentre," in Artières, *68*, 248; Xavier Vigna, "La CGT et les grèves ouvrières en mai-juin 1968: une opératrice paradoxale de stabilisation," in Vigna, *Mai-juin 1968*, 210.

[18] Philippe Askenazy, Catherine Bloch-London, and Muriel Roger, "La réduction du temps de travail: 1997-2003," in Patrick Fridenson and Bénédicte Reynaud, eds. *La France et le temps de travail (1814-2004)*, (Paris, 2004), 186.

overcame the "generation gap" that many analysts presumed was characteristic of the sixties.[19] In addition, the antifascism inherited from the era of World War II continued to motivate both old and young European leftists. Leftist radicals defined fascism very broadly, and they condemned French President Charles de Gaulle, US President Lyndon Johnson, and the Generalísimo Francisco Franco. The children of Spanish anarchists were especially active in the major French provincial capitals—Lyon, Bordeaux, and, of course, Toulouse, the hub of Spanish Republicanism and antifascism in France. Like antifascism, venerable anti-imperialism was an important element of sixties' politics. The post-World War II national independence struggles helped to trigger the *tiersmondisme* of the 1960s. Anti-imperialists supported Algerian decolonization and violently contested the US war in Vietnam.

Perhaps even more consequential than these political positions was the cultural revolution of those years. More than the year 1968 itself, the long sixties fostered dramatic changes that challenged both the left and the right. This "decade," which began in the late 1950s and ended in the late 1970s, saw the emergence of gender equality, expansion of personal (including sexual) freedoms, multiculturalism, new aesthetic values, and a critique of work.[20] In France and other Western nations, including Spain, essential aspects of this cultural revolution have largely been accepted. Few question growing gender equality and the decriminalization of homosexuality, even if during the French May itself the dominant leftist ideologies, which were shaped by Marxism, had little place for homosexual or, for that matter, feminist militancy in their worldview.[21] The basic multiculturalist demand to prohibit racial and religious discrimination has achieved consensus.

In contrast, other elements of the sixties' cultural revolution have provoked a potent international reaction. The flight of the Vietnamese boat people, Cambodian genocide, and desperate migration to the West from Africa and the Middle East have discredited *tiersmondisme*.[22] Even if *tiermondiste* and anti-racist, the May movements' emphasis on proletarian

[19] Shin, "La CGT Berliet," 38-40. For a new vision of youth culture, see Jean-Pierre Le Goff, *La France d'hier: Récit d'un monde adolescent. Des années 1950 à Mai 68*, (Paris, 2018).
[20] Marwick, *The Sixties*, 3-38.
[21] Michael Sibalis, "And What Then about 'Our' Problem—Gay Liberation in the Occupied Sorbonne in May 1968," in Jackson, *May 68*, 123, 130.
[22] Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Récit: Le champ des possibles," in Artières, *68*, 43.

unity was implicitly hostile to multiculturalism.[23] The major French trade unions wanted to integrate immigrants into their ranks as workers, not as Spaniards, Portuguese, Arabs or Muslims. In fact, the latter resisted striking on behalf of French students or even workers.[24] Like feminism and gay rights, the failure of the working class to make revolution propelled multiculturalism, which has recently come under intense attack. Critics have noted that unrestrained multiculturalism encourages national self-contempt and—ironically enough given the relativism of multiculturalism—a counter-productive disdain for European or North American civilization. Opponents of multiculturalism have also accused "*islamo-gauchistes*" (leftists uncritical of Islamism) of substituting a mythical progressive immigrant for a once-imagined revolutionary worker. What many observers see as the failure to integrate hundreds of thousands of Muslims into France and other Western nations has heightened anxieties about immigration. Some suggest a return to more rigorous and self-confident policies of assimilation that were successful with previous generations of European immigrants to France, including hundreds of thousands of Spanish Republicans. These suggestions have raised charges of "racism" and even "fascism," but the advocates of more thorough assimilation and a more positive national identity have responded that unreflective "anti-racism" has replaced an exhausted "anti-fascism."[25]

Cultural counterrevolutionaries have forcefully rejected the refusal of work and wage labor. The massive Champs-Elysées demonstration in Paris on 30 May 1968 in support of de Gaulle and his government called for an immediate return to work in the factory and classroom. During their nearly simultaneous marches, provincial imitators seconded this demand for a return to order and discipline.[26] Peasants who resented wage laborers' refusal to work expressed similar sentiments.[27] This pro-work restorationist current brought together the entire right and encouraged the government to

[23] Xavier Vigna and Jean Vigreux, "Introduction," in Vigna, *Mai-juin 1968*, 6; Daniel A. Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May '68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France*, (Pontypool, UK, 2012), 192.
[24] Mothé, "L'usine," 36.
[25] Audier, *La pensée anti-68*, 337.
[26] Philippe Péchoux, "'Pas de Nanterre à Dijon' Construction de contradictions du mouvement étudiant dijonnais de mai-juin 1968: entre réforme, révolution et réaction," in Vigna, *Mai-juin 1968*, 179-183; Lilian Mathieu, "Décalages et alignements des dynamiques contestataires: mai-juin 1968 à Lyon," in Vigna, *Mai-juin 1968*, 63.
[27] Vincent Porhel, "Plozévet 68: la révolte au village?" in Vigna, *Mai-juin 1968*, 123.

issue an amnesty to the leaders of the failed and subversive *Algérie française* movement. At the end of May 1968, the right's coalition expanded as rapidly as had the left's at the beginning of the month. The threat and reality of revolutionary versus counterrevolutionary violence was elevated and sometimes real, but both sides generally restrained their most murderous and destructive tendencies.[28] This restraint confirmed the difficulty of making a "proletarian" or "working-class" revolution in advanced capitalist nations.

From the mid-1970s onward, the growing scarcity of wage labor limited job turnover and discouraged labor indiscipline. Increasing unemployment undermined the popularity of anti-work theorists and movements while boosting counterrevolutionary forces, including a xenophobic, if not racist, extreme right. The latter made increasing political gains in opposition to uncontrolled non-European immigration as well as uncritical multiculturalism. May's hedonistic slogan that complained of an everyday life of "métro, boulot, dodo" ("subway, work, and sleep") was a product of an era of full employment, and it disappeared in the face of more demands for all three.[29] The counter-offensive against the refusal of work continued well into the 1980s when the conservative neo-liberals, President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, laid the basis for what some claim to be "illiberal" workfare that compelled the unemployed to labor.[30]

In France during the 2007 presidential campaign, Nicolas Sarkozy repeated this frontal attack from above on the sixties' legacy when he blamed the "relativism" that he attributed to May 1968 for France's alleged moral, intellectual, and economic decline. Sarkozy's solution was to glorify work and workers and to defend, at least rhetorically, those who "se lève tôt" ("wake up early for work"). Like Sarkozy, others have exaggerated the importance of May as the starting point (*événement fondateur*) for individualism, hedonism, consumerism, cosmopolitanism, feminism, and gay liberation.[31] Marxists too have blamed May for individualism and hedonism, but, unlike conservatives, they have attributed these "capitalist"

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[28] Charles Diaz, *Mémoires de Police dans la tourmente de Mai 68*, (Paris, 2017), 96.
[29] Mothé, "L'usine" *Esprit*, 43; Alastair Hemmens, *The Critique of Work in Modern French Thought: From Charles Fourier to Guy Debord*, (Cham, Switzerland, 2019), 169.
[30] On this issue, see Desmond King, *In the Name of Liberalism: Illiberal Social Policy in the USA and Britain*, (Oxford, 1999).
[31] This was a major argument in the bestseller, Zemmour, *Le suicide français*.

values to the failure of the 1968 collectivist workers' revolution.[32] Conservative French intellectuals worry that unrestrained individualism subverts traditional France, while leftists accuse "capitalist" egotism of negating the solidarity needed for a progressive future.

