

Common Sense

Drew Milne

Marxist literary theory after Derrida

Ferruccio Gambino

A Critique of the Fordism of the
Regulation School

Toni Negri

The Crisis of Political Space

John Holloway

The Concept of Power and the
Zapatistas

plus **Book Reviews**

Number

19

Common Sense

Journal of the
Edinburgh
Conference of
Socialist
Economists

Number 19

Published in Edinburgh by **Common Sense**, PO Box 311,
Southern District Office, Edinburgh, EH9 1SF, Scotland.

Printed by Clydeside Press, Glasgow.

Typeset in 9pt New Century Schoolbook.

1996 © Copyright June 1996, by Common Sense and the
individual authors indicated. All rights reserved.

Editorial Committee

Werner Bonefeld
Richard Gunn
Derek Kerr
Brian McGrail
Olga Taxidou

Notes for Contributors

Please send articles on 3.5 inch Apple Mac or IBM computer
disc, including one copy in the ASCII format, or send by e-mail
to B.A.McGrail@open.ac.uk. Otherwise send articles in
clean typescript.

Subscriptions

Please see backpages for subscription rates.

ISSN: 0957 - 240X

Contents

Marxist literary theory after Derrida <i>Drew Milne</i>	5
The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas <i>John Holloway</i>	20
The Zapatistas: Conference Notice <i>EZLN</i>	28
The Crisis of Political Space <i>Toni Negri</i>	33
A Critique of the Fordism of the Regulation School <i>Ferruccio Gambino</i>	42
Rewriting the Politics of <i>The City Builders</i>: A Review of Susan S. Fainstein <i>Brian McGrail</i>	65
 <u>Book Reviews</u>	
Cyril Smith Marx at the Millenium <i>Werner Bonefeld</i>	75
Terry Eagleton & Drew Milne Marxist Literary Theory <i>Olga Taxidou</i>	78
Mariarosa Dalla Costa & Giovanna Dalla Costa Paying the Price, Women and the Politics of International Economic Strategy <i>Werner Bonefeld</i>	80
Murray E. G. Smith Invisible Leviathan <i>Chris. J. Arthur</i>	82

Marxist literary theory after Derrida

Drew Milne

*'When I hear the word deconstruction
I reach for my pillow.'* David Antin

Introduction

A literary theory of Marxism, even if it is not Marxist, requires a version of the theory of text, history and political transformation which Marxism has traditionally claimed as its special science of critique and praxis. The difference, then, between a literary theory of Marxism and a Marxist theory of literature may be immaterial, not least because the most important examples of attempts to develop a political hermeneutics of the forces and relations of literary production are those provided by Marxism itself, often by Marxists whose interests in literature and literary theory were fundamental to the attempt to re-read and reinvent the discourse of Marxism. Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Lukàcs and Althusser all make special claims for the ways in which their readings of Marx reinvent the possibilities of Marxism as a mode of literary production, of what Benjamin in a different context termed the author as producer. The history of Marxism has a range of secret affinities with the question of writing and its reception, affinities which have also placed Marxism at the centre of the historical emergence of what is now known as literary theory. Moreover, most of the major movements of literary theory have been defined against Marxism, in dialogue with Marxism, or as part of attempts to exorcise, negate or overcome Marxism as some apparently foundational but reductive moment in the thinking of literature.

Even if the historical evidence is eloquent, the horizon of interpretation nevertheless appears to have shifted such that the work of Marx as the author of the discourse of Marxism is now dead, as though there were no longer a need to wrestle with Marx as the guardian angel of socialism, as though for literary theory, and discourse as such, Marxism was now merely historical, a defeated ghost of the cold war. As Derrida puts it in *Specters of Marx*, there is a dominant discourse: 'To the rhythm of a cadenced march, it proclaims: Marx is dead, communism is

dead, very dead, and along with it its hopes, its discourse, its theories, and its practices.¹ Derrida construes Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* as the emblem of this bogus triumphalism, but, in the rapidly shifting hegemonic disinheritance of the latest thought-bite in the mediatic spectacle, Fukuyama already seems to have gone past his sell-by date.² Derrida poses the question of the death of the author, a familiar problem in literary criticism, as a rather different question for Marx and Marxism. Is Marx any longer the author of Marxism? Is Marxism any longer the author of socialism? Or has Marx, like the intentional object of literary criticism, gone the way of the dodo and the dead parrot?

This paper asks what difference Derrida's *Specters of Marx* has made for Marxist literary theory, elaborating some of the problems sketched in my introduction to *Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader*.³ I am concerned to work out what it means to read Marx and Marxism. The turn I propose is that such reading – both critical and historical re-reading – involves recognising that literary theory is integral to Marxism, since Marxism is inherently a literary theory of the reading of Marx, a hermeneutics of Marx, of capitalism and of capitalism's ideological sirens. The relation of Marxism to Marx provides, like the relation of psychoanalysis to Freud, an important problem for any literary theory of discourse, irrespective of whether such a theory is Marxist or merely attempting to theorise Marxism. This suggests that it is immaterial whether a particular theory earns the proper name 'Marxist', whether a pristine genealogy can be established which would link a thought's family tree back to Marx. What is decisive is the ability to develop a theory of the discourse of Marxism which can explain the relation between the writings of Marx and the historical vicissitudes of Marxism, and in so doing develop the explanatory and emancipatory praxis which Marxism attempts to theorise. In this sense, I am concerned to show how it is possible to re-read Marx so as to understand the development of Marxism and literary theory. This development, I want to suggest, has undergone a dialectical unfolding which reveals the historical envelope of Marxism as a shape of spirit, a shape in which the relation between Marx and Marxism becomes increasingly mediated and indeterminate, to the point where even Derrida can claim the spirit of Marxism.

The reception of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*

In *Specters of Marx* Derrida offers something like a literary theory of Marx in opposition to more conventional Marxist analysis. His reading of Marx has elicited a series of responses from a variety of Marxist and non-Marxist theorists. This means that Derrida has provided a stage on which to analyse the contemporary state of Marxism in relation to literary theory, allowing us to consider the extent to which a Marxist theory of writing, and of Marx's writing, is possible now. Perhaps, somewhat surprisingly, the exceptional estrangement of Derrida's reading of Marx from more conventional modes of Marxism is claimed by Derrida to be in the spirit of Marxism. Derrida, for example, provides

the following formulation of how deconstruction expresses its solidarity with Marxism, a solidarity whose neither-nor is offered as something different from critique, however much the terms seem antagonistic to Marxism: 'deconstruction has never been Marxist, no more than it has ever been non-Marxist, although it has remained faithful to a certain spirit of Marxism, to at least one of its spirits for, and this can never be repeated too often, there is *more than one* of them and they are heterogeneous.' (75) With friends who are neither Marxist nor non-Marxist who needs enemies? There are many unintentionally comic moments in *Specters of Marx* where the relation between Derrida's play on Heideggerian motifs comes into conflict with the more worldly spirits of Marxism, as in the moment Derrida reads *The Communist Manifesto* as: 'Parousia of the manifestation of the manifest. As party.' (103) Understandably wearied by such gestures, Aijaz Ahmad concludes his unsympathetic assessment of *Specters of Marx* by offering a parodically deconstructive solidarity with a certain spirit of Derrida, a solidarity which involves 'no acceptance of the principle categories of deconstruction on our part', just as '[Derrida's] own gesture of affiliation with Marx includes the acceptance neither of the principal categories of political Marxism nor of the slightest responsibility for any part of its history'.⁴ But this gesture of mimicry highlights the difficulty of establishing anything like the grounds for disagreement with an opponent who denies that a significant opposition is involved.

Ahmad suggests that Derrida provides not an argument, but something more literary: 'We have, in other words, essentially a *performative* text in a distinctly literary mode. A text that offers not analysis but performance'.⁵ This is a strange argument for a Marxist literary theorist to deploy, as if literary texts were less argumentative, as if Marx's texts were not literary, as if it were not the case that Derrida has shown how literary performativity is something like a condition of writing as such. The comparison with Marx is striking, since Marx is prepared throughout his writing to pursue and deploy the literary figure as a task of analysis through which critique, polemic and satire can be deployed. In such a comparison, Derrida's insistence on the materiality of rhetoric and on the question of what Derrida has called 'grammatology' in *Of Grammatology* (1967; trans. 1974) appears more faithful to the spirit of Marx – for example in *The German Ideology*, *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* or *Theories of Surplus Value* – than the reading of Derrida provided by Ahmad.

A similar contrast emerges in Fredric Jameson's more sympathetic essay. Suggesting that Derrida provides some remarkable new exegeses of Marx, Jameson doubts that Derrida provides determinate arguments, so much as a project within a broader Heideggerian framework which 'enables the practice of deconstruction to find a consecrated form: that of the commentary or philosophical *explication de texte*, within which it can pursue its own augustly parasitic activity'.⁶ Something similar could be said about the augustly parasitic activity of certain consecrated forms of Marxist explication, from diamat classes on the *Dialectic of Nature* to Jameson's own ponderings on postmodernism. As with Ahmad, Jameson's patient

elaboration of Derridian thematics deploys a hermeneutics which fails to achieve either the rhetorical materiality he praises in Derrida's work, or a Marxist critique of Derrida's reading of Marx. Jameson concedes an exegetical authority to Derrida's reading which would have surprised Marx, and this suggests that Jameson is somewhat indifferent to the detail of Marx's writings, an impression confirmed by a reading of Jameson's claims about the cultural logic of postmodernism. Similarly, Terry Eagleton asserts in *Radical Philosophy* that what Derrida wants 'is a Marxism without Marxism' in which 'Derrida's indifference to almost all of the *actual* historical or theoretical manifestations of Marxism is a kind of empty transcendence'.⁷ And yet, it is difficult to resist the temptation to suggest that the shifting trajectory of Eagleton's own work – from an Althusserian science of the text in *Criticism and Ideology* (1976) to a more Brechtian and Benjaminian mode of essayism, notably in *Against the Grain* (1986) – could also be described as Marxism without Marxism. The wit and intellectual agility of Eagleton's essayism owes as much to the socialist spirit of Oscar Wilde as to Karl Marx or Walter Benjamin, the guiding spirits of Derrida's reading.⁸ This is not to suggest that it is self-evident what a Marxist reading of Marx and/or Derrida would look like if it were more faithful to the spirit of Marxism. Rather it is to suggest that the relation between Marxism and literary theory in the work of leading Marxist literary theorists appears attenuated.

Perhaps even more surprising is the extent to which responses to Derrida by those whose work might be thought more sympathetic to Derrida than to Marxism seem to find it easier to raise substantial objections of a proto-Marxist kind. Spivak, for example, who has written a number of less than pellucid accounts of the relation between Marxism and deconstruction, takes Derrida to task for a number of errors.⁹ She notes the absent problem of Marxist-feminist thematics in Derrida's reading. She observes the dangers in the way in which Derrida attempts to coordinate his reading across the early and later Marx without recognizing the transformation of Marx's early conception of money into the later conception of capital and capitalism. She construes a central problem in Derrida's reading as his eagerness to discern the structural repetition of an ontological response to spectrality which blinds Derrida to the different discursive contexts and subtleties of Marx's thinking. She suggests that Derrida fails to see how the young Marx already offers a critique of Derrida. Spivak's suggestions require careful consideration, not least because they suggest how details might matter for a reading which can articulate both Marx and Derrida. For my purposes what is significant is the extremity of Spivak's affiliation to what might still be called Marxism, however open.

Similarly, Ernesto Laclau, who is himself cited by Derrida, provides objections to Derrida in which Laclau's explicitly post-Marxist position offers a sharper politics than any provided by avowed Marxists. For Laclau, Derrida fails to work through the political and ethical consequences of deconstruction, which 'depend on deconstruction's ability to go down to the bottom of its own radicalism and avoid

becoming entangled in all the problems of a Levinasian ethics'.¹⁰ The extension of undecidability reactivates the agency of decision, but Laclau observes how Derrida's deconstruction of the teleology of emancipatory politics forces Derrida into a politically indeterminate aporia. Laclau spells out the disjointed consequences: 'from the fact that there is the impossibility of ultimate closure and presence, it does not follow that there is an ethical imperative to "cultivate" that openness or even less to be necessarily committed to a democratic society.... In a way a case for totalitarianism can be presented starting from deconstructionist premises'.¹¹ In short, the politics of undecidability throws up dualisms which force either a generalised indifference to specific political contents or a further radicalization of the groundlessness of decision making. Groundlessness becomes a new ground. Although Laclau would resist such an interpretation, undecidability appears subject to a dialectical unfolding which either produces determinate negations or what Hegel understood as the restless and contentless conscience of the beautiful soul. Or as Derrida puts it at the beginning of *Specters of Marx*: 'Infinite responsibility, therefore, no rest allowed for any form of good conscience.' (xv) Such groundless aporia produce an ethics of conscience without duty, and of concern without commitment. As Laclau suggests, the weak messianic power which Derrida claims as a spirit of Marx owes rather more to Levinas than to Benjamin or Marx. Given that Derrida himself cites Laclau sympathetically it would be helpful if Derrida responded to such criticisms.

Simon Critchley also pursues the comparison of Laclau, Levinas and Derrida. Like Spivak, he questions the validity of the way Derrida reads Marx as an ontological thinker. And like Laclau, he indicates the necessity of coordinating Derrida's Benjaminian messianic promise with Laclau's conception of hegemony: 'hegemony is a theory of decisions taken in the undecidable terrain opened up by deconstruction'.¹² Critchley suggests an opening into which something like a Marxist understanding of the politics of Benjamin and Gramsci needs to be developed if deconstruction is to coordinate the agency of its aporia, and that such a development is implied but not substantiated by Derrida.

The difficulty critics have had providing an explicitly Marxist response to Derrida's book suggests that his claim to be faithful to a certain spirit of Marxism is less incredible than it first appears, indeed that Derrida can with some justice claim to have more in common with, for example, Benjaminian Marxism, than many of those whose affiliation with Marxism has no substantive relation to Marx. Contemporary literary theory often thought of as Marxist has barely a residue of determinate Marxist form or content. Marxism can seem little more than an ethical orientation to the professional terrains of 'cultural politics' or 'social science' dubiously construed and promoted by academic left-liberal moralists. The moral attitudes of certain kinds of ethical Marxism are barely distinguishable from the aporia of a Levinasian ethics of alterity and the supposedly non-hypostatized 'Other'. Such, then, are the terms of the possibility of a critical dialogue between Marxism and Derrida, a problem of more consequence than one

which would involve being simply for or against Derrida. It becomes necessary to re-read Marx and Marxism by *seeing through* Derrida in the double optic his figurative readings suggest.

My contention is that while Derrida's performative re-interpretation reveals important problems, it is nevertheless possible to read Marx with and against Derrida, reading Marx differently, without construing a mode of intentionality or a dogmatics of orthodox reception. The necessity of being able to read Marx against dogmatic Marxism also has a political history as part of the resistance to the many dogmatisms which have appropriated Marx's name. I recall the dogmatic surprise which greeted me when I asked academic philosophers in Romania who had been forced by the state to teach Marx why it had not been possible to read Marx against the state, given the complexity of coordinating any coherent reading of Marx's thought as a whole. State ideology requires academicians and theorists to convince themselves of their own ideological illusions, and a state for which *Capital* is a pseudo-bible must surely create the possibility of non-conformist readings. It remains difficult to see how Marx's writings could be made to conform to Soviet-style state ideology without some residue, some trace of difference.

Given the sclerosis of Marxism as the state doctrine of dialectical materialism one of the tasks for a reading of Marx and of Marxism is to understand how such practices could have been developed and legitimated as Marxist, and as a reading of Marxists such as Lenin, Stalin and Mao, whose opportunist readings of Marx are too easily dismissed as vulgar without due consideration of the political content of vulgarity. What, then, would be the trace of difference, the possibility of reading Marx against dogmatic Marxism? The peculiarity of Derrida's reading of Marx serves to indicate the difficulty and historical resonance of specific figures in Marx's writings, and how such traces might be read. It is, then, necessary to suggest how a different kind of reading would be true to the spirit and to the body of Marx and Marxism, and in this light to read the spectre of Marxism that haunts Derrida.

A literary theory of Marxism needs to understand the reception of Marx's writing as a hermeneutic relation to Marx. This involves reading the horizon of historicity in Marx's writings in relation to the problems of contemporary agency and political action. The truth of Marx's writings are not to be read to reveal transcendental or ontological conditions of the possibility of meaning, but rather they ask to be read and re-read as a critical process of prospective and retrospective transformation, a process which acknowledges the dialectical development of both intellectual and social contradictions. Marxism offers itself as a relation between interpretation and action in which textual criticism works both on the horizon of historical and potential meaning, and on the transformation of the conditions of meaning.

The depth of the hermeneutic problem is apparent if the conditionality of meaning as a horizon of revolutionary transformation is compared with the conditions for historical transformation suggested by the interpretation of the Bible or Shakespeare's plays. The possibility

for new interpretations and performances of the *Gospels* or of *Hamlet* pose some formal analogies, but the revolutionary project of Marx seeks a quite different future for its writings, one in which the conditions which produced these writings have been overcome. There are developed traditions of hermeneutics associated with theological and literary criticism, to say nothing of quite different attempts, associated with Dilthey and Gadamer, to conceive philosophy hermeneutically. The claim that Marxism seeks not merely to interpret the world but to change it marks out a quite different conception of understanding and action.

Even if a number of hermeneutic problems are shared, the difficulty is to develop a more acute sense of the relevant differences. The historical location of such differences might be sought in the legacy of Hegel for Marxism, especially with regard to the attempt to think both historically and philosophically. The historical materialist conception of history and the persistence of engagement with the writings and ideas of Marx indicate that a central difficulty for Marxism is the need to develop an understanding of the extent to which Marxism can constitute itself as a hermeneutics of Marx and thus as a critique of the often sectarian or dogmatic interpretations of the spirit of Marx. This is perhaps the central task for Marxist literary theory, not least because the material difficulties faced by literary criticism are superficially similar. The interpretation of inherited literary traditions and texts involves a combination of detailed textual analysis, depth of historical understanding and a sense of the values and politics of the contemporary processes in which texts are read and performed, re-read and reperformed. Clearly, however, literary criticism and theory are no substitute for Marxism. Nevertheless, this affinity perhaps explains why Marxism has such an important place in the history of literary criticism, and why it might be important for Marxism to understand and develop this affinity critically.

Marxism after Derrida

Specters of Marx provides a complicated version of a more general process of appropriation and reinscription. Derrida's gesture of solidarity with Marxism is exemplary. It takes the reading of Marx and Marxism as that with which deconstruction has always already been working *with* rather than *against*, while emptying Marxism of its contents to the point where the difference between a friend and an enemy of Marxism becomes a spectral difference, a difference which claims not to be critical, but which makes all the difference in the world for a discourse which claims to be one of the spirits of Marxism and in the spirit of Marx.

Derrida himself suggests that *Specters of Marx* can be read as Derrida's belated reply to Jean-Marie Benoist's *Marx est mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), a book which suggests a Nietzschean deconstruction of the discourse of Marxism, attempting – in an explicitly Derridean fashion – to read the inflation of signs associated with May 1968 as the tired discourse of metaphysics and metaphor in Marx and Marxism. Most of the themes explored in Derrida's book are already broached by

Benoist, as though in the spirit of Derrida: the question of ontology in Marx's work; the play between presence and non-presence, the inside and the outside, the difference between teleology and revolutionary eschatology, and so forth. Benoist, moreover, makes the metaphors in *The German Ideology* and *Capital* central to his reading, in an investigation which reads Lenin, Marcuse, Mao and Althusser, figures whose presence is barely even spectral in Derrida's reading. Benoist, however, is hardly a household name. It has taken the intervening quarter of a century for Derrida's own deconstruction of Marx to make itself news. This confirms a significant equivocation offered by Derrida in *Positions* (1971) in which he observed that Marxist texts 'are not to be read according to a hermeneutical or exegetical method which would seek out a finished signified beneath a textual surface. Reading is transformational....'¹³ The deconstructive reading of Marxism broached by Benoist requires, for Derrida, something different from an interpretation or a reading of Marx, something more like an agency of re-reading, a transformational protocol which activates textual differences. There is an important distinction here to be made between hermeneutic *methods* and the sense in which Marxist texts are not grounded in the givenness of methods of reading, but are part of a different and active process of social transformation. As Derrida suggests, a reading of Marxist texts as though there were a hidden theological truth to be revealed – or as though the gospel of Marx could be reanimated – would not be in the spirit of Marx, even if much Marxist debate has been mired in such theological speculations. Accordingly *Specters of Marx* repeats a claim Derrida has often made about deconstruction: 'Deconstruction has never had any sense or interest, in my view at least, except as a radicalization, which is to say also in the *tradition* of a certain Marxism, in a certain *spirit of Marxism*.' (92) This hinge between interpretation and transformation in Derrida's reading is also Marxism's difficulty.

As Benoist suggests, the death of Marx is, like that of God, the end of a hermeneutic horizon, marking a shift away from the discursive authority with which Marx can be read. As Foucault has suggested, the status of Marx and Freud as authors not just of particular texts but of an endless possibility of discourse is such that they are founders of discursivity, producers of meaning who, in Benjamin's sense of the author as producer, change the relations of production within and through their writing. The constraining figure of Marx within the discourse of Marxism is not simply available for transformational reading, but is the figure of a possibility of discourse, what Derrida construes as something like the figure of the spirit of Marx.

The different emphasis of Foucault with regard to how the disappearance or the death of the author might be understood emerges in the sharp exchange between Foucault and Derrida. Derrida's reading of Foucault seeks to interrogate certain philosophical and methodological presuppositions of Foucault's history of madness, to show how Foucault confirms a metaphysical gesture he seeks to eschew.¹⁴ In question is the possibility of a historicity of discourse which would free itself from the history of philosophy. Something analogous is

involved in Derrida's attempt to locate a constellation of metaphysical presuppositions in Marx's work, presuppositions from which Marx attempts to flee but in a flight whose figures can be traced in the spectres which haunt Marx's texts. Foucault's trenchant riposte to Derrida highlights the differences in the consequences of the death of the author with regard to the practice of transformational reading and the hinge I have alluded to between interpretation and transformational praxis. Foucault accuses Derrida of:

... the reduction of discursive practices to textual traces; the elision of the events produced therein and the retention only of marks for a reading; the invention of voices behind texts to avoid having to analyse the modes of implication of the subject in discourses; the assigning of the originary as said and unsaid in the text to avoid replacing discursive practices in the field of transformations where they are carried out.

