



1968 AND 1989: THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL DATES OF TURBO-CAPITALISM

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Capitalism dialectically overcomes the antagonistic demands of the proletariat (class struggle, spirit of splitting, partisan organizations, revolutionary passion); and it does so by anesthetizing its consciousness in a consumerist sense, but also by "economizing" the conflict (since the 1970s, the proletariat fights for higher wages and not for overcoming the mode of production, thus metabolizing the ideology of capital as an ineluctable horizon). Simultaneously, capitalism overcomes the bourgeois "unhappy consciousness." In fact, this also represents, no less than the vindictory and potentially revolutionary antagonism of the proletariat, a contradiction within capitalism; and this above all, if we consider that the bourgeoisie: a) presents its own universalist vocation which can lead it—as in the case of Marx—to contest the historical capitalist world in which it is still the dominant class; and b) has a non-marketable valuational and ethical sphere and, therefore, ultimately incompatible with the processes of omni-mercantilization proper to absolute capitalism.

The bourgeoisie is, consequently, incompatible with absolute capitalism, just as the latter is, by its essence, irreconcilable with the bourgeois class, both on the immaterial plane (unhappy consciousness) and on the material plane (properties of the middle classes). In reality, turbo-capital presupposes the happy unconsciousness of the resilient, post-bourgeois and post-proletarian consumers, and the destruction of the material bases of the very existence of the bourgeois middle class by the work of the *auri sacra* fumes of cosmopolitan finance and its cynical managers. The bourgeoisie and the proletariat, in their dialectical conflictuality, had developed within the framework of eticity in the Hegelian sense; that is, in the real and symbolic space of the solid and solidary "roots" of community life, linked to the family and the school, to the trade union and the sovereign national State.

By making the world of life precarious, mobilizing, uprooting and completely commercializing it, absolute-totalitarian capitalism provokes the "dejectification," the annihilation of the *sittlich* element. It deconstructs any residual community other than the intrinsically anti-communitarian one of the ephemeral *do ut des* of the market. It neutralizes the family and the unions, the school and the sovereign national state. And it produces the open space of the world reduced to a market and inhabited only by uprooted and homologated consumers, without proletarian antagonistic consciousness and without bourgeois unhappy consciousness.

The post-traditional society, according to Giddens' expression, becomes a deregulated market, in whose borderless spaces social classes dissolve in the false interclassism of "homologated consumers," who have as many rights as they can buy. The 1968 ideology—confusing the struggle against the bourgeoisie with the struggle against capitalism—acts as a symbolic order of reference for

the new absolute-totalitarian capitalism, itself 1968-ist in its struggle against any legacy of bourgeois ethical life and in its anarcho-deregulating essence. For this reason, as Michéa suggests, since 1968, the Left has been transformed into "a simple political machine destined to culturally legitimize, in the name of progress and modernization, all the forward escapades of liberal civilization."

With 1968 came the divorce between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. The latter, from ascetic and disciplinary (i.e., bourgeois), became permissive and transgressive (i.e., post-bourgeois), along the inclined plane that leads from the rebel to the narcissist and from the revolution to the new age. The formal subsumption of the adversarial couple under capital is verified: Right and Left advance more and more towards the horizon of capital, mutually accepted as natural-eternal destiny. De-anticized and precarious, society becomes a simple consumer society, a planetary "system of needs" (Hegel) and an unlimited "commercial society" (Adam Smith); a cosmopolitan market populated no longer by citizens of nation states and by fathers and mothers, but only by competitors; competitors who, in the absence of any community spirit, relate only on the basis of the principles theorized by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*—the omni-lateral dependence of necessity and acquisitive egoism—in relation to the brewer, the butcher and the baker. Following the Hegel of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, a society stripped of the elements of "eticity" (*Sittlichkeit*) decays into a mere and competitive "system of needs" (*System der Bedürfnisse*); that is, a simple place of mercantile exchange, governed by the "unsociable sociability" of conflictual atoms that relate only to compete and exchange goods, according to what Alain Caillé has called the *axiomatique de l'intérêt*.