May's critique of work planted the seed of anti-productivism, which would bloom after 1968. Attacks on the consumer society morphed into ecology that criticized the ravages of progress and production. Hedonistic consumerism, which was said to derive from the sixties, has continued but has been challenged by new ecological concerns. In the 1970s, radical peasant movements began to pose questions about industrial agriculture and its effects on the earth and on the human body.[33] The decade-long fight from 1971 to 1981 to prevent the French military from occupying the plateau of Larzac gained local and national support and was able to conserve the plateau as a grazing area for sheep used to produce the typically French Roquefort cheese. Rural protests against the state and capitalist innovations, such as genetically altered crops and fast food (*la malbouffe*), were justified by ecological concerns rather than class struggle. Even among the extreme left, such as the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste, the negative slogan of "anti-capitalism" has often replaced the celebration of socialism or communism.

The Spanish sixties had much in common with that of its French neighbor. From 1956 student movements—eventually dominated, as in much of Western Europe, by various forms of Marxism—protested against the regime and were often seconded by progressive elements of a Catholic Church having its own sixties' transformation. As during de Gaulle's Fifth Republic, the late Franco years also experienced enormous and intense cultural and social changes that laid the basis for a delayed, scattered, but nonetheless profound sixties.[34] During this "second Francoism," approximately 1956-1975, the regime promoted unprecedented economic growth, swelled urban environments, and escalated foreign exchanges. The

[32] Roland Holst, Willi Baer, and Karl-Heinz Dellwo, eds. *Paris Mai 68: Die Phantasie an die Macht*, (Hamburg, 2011), 165.
[33] Jean-Philippe Martin, *Des 'mai 68' dans les campagnes françaises? Les contestations paysannes dans les années 1968*, (Paris, 2017), 30, 66-69, 133, 193.
[34] See the contributions by Nigel Townson, Pablo Martín Aceña, Elena Martínez Ruiz, Tom Buchanan, Sasha Pack, Walter L. Bernecker, and Elisa Chuliá in Nigel Townson, ed., *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959-75*, (Basingstoke, UK, 2007). See also Walther L. Bernecker and Sören Brinkmann, *Kampf der Erinnerungen: Des Spanische Bürgerkrieg in Politik und Gesellschaft, 1936-2010*, (Nettersheim, 2011), 235-277.

result was the rapid development of secularization, cultural pluralism, and youth culture. The decline of illiteracy, softening of censorship, and increase of mass consumption encouraged a Spanish cultural revolution which fostered the expansion of sexual and gender freedoms, multiculturalism (both regional and international), and increasing popularity of domestic and foreign rock/pop music. During the long sixties, which coincided with the long Transition to democracy, the vibrant creativity of Spanish art, literature, and cinema achieved international recognition.[35] A social and cultural Transition occurred before the much discussed political one.

After Franco's death in 1975 most Spaniards, including the military, became convinced that a Western European constitutional monarchy could continue the economic growth and social stability to which they were accustomed. A significant part of the *franquista* conservative base agreed, and a broad coalition of left and right terminated the regime. They were supported by the United States and European powers whose past concerns that the end of Francoism would mean instability in the Iberian Peninsula no longer dominated their policy-making. Only when the prospect of revolution had disappeared would the Western powers unreservedly support the Spanish transition to democracy. Despite strike waves, increasing dissidence, and regional tensions, the new democracy managed to survive and even prosper.

Modernization continued to dissolve traditional cultural constraints.[36] The permissive trends culminated in the *movida madrileña* which, even though often described as "countercultural" or "alternative," quickly entered mainstream Spanish and international culture. In fact, local governments (*ayuntamientos*) often financed, at least partially, magazines, concerts, radio stations, and exhibitions.[37] El Viejo Profesor—Enrique Tierno Galván, Madrid mayor (1979-1986)—willingly aided the young muses of the capital. The particular nocturnal context of the *movida* reflected a renewed sixties' atmosphere of drugs, alcohol, gender fluidity, while encouraging individual creativity in the visual arts and music. The night discouraged both diurnal labor and conventional left or right politics

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[35] Jeremy Treglown, *Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory since 1936*, (New York, 2013).

[36] Reiner Tosstorff, "Spanien: 1968 und die Arbeiter—eine andere Bewegung," in Gehrke, *1968*, 291-295.

[37] Maite Usoz de la Fuente, *Urban Space, Identity and Postmodernity in 1980s Spain: Rethinking the Movida*, (Cambridge, UK, 2015), 62; José Manuel Lechado, *La Movida y no solo madrileña*, (Madrid, 2013), 122.

while fostering the playful, but sometimes lethal, experimentation of youth from a mixture of social classes.[38] *La movida madrileña* was an implicit urban cultural critique of Franco's more rural *Movimiento Nacional*.

Coinciding with *la movida* in the late 1970s and 1980s, restrictions on contraception, divorce, and abortion were loosened. The deferred Spanish sixties saw changes as dramatic as in any Western nation even if these occurred not during any single year nor even a single decade. The recurring dream of "Europeanization" of Spain was largely accomplished, although some of the more traditional and classically liberal Europeanizers were not entirely pleased with the results.[39] Like Sarkozy, former Prime Minister José María Aznar objected to the utopian "espíritu sesentayochista" ("sixties spirit") and its slogan, "Seamos realistas, pidamos lo imposible" ("be a realist and ask for the impossible").[40] Aznar attributed the breakdown of the family and the deterioration of public education to the consequences of "mayo de 1968." Instead of *la movida*'s sex, drugs, and rock and roll, he and others called for the return of traditional values of work, sacrifice, and *patria*. Yet the cultural counterrevolution never succeeded in completely eliminating the conquests of the long sixties in Spain, Western Europe, and North America where gender equality, sexual freedoms, and even multiculturalism have largely been accepted, even if constantly challenged.

[38] José Luis Gallero, *Sólo se vive una vez: esplendor y ruina de la movida madrileña*, (Madrid, 1991), 3-5.
[39] Thomas Mermall, "Culture and the essay in modern Spain," in David T. Gies, *The Cambridge Companion Guide to Modern Spanish Culture* (New York, 1999), 172.
[40] José María Aznar, *Cartas a un joven español* (Barcelona, 2007), 112-113.

The Legacy of the October Revolution

David Mandel

A hundred years later, the question of the historical legacy of the October Revolution is not an easy one for socialists, given that Stalinism took root within less than a decade after that revolution and the restoration of capitalism seventy years later met little popular resistance. One can, of course, point to the central role of the Red Army in the victory over fascism, or to the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world that broadened the space for anti-imperialist struggles, or to the moderating effect on capitalist appetites of the existence of a major nationalized, planned economy. Yet, even in these areas, the legacy is far from unambiguous.

But the main legacy of the October Revolution for the left today is, in fact, the least ambiguous. It can be summed up in two words: "They dared." By that, I mean that the Bolsheviks, in organizing the revolutionary seizure of political and economic power and its defense from the propertied classes, were true to their mission as a workers' party: they provided the workers – and peasants too – with the leadership that they needed and wanted.