I will not say that it is a metaphysics, metaphysics itself or its closure which is hiding in this 'textualisation' of discursive practices. I'll go much further than that: I shall say that what can be seen here so visibly is a historically well-determined little pedagogy.¹⁵

Much could be said about the violence of misrecognition in this exchange. For my purposes what is significant is that Foucault's attack has been echoed by many of those frustrated by the limitless pedagogical mastery claimed by the apostles of Derrida. The account of discourse provided by Foucault, however, owes more to Nietzsche than to Marx. The problem is the move from text to practice, from theoretical reading to praxis, precisely the move that Marxism has invariably insisted on as that which is both difficult and necessary. Foucault's criticism of deconstruction as a pedagogy nevertheless has some force given the pedagogic domestication of deconstruction, despite Derrida's claims to the contrary. Foucault's remarks can also be taken as a criticism of the symptomatic reading of literary and textual production proposed by Althusser and Macherey.¹⁶ How then can Derrida avoid the textualisation of Marxism as a pedagogic or academic discourse? How can Derrida avoid reading Marx as if the material practice of Marxism is merely a spectral product of Marx's ontological underpinnings.

The criticisms directed at Derrida by Foucault haunt Derrida via a passage by Marx from *The German Ideology* which Derrida worries over in *Glas* and *La Carte postale*. The passage from Marx gives the following definition of Marx's materialist conception of history:

... it [the materialist conception of history] does not explain practice from the idea but explains the formation of ideas from material practice and accordingly it comes to the conclusion that all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism, by resolution into 'self-consciousness' or transformation into 'apparitions', 'spectres', 'fancies', etc. (in short *Geist*), but only practical overthrow of the

actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug.¹⁷

This rebuke to Young Hegelianism looks like a Marxist critique of Derrida avant la lettre. Indeed, in *La Carte postale*, Derrida points out that a recent French translation of this passage, silently, anachronistically and without explanation amends the translation of 'dissolves' to read: 'all forms of and products of consciousness cannot be deconstructed by mental criticism.' As Derrida remarks: 'it is implied that "deconstruction" is destined to remain limited to the "intellectual critique" of "superstructures"'. And this is put as if Marx had already said it.¹⁸ The anxiety for Derrida is that deconstruction might be characterised as being essentially a theory of reading rather than a material praxis in its own right. Derrida is invariably concerned to suggest how deconstruction is neither a critique nor a pedagogical method of reading, but something like a material praxis, a transformational activity. The difficulty is to see how the performance of reading can be constituted as action, and this is also Marxism's problem with regard to the link between theory and practice, between interpretation and political action.

In the light of these considerations we can begin to specify the significance of the figures of Geist and spectrality in Derrida's reading of Marx. The figures of Geist, spirit, *la fantôme*, the spectre — the apparitions criticised by Marx as illusory forms of consciousness — are the central figures of Derrida's investigation of Heidegger in *De l'esprit*. The figure of Geist and the problem of the spectre of politics haunts Derrida's reading of Heidegger and of Paul de Man. It is not the spectre of communism that haunts Europe and Derrida's thinking, but the spectre of fascism. Moreover, given that in *The German Ideology* Marx suggests a critique of what for Derrida would be a crude misunderstanding of deconstruction, then the difficulty of enacting a deconstructive politics which is not haunted by Marx is a necessary question for Derrida.

The heterogeneity of Derrida's reading of Marx is organised around the claim that Derrida's problematic of Geist and spectrality is also the organising figure in Marx's discourse, a figure which Derrida traces from the opening of *The Communist Manifesto*, through *The German ideology* and into *Capital*. Derrida's performative reading is deliberately provisional and elliptical, but the drift of his reading is summarized as follows:

In its philosophical form, the paradox of the specter was already part of the program of *The German Ideology* and will remain on the program of *Capital*. And the fantastic panoply, while it furnishes the rhetoric or the polemic with images or phantasms, perhaps gives one to think that the figure of the ghost is not just one figure among others. It is perhaps the hidden figure of all figures. (119)

The ingenuity with which Derrida pursues this hidden figure demonstrates that the rhetoric of spectrality is a substantive problem in Marx's writings. It is striking how Derrida manages to put pressure on Marx's text such that a more careful re-reading of Marx is required if the reader is not to be seduced by Derrida's reinterpretation. Less conclusively demonstrated, however, is the extent to which, as Derrida claims, there is an organising ontological figure in Marx's work, the hidden figure of all figures. But if we turn Derrida's reading of Marx into a reading of Derrida then an anxiety about the discourses of *Geist* and spectrality appears to motivate Derrida's discourse. Consider the following remark, in which Derrida is unusually explicit about the reflexivity which motivates his reading: 'everyone reads, acts, writes with *his or her* ghosts, even when one goes after the ghosts of the other'. (139) Just as Derrida is concerned in *De l'esprit* to unravel the dramaturgy of *Geist* in Heidegger's rectoral address, so Derrida himself is concerned that his reading of Marx should be considered as a dramaturgical intervention, a performance whose politics are more than spectral but which open out the possibility of something like a material praxis, a praxis which is not in the spirit of the politics of Heidegger or de Man. Derrida describes this performative dimension of his reading of Marx as follows: 'This dimension of performative interpretation, that is, of an interpretation that transforms the very thing it interprets, will play an indispensable role in what I would like to say this evening.' (51) Derrida plays here on the possibility of deconstruction as a speech act which enacts a Marxian politics of transformation. The process of interpretation, then, goes beyond *explication de texte* such that interpretation becomes a new kind of praxis. Derrida's formulation puts stress on the event of delivery, on the context in which a certain speaking is performed, on the quality of what is performed as an action, and hence also on Derrida's agency. The difficulty is to determine the relation between the performance and the interpretation which it sustains and deploys, and it is just this which Derrida performs as that which is undecidable, hence the dense texture of free indirect paraphrase and ventriloquism in his text. The problem of how the performance is an interpretation rather than a re-write is then part of the materiality of performative interpretation, just as a dramatic text holds the possibility of being performed differently in new theatres, and just as Marxism seeks to perform a political praxis scripted by Marx but which changes according to the theatre in which praxis is engaged.

This anxiety about the performance of deconstruction as that which is haunted by the politics of *Geist* allows Derrida to state a whole range of desiderata for what such a performative reading of Marxism would involve, but which are in dramatic tension with the performance itself insofar as the reading cannot go beyond reading into a different kind of action. Derrida nevertheless indicates the terms with which to assess the performativity of any interpretation of Marx that claims to be both a reading of Marx and a practice in the spirit of Marxism. Derrida provides salutary directions, and also the terms against which his own performance can be read:

What risks happening is that one will try to play Marx off against Marxism so as to neutralize, or at any rate muffle the political imperative in the untroubled exegesis of a classified work.... People would be ready to accept the return of Marx or the return to Marx, on the condition that a silence is maintained about Marx's injunction not just to decipher but to act and to make the deciphering [the interpretation] into a transformation 'that changes the world'.... It is something altogether other that I wish to attempt here as I turn or return to Marx... to do everything we can so as to avoid the neutralizing anaesthesia of a new theoreticism, and to prevent a philosophico-philological return to Marx from prevailing.(31-2)

Derrida recognizes more clearly than most Marxists the terms on which a Marxist reading faithful to the spirit of Marx could be understood and attempted. Yet the very terms put forward by Derrida indicate the impossibility of his own reading of Marx performing such an interpretation. Derrida's reading of Marx risks exactly this neutralising anaesthesia of a new theoreticism. But Derrida highlights the extent to which all claims to be faithful to the spirit of Marx are subject to such a logic of appropriation. A reading which is both interpretation and a political act goes beyond a literal, materialist reading to something like a spirit of reading, and yet does so in the name of materialism. And to re-read Marx and Marxism in this light is to engage with a process of reading as exhaustive and as political as that engaged by Marx in the writing of *Capital*, so as to develop a critique both of the explicit claims of Marx and Marxism and of the material conditions for the possibility of these claims. But there are more to material conditions than the impossibility of escaping metaphysics, however much this impossibility is that which Marxism has continually forgotten in its many lapses into materialist dogmatism. A decisive breach needs to be opened, however, between a Marxist understanding of reading and the kind of performative interpretation suggested by Derrida. The conditions of possibility for the discourse of Marx and Marxism are not those of philosophical form, or of an ontology of spectrality, but those of the contradictory conditions of capitalism and class struggle.

The terms by which the agency of reading is understood by Derrida are such that the political move enacted by his reading of Marx reduces the chain of figures linking Marx's writing to a kind of ontological fear which attempts to flee from the proliferation of spectrality:

Marx continues to want to ground his critique or exorcism of the spectral simulacrum in an ontology. It is a – critical but pre-deconstructive – ontology of presence as actual reality and objectivity. This critical ontology means to deploy the possibility of dissipating the phantom, let us venture to say again of conjuring it away as representative consciousness of a subject, and of bringing this representation back to the world of

labor, production, and exchange, so as to reduce it to its conditions. Pre-deconstructive here does not mean false, unnecessary, or illusory. Rather it characterizes a relatively stabilized knowledge that calls for questions more radical than the critique itself and than the ontology that grounds the critique. These questions are not destabilizing as the effect of some theoretico-speculative subversion. They are not even, in the final analysis, questions but seismic events. *Practical* events where thought *becomes act*... (170)

The quality of Derrida's performative interpretation here emerges in all its contradictory glory. To construe Marx's thought as being grounded in an ontology which reduces spectral representations to their conditions is to offer an explicit and general critique of Marx's thought. And yet Derrida stresses that Marx's critique, although 'pre-deconstructive', is not 'false, unnecessary or illusory', but rather that it is insufficiently radical. If Marx's work can be described as a 'critical ontology', then an important aspect of what makes it critical is its emphasis on *social* being rather than on Being as such. This emphasis is itself critical of traditional conceptions of ontology, such that philosophical questions are to be understood not in terms of consciousness, nor as grounds or ontological conditions, but as ideological reflections of social being and the history of class struggle. There is something like a philosophical anthropology in the early thinking of Marx, notably in suggestions regarding species-being. Nevertheless, Derrida's reduction of Marx's understanding of critique to an ontology inverts the central emphasis of Marx's thought and his attempt to distance his thinking from Hegelianism. And if Derrida thinks that this is not to offer a critique of Marx but a radicalization of the spirit of Marx's thought, then it would seem that this is because, for Derrida at least, critique is necessarily grounded in an ontology, a grounding Derrida wishes to deconstruct. But if Derrida wishes to free Marx's thinking from the necessity of its ontological chains, it would appear to do so at the cost of subverting the very possibility of critique. Hence, Derrida's claim that this is not merely a theoretical or speculative question, but a question which performs a movement from theory to practice, where thought becomes act, constitutes an audacious appropriation of the theory / practice conception traditionally associated with Marxism. The attempt to appropriate Marx's thought by conjuring it away from its conditions of labour is indeed to perform a spectral kind of politics, to ground the possibility of politics in an ontological condition whose ground is in the same moment construed as groundless. Derrida indicates the difficulty of Marxism as a theory of interpretation faced with the shifting hermeneutic horizon of the history in which Marx thought and acted, and as a theory of political action developed in the light of this theory of interpretation. Derrida is right to insist on the materiality of the figurative conditions of Marx's writings, and on the difficulty of understanding the materiality of Marx's texts. Marxism needs to develop such an understanding if it is to avoid the temptation to reduce social being to ontology, particularly when tempted by recourse to ontology as

the implicit ground of critique.

Marxist literary theory after Derrida has, then, to articulate the spirit of Marxism in all its heterogeneity as the spirits of Marx. This articulation involves developing a literary theory of the relation between interpretation and action which can illuminate the discourse founded by Marx, going beyond the fantasy of origin with which Marxism grounds itself in Marx, so as to develop a forgetful remembering of Marx. As such, a literary theory of Marxism will need to converge with Marx's critique of capitalism and with Marxist literary theory, a convergence which meets at the point where these differences makes difference matter.

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 52. Page references to *Specters of Marx* hereafter are included in the main text.

2. Derrida's demolition of Fukuyama is amusingly pointed, but readers of *Common Sense* might find more substance in *Has History Ended?*

Fukuyama, Marx, Modernity (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994), eds. Christopher Bertram and Andrew Chitty.

3. See *Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader*, eds. Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). This paper is a draft version of a chapter from my forthcoming companion book *Reading Marxist Literary Theory*, to be published by Blackwell.

4. Aijaz Ahmad, 'Reconciling Derrida: "Specters of Marx" and Deconstructive Politics', *New Left Review*, 208 (1994), 87-106 (106).

5. Ahmad, 'Reconciling Derrida', 91.

6. Fredric Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter', *New Left Review*, 209 (1995), 75-109 (82).

7. Terry Eagleton, 'Marxism without Marxism', *Radical Philosophy*, 73 (1995), 35-37 (37).

8. Subsequent critiques in *Radical Philosophy* come no closer to a substantiated refutation of Derrida: see 'Symposium: Spectres of Derrida', *Radical Philosophy*, 75 (1996), 26-41.

9. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Ghostwriting', *Diacritics*, 25:2 (1995), 65-84.

10. Ernesto Laclau, 'The Time Is Out Of Joint', *Diacritics*, 25:2 (1995), 86-96 (93). On Laclau's post-Marxist understanding of political thinking informed by Derrida see Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985) and Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990). For a general account sympathetic to Levinasian ethics see S. Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). A critique of Levinas can be teased out, with some difficulty, from Gillian Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism* (1984) and *The Broken Middle* (1992).

11. Laclau, 'The Time Is Out Of Joint', 93.

12. Simon Critchley, 'On Derrida's *Specters of Marx*', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 21:3 (1995), 1-30 (21); cf. S. Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*

(Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

13. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Athlone, 1987), p. 63.

14. See Jacques Derrida, 'Cogito and the History of Madness', *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978).

15. Michel Foucault, 'My Body, This Paper, This Fire', trans. G. Bennington, *Oxford Literary Review*, 4, no. 1 (1979), 9-28 (27).

16. See Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1970) and Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoff Wall (London: Routledge, 1978). Recent works are more modest: see Etienne Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1995); and Pierre Macherey, *The object of literature*, trans. David Macey (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

17. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. C. Arthur (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), pp. 58-9.

18. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, trans. Alan Bass (London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 267-8.

The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas

John Holloway

[1] "A new lie is sold to us as history. The lie about the defeat of hope, the lie about the defeat of dignity, the lie about the defeat of humanity". (Subcomandante Marcos in the invitation to an Intercontinental Gathering against Neo-Liberalism, La Jornada 30/1/96).

The lie is a lie about power, and about necessity. After twenty years of neo-liberalism, it is no longer really a lie about desirability. The market optimism of the 80s has been largely replaced by a market realism: not 'everything is perfect under a market system', but 'this is the way things are and this is the way things must be, in reality there is no alternative'. 'A different society might be nice, but it is not possible'. The lie about the defeat of hope is a lie about the defeat of possibility, a lie about the power to change.

The zapatistas have a different idea of possibility, a different idea of power. This was expressed by Marcos in a comment on the dialogue between the zapatistas and the government. "This is not a fair dialogue, it is not a dialogue between equals. But in this dialogue the EZLN is not the weak party, it is the strong party. On the side of the government there are only military force and the lies spread by some of the media. And force and lies will never, never be stronger than reason. They can impose themselves for days, months or years, but history will finally put each one in its place" (Subcomandante Marcos, 5/5/95, La Jornada, 11/5/95).

Very pretty, but it's absurd! How can Marcos's declaration possibly be correct? His reference to history does not answer anything, since history is no more than the result of struggles about power. So how can we possibly maintain that the zapatistas are stronger than the Mexican government, or that reason is stronger than force and lies? To defend such an absurd statement, it would be necessary to defend an absurd theory of power.

That is surely the challenge of the zapatistas and their absurd rebellion. The zapatista rebellion is absurd. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, after the defeat of the sandinistas, after the defeat of the revolutions in El Salvador and Guatemala, when China is becoming more and more integrated into the capitalist world market, when the Cuban revolution is finding it increasingly difficult to survive in any form at all, when all the major revolutionary movements have disappeared from Latin America

and most other parts of the world, on the very day that Mexico proclaims its modernity through the creation of the NAFTA, on that very day a group of indigenous peasants seize control of San Cristóbal and other towns in Chiapas, many of them armed with wooden guns. Not only that, but they soon proclaim their absurd notions openly: they, a group of a few thousand indigenous rebels in the jungle of the south-east of Mexico want to change the world. What is more, most absurd of all, most important, most central to their whole absurd project, they want to change the world without taking power. And on top of that their discourse is full of jokes, of stories, of children, of dancing. How can we take such a rebellion seriously? It all seems too much of a colourful tale from a novel by Gabriel García Márquez for it to be of serious relevance to us here in Europe.

I want to take the zapatistas seriously. I want Marcos to be right when he says that they are stronger than the Mexican government. I want them to be right when they say that they want to change the world without taking power. I want them to be right because I do not see any other way out of the tragedy we are living, in which about 50,000 people die each day of starvation, in which over a thousand million people live in extreme poverty. Revolution is desperately urgent, but often it appears that we are trapped in a desperately urgent impossibility. I want Marcos's declarations to be not only beautiful and poetic but to have a real theoretical and practical foundation. But wanting them to be right is not enough. If we want them to be right, we must try to understand, criticise and strengthen the theoretical and practical foundation of what they are doing.

The zapatistas pose a theoretical and practical challenge: a challenge to all the established practices and ideas of the revolutionary left or indeed of the Left in the broadest sense. As Marcos puts it in a comment on the first year of the uprising, "Something broke in this year, not just the false image of modernity sold to us by neoliberalism, not just the falsity of government projects, of institutional alms, not just the unjust neglect by the country of its original inhabitants, but also the rigid schemes of a Left living in and from the past. In the midst of this navigating from pain to hope, political struggle finds itself naked, bereft of the rusty garb inherited from pain: it is hope which obliges it to look for new forms of struggle, that is, new ways of being political, of doing politics: a new politics, a new political morality, a new political ethic is not just a wish, it is the only way to go forward, to jump to the other side". (Subcdte Marcos - citado por Rosario Ibarra, *La Jornada*, 2/5/95). He might also have added, "a new political theory, a new understanding of politics and of power".

[2] Power is usually associated with control of money or the state. The Left, in particular, has usually seen social transformation in terms of control of the state. The strategies of the mainstream left have generally aimed at winning control of the state and using the state to transform society. The reformist left sees gaining control of the state in terms of winning elections, the revolutionary left (certainly in the leninist and guerrillero traditions) thinks of it in terms of the seizure of state power.

The classic controversies between reformists and revolutionaries have been about the means of winning control of the state. The actual goal of taking state power is generally taken as an obvious prerequisite for changing society.

The attempts to transform society through the state (whether by reformist or revolutionary means) have never achieved what they set out to do. So many historical failures cannot be accounted for in terms of 'betrayal' of the revolution or of the people. The failure of so many attempts to use state power suggests rather that the state is not the site of power. States are embedded in a world-wide web of capitalist social relations that defines their character. States are incapable of bringing about radical social change simply because the flight of capital which any such attempt would cause would threaten the very existence of the state. The notion of state power is a mirage: the seizure of the state is not the seizure of power.

The attempts to transform society through the state have not just failed to achieve that end. The fixation on the state has tended to destroy the movements pushing for radical change. If states are embedded in a global web of capitalism, that means that they tend to reproduce capitalist social relations through the way that they operate. States function in such a way as to reproduce the capitalist status quo. In their relation to us, and in our relation to them, there is a filtering out of anything that is not compatible with the reproduction of capitalist social relations. This may be a violent filtering, as in the repression of revolutionary or subversive activity, but it is also a less perceptible filtering, a sidelining or suppression of passions, loves, hates, anger, laughter, dancing. The state divides the public from the private and, in so doing, imposes a division upon us, separates our public, serious side from our private, frivolous, irrelevant side. The state fragments us, alienates us from ourselves.

The problem with any left activity oriented towards the state is that it tends to reproduce the same fragmentation of the person. If power is identified with the state, then winning power is identified with the suppression of part of ourselves: with seriousness, dedication, sacrifice, the elimination of all 'irresponsibility'. In the case of reformist political parties which are oriented to winning control of the state by electoral means, the nature of the state's insertion in capitalist social relations means that there are considerable pressures on the party to project itself as serious, responsible and respectful of property, and to suppress any rank-and-file activity which does not correspond to this image. Revolutionaries do not produce the image of the state in quite the same way, but, especially where conditions are such as to make any revolutionary organisation clandestine, a revolutionary must be prepared to dedicate himself, to sacrifice, to subordinate his life to the higher goal of winning power. Although the aim may be to create a society in which the person would be whole, in which alienation would be overcome, it is assumed that in the meantime the winning of power requires the fragmentation of oneself. It is assumed that in a nasty, alienated society, the only way of taking on the enemy is to adopt the enemy's language and forms of organisation.

This way of looking at power has its most extreme expression in the identification of power with military force. The army (whether state or revolutionary) is not only a model for factory organisation but its exaggeration, the intensification of self-alienation to its extreme, the maximum subordination of normal affective life. In the idea that power is military force (and that power must be won by military force), power and dehumanisation (of self and others) are treated as practically identical.

The state-oriented tradition of organisation privileges men (and especially young men), not necessarily in the sense of any direct discrimination against women, but above all in the way that different forms of social experience are valued. Professional dedication to the revolution promotes a culture in which there is a hierarchisation of social experience and activity. Action or experience directed at the state is given priority, and other types of experience (affective relations, playing with children, sensuality etc) are accorded a secondary importance. The same separation between the public and the private, between the serious and the frivolous, which is the basis of the existence of the state, is reproduced within the revolutionary (or reformist) organisation. In the capitalist world, politics is a serious (not to say boring) business, a matter above all for the serious (not to say boring) gender, a matter that has no room for children, jokes or games. In the world of the traditional left, it is not very different.

[3] If it is correct to see the idea of the revolutionary seizure of state power as an idea particularly suited to the experience of young single people, then it is easy to understand why the zapatistas abandoned their traditional notions of revolution as they became transformed from a revolutionary group into a community in arms. They have repeatedly said that they do not want to conquer state power. Time and time again, in their practice and in their declarations, they have rejected the state as a form of action.

The most fundamental example of their rejection of the state as a form of organisation is their insistence on the principle of 'mandar obedeciendo', 'lead by obeying', the idea that the leaders of the movement must obey the members, and that all major decisions should be taken through a process of collective decision making. This principle has meant constant friction in the dialogue with the government, as can be seen for example in the conflict over the issue of time. Given the bad conditions of communication in the Lacandona Jungle, and the need to discuss everything thoroughly, the principle of 'mandar obedeciendo' means that decisions take time. When the government representatives insisted on rapid replies, the zapatistas replied that the government did not understand the indigenous clock. As recounted by Comandante David afterwards, the zapatistas explained that 'we, as Indians, have rhythms, forms of understanding, of deciding, of reaching agreements. And when we told them that, they replied by making fun of us; well then, they said, we don't understand why you say that because we see that you have Japanese watches, so how do you say that you are wearing indigenous watches, that's from Japan' (La Jornada 17/5/95). And

Comandante Tacho commented: 'They haven't learned. They understand us backwards. We use time, not the clock' (La Jornada, 18/5/95).