On the side of intellectual production, the "unhappy consciousness" has dissolved. And, in place of the dialectical class of the bourgeoisie, a global class has taken over that is no longer bourgeois but ultra-capitalist, inclined to frivolously accept the "polytheism of values" and consumerist lifestyles within the "iron cage" of the idolatrous monotheism of the market. It is what, in *Historia y conciencia del precariado*, we have called the new post-bourgeois, post-proletarian and ultra-capitalist "financial aristocracy;" it is, in short, a class that, bearer of postmodern happy unconsciousness, lives in a parasitic and usurocratic manner, exploiting the slave labor of the dominated class.

For its part, the dominated class (so far not "per se") coincides with the aforementioned precariat, dynamic fusion of the old bourgeois middle class and the old proletarian working class. The dissolution of the alliance between the unhappy bourgeois consciousness and the struggles for the recognition of menial labor is dialectically reversed in the passive acceptance of the capitalist world frame as irreversible horizon, making its own the "sad passion" of resilience. The planetarized market society of

capitalism *absolutus* no longer knows any social resistance (it lacks a class that contradicts its project), nor political opposition (Right, Left and Center share the same ultra-capitalist vision of the world), nor philosophical delegitimization (with rare exceptions, intellectuals, devoid of "unhappy consciousness," are today "organic"—in the Gramscian sense—to the system in force, to its relativistic nihilism and its competitive individualism).

The proletariat was dominated but not subdued. In fact, it had its own conceptual maps, largely coinciding with those of the Left in its various historical figures, capable of unmasking class domination and proposing paths of emancipation that would lead to making the cosmos transcend capitalist morphology. On the contrary, the precariat (national-popular servant) is both dominated and subjugated. And it is so to the extent that, in addition to suffering material domination (*id est*, exploitation and its economic-political organization), it also endures the immaterial and ideological, guided by the same maps provided by the dominant plutocratic groups. In them, the figure of the conflict—now only apparent—between Right and Left plays a role of primary importance. In short, if in dialectical capitalism the Right was theoretically the part of the master and the Left was primarily that of the servant; in turbo-capitalism Right and Left are equally the parts through which the dominion of the master is legitimized. The servant is now represented neither politically nor culturally; i.e., he is dominated in politics and culture as well as in economics.

According to the maps of domination outlined above, "progress" is the name that the pedagogues of the new mental order of culmination of power relations assign to everything that favors the dominant pole. On the contrary, "return" (or "regression") is the infamous qualification with which the order of the dominant discourse delegitimizes any figure of the limit or, even simply, of non-alignment with respect to the omni- enveloping advance of the commodity form and the reification of the world of life. According to what we have explained in *Minima mercatalia* and in *Glebalizzazione*, 1968 and 1989 mark, successively, two nodal stages of the evolutionary dialectic of capitalism in its transit from the dialectical phase to the absolute. It is from 1960 onwards that we witness the mise en forme of the diverse but equally expressive processes of the Zeitgeist of the new spirit of capitalism: (a) of the eclipse of the unhappy bourgeois consciousness; (b) of the neutralization of the anti-capitalist utopia of the proletariat, now "economicized;" and (c) of the new anti-bourgeois and ultra-capitalist physiognomy of a new Left which, abandoning Marx and Lenin, has gradually become a "radical mass party" and accepting the reasons of the new order of power relations, which has finally ended up reabsorbing it. The *hodierna* speculative phase is ultra-capitalist precisely because it is anti-bourgeois first (1968) and post-bourgeois later (1989).