It is more than ironic, therefore, that many historians, and following them, popular opinion, have viewed October as a terrible crime, motivated by the ideologically-inspired project to build a socialist utopia. According to this view, October was an arbitrary act that diverted Russia from its normal path of development toward a capitalist democracy. October was, moreover, the cause of the civil war that devastated Russia for almost three years.

A modified version of that view is espoused even by some on the left, who reject "Leninism" (or what they believe to have been Lenin's

strategy) because of the authoritarian dynamic that a revolutionary seizure of power and a civil war unleash.

What strikes one most, however, when one studies the revolution "from below,"[1] is how little, in fact, the Bolsheviks, and the workers who supported them, were motivated by "ideology," in the sense of theirs being some sort of chiliastic movement with socialism as its goal. In reality, and above all, October was a practical response to very serious and concrete, social and political problems confronting the popular classes. That, of course, was also Marx and Engel's approach to socialism – not as a utopia to be constructed according to some preconceived design, but a set of concrete solutions to the real conditions of workers under capitalism. That is why Marx obstinately refused to offer "recipes for the cook-shops of the future."[2]

The immediate and the main goal of the October insurrection was to forestall a counterrevolution, supported by the bourgeoisie's policy of economic sabotage, which would have wiped out the democratic gains and promises of the February Revolution and kept Russia involved in the imperialist slaughter of the world war. A victorious counterrevolution – and that was the only real alternative to October - would likely have given the world its first experience of a fascist state, anticipating by several years the somewhat belated responses of the Italian and German bourgeoisies to similarly failed revolutionary upsurges.

The Bolsheviks, and most urbanized industrial workers in Russia, were, of course, socialists. But all currents of Russian Marxism considered that Russia lacked the political and economic conditions for socialism. There was, to be sure, hope that the revolutionary seizure of power in Russia would encourage workers in more developed countries to the west to rise up too against the war and against capitalism and open broader perspectives for Russia's revolution. That was indeed a hope, but it was far from a certainty. And October would have happened without it.

In my historical work, I present documented, and to my view, convincing, support for that view of October and I will not attempt to

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[1] This article is based in large part on my *The Petrograd Workers in the Russian Revolution*, Brill-Haymarket, Leiden and Boston, 2017.
[2] K. Marx, "Afterword to the Second Edition of *Capital*. vol. I, *International* Publishers, N.Y., 1967, p. 17.

summarize the evidence here. I want rather to explain how painfully aware the Bolsheviks, and the workers that supported them – the party was overwhelmingly working-class in composition – were of the threat of civil war; how much they tried to avoid it, and, failing that, to minimize its severity. In doing so, I want to put into sharper focus the meaning of "they dared," as October's legacy.

The desire to avert civil war was why most Bolsheviks, along with most workers, supported "dual power" in the early period of the revolution. Under that arrangement, executive authority was wielded by a provisional government, initially composed exclusively of liberal politicians, representatives of the propertied classes. At the same time the soviets, political organizations elected by the workers and soldiers, were to monitor the government, ensuring its loyalty to the revolution's programme. That programme consisted of four main elements: a democratic republic, land reform, the eight-hour workday, and an energetic diplomacy aimed at securing a rapid, democratic end to the war. There was nothing of itself that was socialist in that programme.

Support for dual power marked a radical break with the party's longstanding rejection of the bourgeoisie as a potential ally in the fight against the autocracy. That rejection had been the very foundation of Bolshevism as a workers' party. It was the reason the party acquired hegemonic status in the workers' movement during the pre-war years of labour upsurge. That rejection of the bourgeoisie (which was, at the same time, a rejection of Menshevism) had its roots in the workers' long and painful experience of the bourgeoisie's intimate collaboration with the autocratic state against their democratic and social aspirations.

The initial support for dual power reflected a willingness to give the liberals a chance, since the propertied classes (the liberal Constitutional-Democratic (Kadet) Party became their principal political representative in 1917) had, albeit rather belatedly, rallied to the revolution, or so it appeared. Their adherence to the revolution greatly facilitated its bloodless victory across the vast territory of Russia and at the front. The assumption of power by the soviets in February would have alienated the propertied classes from the revolution, raising the specter of civil war. Besides, workers were not prepared to assume direct responsibility for running the state and the economy.

Their later rejection of dual power and their demand to transfer of power to the soviets were by no means an automatic response to Lenin's return to Russia and publication of his April theses. Fundamentally, the

theses were a recall to the party's traditional position, but in conditions of world war and a victorious democratic revolution. If Lenin's position came to prevail, it was because it had become increasingly clear that the propertied classes and their liberal representatives in the government were hostile to the revolution's goals and wanted, in fact, to reverse the revolution.

As early as the middle of April, the liberal government made clear its support for the war and its imperialist aims. And even before that, the bourgeois press put an end to the brief honeymoon of national unity with its campaign against the workers' alleged egoism in pursuing their narrow economic interests at the expense of war production. The clear intention was to undermine the worker-soldier alliance that had made the revolution possible.

Not unrelated was the growing suspicion among workers of a creeping lockout, masked as supply difficulties, a suspicion that was amplified by the industrialists' adamant rejection of government regulation of the faltering economy. Lockouts had long been a favourite weapon of the factory owners. In only the six months preceding the outbreak of war, the capital's industrialists, in concert with the administration of the state-owned factories, organized no less than three generalized lockouts, in the course of which a total of 300,000 workers were fired. And ten years earlier, in November and December 1905, two general lockouts in the capital had dealt a mortal blow to Russia's first revolution.

By the late spring and early summer of 1917, prominent personalities of "census society" (the propertied classes) were calling for suppression of the soviets and receiving standing ovations from assemblies of their class. Then in mid-June, under strong pressure from the allies, the provisional government launched a military offensive, putting an end to the de facto cease-fire that had reigned on the eastern front since February.

And so by June, a majority of the capital's workers had already embraced the Bolsheviks' demand to free government policy from the influence of the propertied classes. That, in essence, was the meaning of "all power to the soviets": a government responsible uniquely to the workers and peasants. To that extent, the Bolsheviks, along with most of the capital's workers, had come to accept the inevitability of civil war.

But that in itself was not so frightening, since the workers and peasants (the soldiers were overwhelmingly young peasants) were the great

majority of the population. Much more worrying was the prospect of civil war within the ranks of the popular classes, within "revolutionary democracy." For the moderate socialists, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), dominated most of the soviets outside the capital, as well as the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) of soviets and the peasant Executive Committee. And they supported the liberals, to the extent of delegating their leaders to a coalition government, in an effort to shore up the latter's weak popular authority.

The threat of a civil war within revolutionary democracy was forcefully driven home at the beginning of July, when, together with units of the garrison, the capital's workers demonstrated massively in order to press the TsIK to take power on its own. They not only failed in that aim, but their demonstrations were marked by the first serious bloodshed of the revolution, followed by a wave of government repressive measures against the left that were condoned by the moderate socialists.

The July Days thus left the Bolsheviks and their worker supporters without a clear way forward. Formally, the party adopted a new slogan that Lenin proposed: power to a "government of workers and the poorest peasants" – with no mention of the soviets, as they were dominated outside the capital by the moderate socialists. Lenin meant that as a call to prepare an insurrection, one that would bypass the soviets, and, if it came to that, even be directed against them. But the slogan was not accepted in practice either by the party or by the capital's workers, since it meant going against the popular masses who still supported the moderates – and so, civil war within revolutionary democracy.