The rejection of the state is central also to the zapatistas' relations with 'civil society'. All their strategies to build a unity of action with those engaged in other forms of struggle quite explicitly bypass the state. Most recently, in the Fourth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, issued at the beginning of this year, in which they propose the formation of a Front of National Liberation, they make it an explicit condition for joining this front that members should renounce all aspiration to hold state office - an idea which has scandalised sympathisers both on the reformist and the trotskyst left.

[4] But then what? The zapatistas say that they do not want to conquer the world, just to make it new. But that implies some concept of strength or power. If power is not defined as the state, or as military force, then what is the alternative? How can we think of the power of those without power, the face of those without face, the voice of those without voice?

The zapatistas speak of what they say as the 'word of those who are armed with truth and fire' ('la palabra de los armados de verdad y fuego'). The fire is there, but the truth comes first, not just as a moral attribute, but as a weapon: they are armed with truth, and this is a more important weapon than the firepower of their guns. Although they are organised as an army, they aim to win by truth, not by fire.

Those 'without voice, without face' are armed with truth. Their truth is not just that they speak the truth about their situation or about the country, but that they are true to themselves. Truth is dignity, having the dignity to say at last the 'Enough!' that would restore meaning to the deaths of their dead. Dignity is to assert one's humanity in a society which treats us inhumanly. Dignity is to assert our wholeness in a society which fragments us. Dignity is to assert control over one's life in a society which denies such control. Dignity is to live in the present the Not Yet for which we struggle. To be armed with truth or dignity is to assert the power of living now that which is not yet.

In the assertion that they/ we are armed with truth or dignity, the conventional concept of power is reversed. Power is not that which is, but that which is not, that which is Not Yet (as Bloch would put it). In a society in which that which is ('that's the way things are') rules, in which identity is lord, to be armed with dignity is to assert the power of non-identity. In a society based on human alienation, the zapatistas raise the banner of non-alienation, of that which is suppressed, of laughing, singing and dancing, of that which simply does not appear in the normal categories of social science, constructed as they are on the basis of the Isness or identity of the world.

But is this not empty, metaphysical nonsense? How can one speak of the power of that which is not yet, of non-alienation, of non-identity, of dignity and truth? History is littered with the corpses of the true and dignified, and ultimately powerless.

The appeal to that which is Not Yet would be purely metaphysical if

the Not Yet did not exist in some form already. The appeal to a pre-given History, or to some Dignity, understood as a pre-given Platonic essence, does not help at all. It is only if we understand dignity, truth, non-identity, the Not Yet as already existing that we can begin to think of power in those terms. They exist, of course, not as transcendent essences, but as present refusal, as struggle, as negation of the untruth of capitalist society. Truth exists as struggle against untruth, dignity as struggle against degradation, non-alienation as struggle against alienation, non-identity as struggle against identity, the not-yet as struggle against the present. In short, they exist as the ¡Ya Basta! inside all of us. This is expressed very nicely by Antonio García de León in his prologue to one of the editions of the zapatista comunicués, where he says "as more and more rebel comunicués were issued, we realised that in reality the revolt came from the depths of ourselves". The power of the zapatistas is the power of the ¡Ya Basta!, the negation of oppression, which exists in the depths of all of us.

How do we know that the ¡Ya Basta! exists? We know it must exist in all of us, possibly very suppressed, always in contradictory form, but always there, not just from experience, but simply because it is an inseparable part of life in an oppressive society. We can see manifestations of it in the million different struggles that make up life in a capitalist society, from the strikes that shook France at the end of last year to the cursing of the alarm clock that tells us it is time to go to an alienating job in the mornings. But there is no way it can be measured, no way in which we can empirically define it. The fact that it exists in often unarticulated form means that there is an irreducible unpredictability in social development.

The question of the power of the zapatistas can now be reformulated as the question of how we articulate the ¡Ya Basta! - not their ¡Ya Basta! but our ¡Ya basta! If we think of their power in this sense, it helps us to understand why the zapatistas have not (or not yet) been suppressed militarily: it is not due primarily to their military strength, but to the extraordinary resonance of their ¡Ya Basta! in Mexico and throughout the world.

Thinking of the issue of power in this way also helps us to understand aspects of the zapatistas' politics. The understanding of people as already having dignity in a society which degrades them, as already having truth in an untrue society (truth and dignity not as essential qualities but as negation of degradation and untruth) is the crucial turning point in their concept of revolution. Understanding people as having dignity implies a politics of listening and not just talking (a politics of mutual recognition). Through the process of being integrated into the communities of the Lacandona Jungle, the original group of revolutionaries were forced to listen in order to communicate, they were forced to abandon the great revolutionary tradition of talking, of telling people what to think. Revolutionary politics then becomes the articulation of Dignity's struggle, rather than the bringing of class consciousness to the people from outside. From this follow two of the key phrases of the zapatista discourse - 'mandar obedeciendo' (to lead by obeying) and 'preguntando caminamos' (asking we walk). Revolution is

redefined as a question rather than an answer: revolution is "revolution with a small 'r'", rather than Revolution with a capital R. It refers to the creative and imaginative articulation of dignity now, and not to a future event, the arrival at a pre-defined promised land.

The notion of dignity and of listening to people's struggles also helps to explain why the zapatistas do not call for supporters to come and join them in the jungle, but insist rather that people should struggle wherever they are in whatever way they can. In effect they say not "we are right, join us", but "we **must** all struggle to express our ¡Ya Basta!". The various political initiatives they have taken - the National Democratic Convention in Aguascalientes, the national and international consultations on the aims and future of the zapatistas, the movement of national liberation, the indigenous forum, and now the intercontinental gathering against neo-liberalism - all aim, not at building up their own membership, nor at constructing a solidarity movement, but at stimulating others to strengthen their own struggles for democracy, freedom and justice.

Their appeal is a general one, to what they call 'civil society'. They do not talk either of class struggle or of the proletariat. This has been criticised by some Marxists as reformist, but, although the concept of 'civil society' is unsatisfactory in some respects, it is understandable why the zapatistas should prefer to avoid the vocabulary of the Marxist tradition, laden as it is with a hundred years of positivist interpretation. The concept of the proletariat is particularly problematic. As usually understood, it refers to a particular group of people defined by a particular type of subjection to capital. As such, it privileges the struggles of certain people over others and certain types of struggle over others. The zapatistas' concept of ¡Ya basta!, on the other hand, more in keeping with Marx's own work, it seems to me, can be seen as based on the idea that the class antagonism runs through all of us, although in different ways, and as allowing a much richer concept of struggle as embracing all aspects of human activity.

In the past two years, this group of rebels in the jungle of the south-east of Mexico, born of the interaction of a group of revolutionaries with the traditions of struggle of the indigenous people of Chiapas, born in the 1990s of the horrors of world neo-liberalism which force so many people either to die in misery or to say "¡Ya Basta!", has crystallised (and advanced) to a remarkable extent the themes of oppositional thought and action that have been discussed throughout the world in recent years: the issues of gender, age, childhood, death and the dead. All flow from the understanding of politics as a politics of dignity, a politics which recognises the particular oppression of, and respects the struggles of, women, children, the old. Respect for the struggles of the old is a constant theme of Marcos's stories, particularly through the figure of Old Antonio, but was also forcefully underlined by the emergence of Comandante Trinidad as one of the leading figures in the dialogue of San Andrés. The way in which women have imposed recognition of their struggles on the zapatista men is well known, and can be seen, for example, in the Revolutionary Law for Women, issued on the first day of the uprising, or in the fact that it was a woman, Ana María, who led the

most important military action undertaken by the zapatistas, the occupation of San Cristóbal on the 1st January 1994. The question of childhood and the freedom to play is a constant theme in Marcos's letters and is highlighted in a recent interview as the issue that he regards as most important: "In our dream children are children and their work is to be children... I do not dream of the agrarian redistribution, of big mobilisations, of the fall of the government and elections and the victory of a left-wing party, or whatever. I dream of the children and I see them being children... We, the zapatista children, think that our work as children is to play and to learn" (interview with Cristián Calónico Lucio, 11/11/95, not yet published).

It is not that the struggle of the zapatistas - the military conflict and the prolonged dialogue with the government - has also raised these important issues. Rather these issues are central to the struggle. The struggle is not just about gaining material improvements, better housing, schools, hospitals and so on: it is about creating a world in which people can live with dignity, a mutually recognitive world in which people can relate to each other without hiding behind masks. Seen in this light, the letters of Marcos, the poetry, the theatre of Aguascalientes and the dances that punctuate all that the zapatistas do are not embellishments of a revolutionary process but central to it.

The question for us, then, is not how we can build solidarity committees, but how we can join in the process that they have started. How can we theorise and articulate our own ¡Ya Basta!? How can we think about the unity of our particular struggles and the struggles of the other zapatistas, those in the southeast of Mexico? How can we articulate that unity in a struggle for a society in which dignity would no longer be a struggle against degradation? It is presumably to stir up such questions that the zapatistas are calling for an Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and against Neo-Liberalism, to be celebrated between the months of April and August in the five continents.

The zapatistas, far from being just another rebellion in some far-off land, challenge us theoretically and practically, challenge us to join in the struggle for dignity: dignity, according to Marcos in the declaration calling for the intercontinental gathering, "is that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the heart no matter what blood lives in it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, customs and wars".

Preguntando caminamos. Asking we walk.

March 1996

This is an individual presentation of work done jointly with Eloína Peláez in the preparation of the book which we are editing on "The Zapatistas: Revolution in the Electronic Age" (Pluto Press, London, 1996/97). The present article was originally written for a talk to be presented in the Free University of Brussels.

The Zapatistas: Conference Notice

La Jornada, January 30, 1996. "The EZLN calls for an intercontinental anti-liberalism gathering"

First Declaration of La Realidad

Against Neoliberalism and For Humanity

"I have arrived, I am here present, I the singer.
Enjoy in good time, come here to present
yourselves those
who have a hurting heart.
I raise my song".

Nahuatl Poetry

To the people of the world:

Brothers and Sisters,

During the last years, the power of money has presented a new mask over its criminal face. Disregarding borders, with no importance given to race or color, the Power of money humiliates dignities, insults honesties and assassinates hopes. Re-named as 'Neoliberalism', the historic crime in the concentration, of privileges, wealth and impunities democratizes misery and hopelessness.

A new world war is waged, but now against the entire humanity. As in all world wars, what is being sought is a new distribution of the world.

By the name of 'globalization' they call this modern war which assassinates and forgets. The new distribution of the world consists in concentrating power in power and misery in misery.

The new distribution of the world excludes 'minorities'. The indigenous, youth, women, homosexuals, lesbians, people of color, immigrants, workers, peasants; the majority who make up the world basements are presented, for power, as disposable. The new distribution of the world excludes the majorities.

The modern army of financial capital and corrupt governments

advance conquering in the only way it is capable of: destroying. The new distribution of the world destroys humanity.

The new distribution of the world only has a place for money and its servants. Men, women and machines become equal in servitude and in being disposable. The lie governs and it multiplies itself in means and methods.

A new lie is sold to us as history. The lie about the defeat of hope, the lie about the defeat of dignity, the lie about the defeat of humanity. The mirror of power offers us an equilibrium in the balance scale: the lie about the victory of cynicism, the lie about the victory of servitude, the lie about the victory of neoliberalism.

Instead of humanity, it offers us stock market value indexes, instead of dignity it offers us globalization of misery, instead of hope it offers us an emptiness, instead of life it offers us the international of terror.

Against the international of terror representing neoliberalism, we must raise the international of hope.

Hope, above borders, languages, colors, cultures, sexes, strategies, and thoughts, of all those who prefer humanity alive.

The international of hope. Not the bureaucracy of hope, not the opposite image and, thus, the same as that which annihilates us. Not the power with a new sign or new clothing. A breath like this, the breath of dignity. A flower yes, the flower of hope. A song yes, the song of life.

Dignity is that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the heart no matter what blood lives it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, customs and wars.

Hope is that rejection of conformity and defeat.

Life is what they owe us: the right to govern and to govern ourselves, to think and act with a freedom that is not exercised over the slavery of others, the right to give and receive what is just.

For all this, along with those who, beyond borders, races and colors, share the song of life, the struggle against death, the flower of hope and the breath of dignity . . .

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation Speaks . . .

To all who struggle for human values of democracy, liberty and justice.

To all who force themselves to resist the world crime known as 'Neoliberalism' and aim for humanity and hope to be better, be synonymous of future.

To all individuals, groups, collectives, movements, social, civic and political organizations, neighborhood associations, cooperatives, all the lefts known and to be known; non-governmental organizations, groups in solidarity with struggles of the world people, bands, tribes, intellectuals, indigenous people, students, musicians, workers, artists,

teachers, peasants, cultural groups, youth movements, alternative communication media, ecologists, tenants, lesbians, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists.

To all human beings without a home, without land, without work, without food, without health, without education, without freedom, without justice, without independence, without democracy, without peace, without tomorrow.

To all who, with no matter to colors, race or borders, make of hope a weapon and a shield.

And calls together to the First Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism.

To be celebrated between the months of April and August of 1996 in the five continents, according the following program of activities:

First:

Continental preparation assemblies in the month of April of 1996 in the following sites:

- 1.- European Continent: Site in Berlin, Germany
- 2.- American Continent: Site in La Realidad, Mexico
- 3.- Asian Continent: Site in Tokyo, Japan
- 4.- African Continent: Site to be defined
- 5.- Oceanic Continent: Site in Sidney, Australia.

Note:

The continental site can change if the organizing groups decide to do so.

Second:

The Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, from July 27th to August 3rd of 1996, in the Zapatista 'Aguascalientes', Chiapas, Mexico.

With the following Bases:

Agenda:

Table 1.- Economic aspects of how one lives under neoliberalism, how one resists, how one struggles and proposals of struggle against it and for humanity.

Table 2.- Political aspects of how one lives under neoliberalism, how one resists, how one struggles and proposals of struggle against it and for humanity.

Table 3.- Social aspects of how one lives under neoliberalism, how one resists, how one struggles and proposals of struggle against it and for humanity.

Table 4.- Cultural aspects of how one lives under neoliberalism, how one resists, how one struggles and proposals of struggle against it and for humanity.

Organization:

The preparation meetings in Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania will be organized by the Committees in Solidarity with the Zapatista Rebellion, related organizations, and citizenship groups interested in the struggle against neoliberalism and for humanity. We call upon groups of all countries so that they work united in the organization and achievement of the preparation assemblies.

The intercontinental gathering for humanity and against neoliberalism, to be celebrated from July 27th to August 3rd of 1996 in Chiapas, Mexico, will be organized by the EZLN and by citizens and Mexican non-governmental organizations that will be made known in opportune time.

Accreditation:

The accreditation for the preparation assemblies in the 5 continents will be made by the organizing committees formed in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, and America, respectively.

The accreditations for the gathering in Chiapas, Mexico, will be done by the committees in solidarity with the Zapatista rebellion, with the people of Chiapas, and with the people of Mexico, in their respective countries; and in Mexico, by the organizing commission, which will be known in opportune time.

General and Intercontinental Note:

All which has not been completed by this convocation will be resolved by the respective organizing committees regarding the continental preparation assemblies, and by the intercontinental organizing committees regarding the gathering in Chiapas, Mexico.

Brothers and Sisters: Humanity lives in the chest of us all and, like the heart, it prefers to be on the left side. We must find it, we must find ourselves. It is not necessary to conquer the world. It is sufficient with making it new. Us. Today.

Democracy!

Liberty!

Justice!

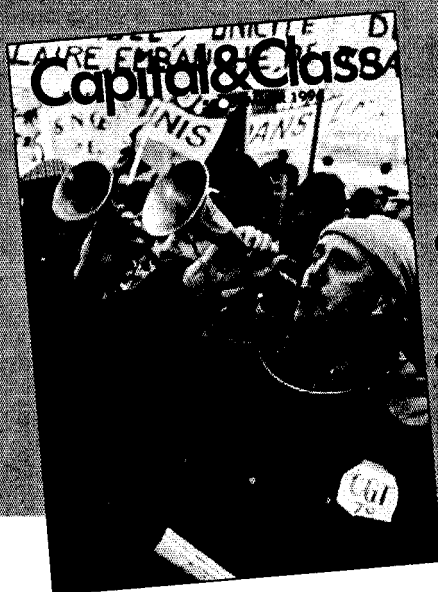
From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. By the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

Mexico, January of 1996

Capital & Class

Journal of the Conference of Socialist Economists



**Issue No.59
– OUT NOW**

BEHIND THE NEWS

- **Steve Jefferys: *France 1995 – The Backward March of Labour Halted***
- **Vadim Borisov & Simon Clarke: *The Russian Miners' Strike of February 1996***

Over 160 pages of articles

- **Chris Arthur: *Marx's Fourth Capital***
- **Thanasis Maniatis: *Testing Marx***
- **Paul Cockshott, Allin Cottrell & Greg Michaelson: *A Reply to Maniatis***
- **John Cunliffe & Andrew Reeve: *Exploitation – The Original Saint-Simonian Account***
- **Gerard Strange: *Which Path to Paradise? Andre Gorz, Political Ecology and the Green Movement***
- **Ian Fitzgerald, Al Rainnie & John Stirling: *Coming to Terms with Quality – UNISON and the Restructuring of Local Government***
- **Brian Heron: *The Birth of Socialist Labour***
- **Paul Allender: *A 'New' Socialist Party?***
- **Book Reviews**

£6 from CSE, 25 Horsell Road, London N5 1XL. Tel/Fax: 0171 607 9615

Annual subscription (3 issues) Subscribers in Non-OECD countries may request UK rates

UK	Full £18.00	Reduced/Student £8.00	Supporting £25.00	Multireader £50.00
Overseas	\$33 US (£21.00)	\$15 US (£10.00)	\$45 US (£25.00)	\$105 US (£60.00)

Airmail postage rates Europe £3.00 \$5.00 Zone 1 £6.00 \$10.00 Zone 2 £10.00 \$18.00

Back issues 1-49 £4.00/\$6.50 Multireader £15.00/\$25 30% off for full set.

Please make cheques payable to CSE Membership. Alternatively, we now accept payment by VISA and ACCESS/MasterCard – Just quote your card number and expiry date and we will do the rest.

The Crisis of Political Space

Toni Negri

translated by Ed Emery

When people use the notion of a "New World Order", they are bringing into a single frame three powerful concepts: order, world-scale globalisation and the newness of the relations established between them.

This new connectedness of "world" and "order" seems to constitute a *new paradigm*, in other words a new way of arranging political power and the physical space of the world. In order to understand this new coming-together, we therefore need first to think about these concepts – to establish what they used to mean, and what is the crisis of the former ways in which they were connected; and then we will need to penetrate to the originality of the new connection, and its dynamics. At that moment we will perhaps be in a position to understand the depth of the change that has taken place.

Let us begin with the concept of *order*. In the modern era, the concept of social and political order is very close to the concept of *sovereignty* – a territorial sovereignty which only with the passage of time becomes "national sovereignty". Thus we need to examine the concept of sovereignty and that of national sovereignty separately.

The concept of sovereignty is a concept of a power that has nothing above it. It is a secular conception of power, opposed to any notion of a power based outside its own dynamic. It is thus an absolute *quoad titulum* in reference to its source. However, when one considers it in its exercise *quoad exercitium* the concept of sovereignty is rather a singular concept. This in no sense diminishes its character of absoluteness, but it is precisely in singularity that sovereignty is exercised. Modern sovereignty is singularised by virtue of the fact that it is exercised over a territory, and in relation to a people or peoples. International law is founded on this singularity *jus gentium*, or, better, the right of sovereigns, which originally consisted in resolving conflicts between sovereign singularities by means of pacts. "By means of pacts", and thus a right that is absolutely weakened, an exchange rather than a juridical contract or administration. But the concept of sovereignty is not singularised only in relation to the exterior: it is also singularised domestically, where it presents itself as a concept of *legitimation*, or as a relation between power and its subjects. Or, better, as an interrelation with subjects. Modern sovereignty may be a power which has nothing above it, but it has a lot of things below it. In particular it has below it a

space (a territory) and a multitude (the citizenry). The legitimation, to put it in Weberian terms, may take various forms (traditional, charismatic, legal/rational); in all cases it is a relationship between sovereign and subjects – a relationship within which there exists jointly both the expression of authority and the obedience (and/or disobedience) of the subjects.

Thus a living and inhabited space is found at the basis of modern citizenship. Order is the result of an activity of government which meets acceptance and/or passivity among a given group of citizens over the extent of a territory. In this perspective, sovereignty as order becomes *administration*; in other words, sovereignty organises itself as a machinery of authority which extends through and structures territory. Through the activity of administration, territory is organised, and structures of authority are extended through it. Increasingly within the dynamics of modern sovereignty, the connection between administration and territory becomes intimate and full. The nature of the economic regime (mercantilist or liberalist) matters little; the nature of the political regime (absolutist, aristocratic or popular) also matters little. Space finds itself absorbed into the scenarios of sovereignty in ways that are increasingly coherent, and each particularity is structured by the whole in a progressively irresistible manner.

It takes the concept of nation a while before it combines with that of sovereignty. National sovereignty, at the start of the nineteenth century, was not in opposition to sovereignty; rather it perfected the modern concept of sovereignty. It is a powerful specification of sovereignty, which exalts the connection between sovereign and subjects, and at the same time the potency of the whole. This double operation is possible because the nation state presents itself as a self-sufficient cultural, ethnic and economic entity within which the spiritual element overdetermines the sum of its determinations. The process of legitimation is hypostasized in nature and/or in the spirit. Between Sieyes and Novalis, between Fichte and Mazzini, between Hegel and Hertzler, the concept of nation spiritualises that of sovereignty, and makes the space of sovereignty an absolute entity. In the concept of national sovereignty, territory and people are like two attributes of one same substance, and government is the relation which consecrates this unity. The modern concept of sovereignty, in its close relationship to territory, is carried to extreme consequences.

Modern politics – or again the sovereign – is thus a figure which assembles into an absolute different aspects of social life: a people, a territory, an authority. The concept of sovereign power becomes all the stronger as its aspects are unified and overdetermined within the continuous historical development of modern sovereignty. This process of absolutisation and intensification of relations is also at the root of the concept of *democratic sovereignty*. Democratic sovereignty integrates territory *qua* space of the life of a people. Legitimation, in this case, seeks to be dialectical. Administration becomes bio-politics. The Welfare State, the *État-providence* and the *Sozialstaat*, are figures of perfected sovereignty, in a progressive and uninterrupted continuity which seems to complete the anthropological process of the sedentarisation of hordes,

to the point where it configures within a given space the global time of social life.