Beyond the irreducible prismatic heterogeneity of the events that have characterized 1968 on a planetary scale, we believe—following in the wake of Preve and of what we have examined in more detail in *Minima mercatalia* and in *Il futuro è nostro*—that it is possible to identify a common expressive function. Illusorily hailed as a revolutionary process of opposition to the capitalist structure, 1968 asks to be interpreted, in a diametrically opposed way, as the foundational myth of post-bourgeois and post-proletarian absolute-totalitarian capitalism; and more precisely as the decisive transit point from the dialectical to the speculative phase. The latter is characterized by the eclipse of the two instances (as well as of their alliance) of the anti-capitalist struggle of the servant and of the unhappy conscience of the bourgeoisie and, as a whole, by the substitution of the patriarchal and authoritarian dialectical capitalism for citizen-subjects, by the current turbo-capitalism of the new liberal-libertarian power for consumers with total deregulation (the *gauchiste* capitalism of the "forbidden to forbid" and of the plus ultra). Exemplum sui generis of the "color revolution," 1968 was a decisive moment of emancipation not from capitalism, but for capitalism. This was aimed at overcoming the oppositional dichotomy between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and certainly not in the direction of the "sun of the future" of a post-capitalist society governed by relations between equally free individuals, but in the direction of an individualistic liberalization of consumption and customs; and this in the framework of a new capitalism no longer inhabited by bourgeois and proletarians, with their "eticity," with their non-marketable values and their possible emancipatory anti-capitalism, but only by post-identitarian and Robinsonian consumers, colonized by a commodity form that has now become the new *raison du monde*.

Since the 1960s, the Left fought against the foundations of modern bourgeois civilization, without realizing that this battle was the same one waged by the new capitalism and its aspiration for the creation of a post-bourgeois space for the unlimited free circulation of commodities, of marketized persons and of the deregulated flows of liquid-financial capital: the struggle against the bourgeois world not only did not coincide with the struggle against capitalism, but finally ended up being identified with the struggle for capitalism itself or, *rectius*, for its definitive empowerment through the overcoming of the contradictions inherent to the dialectical phase and, therefore, for the transition to the new post-bourgeois and post-proletarian turbo-capitalism, beyond Right and Left.

With 1989, the movement of "naturalization" of capital could be considered complete (*capitalismus sive natura*): capitalism becomes "speculative," as humanity sees itself reflected in the speculum of the totalitarian world of commodities. And so it is, more and more, induced to conceive it as the only possible world, in a total desertification of the imaginary. Capitalism then comes to correspond to its own "concept" (*Begriff*) after having gone through and overcome its own being-other-of-itself with the antithetical-dialectical phase.

As we tried to show in detail in *Glebalizzazione*, the *annus horribilis* of 1989 coincided with the epochal date of the imposition of *capitalismus sive natura*, that is, of economic fanaticism and planetary classism ideologically hypostasized in inescapable destiny or in nature already forever given, neither criticizable nor transformable: there is no alternative. It is the moment of the definitive dissolution of the bourgeoisie-proletariat and Right-Left dichotomies, according to the dynamics initiated in 1968 and culminated in 1989. The subsumption of the Left under capital, which with 1968 was formal and coexisted with fragments of a Left not yet integrated, was transformed into a real subsumption as of 1989, when the Left was completely reabsorbed within the horizon of meaning of capitalism and its progressive neoliberalism. It lives it as a natural and eternal horizon, producing an endless series of anthropological profiles worthy of the "last man" described by Nietzsche and classifiable under the headings of "disenchantment," "repentance" and "conversion."

Along with bourgeois culture, the very contradictory presence of the Soviet Union marked a limit for capital. And, as such, it had to be overcome. The Soviet Union and the *Weltdualismus* it made possible (*cuius regio, eius oeconomia*) constituted, in fact, a real and symbolic frontier for the market economy: they signaled that this was not the only possible world, nor the only one that really existed. On the other hand, the famous "thirty glorious years" of the West, from 1945 to 1975, with almost full employment and relative prosperity, from which even the less well-off classes benefited in part, were not the gift of a still munificent capitalism with a human face. Rather, they were the necessary effect of the pressure exerted by the reality beyond the Berlin Wall, an alternative model of social justice and existence. The communism implanted behind the "Curtain" was the very image of a possible alternative, or also of the real existence of the Left—albeit in a place other than the West—and the possibility of thinking and being otherwise. With 1989, the total subsumption of the Right and the Left under capital was consummated: both, from that moment on, integrally metabolized capitalism as an ineluctable destiny and the "struggle" between the two parties was fought, from then on, in the form of competition to become worthy of implementing the mere management—sometimes to the Right, sometimes to the Left—of the reforms decided by the global class and by the mercantilist order.

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