A particular concern was the attitude of the socialist, that is, left-leaning, intelligentsia, itself a minority of the educated. For the left intelligentsia almost universally supported the moderate socialists. The Bolsheviks were an overwhelmingly plebeian party, and the same was true of the Left Social Revolutionaries, who split off from the SRs (Russia's peasant party) in September 1917 and formed a coalition soviet government with the Bolsheviks in November. The prospect of having to run the state, and probably also the economy, without the support of educated people was deeply worrying, and in particular to the activists of the factory-committees, overwhelmingly Bolsheviks.

General Kornilov's abortive uprising at the end of August, which had the enthusiastic support of the propertied classes, appeared initially to open a way out of the impasse. In face of the obvious, the moderate socialists seemed to accept the necessity of a break with the liberals. (The

liberal ministers had resigned on the eve of the uprising). The workers reacted to news of Kornilov's march on Petrograd with curious mixture of relief and alarm. They were relieved that they could at last take action against the advancing counterrevolution – and they did so with great energy – in unison with, and not against, the rest of revolutionary democracy. Lenin, following Kornilov's defeat, offered the TsIK his party's support, to the extent of acting as a loyal opposition, if it would take power.

But after some brief wavering, the moderate socialists refused to break with the propertied classes. They allowed Kerensky to form a new coalition government, which included some particularly odious bourgeois personalities, such as industrialist S.A. Smirnov, who had only recently locked out the workers of his textile mills.

But by the end of September, the Bolsheviks already had majorities in most of the soviets throughout Russia and so could count on a majority at the Congress of Soviets, grudgingly set by the TsIK for October 25. Still in hiding from an arrest order, Lenin demanded that his party's central committee prepare an insurrection. But the central committee's majority hesitated, preferring to await a constituent assembly. And one can understand their hesitation. After all, an insurrection would unleash the still largely latent civil war. It was a terrifying leap into the unknown that would place on the party the responsibility for governing in conditions of deep economic and political crisis. On other hand, the hope that a constituent assembly could overcome the profound polarization the characterized Russian society or that the propertied classes would accept its verdict, if it went against them, was certainly an illusion. And in the meanwhile, industrial collapse and mass hunger were fast approaching.

If the Bolshevik leadership decided to organize an insurrection, it was not because of Lenin's personal authority, but rather under pressure from the middle and lower ranks of the party, to whom Lenin had been appealing. The party organization in Petrograd numbered 43,000 members in October 1917, of whom 28,000 were workers (in a total industrial work force of some 420,000), and 6000 were soldiers. And these workers were ready to act.

The mood among the mass of workers outside the party, was, however, more complex. They strongly supported the demand to transfer power to the soviets. But they were not about to take the initiative themselves. This was a marked reversal from the first five months of the

revolution, when the worker rank and file had held the initiative and compelled the party to follow. It had been so in the February Revolution, in the April protests against the government's war policy, in the movement for workers' control, aimed at forestalling a creeping lockout, and in the July demonstrations aimed at pressuring the TsIK to take power.

But the bloodshed in the July Days and the repression that followed had changed things. True, the political situation had since evolved, to the point that the Bolsheviks almost everywhere stood at the head of the soviets. But in the days preceding the insurrection, the entire non-Bolshevik press was confidently predicting an even bloodier defeat of an insurrection than the workers had suffered in the July Days.

Another source of the workers' hesitation was the looming specter of mass unemployment. The advancing industrial collapse was the most potent argument in favour of immediate action. But it was also a source of insecurity that made workers hesitate.

The initiative, therefore, fell to the party. And it was not as if Bolshevik workers were themselves free of doubt. But they had certain qualities, forged over the years of intense struggle against the autocracy and the industrialists that allowed them to overcome it. One of these qualities was their aspiration to class independence from the bourgeoisie, which was also the defining trait of Bolshevism as a workers' movement. In the pre-revolutionary years that aspiration had expressed itself in these workers' insistence that their organizations, be they political, economic or cultural, remain free of the influence of the propertied classes.

Closely related to that was these workers' strong sense of dignity, both as individuals and as members of the working class. The concept of a "conscious worker" in Russia embraced an entire worldview and moral code that were separate from, and largely opposed to, those of census society. The sense of dignity manifested itself, among other ways, in the demand for "polite address", that invariably figured in lists of workers' strike demands. It was a demand to be addressed by management in the polite second person plural, rather than the informal singular, reserved for close friends, children and underlings. In its compilation of strike statistics, the Tsarist Ministry of Internal Affairs put "polite address" in the column of political demands, presumably because it implied a rejection of the workers' subordinate position in society. In 1917, resolutions of factory meetings in 1917 often referred to the provisional government's policies as a "mockery" of the working class. And in October, when the workers' red guards refused to bend over while running or to fight lying down, since they considered that a

display of cowardice and a disgrace for revolutionary workers, the soldiers had to explain to them that there is no honour in offering one's forehead to the enemy. But if the sense of class honour was a military liability, it is unlikely there would have been an October Revolution without it.

Although the initiative fell largely to the party members in October, the insurrection was welcomed by virtually all the workers, even by most of the printers, traditionally supporters of the Mensheviks. But the question of the composition of the new government arose at once. All the workers' organization, by then headed by Bolsheviks, and the Bolshevik party organization itself, called for a coalition government of all the socialist parties.

Once again, this expressed the concern for unity of revolutionary democracy and the desire to avoid civil war within its ranks. In the Bolshevik central committee, Lenin and Trotsky were opposed to including the moderate socialists (but not the Left SRs and Menshevik-Internationalists), considering that they would paralyze the government's action. But they stood aside, while the negotiations proceeded.

That coalition, however, was not to be. Talks soon broke down over the issue of soviet power: the Bolsheviks, and the vast majority of workers, wanted the government to be responsible to the soviets – that is, a popular government free of the influence of the propertied classes. The moderate socialists, however, considered the soviets too narrow a basis for a viable government. They continued to insist, albeit in somewhat masked form, on the inclusion of representatives of the propertied classes, or, at least, of the "intermediate strata" not represented in the soviets. But Russian society was deeply divided, and the latter, including most of the intelligentsia, were aligned with the propertied classes. More to the point, the moderates refused any government with a Bolshevik majority, even though the Bolsheviks had been the majority at the Congress of Soviets that voted to take power. In essence, the moderates were demanding to annul the October insurrection.

Once that became clear, the workers' support for a broad coalition evaporated. Soon afterwards, the Left SRs, who reached the same conclusion as the workers, formed a coalition government with the Bolsheviks. Toward the end of November, a national peasant congress, in which the Left SRs dominated, decided to merge its executive committee with the TsIK of workers' and solders' deputies, a decision that was met with relief and jubilation in the Bolshevik party and by workers generally:

unity had been achieved, at least from below, although without the left intelligentsia, aligned in its majority with the moderate socialists. (It should be noted, however, that the Mensheviks, unlike the SRs, did not take up arms against the soviet government.)

This, then, is the meaning of "they dared," as the legacy of October. The Bolsheviks, as a genuine workers' party, acted according to the maxim "Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra" (Do what one must; happen what will), which, in Trotsky's view, should guide revolutionaries in all great struggles of principle.[3] But I have tried to show that the challenge was not accepted lightly. The Bolsheviks were not adventurists. They feared civil war, tried to avoid it, and, if that was not possible, at least to limit its severity and improve the odds.