So, from an external point of view, sovereignty is characterised by a monopoly of legitimate physical force; by the exclusive ability to mint the social norms of exchange for reproduction (money); by the singular structuring of the forms of communication (national language, education system, etc); by the democratic (biopolitical) definition of legitimation. **It is an absolute process of territorialisation.**

Modern sovereign states have, in the course of the centuries of their hegemony, exported their absolute power outside of the territories they had originally integrated and moulded within the rules of domination. *Imperialism* (as also colonialism) consisted of occupying zones of the world, and exploiting peoples to whom was denied, by this means, the possibility of acceding to territorial or national sovereignty. In the territories of imperialism, order, legitimation and administration are not auto-centred, but are functional to and dependent on the imperialist state.

Thus far we have posed a number of premises enabling us to get the measure of the *earthquake* which is today shaking the old paradigm of sovereign order. An earthquake which touches all the elements of the old order, and which has created *open conjunctures* wherein many hypotheses exist side by side, and in which one can identify a number of tendencies at work. The changes under way are so profound and extensive that we are not yet in a position to identify directions of development with certainty; they do, however, permit – in fact they demand – new parameters of analysis.

Today the first element that is obvious is that this earthquake is *detritorialising*. It shakes the old paradigm of order in its most intimate aspect: the relation to space, the progression towards a space that is increasingly organised. The paradigm of order is forced to come to terms with a space which lacks traditional determinations – or worse, a space that is limitless. There are three elements which should permit us to define this breakdown and provide an approach to a new power scenario. These are: *the bomb, money, and the ether*.

The Bomb

The development of nuclear technologies is one of the elements that has laid the basis for the present earthquake. It is to this development that we owe the reign of terror which has maintained stability over the "thirty glorious years" of Keynesian development; but more particularly we owe to the bomb the extension of the notion of *limited sovereignty* to the great majority of countries of the world. A monopoly of legitimate physical force – this was one of the original qualifications of sovereignty. Today this qualification, which once included the ability to declare war, no longer belongs to the great majority of states. Major wars begin to become unthinkable; not, however, small wars, limited conflicts, international policing operations, civil wars, dirty wars, guerrilla wars, etc, etc. It was within this perspective that the bomb first appeared, as Günther Anders was already pointing out in the 1950s: it was the

operation of a violence that was absolute, a new metaphysical horizon which deprived sovereignty of its own territory and denied resistance the possibility of action.

And yet this dialectic of deterritorialisation finds – or rather could find – a limit in *imperial hegemony*, or in the necessity of imposing a new order, of imposing a new territorialisation on growing processes of deterritorialisation.

Is this new hegemonic pole really in the process of formation? The conditions for it are there: however this does not mean that this new hegemonic pole necessarily has to emerge as a sovereign continuity of the old order (the USA, for example); it might instead be made up of an ensemble of international powers and organisations. The game is on, and bets – and hypotheses – are being placed on which tendency will eventually win.

In any event – and this is the element that I want to stress – the sovereign monopoly of legitimate physical force (which is one of the key characteristics of the modern concept of sovereignty), is here completely sidelined. Even in a scenario where world hegemony was conquered by an old power (the USA, for example), the content of *its* sovereignty would have to be completely and radically requalified: the worldwide extension of domination modifies the form of that domination. Imperial sovereignty presents itself as a *nuclear territorialisation of a universal deterritorialisation*: here we have a useful initial definition of imperial hegemony.

Money

The construction of the *world market* is a second element of the earthquake which we are experiencing. This has involved, in the first place, a monetary deconstruction of national markets, and of national and/or regional contexts of monetary regulation. All this began between 1971 and 1973, when the USA detached gold from the dollar and ended convertibility, thus putting an end to a long period of fixed exchange rates. The end of Bretton Woods. The consequence of this was very soon revealed in the highly aleatory nature of the markets, in which monetary relations found themselves subordinated to movements of *financial powers*. In this situation national *money* tends to lose all characteristics of sovereignty. Even the dollar, which seemed to have taken on a role as a measure or "standard" of the other moneys, becomes increasingly subordinated to the financial markets. And this, paradoxically, becomes obvious with the fall of the Berlin Wall, in other words from the moment in which – the Cold War having been won – the USA finds itself deprived of *command rent* by its allies. A national money, with the characteristics which it had during the period of modernity, is inconceivable today. At this level too, the process of globalisation becomes a very powerful agent of radical transformation. With a series of dramatic consequences:

1. The impossibility of monetary regulation at the national level – whether in Keynesian, or simply monetarist, terms;

2. The definitive undermining of all processes of welfarist intervention at the national level, and the crisis of democratic sovereignty which derives from that fact;

3. The push towards the construction of regional and multinational organisations/groupings, with the aim of building a relative resistance to the powers of finance and speculation, and thus to create new possibilities (illusions) for planning their own future;

4. The erratic emergence, in the chiaroscuro of the crisis, of certain currencies (dollar, Deutschmark, yen...) as *imperial moneys*. Here too, while modern sovereignty is becoming increasingly *residual*, and the process of global deterritorialisation progresses with the construction of the world market, there is a hint of a new possibility of *territorialisation*, which is *unilateral* – not constructed on monetary values, obviously, but solely on political values. Is this possible? What are the real alternatives (and in what forms, and within what time-scale) to the affirmation of the dollar (or of other currencies) as imperial money?

The Ether

The fixing of language and defence of that language, the construction of an educational system, and the protection of culture now more than ever are the substance of sovereign prerogatives. However from now on all this is dissolved in the airwaves. Modern systems of communication are not subordinated to sovereignty: quite the contrary, sovereignty is subordinated to communication.

In the field of communication, the paradoxes implied in the dissolution of territorial and/or national sovereignty, and by the breakdown in the singularised relationship between order and space, are taken to extremes. In fact communication's capacity for deterritorialisation is wholly original; it no longer merely limits or weakens modern sovereignty; it removes even the possibility of a link between a given order and a given space. Except... within the complete *circularity* of signs and the indefatigable continuity of that circularity. From this there derives a conception of territory as "*circulatory territory*" and therefore the impossibility of singularising the relationship of order to territory. Deterritorialisation is the *primum*; circulation is the form in which it unstoppably manifests itself; and thus in the ether languages become functional to circulation and dissolve all relations of sovereignty. As for education and culture, they have no choice but to subject themselves to the "society of the spectacle".

In this experience we reach an outer limit in the dissolution of the relationship between order and space: henceforth we can only view this relationship within *an other place* – an "elsewhere" which is original in being uncontainable within the articulation of the sovereign act.

The space of communication is completely deterritorialised. It is absolutely other, in relation to the residual spaces that we have identified in analysing the crisis of the the monopoly of legitimate physical force, and that of the definition of monetary measure. What we have here is not

a residue, but a *metamorphosis*: a metamorphosis of all the elements of political economy and theory of the State, which derives from the fact that we have entered a phase of *real subsumption* of society within capital. In other words, communication is the form of the capitalist process of production at the point where capital has conquered and subjected to itself the whole of society, in real terms, globally, by suppressing any margins of alternative: if ever an alternative is to be proposed, this will have to be done through the intermediary of the society of real subsumption, and it will have to be constructed within it, playing up new contradictions. The alternative will be posed within the "new", in fact within the "very new".

The imperial tendency is also operational within the ether. Once again this tendency is seen at first sight in the continued existence of *American power* and in its expansion. The space which is being created with this breakdown of relations of sovereignty is very often American. However in none of the situations which we have examined is the reference to the function of imperial reterritorialisation more unstable than here. Unlike what is happening on the terrains of force and money, communication is actually a relation of production, involving the development of capital and, at the same time, a transformation of the forces of production. This dynamic produces a powerfully open situation in which American power comes into confrontation with the power of social subjects – of all those who are increasingly actively involved in the interactive production of communication. In this place more than any other, which is a place of circulation, imperial domination over the new forms of production/communication has proved to be uncertain.

The earthquake which has destroyed territorial and/or national sovereignty is thus deep and thorough-going. The space of politics becomes undefinable, and within it we can no longer count on the functioning of dialectical connections, or even simply of functional connections. In the formal subsumption of world space to capital there still existed intermediations which offered points of reference to given biopolitical processes. Today we can consider the Fordist period as having been a phase of transition (from formal subsumption to real subsumption) within which, little by little, all determinations tend to be erased. We find ourselves looking at a space which is smooth, with occasionally a few variously striated zones, a space that is unified, and periodically identifiable by the hierarchies which run through it; a space that is invested by a continuous circulatory movement, within which one can occasionally perceive resistances. Or, again, to put it in another way, we are living in a universal suburb, characterised by variations of speed – sometimes one can identify centres, on this desolate horizon, maybe one, maybe many, but at any event what we have here is a power which invests a new space, a *new power*.

Obviously, our problem is to decide whether this new space is in the process of being organised, and if it is, then we must describe how. How is this new deterritorialisation expressing itself in terms of administration. I do not necessarily think that it is possible to advance more broadly in this direction. But it would nevertheless be useful to pose a number of premises, or, rather, to anticipate an ideal type which might

enable clarification of the road to be followed. The *ideal type of empire* could be useful to us. It is radically different from the concept of imperialism (which consisted, as we have seen, in a specification of sovereignty) because the space of empire is without preconstituted determinations; it is a centre which is dislocated over numbers of terrains, and which circulates without finding obstacles. Within a unified world-space, individual states combine within fluxes and networks that are always in movement; countries exist in a context in which *peace* is guaranteed by a permanent and effective policy of international policing. When this breaks down, conflicts are isolated. In all cases, the sovereign characteristics of single states are weakened and recomposed within collective functions of the market and the organisation of communication and policing.

Post-modern ideologies have made much of the weakening of the characteristics of sovereignty. They have also, and by the same token, made much of the new dimensions of the fragmentary, the local, and the particular, and the emergences of new identities (which here and there break the flat surface of postmodernity). In my view these descriptions are not sufficient for providing an understanding of the fundamental nature of the empire: this consists of moving beyond mere manifestation of the fragmentary and the complex, into organising in a unitary manner within the fragmentary, within the complex, within the intermingling and control of identities. Postmodern ideologies have made great play with a given situation of which, up until now, they have not perceived the new structuring dynamic.

It was Foucault and Deleuze who best grasped the figure of empire (considered here solely from the point of view of the construction of an ideal type). The threefold model which they propose for the evolution of the political regimes of modernity (from "*ancien regime* society" to "disciplinary society", to "control society") identifies the dynamic of weakening sovereignty within the transition from disciplinary society to the control society – not as something evanescent, but quite the contrary, as modernisation and optimisation. "Control society" is the framework within which imperial power is deployed. In raising the summit of command to an enormously high level, the possibility of mediations in the resolution of conflicts and therefore the dynamic requalification of all particularities within the process of power, becomes very much greater. Force and discipline are thus included within politics of control.

But let us now take a look at the model of empire which Polybius constructed. The Roman empire, we are told by this Greek intellectual who lived in Rome, was a synthesis of the three forms of government defined by classical antiquity: the empire was monarchic with the emperor, aristocratic in the Senate, and democratic-republican in its tribune functions. And what about today? Is what we are seeing in the organisation of a new imperial power once again Polybius's threefold model? Perhaps. A definitive monarchic centre, the exclusive holder of force, has not yet emerged, although one can say that it is increasingly identifiable in tendency. But the two other aspects of the model required by the imperial synthesis are there: on the one hand the financial

aristocracy and the discipline which it imposes on substantial fractions of overall labour power at the worldwide level; and also the republican power of control, or that disciplinary reflex which is embodied in what is left of the single national states, and which is increasingly represented in a contractual role in relation to the imperial authority.

The empire is thus there, just around the corner, waiting for us inexorably, as something which is already in place. As a political philosophy, post-modernity has been a warning sign telling of empire – sad and inadequate, but effective.

Far stronger and more real are the warning signs that are etched in the crises and the temporary pauses of the constitutive process of empire. Where are they to be seen? Essentially in conflicts between orders of values and in contradictions between procedures. *Increasingly strong hybridisations* become apparent when we consider the space of the proper and the improper, of the economic and the political, of the legal and the illegal, and when the traditional considerations of law and the social (not forgetting the moral) comes up against the spatial opening-up of empire. In the lives of states and communities a large part of public activity is henceforth devoted to the resolution of these conflicts, to the recomposition of the procedures which govern them, and thus to the "management" of these hybrid spaces.

We clearly have to ask whether the life of empire – in this, which would be its first real form – rather than being invoked for the solution of major international conflicts, should not here be invoked to deal with the individual conflicts affecting the material aspects of the existence of peoples and nations.

This now brings me to my final formulation. For me it is so fundamental that I would be very happy if it found an equal footing in everything that I have said so far, even in reductive fashion – because it is no less essential. My conclusion is the following: the breakdown of the modern relation between order and space is a radical rupture, the sign of a mutation of paradigm. What this rupture presents to critical thought and action is *a new transcendental of the political*. When politics is looked at within the dimension of empire, one can no longer conceive it in the dimension of single national spaces. From now on, concepts of politics, sovereignty, legitimation, administration etc are completely thrown into question – they certainly go into crisis, they may be subject to re-arrangement, but in the long term they are also open to overthrow and subversion, because they no longer have any relation to the old paradigm of national, international, territorial and cosmopolitical order. Today the multinational level is played out within a space that is quasi-national. There are no alternatives to the verticality of the new imperial power – the only alternatives are in who will actually own imperial power (will it be the USA or a conglomerate of different sovereign states that will take power over the empire?), or in the games that might be played in terms of transversality. In any event we are already right in there. We are citizens of this world which is preparing to make public its new international organisation – in other words *the imperial nature of the relations of domination*. Whether or not one agrees with this development, we must necessarily view it as inevitable, and we will have

to recognise that many of the contradictions which democratic action has experienced hitherto are going to reproduce themselves on terrains that are infinitely more complex. From now on power can only be looked at from within the framework of this new political transcendental.

A Critique of the Fordism of the Regulation School

Ferruccio Gambino

translated by Ed Emery

Introduction

Some of the categories that people have used in recent years to describe the changes taking place in the world of production, such as Fordism, post-Fordism and immaterial production, have shown themselves to be rather blunt instruments.¹ Here I intend to deal with the use of the concepts "Fordism" and "post-Fordism" by the regulation school, which has given a particular twist to the former term, and which coined *ex novo* the latter. The aim of my article is to help break the conflict-excluding spell under which the regulation school has succeeded in casting Fordism and post-Fordism.

From midway through the 1970s, as a result of the writings of Michel Aglietta² and then of other exponents of the regulation school, including Boyer, Coriat and Lipietz, Fordism began to take on a neutral meaning, due in part to a degree of slipshod historiography, but also to the reduction of movements of social classes into mere abstraction.³

When they use the term Fordism, the regulation school are referring essentially to a system of production based on the assembly line, which is capable of relatively high industrial productivity.⁴ The regulationists' attention is directed not so much to the well-documented inflexibility of the Fordist process of production, to the necessary deskilling of the workforce, to the rigidity of Fordism's structure of command and its productive and social hierarchy, nor to the forms and contents of industrial conflict generated within it, but to the regulation of relations of production by the state, operating as a locus of mediation and institutional reconciliation between social forces. *I shall call this interpretation "regulationist Fordism", and shall use "pre-trade union Fordism" to refer to the sense in which Fordism was generally understood in Europe from the early 1920s to the 1960s.*

Regulationist Fordism

In what follows I shall outline briefly the periodisation which the inventors of the regulationist notion of Fordism have given their idea,

because this is crucial if we are to understand the ways in which it is semantically distinct from pre-trade union Fordism; I shall then sketch the basic characteristics of the latter.

According to the regulation school, Fordism penetrated the vital ganglia of the US engineering industry and became its catalysing force in a period that is undefined, but presumably in the 1920s, delivering high wages and acting as the cutting edge of the mass consumption of consumer durables. Having passed through the mill of the Great Depression and the Second World War, Fordism then provided the basis for the expansion of Keynesian effective demand in the United States, where it provided the underpinning for a "welfare" regime, and thus for a stable global social reproduction, presumably from the end of the 1940s onwards. In the 1950s, this system of production is seen as reaching out from the United States towards the countries of Western Europe, and Japan. According to the regulationist periodisation, therefore, the high season of Fordism actually turns out to be rather brief, since it converges – albeit only on paper – with Keynesianism at about the end of the 1930s; then it becomes a concrete reality at the start of the 1950s, and lasts through to the end of the 1960s, when it goes into irreversible crisis. In their view, that point sees the opening of the period – through which we are still passing – of post-Fordism.

The regulation school can justifiably claim credit for the interpretation which associates transformations in the processes of valorisation with changes taking place in the socio-political sphere, and vice-versa. It was to make this position its own, and developed it with contributions on the state apparatus and its relations with modern and contemporary capital, in the writings of Hirsch and Roth in Germany and Jessop in Britain.⁶ According to Jessop, the regulation school comprises four principal directions of research.⁷

The first direction, initiated by Aglietta, studies regimes of accumulation and models of growth according to their economic determinations, and it applied its first interpretative schema to the United States. Other studies looked at state economic formations – sometimes to examine the spread of Fordism in a given context, and sometimes to follow the particular circumstances of its development – independently from the question of the insertion or otherwise of those states within the international economic circuit.

The second direction concentrates on the international economic dimensions of regulation. It studies the various particular models of international regulation, as well as the form and extent of the complementarity between different national models of growth. This involves examining subjects such as the inclusion and/or exclusion of state and regional formations from the economic order, and the tendencies to autarchic closure and/or internationalistic openness of given countries.

The third direction analyses the overall models of the social structures of accumulation at national level. Reproduction of society depends on an ensemble of institutionally mediated practices which guarantee at least a degree of correspondence between different structures and a balance of compromise between social forces. This

strand of regulationism devotes particular attention to the categories of state and hegemony, which it considers to be central elements of social regulation.

The fourth strand, the least developed of the four, studies the interdependences of emerging international structures, and various attempts to lay the basis of a world order through international institutions (which the regulationists call "regimes") aimed at establishing or re-establishing an international order.

Now, even from this summary listing of the regulation school's principal themes it becomes obvious that the centre of gravity of its interests lies in the analysis not so much of the social relations of production, but rather of the economic/state institutions which oversee them. *In short, the regulation school stresses the permanence of structures, and tends to overlook human subjects, their changes and what is happening to them with the disorganisation and reorganisation of social relations.*

From the start regulationism has been fascinated by the staying power of US capital post-1968, despite the United States' defeat in Vietnam. According to the regulationists, in the period after World War II one has to grant the US "the dominant imperialist position":⁸ it therefore becomes necessary to understand how, and *thanks to what institutions* its structures and those of its allied industrial countries maintained their stability. Within this hypothesis there is an underlying assumption, in which Western institutions are seen as remaining solid (extremely solid in the case of the US), while not only the institutions of the labour movement, but also living labour power as a whole appear as inescapably subjugated to the unstoppable march of accumulation: in short, in the medium and long term capital's stately progress is destined to continue, while its aporias melt on the horizon. Thus it becomes a question of studying the laws by which Western capital has succeeded in perpetuating itself. It was from within this framework that Michel Aglietta's book⁹ emerged, in the year following the first oil price shock, which was also the year of Washington's political and military defeat in Vietnam.

The Uncertain Contours of Regulationist Post-Fordism

For the regulation school, post-Fordism is like a crystal ball in which, "leaving aside the still not completely foreseeable consequences of molecular and genetic technology" it is possible to read some signs of the future. Particularly in the new information technology, in telecommunications and in data processing technologies, all of which could become the basis for a "hyperindustrialisation", they see a potential for revolution in the world of production. Radically transforming work and fragmenting the "Taylorist mass worker", the "electronic revolution" restratifies labour power and divides it into a relatively restricted upper level of the super-skilled, and a massive lower level of ordinary post-Fordist doers and executors. In short, it separates and divides labour power hierarchically and spatially and ends by breaking the framework of collective bargaining.¹⁰ As a result the rhythm of accumulation

becomes more intense, and there opens a perspective of a long period of capitalism without opposition – a *turbo-capitalism* – with a political stability that is preserved intact. The post-Fordist worker of the regulation school appears as an individual who is atomised, flexibilised, increasingly non-union, kept on low wages and inescapably in jobs that are always precarious. The state no longer guarantees to cover the material costs of reproduction of labour power, and oversees a contraction of workers' consumption. In the opinion of the regulation school it would be hard to imagine a more complete overturning of so-called Fordist consumerism, within which, it is claimed, the workforce was allegedly put into conditions of wage employment which would enable them to buy the consumer durables that they created.

If we then look at the discontinuity between Fordism and post-Fordism, it seems to derive from the failure of two essential conditions: the mode of capitalist accumulation and the failure to adjust mass consumption to the increase in productivity generated by intense accumulation.¹¹ In the "golden years" following the Second World War, these two conditions had been satisfied. Fordism mobilised industrial capacities at both the extremes of high skilled and low skilled labour, without the system being destabilised by this polarisation; satisfactory profits were produced from mass consumption, which kept pace with growing investments.¹² As from the 1960s, these twin conditions were no longer given, because investments in the commodity-producing sector in the industrialised countries grew more than productivity, generating a crisis which capital then attempted to resolve by seeking out production options and market outlets in the Third World.

According to the regulationists the consequences at the social level are enormous. The influence of the state is reduced in society; the state is pared back; the majority sector of the non-privileged cuts back on its standard of living in order to organise its own survival; there is no sign of new aggregations arising out of the ashes of the old organisations and capable of expressing a collective solidarity. For the regulationists, strikes, campaigns and conflicts at the point of production are seen in terms of a pre-political spectrum which ranges between interesting curiosities (to which university research cannot be expected to pay attention) and residual phenomena.

The Toyotophile variant

The proponents of the advent of post-Fordism discovered Toyotism as a variant of post-Fordism towards the end of the 1980s.¹³ In the 1960s, the West began belatedly to take account of the expansion of Japanese capitalism.¹⁴ At that time it was understood as a phenomenon which combined shrewd commercial strategies with an endemic conformism and inadequate social policies.¹⁵ On the Left there were some who – correctly, and before their time – saw in Japanese expansion new hegemonic temptations for Japan in East Asia.¹⁶ Some years later, an admirer of the country's rate of economic growth drew attention to the regular increase in Japan's standard of living and the way in which the Japanese absorbed the oil price "shocks" of the 1960s.¹⁷ There were also

those who issued warnings about the regimentation of Japanese society, and about its incipient refusal of the rules dictated by the West.¹⁸ Meanwhile there was something of a fashion for Japanese authors who supplied the West with dubious but easy explanations of the rise of Japan on the basis of its cultural and religious ways of life.¹⁹

In the 1980s the debate entered the public domain with the publication of a number of important works on Japan's economic structures, despite the growing hostility of Western commercial interests and subsequent gratuitous attacks on the Japanese industrial system in the media.²⁰ However, still in the 1980s, a number of studies by Japanese economists and sociologists that had been translated into English went almost unobserved.²¹ Even the book by the main inventor and propagator of the word "Toyotism", Tai'ichi Ohno,²² was only translated and distributed in the West at the end of the 1980s, at a point when the world of Japanese industry was becoming one of the key focuses for discussions of industrial productivity.