In an essay written in 1923, the Menshevik leader, Fedor Dan, explained his party's refusal to break with the propertied classes even after Kornilov's uprising. It was because the "middle strata," that part of "democracy" not represented in the soviets (Dan mentions a teacher, a cooperator, the mayor of Moscow…) would not countenance a break with the propertied classes – they were convinced that the country could not governed without them. And they would not even consider participating in a government with Bolsheviks. Dan continued:

> Then – theoretically! – there remained only one path for an immediate break with the coalition [with representatives of the propertied classes]: the formation of a government with Bolsheviks - one not together with "non-soviet" democracy [the "middle strata"], but against it. We considered that path unacceptable, given the position that the Bolsheviks were adopting by the time. We understood clearly that to enter onto that path meant to enter onto the path of terror and civil war, to do everything that the Bolsheviks were, in fact, later forced to do. None of us felt it possible to assume responsibility for such a policy of a non-coalition government.[4]

Dan's position can be contrasted that with that of another moderate socialist, the SR V.B. Stankevich, a rare figure in his party (who had been a

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[3] Trotsky, L., *My Life*, Scribner, N.Y., 1930, p. 418.
[4] F. I., Dan, "K istorii poslednykh dnei Vremennogo pravitel'stva, *Letopis' Russkoi revolyutsii*, vol. 1, Berlin, 1923 (https://www.litres.ru/static/trials/ 00/17/59/00175948.a4.pdf).

commissar at the front under the provisional government). In a letter from February 1918 to his party comrades, he wrote:

> We have to see that by this time the forces of the popular movement are on the side of the new regime …
>
> There are two paths open to them [the moderate socialists]: pursue their irreconcilable struggle against the government, or peaceful, creative work as a loyal opposition …
>
> Can the former ruling parties say that they have by now become so experienced that they can manage the task of running the country, a task that has become not easier, but harder? For, in essence, they have no programme to oppose to that of the Bolsheviks. And a struggle without a programme is nothing better than the adventures of Mexican generals. And even if there the possibility of creating a programme existed, you have to understand that you don't have the forces to carry it out. For to overthrow Bolshevism you need, if not formally, then at least in fact, the united efforts of everyone, from the SRs to the extreme right. But even in those conditions, the Bolsheviks are stronger…
>
> There is but one path: the path of a united popular front, united national work, common creativity…
>
> And so what tomorrow? To continue the pointless, meaningless and in essence adventurist attempts to seize power? Or to work together with the people in realistic efforts to help it to deal with the problems that face Russia, problems that are linked to the peaceful struggle for eternal political principles, for genuinely democratic bases for governing the country![5]

I will let the reader decide which position, Dan's or Stankevich's, had more merit. But one can make a convincing argument that the moderate socialists' refusal "to dare" contributed to the outcome that they claimed so to fear.

History since October 1917 is replete with examples of left parties that did not dare, when they should have. One can mention, among others, the German Social Democrats in 1918, the Italian Socialists in 1920, the

[5] I.B. Orlov, "Dva puti stoyat pered nimi …" *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4, 1997, p. 79.

Spanish left in 1936, the French and Italian Communists in 1945 and 1968-69, the Chilean Unidad Popular in 1970-73, most recently Syriza in Greece. The point, of course, is not that they failed to organize an insurrection at some particular moment, but rather that they refused from the very outset to adopt a strategy whose goal was to wrest economic and political power from the bourgeoisie, a strategy that necessarily requires, at some point, a revolutionary break with the capitalist state.

Today, when the alternatives facing humanity are so deeply polarized, when, more than ever, the only real options are socialism or barbarism, when the future of civilized society itself is at stake, the left should take inspiration from October. That means, despite the historic defeat suffered by the working class and allied social forces over the past decades, to reject as illusory the goal of restoring the Keynesian welfare state, a return to "genuine social democracy." For such a programme in contemporary capitalism is bound to fail and further demobilize. To dare today means to develop a strategy whose end-goal is socialism and to accept that that goal will necessarily involve, at one point or another, a revolutionary break with the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie, and so with the capitalist state.

Lenin and Trotsky on the Quantitative Aspects of Strikes and Revolution

Eddie Cottle

Introduction

In most Western countries, the systematic collecting and publishing of strike data mainly by the police began sometime between 1870 and 1900 (Franzosi, 1982:2) and in Russia from 1895 (Lenin, [1913] 2004). In this period, there were widespread strikes, especially in large factories in Russia. Like his predecessors, Engels and Marx, Lenin saw in these strikes a "school of war" that eventually allows workers to see the true character of the bourgeois order. Lenin and Trotsky in particular took a keen interest not only of the qualitative aspects of strike dynamics but also the quantitative aspects to examine the changing levels of consciousness, the organisational capacity of the working class and the overall temporal dynamics of the class struggle. They examined the close connection between the strike weapon and economic fluctuations and the detailed movement from the economic to the political strike in order to gauge the path to revolution. The main purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the quantitative method used by Lenin and Trotsky's integration of the quantitative aspects in explaining the qualitative dimensions of strikes and protest.

The paper argues that strike data is crucial in understanding the ebb and flow of the labour movement over long periods, as short-term analysis tends to give way to intellectual fashions, undermining the role of workers as emancipatory subjects. Ross and Hartman's (1960) "withering away" of strikes thesis soon withered in light of the major strikes in the late 60's and

early 70's and similarly, Castell's non-class identity movements have been questioned in light of the resurgence of global strikes at the beginning of the 21st century (Silver, 2003).

Lenin

In 1910, Lenin published the article, "Strike Statistics in Russia" where he set out his preliminary elaboration of official statistical data of which he intended but was unable to write a book of the history of the 1905 Russian Revolution. The government strike statistics, despite their shortcomings, contained "a wealth of valuable material collected in these publications that a complete study and thorough analysis of it will require a great deal of time" (Lenin, [1910] 2004). According to Lenin, his article was "a first approach to the Subject" in which he analyses the dynamics of the 1905-7 strike waves in Russia in comparison with the USA, Germany and France and concluded that the number of *strikers* in Russia "are unparalleled anywhere else in the world" (ibid). The significance of the data on the number of strikers was that "Russian workers were the first in the world to develop the strike struggle on a mass scale" (Lenin, [1912] 2004) in a country that was just passing through a bourgeois revolution and had a smaller amount of workers and industrial enterprises than advanced industrial countries. His main argument was that European countries had not yet experienced a great national crisis as that which occurred in Russia. By reviewing strike data Lenin observed that there was a number of repeated strikes and the ratio of workers on strike and the number of workers employed, was much higher than in industrialised countries. Despite the decline in the number of strikes and the number of strikers in 1906, he observed that in some industries and districts the number of strikers increased. Of significance was the fact that in least industrially developed provinces there was a marked increase of the number of workers on strike, one year after the 1905 revolution. For Lenin, this was important in understanding historical processes as the more advanced workers struggle tend to act as a trigger for other workers and that this appeared to alternate when he examined the provincial dynamics of 1905-1907 (Lenin, [1910] 2004).

Going into more detail and breaking down the number of strikers per industrial district in 1905, Lenin was able to identify the advanced sections (vanguard) of the working class. St. Petersburg and Warsaw accounted for one third of all factory workers but accounted for two-thirds of the number of strikes. While there was a general decline in strikers in 1906 as compared to 1907 in Warsaw, Moscow, Kiev and Volga areas, there was an increase

in the number of strikers in St. Petersburg and Kharkov. The general decline in the number of strikers was an indication of a change in *political consciousness and levels of preparedness* to strike. However, this exhaustion of workers over one year (1906) was merely a period of recuperation before the upsurge in the number of strikers in 1907. This alternation in the number of strikers for Lenin was especially important as reformists regarded 1906 as a general retreat of the working class and thus not able to see a longer historical trajectory of future upsurges. This early work of Lenin also included an examination of cities and the different levels of strike participation between town and country, which assisted him in coming to the conclusion that the vanguard of the working class is in the major cities. Quite contrary to the accusations of determinism of Lenin, his level of openness displayed in examining the strike data demonstrates his acute appreciation of social dynamics and the historical movement of the working class.

Lenin ([1912] 2004) further developed his understanding of this historical movement by paying close connection to the economic and political demands of strikers. The Ministry of Commerce in Russia, developed economic and political strike data, necessitated by reality of distinctive forms of the strike movement in the course of the 1905 revolution. In his, "Economic and Political Strikes" he set out the task of further, analysing the dynamic of the 1905-7 strikes. Lenin argues that while economic strikers (604,000) predominated over the political strikers in the first quarter (206,000) but by the last quarter in 1905 it was the reverse as the number of economic strikers contracted (430,000) with the number of political strikers (847,000) almost double that of the economic strikers. This meant that at the beginning of the struggle workers focused on the economic and by the height of the struggle, it was the converse. Again, Lenin adds another quantitative measure, in order to gauge the changing consciousness of the working class in order to understand the overall magnitude of strikes and the development of the unfolding mass movement.

> Unless these forms of strike are closely interlinked, a really wide mass movement – moreover, a movement of national significance – is impossible. V.I. Lenin (1912)

For Lenin, the economic basis establishes the broadest connection upon which the political strikes rest, each being a source of strength and alternating over time. In the early formation of the mass movement, it rests

on the economic, raising consciousness before moving to a higher political plane. With the political strike, a wide movement emerges, achieves great aims, and the working class appears as the vanguard leader. This farsightedness of Lenin, is corroborated by recent events in the 21st century. The Bolivian Revolution of 2003 (Djampour, 2009; Luxemburg, 2005) and the Arab Spring of 2010 (Zemni, Smet, and Bogaert, 2013) all combined the economic and political strike and other forms of protest to ensure a really wide mass movement.

Further, in an article later that same year, Lenin not only analysis the weakness of official strike statistics but develops a full quantitative analysis of the role of the metalworker's strike in the strike movement of 1912 in comparison with other countries and types of industries. He starts by looking at the aggregate number of economic strikes, which were 96,750 in 1911 and 211,595 in 1912. The estimates of political strikes as affecting 850,000 workers in 1912, 8,000 in 1911 and 4,000 in 1910. The political strikes are overtaking economic strikes signaling once more a rise in consciousness and Lenin sets his investigation to discover the timing of these strikes, the leading industries and the outcomes of strikes.

Lenin begins with a breakdown of the aggregate number of strikers, which was 211,595, as follows: metalworkers, 78,195; textile workers, 89,540; workers of all other branches of industry the total was 43,860. After weighting the number of workers per industry he argues that despite the far fewer number of metalworkers as compared to textile workers, the number of strikers of metalworkers indicate that their strike action was more *rigorous*. The *persistence* measure (days lost) indicated the extent to which workers were prepared to make sacrifices and challenge to the pre-eminence of capitalism itself. Furthermore, the data shows that in terms of days lost in strike action the metalworkers conducted the most persistent struggle, followed by textiles and on average days lost for all workers in 1912 was double that of 1911. The data from 1895 on days lost to 1912 further shows that the persistent aspect of strike struggle was increasing over time. Lenin also employed a more detailed, open assessment, and was in particular interested in the shifts of strength and dynamics within regions and the various industries where he notes that the textiles overtook the metalworkers in strength by the last half of 2012.

Lenin however does not conclude that in order for a strike to be successful it must be the most persistent strike, which rests upon the specific circumstances of the industry. Although the most successful strikes in the metal industry were those of long duration, those strikes that were most

unsuccessful were those of longer duration in the textile industry. The outcome depends on the strength of the "contestants" when more or less equal can lengthen the duration of the strikes[1].

Furthermore, the breakdown of a specific industry showing variations of the aggregate success rates of persistent strikes for towns and districts, led Lenin to conclude that, "the St. Petersburg metalworkers play the role of vanguard to the metalworkers of all Russia". However, what factors allowed for such a persistent strike struggle on the part of metalworkers?

In order to understand the persistence of metalworkers Lenin argues that the metalworker's strikes were closely connected to economic fluctuations, both in relation to the specific industry cycle and the business cycle;

> There is no doubt that the relatively more favourable market conditions in 1912 facilitated the strike struggle of the metalworkers… (Lenin [1912] 2004).

Of particular interest is that Lenin looked at the quantitative aspect of the business cycle in relation to strike dynamics. He was the first to provide a definition of offensive and defensive strikes which are crucial for understanding strike dynamics and which were absent from official statistics. He defined "offensive strikes (when the workers demand an improvement in their living and working conditions) and defensive strikes (when workers resist changes introduced by the capitalists worsening living and working conditions)"[2]. When assessing strikes in the Kingdom of Poland he argues, "the economic conditions for a strike movement in that district turned out most favourable for the workers" where "only 390 defeated as compared with 8,060 successful". We can thus also safely assume that in Lenin noting the 'favourable conditions' that he located the offensive and defensive character of strikes within the fluctuations (boom and crisis) of the business cycle.

[1] In more contemporary literature this contestation is termed a "trial of strength" (Ross et al., 1960: 3-5; Hyman 1989:19-25).
[2] Interestingly this definition of Lenin on defensive and offensive strikes is very similar to neo-classical, pioneers (Griffin, 1939: 63; Hansen, 1921).

Lenin however does not conclude that in order for a strike to be successful it must be the most persistent strike, which is based upon the specific circumstances of the industry. Although the most successful strikes in the metal industry were those of long duration, those strikes that were most unsuccessful were those of longer duration in the textile industry. Furthermore, the breakdown of a specific industries showing variations of the aggregate success rates of persistent strikes for towns and districts, led Lenin to conclude that, "the St. Petersburg metalworkers play the role of vanguard to the metalworkers of all Russia".

In Lenin's pioneering development of strike statistics, he did not prioritise one measure over the other. He sought to use all of them in an effort to understand the overall changing consciousness of workers, the variations in strength of workers, the tactics employed within different regions and industries, the shifts in leading roles of workers in different industries and the connection between the economic and political strikes in the course of the first Russian revolution. Most importantly, Lenin argued that:

> Strike statistics that are complete, accurate, intelligently processed and published in good time have tremendous importance, both theoretical and practical, for the workers. They provide valuable information that illuminates every step of the great road the working class is travelling towards its worldwide goals, and also the closer, current tasks of the struggle (Lenin, [1912] 2004).

As we can see Lenin, developed a keen interest in the quantitative aspects of strikes in order to provide a deeper grasp of the qualitative aspects of social reality in order to gauge the changing consciousness of the working class. By combing through strike data over long periods Lenin, observed the victories and defeats, the periods of ebb and flow of the workers movement, which assisted him in coming to the conclusion that the working class goes through distinct but interrelated phases of class struggle.