In the early 1990s, thanks principally to the book by Coriat,²³ in continental Europe too the focus of the debate on Japanese industry shifted from cultural motivations to business strategies; other earlier and worthwhile contributions had aroused less interest. According to Coriat, the lessons emanating from the Toyota factories introduced a new paradigm of productivity, whose importance was comparable to those of Taylorism and Fordism in their time. *Thus Toyotism comes into the limelight in the guise of a post-Fordism that is complete and by now inevitable.* Toyotism is seen as the fulfilment of a tendency to a new form of rationalisation, a rationalisation which had certainly dawned with the category of post-Fordism, but which, in the West, had appeared vague, not yet taking concrete form in a specific form of production and a consolidated social space. In Toyotism however, we are told by Coriat, post-Fordism is realised not only as an ensemble of attempts to rationalise and reduce production costs, but also as a major experiment in new and more advanced relations of production – in fact of a new sociality which might prefigure new forms of industrial democracy. In Coriat's book the West remains in the background, but if we transferred our attention from the delicate balance of productivity in Japan to its European variant, the diffuse factory, we would find an informal Toyotism already operating there, based on individual work contracts. For example, in the celebrated Italian industrial districts, we would find the employers in the "diffuse factory" attempting to set up individual relationships with their workers in order to break down systems of collective bargaining.

According to the Toyotist vulgate, the new system of productivity emerged principally as a result of endogenous demand factors during and after the boom of the Korean War (1950-53), as "just-in-time" production, and thus in large part as an attempt to reduce lead times and cut the workforce.²⁴

What is new about Toyotism is essentially the elements of "just-in-time" production and prompt reaction to market requirements; the imposition of multi-jobbing on workers employed on several machines, either simultaneously or sequentially; quality control throughout the

entire flow of production; real-time information on the progress of production in the factory; information which is both capillary and filtered in an authoritarian sense, in such a way as to create social embarrassment and drama in the event of incidents which are harmful to production. Production can be interrupted at any moment, thus calling to account a given work-team, or department, or even the whole factory. Any worker who shows a waged-worker's indifference to the company's productivity requirements, and therefore decides not to join "quality control" groups etc, is stigmatised and encouraged to leave. From Coriat we learn that in the interplay of "democracy" and "ostracism", the group may enjoy a measure of democracy, but the person stigmatised will certainly enjoy ostracism. In the interests of comprehensiveness, in his description of the wonders of Toyotism Coriat²⁵ devotes a laconic note to Satochi Kamata, the writer who went to work in Toyota in 1972 and whose experiences were reflected in the title of his book: *Toyota, the Factory of Despair*.²⁶

Toyotism has a number of advantages for the regulation school as regards Western managerial perspectives, even though the Japanese advantage in productivity is showing itself to be tenuous, despite the propagandistic aura that has surrounded it in the West.²⁷ First of all, it is an experiment that is geographically remote and commercially successful, inasmuch as it defines a route to accumulation (albeit in conjunctures that are both pre-war and war-based, and not at all in conditions of peace, as the enthusiasts of Toyotism would like to have us believe). In the second place, Toyotist methods seem to contradict the growing process of individualisation, which is often given as the reason for the endemic resistance from Western workforces to massification and regimentation. Thirdly, Toyotism is the bearer of a programme of tertiarisation of the workforce, the so-called "whitening" of the blue-collar worker, which, while it actually only involves a rather limited minority of workers, nonetheless converges with the prognosis for a dualistic restratification of the workforce which the post-Fordists consider inevitable.

Pre-trade union Fordism

What was the reality of Fordism for those workers who experienced it at first hand? Put briefly, Fordism is an authoritarian system of production imposed "objectively" by the assembly line, operating on wages and working conditions which the workforce is not in a position to negotiate collectively. Pre-trade union Fordism, with its use of speed-up, armed security guards, physical intimidation in the workplace and external propaganda, in the 1920s and 1930s was *one of the key elements in the slow construction of the world of concentration camps* which put out its claws initially in Stalin's Soviet Union and which would soon put out claws in Nazi Germany too. By the opposite token, even during the Depression, the US witnessed a continued, and even strengthened, democratic grass-roots way of doing things which aimed at the building of the industrial union, and which laid siege to Fordism, and brought it down. In the twenty years preceding the unionisation of Ford in 1941,

the company's managers and goon squads conducted anti-worker repression, with beatings, sackings and public relations operations. One day perhaps we will be able to be more detailed than Irving Bernstein when, speaking of the main Ford plant of that period, he wrote: "The River Rouge... was a gigantic concentration camp founded on fear and physical assault".²⁸ The fact is that the Fordist mania for breaking down the rhythms of human activity in order to crib and confine it within a rigid plan at the worldwide level was defeated in the United States, but in the meantime it had already made its way across to a Europe that was in flames. One could argue that in the twentieth century the assembly line is, together with totalitarian state systems and racist nationalism, one of the originating structures which broadly explain the concentration-camp crimes perpetrated on an industrial scale. By this I mean that in pre-trade union Fordism, and in Taylorism before it, there was not already contained in potentiality its opposite: not the superiority of work "to capital" as in Abraham Lincoln; nor the construction of the CIO industrial union; nor the fall of the racism and male dominated division of labour; nor even less the right to strike. Fascism and Nazism were not in their origins the losing versions of Fordism, but were forced to become such thanks to the social and working-class struggles of the 1930s in the United States – struggles which had already stopped a ruling class that was set on a course of corporatist solutions at the time of the formation of the first Roosevelt government in 1932-33.

As we know, in the United States the assembly line dates from way back. The process of series production of durable goods in the twentieth century was built on the American System of Manufactures, the method of production by interchangeable parts which was already operating in US industry in the nineteenth century.²⁹ Ford's experiment in his factories is a crucial moment in this series production, inasmuch as it applies it to a consumer durable, the motor car, which had been a luxury object in the early years of this century, even in the United States. By so doing, Ford structured an increasingly broad-based and pressing consumer demand, which in its turn legitimated among public opinion the authoritarian measures so typical of the Ford factories in the period stretching from the early part of the century to the eve of World War II.

I use the word "authoritarian" advisedly to describe the Ford experiment, because in its way it was both more authoritarian and – especially – more grounded than the proposals that had been advanced by F.W. Taylor twenty years previously. The worker who works for Ford is an individual who produces the means for a multiplication of the points of contact between individuals,³⁰ but paradoxically he produces it precisely thanks to his own imprisonment for hours on end at the point of production, where he is deprived of the right of movement to an extent hitherto unheard of, just as the woman employed on his daily reproduction is bound to the rhythms of industrial production while at the same time confined to the social twilight of domestic labour. The worker is also deprived of the right of speech, because – in this respect Fordist disciplining goes one stage further than Taylorism – the rhythm of his working day is set not so much by direct verbal orders from a superior, as by a pre-ordained tempo set by the factory's machinery.

Communication and contact with his peers was minimised and the worker was expected simply to respond automatically and monotonously to the pace set by a totalitarian productive system. By no means the least of these factors of isolation were the linguistic barriers which immigrant workers brought as a gift to Ford, and which the company maintained and deliberately exacerbated for four decades on end, fomenting bitter incomprehensions and divisions. These were lessened only with the passing of time, by daily contact between workers, by the effects of the Depression, and by the organisational efforts – apparently defeated from the start, but nevertheless unstinting – of the minority who fought for industrial unionism during the 1920s and 1930s.

As we know, right from its establishment in 1903, the Ford Motor Company would not tolerate the presence of trade unions: not only the craft unions or industrial unions, but even "yellow" or company unions. Trade unions remained outside the gates of Ford-USA right up till 1941. Wages became relatively high for a period with the famous "five-dollar day" in January 1914, but only for those workers whom Ford's Sociological Department approved after a minute inspection of the intimate details of their personal and family lives – and then only in boom periods, when Ford was pressurised by the urgent need to stabilise a workforce which was quitting its factories because of the murderous levels of speed-up.³¹ The plan for total control of workers and their families went into crisis after America's entry into the war in 1917; thereupon surveillance began the more detailed use of spies on the shop floor. In the recession following on World War I, the wages of the other companies were tending to catch up with wages at Ford, and Ford set about dismantling the forms of welfare adopted in the 1910s. In February 1921, more than 30 per cent of Ford workers were sacked, and those who remained had to be content with an inflation-hit six dollars a day and further speed-ups.

Ford's supremacy in the auto sector began to crack halfway through the 1920s, when the managers at General Motors (in large part refugees from Ford and its authoritarian methods), definitively snatched primacy in the world of auto production. Rather than pursuing undifferentiated production for the "multitudes", as Henry Ford called them, General Motors won the battle *in the name of distinctiveness and individuation*, broadening its range of products, diversifying, and introducing new models on a yearly basis. From the end of the 1920s, and up till unionisation in 1941, the Ford Motor Company was to be notorious for its wages, which were lower even than the already low wages in the auto sector in general.³²

The fact of the company having been overtaken by General Motors, and Ford's financial difficulties, were not sufficient to break pre-trade union Fordism in the United States: it took, first, the working-class revolts and the factory sit-ins of the 1930s, and then the unionisation of heavy industry, to bring about the political encirclement of the other auto manufacturers, and, finally, of Ford, to the point where it eventually capitulated to the United Auto Workers union following the big strike in the Spring of 1941. Pre-trade union Fordism dissolved at the point when, faced with attacks by the company's armed security guards, the

picketing strikers instead of backing down increased in numbers and saw them off. It was a moment worth recalling with the words of Emil Mazey, one of the main UAW organisers: "It was like seeing men who had been half-dead suddenly come to life".³³

With the signing of the first union contract in 1941, not only did Ford line up with the other two majors in the auto industry, General Motors and Chrysler, but it even outdid them in concessions to the UAW. Ford was then saved from bankruptcy a second time only thanks to war orders from the government. Already in the course of the Second World War it had been attempting to strengthen the trade union apparatus in the factory, to bring it into line with the company's objectives. As from 1946, a new Ford management set about a long-term strategy to coopt the UAW and turn it into an instrument of company integration. Thus was Fordism buried. If, by Fordism, we mean an authoritarian system of series production based on the assembly line, with wages and conditions of work which the workforce is not in a position to negotiate by trade union means – Fordism as it was generally understood by labour sociologists in the 1920s and 1930s – then *Fordism was eliminated* thanks to the struggles for industrial unionism in the United States in the 1930s, which were crowned by the imposition of collective bargaining at Ford in 1941. As for the dictatorial tendency to deny the workforce discretionality in the setting of work speeds, and the imposition of work speeds incorporated into machinery, these were far from disappearing with the end of pre-trade union Fordism; if anything, by the late 1990s they become more pressing than ever, precisely in the face of the growth in the productive power of labour and the advent of computer-controlled machinery – but that now takes us a long way from pre-trade union Fordism.

We may or may not choose to see these tendencies as a chapter in a far broader movement of rationalisation which began with the American System of Manufactures and which has not yet fully run its course. In any event, the overall drive to command over worktimes through the "objectivity" of machinery³⁴ was incubated by other large companies before Ford, explodes with the diffusion of the Fordist assembly line, but is not at all extinguished with its temporary defeat at the end of the 1930s. In fact it seems to impose itself with renewed virulence even in the most remote corners where capitalism has penetrated.

Global post-Fordism and Toyotism

As for the category of post-Fordism, in its obscure formulation by the regulation school, it then opened the way to a number of positions which seemed to be grounded in two unproven axioms: the technological determinism of small-series production which, since the 1960s, is supposed to represent a major break with large series production in the manufacture of consumer durables; and the recent discovery of the productivity of communication between what they choose to call the "producers" in industry.³⁵

The first axiom derives from the assertion that material production in general (even in engineering – which is more discontinuous than flow

production) today proceeds by small series, because, thanks to the increasing flexibility of machine tools, beginning with the numerical control machinery of the 1950s, it has become easier to diversify products, in particular in the production of consumer durables. This diversification makes it possible to meet the needs of consumers seeking individuality, but also to mould people's tastes and to offer them the little touches and personalising elements that pass for expensive innovations. In short, this tendency is merely a strengthening of the drive to diversification which General Motors had attempted and promoted right from the 1920s, and which enabled it to beat Ford at a time when Henry Ford was saying that his customers could have any colour of car that they wanted as long as it was black. Mass production had only in appearance moulded the mass-worker (a term which is used, but also abused, in identifying changing historical figures in class composition). In some departments of Ford's biggest factory, River Rouge, the Ford silence was broken by the "Ford whisper", or by "discourse by hand signals", one of the elements of working-class resistance up until the decisive confrontation of 1941.³⁶ Despite the fact that workers had to wear identical blue overalls, and despite the fact that they were not given permission even to think, it was plain that the "producers" had minds which aspired to *individuation*, not to a universal levelling. We were reaching the end of the levelling battle for an equality "which would have the permanence of a fixed popular opinion".³⁷ Towards the end of the 1920, Henry Ford found himself for the first time in serious financial difficulties, arising out of his insistence on the single-colour Model T. It is worth noting that in the Ford factories, even in the dark years of the 1930s, there were workers willing to risk the sack by buying a General Motors car.³⁸ Thus, within the auto industry, it was General Motors in the 1920s that invented and brought about a flexible production that matched the needs of the times.³⁹ Its diversified vehicles were produced by means of a "commonalisation" of machine tools and of the main components of the finished auto. The basis of economies of range was economies of scale. The advent of variety in production did not have to wait for Toyotism, as C. Wright Mills was well aware in the early 1950s, when he denounced the manipulating interplay between mass tastes and "personal touches" in the products of his time.⁴⁰

Furthermore, it is taken as real that Toyotism had already broken with "Fordism" in the 1950s and 1960s, because it needed to be flexible in order for its auto production to cope with a demand that was somewhat diversified. Even the prime advocate of Toyotism⁴¹ makes this clear, and a number of Western researchers, including Coriat, have propagated its myth. The fact was that in the post-War period, Toyota, as was the case with Nissan, was relatively inexperienced as a producer of vehicles; it had begun production only in 1936, and had quickly learned to build itself an oligopolistic position which contributed to the dislodging of Ford and General Motors from Japan a bare three years later. After 1945, with the Toyoda family still at the helm, the company focused on large series production, which was exported, and then also produced abroad. The continuity not with regulationist Fordism but with the US auto sector turns out to be far stronger than the Toyotophile vulgate would be

willing to admit.

After a difficult period of post-War reconversion, Toyota tried the path of the cheap run-about (the Toyotapet), and experienced major strikes in 1949 and 1953. It was saved principally by the intransigence of Nissan, when they destroyed the Zenji auto union, but also thanks to United States orders arising out of the Korean War. Subsequently, and for a further twenty years to come, Toyota's range of products, and those of the other Japanese auto companies, was restricted to a very limited number of models. Up until the 1960s the defective quality of these models meant that exports were not a great success. Faced with this lack of success, there began a phase of experimentation based on using multi-jobbing mobile workteams on machine tools with variable programming, and on attention to quality with a view to exports.⁴² It was the success of one single model (the Corolla runabout) in the 1970s that laid the basis for a diversification of production, and not vice-versa; and it was a success that Toyota was able to build on abroad as well as at home, where the market was far less buoyant. Up until the 1980s, the variety of Toyota models was prudently limited, and only in the 1980s, when the domestic market experienced a standstill, did the company expand their range of production with a view to winning new markets overseas. *Thus it was not the need for a variety of models, but the mobilisation of the workforce after a historic working-class defeat that explains Mr Ohno's experiments at Toyota.* The principal novelty of his experiments was that whereas General Motors in the 1920s had been content to have several ranges of cars built on separate lines, Toyota created work teams that could be commanded where and when necessary, to multi-jobbed labour on the production of a variety of models along the same assembly line.

As for "just in time" production, this had already been experimented with, in its own way, by the auto industry in the United States in the 1920s, and even after the Depression. The layoffs without pay, which were so frequent in the 1920s, and even more so during the Depression, because of the seasonal nature of demand, was one of the battlefields that was decisive in the creation of the auto union in the United States.⁴³ In the 1936-37 showdown between the UAW and General Motors, the union was victorious on the planning of stocks and on the elimination of seasonal unemployment. Perhaps those who sing the praises of "just in time" production could take a page or two out of the history of Detroit in the 1930s, or maybe a page from the history of the recent recurring strikes in Europe and the US by the independent car-transporter drivers operating within the cycle of the auto industry, who are actually the extreme appendages of the big companies.

As regards the second thesis, the supporters of the notion of post-Fordism claim that production now requires, and will continue to require, ever-higher levels of communication between productive subjects, and that these levels in turn offer spaces of discretionality to the so-called "producers", spaces which are relatively significant, compared with a past of non-communicating labour, of "the silent compulsion of economic relations"⁴⁴ of the modern world. This communication is supposed to create an increasingly intense connectivity between subjects,

in contrast with the isolation, the separateness and the silence imposed on the worker by the first and second industrial revolutions. While it is certainly true that processes of learning in production ("learning by doing") have required and still require a substantial degree of interaction, including verbal interaction, between individuals, it remains the case that from Taylorism onwards the saving of worktime is achieved to a large extent through reducing to a minimum contact and informal interaction between planners and doers. Taylorism tried, with scant results, to impose a planning in order to increase productivity, depriving foremen and workers of the time-discretionality which they assumed by negotiating informally and verbally on the shop floor. However, in the era of pre-trade union Fordism it should be remembered that in the periods of restructuring of the factory, of changes of models and of technological innovation, the "whispering" of restructuring was not only productive, but was actually essential to the successful outcome of the operation. Anyway, the silence imposed by authority and the deafening noise of development is what dominates the auto industry through to the mid-1930s.⁴⁵ *But the disciplining of silence and of the whisper within the channels of capital's productive communication – is this not perhaps also a constitutive characteristic of the modern factory?* On this point, one might note that industrial sociology, as a discipline, was built on the concealing of the communicative dimension and on the rejection of any analysis of the processes of verbal interaction in the workplace. It is not a mere distraction. Here we have only to remember the words of Harold Garfinkel:

"There exists a locally-produced order of work things; [...] They make up a massive domain of organizational phenomena; [...] classic studies of work, without remedy or alternative, depend upon the existence of these phenomena, make use of the domain, and ignore it."⁴⁶

As for the tendency to impose speed-up in totalitarian fashion, this certainly did not disappear with the demise of pre-union Fordism; if anything it is even more in evidence in this tail-end of the twentieth century, precisely in the face of the strengthening of the productive powers of labour. In fact the tendency now assumes some of the characteristics of the pre-union Fordism of the Roaring Twenties: a precariousness of people's jobs; the non-existence of health care schemes and unemployment benefits; cuts not only in the real wage but also in money wages; the shifting of lines of production to areas well away from industrially "mature" regions. Also working hours are becoming longer rather than shorter. In the whole of the West, and in the East too, people are working longer hours than twenty years ago, and in a social dimension from which the regulatory power of the state has been eclipsed. The fact that people are working longer hours, and more intensively, is also thanks to the allegedly obsolete Taylorist chronometer and the "outmoded" Fordist assembly line. Ironically, precisely for France, which is where the regulationist school first emerged, precious data, non-existent elsewhere, show that *work on assembly lines and*

*subject to the constraint of an automated pace of production is on the increase, in both percentage terms and absolute terms: 13.2 per cent of workers were subjected to it in 1984, and 16.7 per cent in 1991 (out of, respectively, 6,187,000 and 6,239,000 workers).*⁴⁷

In the 1950s and 1960s – the "golden years" of Fordism as Lipietz calls them – the international economy under the leadership of the United States pushed the demand for private investment, even more than the consumption of wage goods. *What had appeared to be a stable system began to come apart from the inside*, because at the end of the 1960s the class struggle, in its many different forms, overturned capital's solid certainties as regards the wage, the organisation of the labour process, the relationship between development and underdevelopment, and patriarchy. *If one does not understand the radicality of this challenge, it becomes impossible to grasp the elements of crisis and uncertainty which characterised the prospects for capital's dominion in the twenty years that followed.*⁴⁸ The dishomogeneity of the reactions – from the war of manoeuvre against blue collar workers in the industrialised countries, through to capitalism's regionalisation into three large areas (NAFTA, European Union and Japan) and to the Gulf War – denote not the transition to a post-Fordist model, but a continuous recombination of old and new elements of domination in order to decompose labour power politically within a newly flexibilised system of production.

Conclusions

The regulation school looks at the implications of this recombination from capital's side, seeing capital as the centre and motor of the overall movement of society. Hirsch and Roth speak in the name of many when they state that "it is always capital itself and the structures which it imposes 'objectively', on the backs of the protagonists, that sets in motion the decisive conditions of class struggles and of processes of crisis".⁴⁹ Thus it is not surprising that the conclusions that the regulationists draw from their position tend to go in the only direction which is not precluded for them: namely that conflict against the laws of capitalist development has no future, and also that there is no point in drawing attention to the cracks in the edifice of domination. Paraphrasing Mark Twain, one might say that if the regulationists have only a pan-Fordist hammer, they will see only post-Fordist nails to bang.

In taking up this position, not only do the regulationists deny themselves the possibility of analysis of conflictual processes both now and in the future, but they also exclude themselves from the multi-voiced debate which is today focussing on social subjects.⁵⁰ This is the only way in which one can explain the regulationists' reduction of the working class in the United States to a mere *Fordised object*,⁵¹ even in its moments of greatest antagonistic projectuality as it was expressed between the Depression and the emergence of the Nazi-Fascist new order in Europe. And given the limits of its position, regulationism is then unable to understand how this working class contributed decisively in the placing of that selfsame United States capitalism onto a collision

course with Nazism and fascism. Pre-union Fordism was transient, but not in the banal (but nonetheless significant) sense of Henry Ford financing Hitler on his route to power and decorating himself with Nazi medals right up until 1938, but because what overturned the silent compulsion of the Fordised workforce was the workforce itself, in one of its social movements of self-emancipation – a fact of which the regulationists are not structurally equipped to understand the vast implications at the world level, and for many years to come, well beyond the end of World War II.

As regards today's conditions, what is important is not the examination of the novelties following on the collapse of various certainties in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but the possibility or otherwise of avoiding the inevitability of the passage to a "post-Fordist" paradigm in which labour power figures once again as a mere object and inert mass. As Peláez and Holloway note, the insistence with which the regulationists invite their audience to look the future in the face arouses a certain perplexity.⁵² After all, a belief in the marvels of technology within the organisations of the labour movement has led to epic defeats in the past. What is at stake here is not just the inevitability or otherwise of a system – the capitalist system – which has too many connotations of oppression and death to be acceptable, but even the possibility of any initiative, however tentative, on the part of social subjects. What is at stake here is the possibility of resisting a preconstituted subordination of labour power to the inexorable New Times that are imposed in part, certainly, by the computer chip, but also by powerful intra-imperialist hostilities, which for the moment are disguised behind slogans such as competition and free trade.