In 1913, Lenin carried out an 18-year study, "Strikes in Russia" from 1895-1912 where he extended his analysis to include four distinct periods of strikes. These periods were, pre-revolutionary (1895–1904), revolutionary (1903–07), counter-revolutionary (1908–10) and revival (1911–12). The revival period is four years before the Russian Revolution. There should be no doubt at this stage that Lenin skillfully applied amongst others the quantitative study of strikes, to "illuminate[s] every step of the great road" the proof of which was the timing and the tasks he set out for the seizure of

power in Russia in 1917. We now turn to Trotsky, co-leader of the Russian revolution.

Trotsky

Trotsky was active in both the 1905 revolution where he was president of the Petrograd Soviet and under the political leadership of Lenin led the insurrection of October 1917. Leon Trotsky took up the task of writing the *History of the Russian Revolution*, where he makes use of strike statistics[3] and other historical works in his analysis of the revolutionary process, and argues that although;

> …the records are incomplete, scattered, accidental. But in light of the events themselves these fragments often permit a guess as to the direction and rhythm of the hidden process. For better or for worse, a revolutionary party bases its tactics upon a calculation of the changes of mass consciousness. The historic course of Bolshevism demonstrates that such a calculation, at least in its rough features, can be made… (Trotsky, [1930] 2008: xvii).

Trotsky following in the footsteps of Lenin used strike statistics to gauge the changing political consciousness of the working class in order to formulate the appropriate tactics during the revolutionary process. The role of consciousness was crucial to understanding the peculiarities of the Russian revolution, "since the enigma is the fact that a backward country was the first to place the proletariat in power" and the "consciousness of the masses are not unrelated and independent" of changing social structures (ibid, xvii). Central to understanding this peculiarity of Russia, Trotsky argues that it was the political circumstances created by a despotic state in which strikes were forbidden by law that created the conditions for underground circles, street demonstrations with police and troops - a 'school of war' which was combined by rapidly developing capitalism. Through the combination of the huge concentration of workers in colossal enterprises, intensive state repression, a young and impulsive proletariat brought about the political strike which became the fundamental method of class struggle in Russia (ibid, 26). It was thus the specific relations of both objective and subjective conditions that Trotsky like his predecessors tied both structure, consciousness and agency to the dynamic of economic and political change.

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[3] Trotsky used extensive strike data for his analysis but chose not to "burden the text with figures" (Trotsky, [1930] 1932:26).

Figure 1: Number in thousands participating in political strikes

Year	
1903	87*
1904	25*
1905	1,843
1906	651
1907	540
1908	93
1909	8
1910	4
1911	8
1912	550
1913	502
1914 (first half)	1,059
1915	156
1916	310
1917 (January-February)	575

* The figures for 1903 and 1904 refer to all strikes, the economic undoubtedly predominating

Source: Trotsky ([1930] 1932)

In order to understanding the change in consciousness, Trotsky places emphasis on the data on political strikes (figure 1) which stretches from 1903-1917 which for him illuminates, “a curve – the only one of its kind – of the political temperature of a nation carrying in its womb a great revolution” (ibid, 26). Trotsky observed that worker consciousness undergoes change due to a consistent struggle over time, and political strike data is a central indicator of such change. He argues that by looking solely at political strikes, the data itself reveals 1905 as a year of revolution. There were 1,8 million political strikers in 1905 compared to 87000 in 1903 and 25000 in 1904. The economic and politic strikes in 1905 combined to some 2, 8 million and was 115 times more than the previous year.

Trotsky, in agreement with Lenin, argues that despite the ebb shown in strikes statistics after 1905, these years still belong to the revolution. Here we see that Trotsky also tied strikes to the rhythm of the business cycle, which produce in part the ebbs (defensive) and flow (offensive) of strike movements. The ebb displays the period of counterrevolution which coincided with an industrial crisis in which “national convulsions find their reflection in these simple numbers” the effects of which are that, “great defeats discourage people for a long time” (ibid, 27-28).

Further, concerning the relationship between strikes and the fluctuations of the business cycle, Trotsky like Lenin, argues that workers need a respite from economic strife in order to renew their struggles and

concludes that, the "industrial boom of 1910 lifted the workers to their feet and gave a new impulse to their energy" (ibid, 27). With the boom, the political strike statistics (1912-1914) again begin to show a pattern similar to that of 1905-7 but in an opposite order, from a lower to a higher amount of political strikers. The underlying economic impulse now sets the struggle on a higher plane and "a new revolutionary offensive begins" (ibid). Finally, a new cycle of political strikes opens in February 1917 that eventually culminates into an insurrection and seizure of power.

Most importantly, Trotsky viewed strike movements as long-run movements and thus an ebb in the level of political strikers formed a continuum of class struggle in the process of revolution. This is unlike reformists who view the ebb as a defeat and opt exclusively for reforms and not revolution. Trotsky also extended his analysis of strikes, class struggle and revolution beyond the fluctuations of the business cycle. He developed a long-term view of capitalist expansion and contraction – the theory of long waves of capitalist development.

Trotsky's speech (1921) at the Third International Third Congress, "The World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International", took place in the context of global crisis where capitalisms imminent collapse was being expected argued contrary;

> Capitalist equilibrium is an extremely complex phenomenon. Capitalism produces this equilibrium, disrupts it, and restores it anew in order to disrupt it anew, concurrently extending the limits of its domination. In the economic sphere, these constant disruptions and restorations of the equilibrium take the shape of crises and booms. In the sphere of inter-class relations, the disruption of equilibrium assumes the form of [strikes], lockouts, revolutionary struggle. In the sphere of inter-state relations the disruption of equilibrium means war or – in a weaker form – tariff war, economic war, or blockade. Capitalism thus possesses a dynamic equilibrium, one which is always in the process of either disruption or restoration. But at the same time this equilibrium has a great power of resistance, the best proof of which is the fact that the capitalist world has not toppled to this day" (Trotsky 1921). *My emphasis*.

Trotsky was arguing against a mechanical materialism of Kautsky, whose views had dominated the Second International and was still widespread in the Third International. For Kautsky, capitalism's degrading tendencies of economic crisis would lead workers to strike and automatically seek revolutionary social change. In other words, the material

structures alone guarantee that the working class will become socialists and revolution was inevitable (G. Friedman 2009). Trotsky thus sought to recover the dialectic between social structure and consciousness and examine the counter tendencies, the "great power of resistance" of capitalism, which tended to restore equilibrium. He further argued that,

> Many comrades say that if an improvement takes place in this epoch it would be fatal for our revolution. No, under no circumstances. In general, there is no automatic dependence of the proletarian revolutionary movement upon a crisis. There is only a dialectical interaction. It is essential to understand this…At that time many of us defended the viewpoint that the Russian revolutionary movement could be regenerated only by a favorable economic conjuncture. And that is what took place. In 1910, 1911 and 1912, there was an improvement in our economic situation and a favorable conjuncture which acted to reassemble the demoralized and devitalized workers who had lost their courage. They realized again how important they were in production; and they passed over to an offensive, first in the economic field and later in the political field as well. On the eve of the war the working class had become so consolidated, thanks to this period of prosperity, that it was able to pass to a direct assault. And should we today, in the period of the greatest exhaustion of the working class resulting from the crisis and the continual struggle, fail to gain victory, which is possible, then a change in the conjuncture and a rise in living standards would not have a harmful effect upon the revolution, but would be on the contrary highly propitious. Such a change could prove harmful only in the event that the favorable conjuncture marked the beginning of a long epoch of prosperity. *Trotsky, 1921*.