What the present leads us to defend is the indetermination of the boundaries of conflictual action. We shall thus have to re-examine a means or two, with a view to clearing the future at least of the more lamentable bleatings.

Up until now the decomposition and anatomisation of labour-power as a "human machine" has been a preparatory process of the various stages of mechanisation; it is a process which capitalist domination has constantly presented as necessary. The point is not whether post-Fordism is in our midst, but whether the sacrifice of "human machines" on the pyramids of accumulation can be halted.

Notes

1. For a timely critique of the term "immaterial production", see Sergio Bologna, "Problematiche del lavoro autonomo in Italia" (Part I), *Altreragioni*, no. 1 (1992), pp. 10-27.

2. Michel Aglietta, (1974), *Accumulation et régulation du capitalisme en longue période. L'exemple des Etats Unis (1870-1970)*, Paris, INSEE, 1974; the second French edition has the title *Régulation et crises du capitalisme*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1976; English translation, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: the US Experience*, London and New York, Verso, 1979; in 1987 there followed a second English edition from the same publisher. The link between the category

of Fordism and that of post-Fordism may be considered the term "neo-Fordism", proposed by Christian Palloix two years after the publication of the first edition of Aglietta's book. Cf. Christian Palloix, "Le procès du travail. Du fordisme au neo-fordisme", *La Pensée* no. 185 (February 1976), pp. 37-60, according to whom neo-Fordism refers to the new capitalist practice of job enrichment and job recomposition as a response to new requirements in the management of workforces.

3. For the regulationist interpretation of Fordism prior to 1991, see the fundamental volume edited by Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway, *Post-Fordism and Social Form: A Marxist Debate on the Post-Fordist State*, London, Macmillan, 1991, which contains the principal bibliographical references for the debate. For the regulation school see, among others, the following works: Robert Boyer, *La théorie de la régulation: une analyse critique*, Paris, La Découverte, 1986; Robert Boyer (ed.), *Capitalismes fin de siècle*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1986; Alain Lipietz, "Towards Global Fordism?", *New Left Review* no. 132 (March-April 1982), pp. 33-47; Alain Lipietz, "Imperialism as the Beast of the Apocalypse", *Capital and Class*, no. 22 (Spring 1984), pp. 81-109; Alain Lipietz, "Behind the Crisis: the Exhaustion of a Regime of Accumulation. A 'Regulation School Perspective' on Some French Empirical Works", *Review of Radical Political Economy*, vol. 18, no. 1-2 (1986), pp. 13-32; Alain Lipietz, *Mirages and Miracles: the Crisis of Global Fordism*, London, Verso, 1987; Alain Lipietz, "Fordism and post-Fordism" in W. Outhwaite and Tom Bottomore (eds.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Social Thought*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, pp. 230-31; Benjamin Coriat, *Penser à l'envers. Travail et organisation dans l'entreprise japonaise*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1991; Italian translation, *Ripensare l'organizzazione del lavoro. Concetti e prassi del modello giapponese*, Bari, Dedalo, 1991, with introduction and translation by Mirella Giannini.

4. I say "relatively high productivity" because the assembly line has not always produced results. For example, the Soviet Fordism of the first two five-year plans (1928-32, 1933-37) was the object of some experimentation, particularly on the assembly lines of the Gorki auto factory (thanks in part to the technical support of Ford technicians), but productivity turned out to be about 50 per cent lower than that of Ford's US factory. Cf. John P. Hardt and George D. Holliday, "Technology Transfer and Change in the Soviet Economic System", in Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., *Technology and Communist Culture: the Socio-Cultural Impact of Technology under Socialism*, New York and London, Praeger, 1977, pp. 183-223.

5. In his "Fordism and post-Fordism", op. cit., p. 230, Lipietz maintains incorrectly that the term "Fordism" "was coined in the 1930s by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and by the Belgian socialist Henri de Man". Lipietz is obviously referring to "Americanismo e fordismo" (1934) in Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 3. ed. Valentino Gerratana, Torino, Einaudi, 1975, pp. 2137-81, a series of notes in which Gramsci takes account, among other things, of a book by de Man which does not directly discuss Fordism. The first edition of de Man's work appeared in Germany in 1926: Hendrik de Man, *Zur psychologie des Sozialismus*, Jena, E. Diederichs, 1926 and, after a partial French translation which appeared in Brussels in 1927, a complete translation was published under the title of *Au delà du Marxisme*,

Paris, Alcan, 1929, based on the second German edition published by Diederichs (1927). For his prison notes on "Americanism and Fordism", Gramsci had the Italian translation of the French edition published by Alcan: Henri de Man, *Il superamento del marxismo*, Bari, Laterza, 1929. In Europe the term "Fordism" pre-dates de Man and Gramsci, and was already in use in the early 1920s; cf. in particular Friedrich von Gottl-Ottlilienfeld, *Fordismus? Paraphrasen über das Verhältnis von Wirtschaft und Technischer Vernunft bei Henry Ford und Frederick W. Taylor*, Jena, Gustav Fischer, 1924; H. Sinzheimer, "L'Europa e l'idea di democrazia economica" (1925), *Quaderni di azione sociale* XXXIX, no. 2 (1994), pp. 71-4, edited and translated by Sandro Mezzadra, whom I thank for this reference. In his article cited above, Lipietz states equally erroneously that "in the 1960s the term was rediscovered by a number of Italian Marxists (R. Panzieri, M. Tronti, A. Negri)". In Italy the discussion of Fordism was addressed, taking a critical distance from Gramsci, in the volume of Romano Alquati's writings, *Sulla FIAT e altri scritti*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1975, which brought together texts from the period 1961-1967, and in the volume by Sergio Bologna, George P. Rawick, Mauro Gobbini, Antonio Negri, Luciano Ferrari-Bravo and Ferruccio Gambino, *Operai e Stato: Lotte operaie e riforma dello stato capitalistico tra rivoluzione d'Ottobre e New Deal*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1972, which contained the proceedings of a conference held in Padova in 1967.

6. See in particular, in Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway (eds.) *Post-Fordism and Social Form*, op. cit., the essay by Joachim Hirsch, "Fordism and post-Fordism: The Present Social Crisis and its Consequences", pp. 8-34, and the two essays by Bob Jessop, "Regulation Theory, Post-Fordism and the State: More than a Reply to Werner Bonefeld", pp. 69-91; and "Polar Bears and Class Struggle: Much Less than a Self-Criticism", pp. 145-69, which contain further bibliographical references.

7. Bob Jessop, "Regulation Theory, Post-Fordism and the State", op. cit., pp. 87-8.

8. Joachim Hirsch, "Fordism and Post-Fordism: The Present Social Crisis and its Consequences", op. cit., p. 15.

9. Michel Aglietta (1974), *Accumulation et régulation du capitalisme en longue période. Exemple des Etats Unis (1870-1970)*, Paris, INSEE, 1974.

10. Joachim Hirsch, "Fordism and Post-Fordism: The Present Social Crisis and its Consequences", pp. 25-6.

11. Alain Lipietz, "Towards Global Fordism", *New Left Review*, no. 132 (March-April 1982), pp. 33-47.

12. Ibid., pp. 35-6.

13. On this development, cf. the review by Giuseppe Bonazzi, "La scoperta del modello giapponese nelle società occidentali", *Stato e Mercato*, no. 39 (December 1993), pp. 437-66, which discusses the variously critical reception of the Japanese model within Western sociology; more briefly and in more general terms, cf. Pierre-François Souyri, "Un nouveau paradigme?", *Annales*, vol. 49, no. 3 (May-June 1994), pp. 503-10.

14. Robert Guillaín, *Japon, troisième grand*, Paris, Seuil, 1969; Herman Kahn, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate*, Minneapolis, Minn., Hudson Institute, 1970.

15. Robert Brochier, *Le miracle économique japonais*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1970.

- 16 Jon Halliday and David McCormack, *Japanese Imperialism Today: Co-prosperity in Greater East Asia*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973.
- 17 Ezra Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1979.
- 18 Karel Van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, New York, N.Y., Knopf, 1989.
19. Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970; Italian translation, *La società giapponese*, Milan, Cortina. Michio Morishima, *Why Has Japan "Succeeded"?*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Italian translation, *Cultura e tecnologia nel successo giapponese*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1984.
20. Jean-Loup Lesage, *Les grands sociétés de commerce au Japon, les Shosha*, Paris, PUF; Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: the growth of industrial policy, 1925-75*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1986.
21. Masahiko Aoki, *The Economic Analysis of the Japanese Firm*, Amsterdam, Elsevier, 1984; Kazuo Koike, *Understanding Industrial Relations in Modern Japan*, London, Macmillan, 1988.
22. Tai'ichi Ohno, *Toyota Seisan Hoshiki* [The Toyota Production Method], Diamond Sha, 1978; English translation, *The Toyota Production System: Beyond Large-scale Production*, Productivity Press, Cambridge, Mass.; French translation, *L'esprit Toyota*, Paris, Masson, 1989; Italian translation, *Lo spirito toyota*, Torino, Einaudi, 1993.
23. Benjamin Coriat, *Penser à l'envers. Travail et organisation dans l'entreprise japonaise*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1991; Italian translation, *Ripensare l'organizzazione del lavoro. Concetti e prassi del modello giapponese*, Bari, Dedalo, 1991.
24. Benjamin Coriat, *Ripensare l'organizzazione del lavoro*, op. cit., pp. 32-3.
25. Benjamin Coriat, *Ripensare l'organizzazione del lavoro*, op. cit., p. 85.
26. Satochi Kamata, *Toyota, l'usine du désespoir*, Paris, Editions Ouvrières, 1976; English translation, *Japan in the Passing Lane: Insider's Account of Life in a Japanese Auto Factory*, New York, N.Y., Unwin Hyman, 1984. By the same author, *L'envers du Miracle*, Paris, Maspéro, 1980.
27. Ray and Cindelyn Eberts, *The Myths of Japanese Quality*, Upper Saddle, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1994.
28. Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker 1933-1941*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1969, p. 737.
29. David A. Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production (1800-1932)*, Baltimore and London, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.
30. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973, p. 265: "Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand."
31. Stephen Meyer III, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921*, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1981, in particular pp. 96-202.
32. Joyce Shaw Peterson, *American Automobile Workers, 1900-1933*, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York, 1987. As Samuel Romer wrote in "The Detroit Strike", *The Nation* (vol. 136, no. 3528), 15 February 1933, pp. 167-

8. "The automobile industry is a seasonal one. The factories slow down production during the fall months in order to prepare the new yearly models; and the automobile worker has to stretch the 'high wages' of eight months to cover the full twelve-month period." Cf. also M.W. La Fever (1929), "Instability of Employment in the Automobile Industry", *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 214-17

33. Bernstein, *Turbulent Years*, op. cit., p. 744.

34. David Noble, "Social Choice in Machine Design", in Andrew Zimbalist, *Case Studies on the Labor Process*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979, pp. 18-50.

35. An updated synthesis of these positions is to be found in Marco Revelli's essay, "Economia a modello sociale nel passaggio tra fordismo e toyotismo" in Pietro Ingrao and Rossana Rossanda, *Appunti di fine secolo*, Rome, Manifestolibri, 1995, pp. 161-224.

36. Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years*, op. cit., p. 740.

37. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol.1, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p. 152.

38. Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years*, op. cit., p. 740.

39. While not belonging to the regulation school, there are two admirers of the Italian industrial districts who presented flexible production as an innovation typical of the 1970s. Here the reference was not to Japan, but to the eastern part of the Po Valley plain: J. Michael Piore and Charles F. Sabel (1983), *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity*, New York, N.Y., Basic Books; Italian translation, *Le due vie dello sviluppo industriale. Produzione di massa e produzione flessibile*, Torino, ISEDI, 1987.

40. Charles Wright Mills, "Commentary on Our Culture and Our Country", *Partisan Review*, vol. 19, no. 4 (July-August 1952), pp. 446-50, and in particular p. 447.

41. Tai'ichi Ohno, *Toyota Seisan Hoshiki* [The Toyota Method of Production], op. cit.

42. Marie-Claude Belis Bourguignan and Yannick Lung (1994), "Le Mythe de la variété originelle. L'internationalisation dans la trajectoire du modèle productif japonais", *Annales*, 49, 2 (May-June), pp. 541-67.

43. M.W. La Fever, "Instability of Employment in the Automobile Industry", op. cit., pp. 214-17. Cf. also note 31 above.

44. Karl Marx, *Capital*, op. cit., p. 899.

45. Joyce Shaw Peterson, *American Automobile Workers, 1900-1933*, op. cit., pp. 54-6; Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years*, op. cit., p. 740.

46. Harold Garfinkel (ed.), *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work*, London and New York, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 7.

47. Anon., *Alternatives Economiques*, May 1994, on the DARES data: *Enquêtes spécifiques Acemo: Enquêtes sur l'activité et les conditions d'emploi de main-d'oeuvre*. My thanks to Alain Bihr for this reference.

48. See the indispensable "Contribution by Riccardo Bellofiore: On Pietro Ingrao and Rossana Rossanda, *Appunti di Fine Secolo*", pub. Associazione dei Lavoratori e delle Lavoratrici Torinesi (ALLT), 24 November 1995.

49. Joachim Hirsch and Roland Roth, *Das neue Gesicht des Kapitalismus*, Hamburg, VSA, 1986, p. 37

50. On this theme see Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, "Production, Identity and Democracy", *Theory and Society*, vol. 24, no. 3 (June 1995), pp.

427-67.

51. During the first two five-year plans under Stalin, the workers on the assembly lines of the Gorky auto factory were referred to as "the Fordised" (*fordirovannye*) by the Soviet authorities.

52. Eloina Pelàez and John Holloway, "Learning to Bow: Post-Fordism and Technological Determinism", in Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway (eds.), *Post-Fordism and Social Form*, op. cit., 1991, p. 137.

Translator's Note

FG has a long-standing interest in Ford. A key text was the extended article "Ford Britannica: formazione di una classeoperaia". This was printed in the volume *Operai e Stato* (1972), which brought together crucially important texts – see Note 5 above – most of which have since been translated for limited circulation. FG's piece on Ford was published by Red Notes (1976), together with useful archive material. The translation was a touch free, so the author frowned on further circulation. This was a shame, since the article embodies a good approach for *class composition analysis*.

Equally important, methodologically, was Romano Alquati's study of FIAT – "Sulla FIAT – punto medio nel ciclo internazionale". This pamphlet also provides a viable structure for a class composition approach. Although it predates the Gambino piece, it has never been published in English.

Coming right up to date and in direct line of continuity, the latest issue of *Futur Antérieur*, the journal published by an Italo-French group of comrades in Paris, prints a major series of "Reflections on the Struggle of November-December 1995", in which class composition analysis is used to understand the social upheavals shaking France and the new structures of productive labour that are being formed.

Each of the above materials, if published in English, would give useful indications of form, content and method for analysis of our own present realities.

E.E.

Bibliography

- AGLIETTA, Michel (1974), *Accumulation et régulation du capitalisme en longue période. L'exemple des Etats-Unis (1870-1970)*, Paris, Insee, 1974; *Régulation et crises du Capitalisme*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1976 (2nd edition); English translation, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The US Experience*, London and New York, New Left Books, 1979 (2nd edition, Verso, London and New York, 1987).
- ALQUATI, Romano (1975), *Sulla Fiat e altri scritti*, Milan, Feltrinelli.
- ALQUATI, Romano (1989), *Dispense di sociologia industriale*, vol. III, parts 1 and 2, Torino, Il Segnalibro.
- ANONIMO (1994), "Taylor n'est pas mort", *Alternatives Economiques*, (May), on DARES data, *Enquetes spécifiques Acemo, Enquetes sur l'activité et les conditions d'emploi de main-d'oeuvre*, Table I.2.1.

- AOKI, Masahiko (1984), *The Economic Analysis of the Japanese Firm*, Amsterdam, Elsevier.
- BELIS-BOURGOUIGNAN, Marie-Claude et LUNG, Yannick (1994), "Le Mythe de la variété originelle. L'internationalisation dans la trajectoire du modèle productif japonais", *Annales*, 49, 2 (May-June) pp. 541-567.
- BERNSTEIN, Irving (1969), *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker 1933-1941*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin.
- BOLOGNA, Sergio, RAWICK, George P., GOBBINI, Mauro, NEGRI, Antonio, FERRARI BRAVO, Luciano, GAMBINO, Ferruccio, *Operai e stato: Lotte operaie e riforma dello stato capitalistico tra rivoluzione d'Ottobre e New Deal*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1972.
- BOLOGNA, Sergio, "Problematiche del lavoro autonomo in Italia", *Altreragioni*, 1 (1992), pp. 11-32.
- BONAZZI, Giuseppe (1993), "La scoperta del modello giapponese nella sociologia occidentale", *Stato e mercato*, No. 39 (dicembre), pp. 437-466.
- BONEFELD, Werner e HOLLOWAY, John (eds.) (1991), *Post-Fordism and Social Form: A Marxist Debate on the Post-Fordist State*, Houndmills and London, MacMillan Academic and Professional, pp. 69-91.
- BOYER, Robert (1986), *La théorie de la régulation: une analyse critique*, Paris, La Découverte.
- BOYER, Robert (ed.) (1986), *Capitalismes fin de siècle*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
- BROCHIER, Robert (1970), *Le miracle économique japonais*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy.
- CORLAT, Benjamin (1991), *Penser à l'envers. Travail et organisation dans l'entreprise japonaise*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1991; Italian translation, *Ripensare l'organizzazione del lavoro. Concetti e prassi del modello giapponese*, Bari, Dedalo, 1991, with introduction and translation by Mirella Giannini.
- DAVIS, Mike (1978), "'Fordism' in Crisis: A Review of Michel Aglietta's *Regulation et Crises: L'Expérience des Etats Unis*", *Review*, 2.
- EBERTS, Ray and Cindelyn (1994), *The Myths of Japanese Quality*, Upper Saddle, N.J., Prentice Hall.
- FOX, R. M. (1927), "Fordism: A Critical Examination", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, CI, no. 2 (February), pp. 234-241.
- GAMBINO, Ferruccio (1972), *Ford britannica. Formazione di una classe operaia*, in S. Bologna, L. Ferrari Bravo, F. Gambino, M. Gobbini, A. Negri, G.P. Rawick, *Operai e Stato*, Milan Feltrinelli, pp. 147-190.
- GAMBINO, Ferruccio (1987), *The Significance of Socialism in the Post-War United States*, in HEFER, Jean and ROVET, Jeanine, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States*, Paris, Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, pp. 297-309.
- GARFINKEL, Harold (ed.) (1986), *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London e New York.
- GOTTL-OTTLILIENFELD, Friedrich von (1924), *Fordismus? Paraphrasen über das Verhältnis von Wirtschaft und Technischer Vernunft bei Henry Ford und Frederick W. Taylor*, Jena, Gustav Fischer.
- GRAMSCI, Antonio (1975), "Americanismo e fordismo" (1934) in *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 3, ed. V. Gerratana, Torino, Einaudi, pp. 2137-2181.
- GUILLAIN, Robert (1969), *Japon troisième grand*, Paris, Seuil.

- HARDT, John P. & HOLLIDAY, George D. (1977), *Technology Transfer and Change in the Soviet Economic System*, in Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., *Technology and Communist Culture: The Socio-Cultural Impact of Technology under Socialism*, New York and London, Praeger, pp. 183-223.
- HIRSCH, Joachim e ROTH, Roland (1986) *Das neue Gesicht des Kapitalismus*, Hamburg, VSA.
- HIRSCH, Joachim (1991), *Fordism and Postfordism: The Present Social Crisis and its Consequences*, in BONEFELD, Werner and HOLLOWAY, John (eds.), pp. 8-34.
- HOLLOWAY, John (1991a), *The Great Bear: Post-Fordism and Class Struggle. A Comment on Bonefeld and Jessop*, in BONEFELD, Werner e HOLLOWAY John (eds.), pp.92-102.
- HOLLOWAY, John (1991b), *Capital is Class Struggle (and Bears are not Cuddly)*, in Bonefeld, Werner & HOLLOWAY John (eds.) (1991), pp. 170-175.
- HALLIDAY, Jon and McCORMACK, David (1973), *Japanese Imperialism Today: Co-Prosperity in Greater East Asia*, Harmondsworth, England, Penguin.
- HOUNSHELL, David A. (1984), *From the American System to Mass Production (1800-1932)*, Baltimora e London, The Johns Hopkins Univesity Press.
- JESSOP, Bob (1991a), *Regulation Theory, Post-Fordism and the State: More than a Reply to Werner Bonefeld*, in BONEFELD, Werner and HOLLOWAY, Jon (eds.) (1991), pp. 69-91.
- JESSOP, Bob (1991b), *Polar Bears and Class Struggle: Much Less than a Self-Criticism*, in BONEFELD, Werner, and HOLLOWAY, John, (eds.), 1991, pp.145-169.
- JOHNSON, Chalmers (1986), *MITI and Japanese Miracle: the Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975*, Tokyo, Tuttle.
- KAHN, Herman (1970), *The Emerging Japanese Superstate*, Minneapolis, Minn., Hudson Institute.
- KAMATA, Satochi (1976), *Toyota, l'usine du désespoir*, Paris, Editions Ouvrières; English translation, *Japan in the Passing Lane: Insider's Account of Life in a Japanese Auto Factory*, New York, N.Y., Unwin Hyman, 1984.
- KAMATA, Satochi (1980), *L'envers du miracle*, Paris, Maspero.
- KOIKE, Kazuo (1988), *Understanding Industrial Relations in Modern Japan*, London, MacMillan.
- LA FEVER, M. W (1929), "Instability of Employment in the Automobile Industry", *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 214-217.
- LESAGE, Jean-Loup (1983), *Les grandes société de commerce au Japon, les Shosha*, Paris, PUF.
- LIPIETZ, Alain (1982), "Towards Global Fordism?", *New Left Review*, No. 132 (March-April) pp. 33-47.
- LIPIETZ, Alain (1984), "Imperialism as the Beast of the Apocalypse", *Capital and Class*, No. 22 (Spring), 81-109.
- LIPIETZ, Alain (1986), "Behind the Crisis: the Exhaustion of a Regime of Accumulation. A 'Regulation School Perspective' on Some French Empirical Works", *Review of Radical Political Economy*, vol. 18, No.1-2, pp. 13-32.

- LIPIETZ, Alain (1987), *Mirages and Miracles: The Crisis of Global Fordism*, London, Verso
- LIPIETZ, Alain (1993), *Fordism and post-Fordism* in W. Outhwaite and Tom Bottomore, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth Century Social Thought*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 230-231.
- MAN, Hendrik de (1926), *Zur Psychologie des Sozialismus*, Jena, E. Diederichs, 1926; 2nd edition, 1927; English translation, *The Psychology of Socialism*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1928; French translation, *Au delà du marxisme*, Paris, Alcan, 1929; Italian translation, Henri de Man, *Il superamento del marxismo*, Bari, Laterza, 1929.
- MARX, Karl (1964), *Il Capitale*, vol. I, Rome, Editori Riuniti.
- MARX, Karl (1968), *Lineamenti fondamentali della critica dell'economia politica*, vol. I, tr. di Enzo Grillo, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.
- MEYER, Stephen III (1981), *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921*, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press.
- MEZZADRA, Sandro (1994), "La costituzione del lavoro. Hugo Sinzheimer e il progetto weimariano di democrazia economica", *Quaderni di azione sociale*, 2, pp. 57-71.
- MILLER, Peter e ROSE, Nikolas (1995) "Production, Identity, and Democracy", *Theory and Society*, vol. 24, No. 3 (giugno), pp. 427-467.
- MILLS, Charles Wright (1952), "Commentary on Our Culture and Our Country", *Partisan Review*, vol. 19, no. 4 (July-August), pp. 446-450.
- MORISHIMA, Michio (1982), *Why Has Japan "Succeeded"?*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Italian translation, *Cultura e tecnologia nel successo giapponese*, Bologna, Il Mulino 1984.
- NAKANE, Chie (1970), *Japanese Society*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson; Italian translation, *La società giapponese*, Milan, Cortina, 1992.
- NOBLE, David (1979), *Social Choice in Machine Design*, in ZIMBALIST, Andrew, *Case Studies on the Labor Process*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979, pp. 18-50.
- OHNO, Tai'ichi (1978), *Toyota Seisan Hoshiki* [The Toyota method of production], Tokyo, Diamond; English translation, *The Toyota Production System: Beyond Large Scale Production*, Productivity Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1988; French translation, *L'esprit Toyota*, Paris, Masson, 1989; Italian translation, *Lo spirito toyota*, Torino, Einaudi, 1993.
- PALLOIX, Christian (1976), "Le procès de travail. Du fordisme au néofordisme", *La Pensée*, no. 185, (February), pp. 37-60.
- PELÁEZ, Eloina and HOLLOWAY, John (1991), *Learning to Bow: Post-Fordism and Technological Determinism*, in BONEFELD, Werner, and HOLLOWAY, John (eds.), pp. 135-144.
- PETERSON, Joyce Shaw (1987), *American Automobile Workers, 1900-1933*, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press.
- PIORE, J. Michael, and SABEL, Charles F. (1983), *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity*, New York, N.Y., Basic Books; Italian translation, *Le due vie dello sviluppo industriale. Produzione di massa e produzione flessibile*, Torino, Isedi, 1987.
- REVELLI, Marco (1995), *Economia e modello sociale nel passaggio tra fordismo e toyotismo*, in INGRAO, Pietro e Rossana ROSSANDA, *Appuntamenti di fine secolo*, Roma, Manifestolibri, pp. 161-224.

- ROMER, Samuel (1933), "The Detroit Strike", *The Nation* (vol. 136, no. 3528), 15 February 1933, pp. 167-168.
- SINZHEIMER, Hugo (1925), *Europa und die Idee der wirtschaftlichen Demokratie*, in *Europas Volkswirtschaft in Wort und Bild. Beiträge zur Wirtschaftserkenntnis*, hrsg. von der "Frankfurter Zeitung", 1925-26, pp. XVII-XVIII, now in same author, *Arbeitsrecht und Arbeitssoziologie. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden*, ed. O. Kahn-Freund and Th. Ramm, Frankfurt-Köln, Europäische Verlaganstalt, 1976 ("Schriftenreihe der Otto Brenner Stiftung", 4), 2 Bde., Bd. 1, pp. 221-225; *L'Europa e l'idea di democrazia economica*, trans. Sandro Mezzadra, *Quaderni di azione sociale*, XXXIX, No. 2 (1994), pp. 71-74.
- SOUYRI Pierre-François (1994), "Un nouveau paradigme?", *Annales*, vol. 49, No. 3 (May-June), pp. 503-510.
- VAN WOLFEREN, Karel, (1989), *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, New York, N.Y., Knopf.
- VOGEL, Ezra (1979), *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

Rewriting the Politics of *The City Builders*: A review of Susan S. Fainstein

Brian McGrail

In her book, *The City Builders: Property, Politics & Planning in London and New York*, Susan Fainstein provides a timely account of a much publicised but less well analysed phenomenon – the rise and fall of the property development industry in two of the worlds leading financial centres, London and New York, during the 1980s. Whilst finding her research of great interest, and exceedingly well presented, I ultimately found her theoretical approach unconvincing and felt the need to place her chosen topic – the people who built the places of the 1980s – within a more critical framework. In this review article I begin by outlining her argument and then move on to examine her discussion of Marxism and post-structuralism as a means of questioning the ‘depoliticisation’ of modern urban spaces which emerges from her work.

Like many others who started out studying the decision making processes involved in “shaping the physical form of these two cities” (p. x.) during a massive debt-driven developmental boom, Fainstein’s initial area of interest was transformed by the complete collapse of some of the worlds largest development companies in 1990 and the events which preceded that collapse. On the one hand, unprecedented amounts of money were involved and, as Fainstein is at pains to point out at least twice, Olympia & York went down owing “more than \$18 billion, exceeding the indebtedness of most third-world nations” (p. 61). On the other hand, the extent of this indebtedness should have been controlled since it was clear that, by the end of 1987, the stock market crash was already restricting the further spatial expansion of banks and financial institutions in both cities:

Yet developers were continuing to propose and gain financing for projects seemingly doomed to stand empty upon completion, making inevitable the sharp downturn that did indeed mark the early nineties. *Why?* (p. x.)

Hence, Fainstein's research evolved from a comparative study of how social, technological and cultural factors affected the different patterning of spatial use in New York and London into a search for "the underlying logic of property development and ... its similarities to, and differences from, other forms of commodity production" (p. x.).

To what extent Fainstein has succeeded in the latter of these (more theoretical) objectives is debatable, but her substantive work, portrayal of the developments which took place in both cities, and lucid writing style are all excellent, making the book enjoyable as well as extremely interesting. She admits that her method of research is more akin to "investigative journalism than standard social science" (p. 17) but this, as far as I am concerned, is a bonus rather than a fault, and her original concern to provide a comparative account of what actually happened within the cities (as opposed to an in depth conceptual study) still comes across in the structure of the work.

The first chapter covers the theoretical and practical background to the research. It notes the rise of interest in real-estate as a form of investment during the last 20 years, specifically after the switch to floating exchange rates, and relates this growth in interest to (a) an academic need to re-theorise the place of property development in the theory of capitalism, (b) the emerging cyclical nature of such investment, and (c) the issue of depressed urban centres and the role of local politicians and other agents in attracting inward investment (primarily property investment) in order to pursue ideas of 'growth with equity'. Although Fainstein is obviously aware of the theoretical debates which underpin these issues in the social sciences (e.g. liberal versus structuralist theory) she conveniently places her own account of these debates at the back of the book (Appendix A). The result is an opening chapter which is not only easier going on students but probably more acceptable to people within 'the profession' who do not follow such debates. My own impression of this technique is that Fainstein wished to produce a work that would be read by the city builders themselves – a practical-critical work from which lessons could and should be learnt – as much as by the academic community.

Each of the next four chapters follows up a single theme (namely, changes in the property industry, the property slump, the role of government and participation in planning) related to the general redevelopment process, showing how each of these influenced and were affected by the different historical and social conditions to be found in London and New York. Instances of differences include the existence in Britain of a profession to deal in property – chartered surveyors – where no such specialisation exists in America. However, a major point drawn out by Fainstein is that despite the legal, professional, procedural and political differences both cities were ultimately driven by the same forces, leading to comparable experiences in the rush to build bigger and faster, and the consequent dash to abandon property developments (and developers) once the extent of over-build became apparent.

Chapter 2 focuses on the changes which took place within the property development industry itself once "the debt crisis that began in the 1970s had cut off third-world outlets for investment at the same time

as financial institutions continued to acquire massive amounts of capital from pension and mutual funds" (p. 27). The need for property redevelopment is thus seen in terms of "global flows of capital" (p. 27), which stimulated "the development of new financial instruments as hedges against risk" (p. 28), alongside the changing locational and technological demands of urban land users. On one side, fund investors sought higher rates of return to avoid devaluation (a threat enhanced by competition from foreign investment institutions) whilst, on the other, the reorganisation of large corporations (spatial rationalisation of functions, mergers and takeovers) and global money markets themselves created a concentration of finance activities in specific 'Global Cities'. As rents began to move upward with the intensification of direct contact between financial institutions and borrowers – a phenomenon called "disintermediation" (p. 27) which involved cutting out clearing banks – the rate of return on central office developments proved too great a temptation for investors desperate to lend. The latter half of this chapter examines the impact of these forces on each city. Whereas London was the only feasible choice in the U.K., New York had several rivals to contend with (including nearby New Jersey as well as Los Angeles and Chicago). This meant that public money and tax incentives were to play a greater role in New York's development while London witnessed a foot-print effect caused by the resistance private developers expected from certain Labour-led councils. Nevertheless, the overall form of development was roughly similar with major new de-centred sites being developed, and the central business district (CBD) expanding into surrounding neighbourhoods previously regarded as residential or industrial.

Chapter 3 analyses the "property bust" (p. 61) and asks "why did it happen?" (p. 63). This, in essence, deals with the forces behind the over-supply of office space and raises the question as to why such over-supply was not predicted and why the industry failed to do anything about it. Fainstein pulls together several problems to demonstrate that blame cannot be placed at the door of any one agent but has to be aggregated across the structure of the industry and the economy as a whole. Firstly, developers are under "the pressure to build" (p. 64), that is, keep their books full, in order to earn bonuses, prevent takeovers or win promotion. Secondly, as "few development firms in either London or New York boasted in-house research units" (p. 67) most advice and market research came from outside consultants who made a living from project fees. They lost nothing "but reputation" (p. 67) if a project failed and increased their income the more projects they approved. Thirdly, during a period of recession or crisis governing bodies "devote themselves to reinforcing expansionary tendencies" (p. 69) rather than controlling or constraining development. The final outcome is a process in which no-one wants to be the first to pull the plug. Meanwhile, as Fainstein indicates, these similarities in decision-making continue at a more mundane level where variations in rent levels, lengths of lease (and leasing practice), and the extent of land monopolisation between the two cities are over-ridden by the use of equivalent project calculation procedures. This creates the impression that equivalent locational rents

have the same capital values whilst ignoring concrete social and economic conditions.

The last two theme based chapters concentrate on one of the aspects of the boom raised in chapter 3, namely, the role of public institutions. Chapter 4, entitled 'Policy and Politics', contrasts the cities' two system of government. Fainstein notes the greater autonomy of New York from central government but also its greater reliance on local taxes which produces public policies centred on incentives to attract businesses and high-income residents for their revenues. London, by comparison, had its stricter local planning regulations dismantled from above, demonstrating the power of central government to dictate policy, but also produced (for a time) local councils with more radical agendas. Chapter 5 tightens this discussion by examining one feature of government of particular relevance to property development – planning. This begins by analysing the trend in attitudes towards urban planning:

The discourse in which planners in London and New York interpret the world and communicate their intentions has shifted from long-term concerns with environmental quality to an emphasis on short-term accomplishments. (p. 100)

Once the fragmentation of the planning process had been started, the manner in which short-term accomplishments grew in importance is connected to the "independent deal-making associated with each project and the efforts by individual developers and separate communities to gain the most advantages for themselves" (p. 102). The abandonment of strategic planning and the desire by local governments to either reduce some budget items to enhance others or raise the quality of public services led to the evolution of a whole new set of mechanisms for engendering local economic development. These included the establishment of public-private partnerships and the trading of planning permissions in return for utilities (known as 'planning gain' in Britain and 'exaction' in America). The fire of over-supply was thus fuelled further by the eventual complicity of local governments in promoting privately initiated developments.

However, whereas this form of complicity could still be resisted by local people in and through their participation in local government or their right to make recourse to the courts, the setting-up of powerful urban development corporations (UDCs) – like the London Docklands Development Corporation – removed the last remaining vestige of direct local involvement from the development process. These new bodies were "not subject to the normal requirements, such as holding open public meetings, filing extensive reports of their activities, providing avenues for community participation, and conforming to civil-service rules, to which the public sector is subject" (p. 11). The form urban growth would take in corporation areas was henceforth concentrated in the hands of unelected officials and the real-estate industry. Although urban redevelopment strategies, after the early '80s recession, initially took different paths – Fainstein refers to British and American approaches – the adoption by Britain of American-style UDCs meant

that there was convergence of tactics and thereby movements in the cities' property markets. Even where other, new methods of urban planning were developed, such as 'City Challenge' in Britain which was "much more responsive to local communities than the UDC approach" (p. 113) they "still represented the new mode of planning whereby decision-making rested in an agency outside the regular governmental structure" (p. 113-114). The result was that "the actions of public officials determining local initiatives became more similar" (p. 119).

The second half of Fainstein's book (Chapters Six to Nine) supplies a detailed study of several comparable projects so as to "reveal the complex interplay of forces that operate in particular situations" (p. 123). She analyses the use of public-private partnerships in King's Cross and Times Square, the creation of new centres in Spitalfields and Downtown Brooklyn, and the creation of 'new addresses' in New York's Battery Park City and London's Docklands. However, common practices and problems emerge from, and are repeated through, most of these case studies. In most cases it was the public sector which originated the projects *but* it did so under the impression that (a) regeneration would be solely based on the new services and commercial sectors – not manufacturing or small businesses, and that (b) the private sector would eventually take on the leading role in this regeneration. Where community resistance did take place it was largely ineffective *except* in instance when disputes *delayed* the timing of the project so much that it became financially unfeasible with the crash in property values by the late 1980s. However, even then the plans remained intact awaiting future implementation. Hence, although overall the experience "exposes the fatal weakness of relying heavily on property development to stimulate regeneration" (p. 213) politicians, Fainstein argues, have not yet learnt the lessons of the '80s and still "maintain their faith in the power of real estate to produce economic growth, especially because they lack other instruments for stimulating growth that do not require an obviously enlarged governmental sector" (p. 213). According to Fainstein, effective urban regeneration has therefore been undermined by the unwillingness of governments to provide extra resources and the non-existence of other areas of investment as possible means of escaping the crisis.

The penultimate chapter returns to broader issues and ask why has real-estate been treated as a special case with regards to the economic regeneration of cities? Fainstein's targets in this discussion appear to be twofold. Firstly, she criticises those who see real property ownership as a particularly obnoxious form of commodity ownership which undermines – in their understanding – the growth of the capitalist economy. Her critique focuses both implicitly and explicitly on Ricardo and Marx, including the 'neo-marxism' associated with David Harvey. Secondly, she takes issue with those who see real-estate as a panacea for all ills. Here her focus falls on environmental determinists (of an older generation) and those who view spatial reconstruction as a means of improving social character and well-being (as well as political speculators and opportunists who view superficially sanitised space as good for business). Fainstein tries to situate property-led development in

the 1980s in its proper place so that a balanced evaluation of “the places that the city builders have made” (p. 224) can take place, something she believes traditional ‘productivist’ theories, especially Marxism, and cultural criticism, represented by post-structuralism, cannot achieve.

‘Marxism’, represented in Fainstein’s book by the works of Michael Ball and David Harvey (see for instance Ball (1983) and Harvey (1982)), is criticised for (i) living in a by-gone age, (ii) reductionism, and (iii) inconsistency. She believes these problems are created by the need to overcome difficulties encountered in trying to maintain a ‘labour theory of value’ (footnote 8, p. 240-241)). However, many of Fainstein’s criticisms of Ball and Harvey are grist to the mill for Marxists who have produced more lengthy and coherent criticisms of their ideas (see for example the recent article by Kerr, 1996). Harvey may well think “that gains from property are particularly ill-gotten” (p. 221) and that landed accumulation (which Harvey calls a ‘secondary circuit’ of accumulation) acts as a barrier or limit to the accumulation of capital in industry (viewed as ‘real’ production in that it produces *value* whereas speculative property development absorbs ‘fictitious capital’), however, none of Harvey’s positions are essential nor integral to Marx’s conception of accumulation and rent. Alternative interpretations of Marx’s theory of rent, specifically the concept of absolute rent, take landed accumulation as the *essence* of all capitalist accumulation (in that it dispossesses labour power from the primary means of production – land) and goes on to argue that landed accumulation is a *form* of accumulation which cannot be maintained without the transfer of industrial capital (fertiliser, machinery) onto land, nor the existence of urban markets, which absorb the ‘by-product’ (excess variable capital) created by land accumulation (including excess labour power and produce from the land).

Marxist theory does not *have to* treat land as an especially ‘evil’ kind of wealth – it is no more or less ‘evil’ than any other form of capitalist accumulation – but can comprehend landed property dialectically as both the *mode of existence* of industrial capital and its *antithesis*. It is the mode of existence of capital in that without dispossession there would be no ‘doubly-free’ labour power with which to produce value, but it is at the same time the antithesis of capital since the resource put into reproducing this landed dispossession does not itself produce any value. That is, the antithetical relation is the social necessity of capitalism to control space by transferring a proportion of surplus value into the unproductive activity associated with land ownership. For Marx the activity of land ownership was *unproductive* in the sense that it did not produce *new* value, but then, according to his theory, neither does the activity of producing labour power (social reproduction).

As a result, the theorisation of the latter is another aspect of Marxism that Fainstein takes issue with – the distinction between productive and unproductive labour – since it *appears* to privilege the ‘bread-winning’, white, male, manufacturing workers of old. This relates back to Marxist theories which posited industrial *waged* workers as ‘essential’ to the capitalist system of production and thereby as central to the revolution that would overthrow that system whilst, at the same

time, positing female, domestic, unwaged workers as powerless and in need of following the example of their waged, unionised husbands. Once again, Fainstein's objections miss the point. Marx merely analysed capital in his critique of political economy to show its oppressive and contradictory constitution. In such a context 'unproductive' means unproductive of value, not unnecessary. Hence, although unproductive in one sense, non-valuing producing labour, which can include teachers, nurses, and housing managers as well as housewives, produces the one commodity essential to capitalist production, even though it does not produce surplus value or the goal of that system. Again this alternative reading has led to Marxist theories which promote the positive role played by unproductive labour in the history of capitalism and urbanisation. In so far as unemployment reduces the value of labour power (wages), it plays a necessary part in capitalist accumulation, just like any other worker involved in social reproduction, however, the reproduction of this necessary labour power also creates problems for the capitalist class precisely because it is not value producing. The existence of unproductive labour is thus both the mode of existence of capitalist accumulation and its antithesis. Together the necessity of controlling space (land) and of maintaining unproductive labour power (from pensioners, to state workers, to the unemployed) represent a serious problem for modern capitalist society and its regeneration of space. However, Fainstein fails to touch upon any of these issues and leaves us with a rather unsatisfactory discussion of recent developments in Marxist geography.

Fainstein also tackles the "post-structuralist critique" (p. 225) of recent spatial developments. Here she finds herself more in agreement with the post-structuralist emphasis on diversity and the need to analyse the development of defensible and/or simulated spaces. The more subjective starting point of post-structuralism, as opposed to that of 'structuralism' which is usually equated with 'Marxism', offers a less economic and reductionist way "to describe the culture of urban development and to understand how different social groups shape and respond to the new urban form" (p. 225). Unlike Fainstein's understanding of the Marxist concept of 'class', which she sees as being externally imposed on groups of people, post-structuralism is seen as picking up on the important concept that groups create, shape and recreate themselves from the inside, via notions of inclusion and exclusion. Fainstein obviously prefers this approach to evaluating the social spaces of the 1980s to that of Marxist 'class' approaches, however, her unfair reading of Marxism means that Marx's *immanent* critique of class relations, that is, from the inside, is not even mentioned. Her preference for post-structuralism is thereby flawed in that the historical connections between Marxist and post-structuralist critique are not fully explored.

Nevertheless, Fainstein still finds serious problems with the post-structuralist approach. The most important of these problems is the post-structuralists' dislike of current tendencies (to generate cultural exclusions in and through spatial forms) *on the grounds* that there was, at some time in the past, more open and diverse urban communities through which strangers and different cultures came into contact with

one another. Fainstein correctly criticises this view on the basis that there never was such a “golden age of greater diversity” (p. 229) but, instead, that such forms of exclusionism have always existed. In addition, Fainstein takes issue with the post-structuralist dislike for non-authenticity in architecture on roughly the same ground, although, there is an implicit notion that she is attacking any form of epistemology which holds that one culture can and should be dismissed by another. In this criticism Fainstein is, in fact, turning post-structuralism against its own proponents who on the one hand wish to promote diversity and democracy and at the same time slag off modern consumer culture and its acceptance of pastiche. This leads to the ultimate issue of accepting people, and in this case I think Fainstein is including the buildings and urban spaces created by such diverse people, on their own terms. Here I believe Fainstein enters shaky political and social ground. Although she says that “a deeper critique must instead show that this landscape fails to satisfy important human needs” (p. 232) she offers no means of establishing what are ‘important’ needs. This is something she immediately recognises herself, “but to do so [would] put the critic on the thorny ground of explicating what activities afford genuine as opposed to false satisfaction” (p. 232). One thing Fainstein does not consider with regards to such a need for a means of evaluation of the post-modern city is that ‘criteria’ are ultimately political and practical categories, with the corollary that it might be better for the critic to take up the thorny ground of explication in a demand for justice, than the shaky ground of ‘can’t do anything’ but take it on the chin!

Hence, the last part of this excellent book is given over to a rather weak and in some ways contradictory ending. “Developing Docklands as an office centre was not wrong ... [but it] ... should have been developed for the benefit of all Londoners, not just the small number of nearby residents” (p. 238), while “creating spaces that many people enjoy, even if they do not faithfully reproduce the past, and even if they make some people feel like outcasts, is not in itself so terrible” (p. 239). The contradiction developers and planners face when making policy is thus between making spaces people enjoy that, nonetheless, are not (or cannot be) for the benefit of all. In this fashion Fainstein brings out what Harvey might call the post-modern condition – the drive to develop spaces which are fun for people who are desperate to escape the boredom, banality and mundanity of their everyday lives but are essentially about selling things. Fainstein’s book therefore seems to raise more questions than it can answer about property-led development in the 1980s and, if for no other reason, it should be widely read.