Trotsky argued that a boom in the business cycle provided the "breathing spell during which it [the working class] could undertake to reorganize its ranks" which was born out of the direct experience of strike waves in Russia *(my addition)*. Trotsky further muscles in evidence for his argument, by demonstrating that the French revolution of 1848 took place in favourable circumstances where offensive strikes took place at the beginning of a "long epoch of prosperity" and this factor explained the "half-way" character of the revolution.

The economic fluctuations of the conjuncture at the time was proceeding along an ascending curve (expansionary wave) in this period in which crisis were relatively short-lived, and "that this is the most important aspect of the whole question… it was precisely this period that ended with revolution".

Trotsky was the first to make this distinction of the dynamic of capitalist equilibrium and disequilibrium in the form of booms and crisis in the short term (business cycles) and over long periods (long waves) with the dynamic interaction of the class struggle. Trotsky's theoretical achievement in his historical analysis strike dynamics and turning points both at the level of business cycles and long waves were prophetic. The general economic crisis after 1920-21 did not automatically lead to revolution but instead "capitalism's great power of resistance" resulted in the golden age of capitalism (1945-70) in the post-war II period.

Conclusion

Lenin and Trotsky conducted serious and recurrent studies of strike data, and the relationship between strikes and the economic fluctuations of the industrial cycle, business cycle and long waves. They did not promote one form of strike action over the other or one section of workers over the other, but saw in them a dynamic process of interaction between social structure and a growing class-consciousness. They were thus interested in the long-run details of strike *outcomes*, and developing strike data indicators that illuminate the curve of the class struggle, which assisted them in preparing the working class not for reform but revolution.

In the 21st century, the working class has risen powerfully once more to challenge the preeminence of economic forces over human beings (Silver, 2003, 2014; Pons-Vignon and Nkosi, 2015; Smith, 2016; van der Velden et. al., 2007; Balashova et. al., 2017). A renewed interest in the quantitative aspects of strikes should be able to assist us as to the direction the working class is taking.

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Abstracts

Attila Melegh

The Betrayal of Workers. Counterrevolution in the 1980s: the Transitory Class and their Hegemony.

In dismantling a socialist, non-capitalist mixed economy Hungarian elites were following a clear line of neoliberalism with an almost unconditional West-centrism. In this process intellectuals and expert technocrats played a specific role and the paper argues that they formed a transitory "new class" which could start a large-scale privatization process in the name of "Europe". This formation in a specific global historical moment can explain how the voices opposing the capitalist transformation and the critical left were silenced already in the 1980s. We can also see the specific circumstances of how and why the new class could establish hegemony through civilizational discourses for a while, and how their later control collapsed. This betrayal of workers by a supposedly socially minded professional and intellectual elite needs further analysis in order to understand how through a historic dialectic logic the later authoritarian/illiberal rule can consolidate its positions so easily at the end of a globalization cycle.

Keywords: Transitory class, privatization, hegemony, intellectual elite.

David Mandel

The Legacy of the October Revolution

This article discusses the lasting legacy for the Left today of the October Revolution and of the role played by the Bolshevik party. It argues that the October Revolution was motivated by a widespread popular determination to realize the goals of the February liberal-democratic revolution in the face of the imminent threat of counterrevolution at the hands of political forces allied with the propertied classes. The leadership provided in October by the Bolshevik party, a predominantly workers' movement, was far from a criminal, ideologically motivated act, as often presented by historians. It provided the workers and peasants with the political leadership that they

both needed and desired, and did so in full cognizance of the daunting odds that this new revolution faced.
Keywords: October Revolution, Bolshevik party, political leadership.

Eddie Cottle

Lenin and Trotsky on the Quantitative aspects of Strike Dynamics and Revolution

Lenin and Trotsky took a keen interest not only of the qualitative aspects of strike dynamics but also the quantitative aspects to examine the changing levels of consciousness, the organisational capacity of the working class and the overall temporal dynamics of the class struggle. They examined the close connection between the strike weapon and economic fluctuations and the detailed movement from the economic to the political strike in order to gauge the path to revolution. The main purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the quantitative method used by Lenin and Trotsky's integration of the quantitative aspects in explaining the qualitative dimensions of strikes and protest.
Key words: Strikes, quantitative analysis, revolution, capitalism, Russia.

Michael Seidman

May '68 Fifty-One Years Later

The French workers' strikes of May 1968 reflected traditional working-class demands for less work and more pay. The student movement of the sixties confronted both left and right by advancing a cultural revolution of gender equality, expansion of personal freedoms, and eventually multiculturalism. During the long sixties, antiwork ideologies gained popularity and unprecedented public exposure by attempting to synthesize the New Left's desire for simultaneous personal and social liberation. Antiwork movements also provoked a powerful counterrevolution that endorsed labor and the work ethic. Nevertheless, in France, Spain, and other Western nations, much of the sixties' cultural revolution has survived, even if challenged.
Keywords: antiwork, strikes, 1960s, France, Spain.

Raquel Varela

The Crisis of 1929, the Revolutions of the 1930s and Nazism

In this article, we analyze the history of the 1929 crisis, and its political-economic outcome, with emphasis on employment fluctuations in Roosevelt's New Deal in the USA and the country's entry into World War

II; the Spanish revolution, the French popular front and the civil war and the rise of Nazi-fascism as a product of the defeat of social revolutions. The absence of support on the part of the USSR and the social democracy for the revolutionary projects of the 30s of the 20th century contributed to this defeat; it resulted from the militant support of the German industrial and financial sector for this Nazi project, and of the inaction, if not active complicity, of social democracy and its alliances with semi-Bonapartist powers before Hitler's rise to power. Its outcome was the greatest tragedy in human history.
Keywords: crisis of 1929, social revolution, nazi-fascism, WWII.

Verity Burgmann

Trade Unions and the Alter-globalisation Movement: a Lost Moment for Labour?

Criticism of neoliberal globalisation has become associated with xenophobia, racism and nationalism, enabling far-right populist demagogues such as Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump to exploit working-class discontent with globalisation. Yet less than two decades ago a radical left-wing movement was seriously challenging globalisation and demonstrating that critique of corporate globalisation was compatible with internationalism and working-class solidarity across national borders. Where was labour in this important movement? Did unions participate in blockading the citadels of corporate power? Evidence from case studies of four mobilisations (Seattle November-December 1999, Melbourne September 2000, Québec City April 2001 and Genoa July 2001) suggests strong working-class involvement, especially of white-collar workers from the public sector, and important contributions from union activists and particular radical unions as organisations. However, trade union officials often preferred union contingents keep a safe distance from centres of action. Significant conflicts were apparent within unions between class-conscious activists, who wished to embrace the growing left-wing movement against globalisation, and more conservative officials. It confirmed the truism of union movement scholarship: the problem of full-time bureaucracies with interests distinct from those of rank-and-file workers; and the existence of the "universal tension" between the contradictory elements of "movement" and "organisation." Ambivalence and prevarication did not present the union movement in the best possible light to workers angry and distressed by the effects of globalisation. Did the hesitant role played by unions in alter-globalisation campaigns contribute to union decline and prepare the ground

for right-wing populist opposition to globalisation? Was this a lost moment for labour?

Keywords: right-wing populism; anti-capitalist globalisation movement; labour unions; Seattle; Melbourne; Québec City; Genoa.