Susan S. Fainstein (1994), *The City Builders: Property, Politics & Planning in London and New York*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 298. ISBN: 0-631-18243-8 (hbk); 0-631-18244-6 (pbk). The paperback is priced at £16.99 and the hardback at £40.00.

References

BALL, M. (1983), *Housing Policy and Economic Power*, Methuen, London.

HARVEY, D. (1982), *The Limits to Capital*, Blackwell, Oxford.

KERR, D. (1996), "The Theory of Rent: From Crossroads to the Magic Roundabout", in *Capital & Class*, No. 58, CSE, London.

Book Reviews

Cyril Smith

Marx at the Millennium

Pluto Press, London, 1996

0745310001 pbk; 074531001X hbk

£ 12.99 pbk; £ 40 hbk; 196pp.

reviewed by Werner Bonefeld

The book's title *Marx at the Millennium* is apt. Might the thousand years after the second coming of Christ not be the beginning of the golden age of communism? Millennium understood in the sense of 'a coming golden age' is usually used ironically. The book's summoning of communism as a coming golden age appears slightly odd and out of step with 1990's left thinking. Indeed, is it not the case that, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the spectre of communism haunts the left rather than the respectful bourgeoisie? However, there is no trace of irony here and Smith's espousal of communism as the start of human history is sincere, passionate and warm. This book forms part of a wider project of new publications on Marx which seek to open and emancipate Marx from the orthodox and dogmatic tradition(s) of Marxism. His specific attempt is to disentangle Marx from what he terms the 'Marxist tradition'. By this he means the tradition that was established first by Plechanov and Kautsky, taken up by Lenin and canonised by Stalin. In a word, for Smith, the tradition from which Marx needs to be emancipated is Marxist-Leninism.

Smith's book is an angry but also understanding book. Let's look at 'angry' first. The collapse of the Soviet Union is said to have led to two distinct responses by the 'Marxist tradition'. One response is said to be characterised by a dogmatic blindness to the events in the Soviet Union and the meaning of its collapse: We maintain that anything we once said must be true because we once said it. The other response is to declare that the collapse of the Soviet Union means that Marxism is indeed dead and that the project of emancipation, of communism, needs to be abandoned. Against dogmatic blindness and defeatism Smith insists emphatically on the need to re-examine the entire history of the fight for socialism and the body of 'theory' that grew out of it (page x). He is adamant that the

proponents of socialism such as Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg are treated with respect and their work 'assessed with scrupulous objectivity'. Thus his book is an understanding book. The emancipation of Marx from the 'Marxist tradition' is not intended on rubbishing the 'Marxist tradition' as a delusion but, rather, to respect the history of struggle connected with and represented by the above protagonists and, importantly, to learn from this history of struggle.

The book is written from within the legacy established by Trotskyism and seeks to go beyond Trotsky. This 'beyond' is the book's concern. Smith goes back to Marx in order to go beyond the 'Marxist tradition'. The aim is thus to reinstate Marx's work and to show it as a valid and vital source of inspiration as we move towards the 21st Century. Before reporting on Smith's reading of Marx, the following critical observation is in order. The task Smith sets himself is enormous and obvious restrictions have to be met. Nevertheless, the assessment of both the 'Marxist tradition' and Marx from within the bounds established by the 'Marxist tradition' is too constrained and Smith's (re)assessment remains blinkered. Luxemburg and Korsch are only mentioned in passing. Pannekoek's critique of Leninism, 'Lenin as Philosopher', and Mattick's work are not considered. The Frankfurt school's response to Leninism is dismissed as having lost faith in the possibility of a socialist transformation and as having established itself as merely an academic discipline firmly embedded within the tradition of the Enlightenment. The entire body of Antilevist-Marxism is disregarded and omitted. This has obvious repercussions for Smith's argument. Indeed, his 'emancipation' of Marx is characterised by the language of dogmatism: The 'Marxist tradition' is charged with having 'buried, falsified' and 'distorted' Marx's writing.

The book consists of 4 substantive chapters, a preface and a concluding chapter. The preface sets out and justifies the scope and content of the book. Chapter 1 supplies a powerful account of the misery, inhumanity and insanity of contemporary capitalism, and provides, for Smith, communism's moral justification and springboard.

Chapter 2 focuses on the way in which the 'Marxist Tradition' 'buried', 'distorted' and 'falsified' Marx. The theoretical work of the Second and Third Internationals are introduced and contrasted with Marx's writing. The chapter shows the gulf between the ideas of Marx and the 'Marxist tradition' and justifies Smith's claim that Marx and the 'Marxist tradition' need to be kept quite separate from each other. The main issue here is that the Leninist tradition and practice, despite its originally courageous call to arms, constituted the mirror image, or other side, of capital's subordination of the working class, that is, it established the nightmare of dialectical and historical materialism, casting human beings as puppets controlled by an impersonal historical process whose precise working was known only by the leaders of the party. In this chapter, Marx is summoned as the commentator on the Paris Commune and 'Russian conditions'. Whereas the 'Marxist tradition' is seen to get more and more trapped in its dogma of the workers state, Marx stands out as the critic of all conditions where Man [*Mensch*] is a debased,

enslaved, forsaken, despicable being. This issue is the central theme of Smith's reassessment of Marx in Chapter 3. The title of this chapter which is taken from the 10th Thesis on Feuerbach 'The Standpoint of Socialised Humanity', provides a crisp and concise summary of the chapter. The focus is on Marx's conception of human beings as creators, of labour as purposeful activity, of communism as the real movement of the working class, of revolution as the self-emancipation of the working class and of capital as a crazy and perverted, up-side down, topsy-turvy world which enslaves, dehumanises and destroys humanness. The 'original' Marx is shown as a revolutionary and a communist whose work is said to have focused on the questions 'what do humans have to do in order to live humanly?' and 'how can humanity make itself what is in essence?'. This is a powerful chapter and Marx's critique of fetishism and alienation are foregrounded as the chief motivating and organising factors of his critique of political economy. The difficulty of the 'human standpoint' in an estranged, crazy and perverted world is that of 'knowing' what 'humanity in essence' amounts to since, as creators, this human essence is in fact understood as the creator of its own perverted existence. Although these 'methodological problems' are dealt with in chapter 4 'Science and Humanity', Smith avoids addressing these issues head-on and in a convincing manner. He discusses Marx's anti-epistemological approach and contrasts it to the 'Marxist tradition' whose 'theory' is shown to be mechanical and an extension of natural science's objective method. Chapter 4 concludes with an appendix on 'Science and Humanity' (earlier published in *Common Sense* no. 15) where the differences between Hegel and Marx are discussed. The concluding chapter raises some questions for radical, communist practice in our time.

In sum, the book examines the theoretical views of Lenin and Trotsky alongside those of Marx and reveals a discrepancy which can be traced back to figures like Kautsky and Plekhanov and also Marx's contemporaries. The argument of the book does not consider those schools of Marxism which have been critical of Marxist orthodoxy in the past and present.

The main weakness of the book is Smith's dualist conception of human essence, on the one hand, and capital's denial of humanity, on the other. The charge of dualism concerns his conception of humanity as a creative power. Smith thus separates 'humanity' from capital. This leads him to view capital as a 'thing' which merely imposes itself upon humanity. As a consequence, human essence becomes a normative yardstick. Furthermore, capital is, by implication, merely perceived in political economy terms and the critique of capital becomes one of merely ethical and normative judgement. In other words, the critique of political economy, of capital, remains restricted insofar as the constitution of capitalist social relations is not conceptualised. This critique of capital, however, amounts to a critique of labour, of social practice, which produces and reproduces the perverted world of capital. Without a critique of labour, capital becomes a mere thing which apparently subsists in and through its own natural logic. Such a

conception replays the dogmatic insistence of 'natural laws' of history from which Smith intends to escape.

In Smith, fundamental issues such as the separation-in-unity of theory and practice, of subject and object, and of labour and capital are not dealt with in a rigorous way and recurring formulations such as 'humanity exists within an inhuman shell' are not sufficient to clarify the relationship between human essence and its capitalist denial. This is important insofar as Smith sees human beings as the creator of their own social world; such a view would involve an understanding of human practice as an activity which creates its own perversion, i.e. the perverted and disenchanted world of capital. Smith does not explore the circumstance that the critique of capital amounts to a critique of labour, of human practice.

Smith perceives Marx in normative terms and offers a sort of ethical Marxism. This is the weak and the strong point of the book. *Marx at the Millenium* makes a much welcomed break from a Marxism devoid of the project of emancipation and that is communism. He summons Marx's categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which Man [*Mensch*] is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being. At a time when the left's project has become one of accommodation with capital's insanity, Smith's book throws a subversive spanner into the New Times of left reformism and its dogmatist roots. Smith has written an entertainingly destructive and engagingly human book.

Terry Eagleton & Drew Milne (eds.)

Marxist Literary Theory

Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, £13.99

ISBN 0-631-18581-X pbk

reviewed by Olga Taxidou

As the introductions to this reader point out, this collection appears at a time when literary theory and the whole notion of literature itself seem to be under crisis (both as cultural institution and epistemological category). What this collection also suggests is the need to re-invent or to re-theorise the complex relationship between culture and political praxis. The recent rise of literary theory in academic institutions has in many cases simply led to a unreflective relationship between theory and radical critique. As Terry Eagleton stresses, there is a 'callous idealism' that believes 'by studying Derrida rather than Aristotle' somehow the painless transition can be made from 'the kingdom of identity to the realm of difference'. The significance of a reader like this has to be read against the dominant trends in most educational institutions where the rise of 'theory' has led to an uncritical acceptance of notions of relativism,

difference and pluralism which have, in many ways, reinforced 'mythical' and 'ahistorical' approaches to literature. The institutions themselves, initially also the object of the critique, have only been reinforced and validated by the rise of 'theory'.

Drew Milne's insightful introduction underlines the fact the Marxism is both a form of praxis and a form of discursivity. Indeed, following Foucault, he claims that Marx together with Freud share the historically distinct status of being the founders of discursivity. As a body of work Marxism, and Marxist literary theory, cannot be reduced to a single person or even school, nor can it simply be termed a theory. As Terry Eagleton says it has helped shape the lives of millions of people. Literature can also be defined by such a double axis of meaning. Inhabiting one of the main dialectics of the Enlightenment, it is both a testament to civilisation and barbarism. This collection firmly locates Marxist literary theory within the project of Modernity. Drew Milne frames the approaches covered in this selection by setting up three very useful categories fundamental to Marxist literary theory. These are: the critique of literature as a historical phenomenon; the critique of the reproduction and educational dissemination of 'literature'; and the critique of literature as an ideological form whose social physiognomy provides cognitive, utopian or aesthetic insights. The selection presented here (Marx and Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Volosinov, Benjamin, Bloch, Brecht, Caudwell, Barthes, Lukacs, Della Volpe, Adorno, Goldman, Sartre, Williams, Althusser, Eagleton, Jameson, Ahmad, Amuta, Callinicos) shows a rich and varied tradition which covers all these areas.

What emerges from all these writings is that Marxism itself offers a 'materialist dialectics of reading' (Milne). As such it can help re-establish the historical and political dimensions of contemporary literary theory. The final sections of the collection with the work of Aijaz Ahmad and Chidu Amuta already point towards a second volume, following in the spirit of the first. This would trace the complex relationships between Marxist Literary theory and other contemporary theoretical approaches like post-colonialism and those associated with gender studies that also encompass the categories of emancipation and critique. The absence of Antonio Gramsci, even though he is mentioned in Terry Eagleton's introduction, seems like the only obvious omission. Considering the influence of his work in contemporary debates on post-colonialism and identity politics this absence seems very strange.

The contribution of this reader is very valuable both in the context of literary studies and within the broader field of contemporary Marxist studies. It acts as a useful reminder of the long and varied tradition of Marxist literary theory (against simplistic, reductive readings, cold-war inspired or otherwise); a tradition that can help solve some of the crises facing literary studies today. Hopefully this collection will inspire others, as this is an area that contemporary literary theory - although in many cases defining itself against it - has unjustifiably neglected.

Mariarosa Dalla Costa & Giovanna F Dalla Costa (eds.)

**Paying the Price,
Women and the Politics of
International Economic Strategy**

Zed Books, London, 1995

ISBN 1856492982 pbk, £ 10.95. pp. 127 + xiii.

reviewed by Werner Bonefeld

Paying the Price makes a very important contribution to our understanding of the politics of economic adjustment in so-called developing countries. The book focuses on three integrated lines of inquiry. The overriding issue is that of the relationship between social reproduction and the politics of international debt since the early 1980s. The issue of social reproduction leads on to the second line of inquiry, namely the role of women. Her labour's position in maintaining family and community is of critical importance and the changing conditions of reproductive roles and practices supplies a good insight into 'the population's conditions of reproduction' (page 2). The third line of inquiry emphasises the role of women in resistance to the politics of economic adjustment. Indeed, the book shows that resistance is often community or neighbourhood based and led by women. Grassroots movements have formed around issues arising from living conditions and thus reproductive conditions, including the communal ownership of land and the communal character of women's work. The book contends that these struggles are 'antithetical' to the subordination of social reproduction to capitalist commodification of social practice and thus antagonistic to capital accumulation.

Although the connection between the 'politics of economic adjustment', 'social reproduction' and the role of women's work and struggle is clear and straightforward, there is hardly anything written and published on it. Maria Mies' *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (Zed Books, 1986)¹ is one amongst a very few publications on this topic.² Indeed, the debate on 'economic adjustment and social reproduction' was, and still is, dominated by either of the two following approaches. The first argues that the relationship between economic adjustment and social reproduction is not necessarily negative and that adjustment's 'harmful' influence on social reproduction is an unintended – and only temporary – side-effect which will be overcome once the debt has been repaid: Short-term harm will bring long-term happiness. The second approach emphasises the 'social costs of adjustment' and argues that there is a definite relationship between adjustment and the deterioration in areas such as health, education, child and maternity

mortality, poverty and so on. This 'social cost' approach calls for measures to reduce the negative effect of economic adjustment by, for example, programmes designed to protect the poor.

Paying the Price offers an alternative interpretation and perspective. Its concern and focus is on the relationship between social reproduction and the politics of economic adjustment in terms of the global restructuring of capitalist accumulation. Thus, the politics of economic adjustment is seen as a politics of imposing a new phase of capitalist accumulation. In this context, social reproduction is seen as the primary terrain for creating the 'right' conditions upon which the commodification and profitable exploitation of 'new populations' might well rest. This creation is discussed by some contributors in terms of 'primitive accumulation'. The term emphasises the expropriation of communal land and thus the expropriation of the means of subsistence and the means of production, including communal structures of the division of labour. Most importantly, however, the term focuses on the 'expropriation' of the body, that is of sexual and reproductive powers. The issues considered here are not just famine, plague and war but, also, the control of population growth through, for example, genital mutilation, sterilisation, and death through starvation and/or infection. The break-up of existing traditions of communal ownership of property and work is shown to go hand-in-hand with the control of population size to improve not only labour productivity but, also, to subordinate social practices to the demands of wage labour discipline. The alienation of labour from the conditions of labour and thus the commodification of social practice in the form of wage labour presupposes not only that the land question is settled and landed property is privatised. It presupposes also a reduction in population size because 'the African population is not considered sufficiently productive to provide incentives to capital investment' (page 43)³

The book consists of 6 substantive chapters, including the introductory chapter by Mariarosa Dalla Costa. George Caffentzis' contribution is on the debt crisis and its implications for social reproduction in Africa. He makes specific use of the category 'primitive accumulation' to argue that we witness a new enclosure movement. Silvia Federici works within the same theoretical perspective and supplies a case study of Nigeria to show the interrelation between the politics of economic adjustment and the politics of population control. Chapter 4 by Andrée Michel is on African Women, their crucial role in sustaining the community and the impact of the politics of economic adjustment which left them excluded from previously available means of subsistence and which denied them access to new resources because of non-availability of jobs and thus wage-income. A joint contribution by A. Britto da Motta and I.M.M. de Carvalho examines the interrelation between poverty and the emergence of women-led neighbourhood movements in Brazil. The final chapter by Giovanna F. Dalla Costa analyses social policies in Venezuela, focusing on the way in which these policies impose austerity. Her emphasis falls on the role of women and their leading role in grassroots resistance and rebellion against austerity.

The major weakness of the book is its lack of conceptualisation. None of the contributions raises the issue of capitalist crisis and all of the contributions assert that we are witnessing the creation of a new phase of capitalist accumulation. The interrelation between 'capitalist crisis' and 'capitalist restructuring' is assumed but not shown. Although the category 'primitive accumulation' emphasises what is undoubtedly a very interesting and challenging perspective, its significance is, once again, assumed rather than shown: the concept is used as an analytical tool which is merely applied to case studies rather than discussed as a condition of capital's constitution and existence. That 'capital', for the purpose of its expanded reproduction, relies on the politics of 'primitive accumulation' is suggestive and persuasive but should have been discussed and conceptualised in a much more forceful way.

The above should, however, be treated with caution: the significance and importance of the book is not theoretical and conceptual. The book breaks new ground in its political critique of current development strategies and suggests a forceful way of understanding the struggle over 'economic adjustment'. *Paying the Price* is a fine, politically important and thought-provoking book and is strongly recommended.

Notes

1. See H. Cleaver's contribution to *Common Sense* no. 14 for an appreciation of Mies' book.
2. For example, M. Dalla Costa's contribution to *Open Marxism* Vol. III (Pluto Press, 1995) and *Common Sense* no. 17; see also the volume edited by Midnight Notes *Midnight Oil* (Autonomedia, 1992).
3. On this topic see also Aly and Heim's 'The Economics of the Final Solution', published in *Common Sense* no. 11.

Murray E. G. Smith

Invisible Leviathan:

The Marxist Critique of Market

Despotism beyond Postmodernism

Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press, 1994

xiii + 272pp; £36.00 hb.; £16.00 pb.

ISBN: 0 8020 0589 6 hb; 0 8020 7190 2 pb.

reviewed by C. J. Arthur

The title 'Invisible Leviathan' is a clever play on Hobbes's theory of the condensation of power at the level of the social totality and Smith's image of an invisible hand coordinating market phenomena. The clumsy subtitle is misleading for there is little on postmodernism here.

What we are given is a series of linked studies amounting to an intelligent survey of problems in Marxist theory, especially historical materialism and the theory of value and crisis. The author is familiar with the latest literature in the field, outlines it, and makes his own comments. The book would be useful, therefore, to any student of Marxism seeking an overview of the current state of play; while some of the detailed discussion of the method of Marx's *Capital* makes worthwhile contributions to the ongoing debate. The standpoint of the author is situated firmly in the tradition of revolutionary Marxism.

BACK-ISSUES LIST

(£3.00 each + 50p postage)

Issue 17

- A Letter from the Zapatistas* The E.Z.L.N.
The Zapatistas John Holloway
Development and Reproduction Mariarosa Dalla Costa
Mayas and Zapatistas Javier Villanueva
What do we owe to the Scots? A Reply to Caffentzis
Richard Gunn
The Politics of Debt: Social Discipline and Control
Werner Bonefeld

Reviews

- Specters of Marx (Jacques Derrida)* Adrian Wilding
Labour of Dionysus (Michael Hardt & Toni Negri) Ian Fraser

Issue 16

- Bosnia, Bohemia and Bilderberg: The Cold War*
Internationale Alfred Mendes
Nazism and the Working Class 1933-93 Sergio Bologna
Mistaking Rights and Normativity Manolis Angelidis
On the Scottish Origin of 'Civilisation' George Caffentzis
Constituent Republic Toni Negri

Reviews

- Marx and Feminism (Selma James)* Alice Brown
Time, Labour and Social Domination (Moishe Postone)
Cyril Smith

Issue 15

- The Chiapas Uprising and the Future of Class Struggle*
Harry Cleaver
The Time of Trial by Space Derek Kerr
The Relevance of Marxism Today John Holloway
Human Practice and Perversion: Beyond Autonomy and
Structure Werner Bonefeld
Marxism and Contradiction Richard Gunn
V.A.T. on Fuel CS Collective

Science and Humanity: Hegel, Marx and Dialectic
Cyril Smith

Thomas Paine on Common Sense Richard Gunn

Reviews

The Recomposition of the British State in the 1980s
(Werner Bonefeld) Brian McGrail

Bridge of Courage (Jennifer Harbury) Ian Fraser

Origins of the Crisis in the USSR (Hillel Ticktin)

David Gorman

Issue 14

Capital's Water Crisis Brian McGrail

The Freeing of Marx John Holloway

Marxism, Neo-realism and International Relations

Peter Burnham

Marxian Categories, the Crisis of Capital and the
Constitution

of Social Subjectivity Today Harry Cleaver

History and Open Marxism: A Reply to Holloway

Heidi Gerstenberger

Money and Crisis: Marx as Correspondent of the

Daily Tribune (Part II) Sergio Bologna

Review

Sabotage in the American Workplace (Martin

Sprouse) (i) Paul Barret - (ii) Alan Rice

Posthistoire: Has history come to an end? (Lutz

Niethammer) Adrian Wilding

The London Hanged (Peter Linebaugh) Ian Fraser

COMMON SENSE

Journal of the Edinburgh Conference of Socialist Economists

Subscription Form

Annual subscription Rate - for 2 issues

	UK	Overseas
Individual Full	£8.00	£12.00/\$18.00
Individual Reduced	£5.00	£7.00/\$10.00
Supporters	£16.00	£16.00/\$24.00
Libraries	£20.00	£30.00/\$45.00

All rates are surface post.

Please make cheques and money/postal orders payable to 'Common Sense'.
Standing Order forms available on request.

Please start my subscription with No: 18 19 20

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode/Country: _____

Amount enclosed:

including ____ for backissues [Nos. ____]

Backissue Prices

£3.50 plus 50p postage (per issue). Issues 1 to 4 are now out of print.

Send forms to: **Common Sense, P.O. Box 311**
Southern District Office, Edinburgh EH9 1SF

£ 3.95

Drew Milne

Marxist literary theory after Derrida

John Holloway

The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas

The EZLN

The Zapatistas: Conference Notice

Toni Negri

The Crisis of Political Space

Ferruccio Gambino

A Critique of the Fordism of the Regulation School

Brian McGrail

Rewriting the Politics of *The City Builders*: A Review of Susan S. Fainstein

Book Reviews

Cyril Smith *Marx at the Millenium* (Werner Bonefeld) •
Terry Eagleton & Drew Milne *Marxist Literary Theory*
(Olga Taxidou) • Mariarosa Dalla Costa & Giovanna
Dalla Costa *Paying the Price, Women and the Politics of*
International Economic Strategy (Werner Bonefeld) •
Murray E. G. Smith *Invisible Leviathan* (Chris J. Arthur)

Published &
Printed in
Central
Scotland by the
Edinburgh
Conference of
Socialist
Economists

ISSN:
0957 - 204X

