

3. THE REACTION OF THE 1970S: NO FUTURE

I. INTEGRATED WORLD CAPITALISM

A restructuring of power helped to restore the command mechanisms in the 1970s, and to restart the process of capitalist and socialist productive accumulation. Politics and economics, capital and the state, were now completely integrated. The process developed in two directions.

In the first place, as the international integration of national economies on an increasingly world scale, and their subordination within a polycentric and rigorously planned project of control. We call this figure of command which coordinates yet exasperates the unity of the world market, submitting it to instruments of productive planning, monetary control, political influence, with quasi-statist characteristics, Integrated World Capitalism (IWC). In this process, world capital integrates, besides the developed countries and directly dependent on them, the ensemble of real socialist countries, and controls, in addition, the means by which the economies of numerous Third World countries are absorbed, putting in question their previous position of "peripheral dependence." Indeed, statist command and the national states thus undergo a veritable deterritorialization. Integrated World Capitalism is not limited to recomposing, using new forms of unification, the flux and hierarchies of

statist powers in their traditional sense. It generates supplementary statist functions which are expressed through a network of international organizations, a planetary strategy of the mass media, rigorous taking control of the market, of technologies, etc.

It is certainly important to avoid an ingenuous or anthropomorphic conception of IWC which would entail describing it as the work of a Leviathan or as a one-dimensional macro-structure of the Marcusean variety. Its planetary expansion, as well as its molecular infiltration, occur through mechanisms which can be extremely flexible and which can even take contractual forms. Each one engages legal forms that rely on continuous procedures rather than constraining substantive law. But it is no less true that it is this very procedural and regulatory continuum of relations which consolidates the centripetal tendency of the system, by diluting and “negotiating” the effect of crises in time and space and by relativistically reterritorializing each singular process.

In the second place, and conditioning the constitution of this global integration, the restructuring aims at the mode of production and the ensemble making up the collective labor force which relates to it. This deterritorialization and this integration was facilitated by rendering the social into data form, i.e. on the basis of the fundamental computerization [*informatisation*] of society. Exploitation could thus be articulated scientifically over the entire arena of the social, extending the control of profit creation mechanisms. Under these conditions, the assembly line of commercial and industrial production spreads its fabric over the social, not in its symbolic sense but materially. Society is no longer merely subsumed by capitalist command; it is absorbed entirely by the integrated mode of production. Differences in productivity and in levels of exploitation can then be articulated in a smoother, more diffuse way within each geopolitical segment according to region, country, or continent. Competition, the key link in the bourgeois market, is no longer very important for this

process of capitalist retraining.

The transnational computerization of the social is concerned with only one form of competition: that which it can provoke between workers and between the different strata of the working class and of the proletariat. It thus becomes possible for Integrated World Capitalism to activate specific techniques of analysis and control of social classes – which now make struggles erupt, now pulverize their power at those points where their level of politicization is significant, or, on the contrary, unleash them in a controlled way at those points where the problems of economic take off and of political reform are posed most urgently.

As it has always been in the history of capital, this renovation of the forms of command by Integrated World Capitalism goes hand in hand with a redefinition of the ways surplus value is extracted (computerization of the work process, spread of social control through mass media, subjective integration by governmental apparatuses, etc...).

And as it has always been in the history of the exploitation of workers' struggles, this leap forward of the organization of work and of the state was anticipated by the movements of the class struggle. The forms of social subjectivity which emerged in 1968 gave rise to a weaving of molecular struggles for liberation which are concerned with objectives that are at once immediate and long-term, local, everyday, trivial, yet engaged nevertheless with the future of humanity on a global scale. This operation was of course very complex and, in many respects, impossible to sum up within the framework of a single historical sequence.

It is no less true that the pseudo-progressive dialectic of capitalism which triumphed after the second world war was thus completely blocked. After 1968, the dynamic between the different functions of capital (constant and variable) and the interaction between the class of capitalists and the social work force has radically changed context; this is a result of the emergence of increasingly important, heterogeneous arrangements of subjectivity and sensibility. The law of value has ceased to function – if it ever worked in the

manner in which it was described – along with norms of economic proportionality and even the ordinary modalities of simple class exploitation. The social hegemony of the new proletarian subjectivities, once it was affirmed, had to acquire the quality of irreversibility: no longer would anything be able to prevent it from revealing itself, regardless of the prevailing relations of force, “the highs and the lows;” indeed, particularly on the front of their affirmation in the mass media, no longer can anything prevent these subjectivities from being basic reference points for future struggles. Capitalist and/or socialist restructuration does not automatically refer to relatively rational laws. It is not scientific – no matter how sophisticated the theoretical devices and the instruments of prediction which it employs: it is essentially repressive. The computerization [*informatisation*] of the social is inseparable from its mechanization and its militarization, in such a way that the systematic production of information tends to be substituted for the search for it. Such are the zones of strategic importance that the circuits of reproduction which support life and the struggle are more and more controlled, ordered, and, ultimately, repressed in a preventive fashion. Life time thus finds itself tightly fastened onto the military time of capital.

The time of capital, or the capacity to translate every sequence of life into terms of exchange, and of overdetermination with the urgency and the necessity of the operations of economic quantification and of political command; terror, or the capacity to annihilate all those who refuse to submit to it: this is what the reshuffling of the traditional functions of the state, and their unlimited penetration of people’s attitudes, sensibility and minds, amounts to. By threatening the very foundations of being, the state manages to control the singular flow of our lives, subjecting it to the rhythm of capitalistic time. Once it became clear that no law, nor other norm, could ever mediate between the capital and the proliferation of collective subjectivities, terror became the only way to secure the resumption to capitalistic and socialistic accumulation in the 1970s. It is under the impetus of this

terror that the nuclear state became the central figure of Integrated World Capitalism.

At present the club of nuclear powers subjects on a large scale all nations and peoples to its multicentered networks; but it also dictates in details the countless conflicts and local strifes which poison life on this earth, repressing or fueling them at will. In the Third World, since the so-called period of decolonization, all these conflicts make up some kind of world war that doesn't dare call itself by that name. Nuclear terror is at the root of every kind of oppression and over-determines the relationships of exploitation between social groups at both political and micropolitical levels. Thus threat and intimidation seep through all the pores of the thin skin of nuclear deterrence, which doesn't exclude more direct forms of intervention. The ultimate goal, as always, is to force people to condone their misery and political impotence. Capitalism answers: "No future" to the rise of new forms of proletarian subjectivity, countering their offensive with state terror. At this juncture the word "democracy" begs redefinition. The word communism has clearly been defaced, but the word democracy itself has been trashed and mutilated. From the Greek *polis* to the popular uprisings of the Renaissance and Reformation, from the proletarian rebellions that coexisted with the great liberal revolutions, democracy has always been synonymous with the legitimation of power through the people. This legitimation, always concrete, punctual, material, took specific forms, breaking away from a divine or absolute tradition.

With democracy, legitimacy is primarily human, spatially and temporally defined.

We're all subjected to Integrated World Capitalism because it is impossible to locate the source of its power.

If we try to go back to its source, all we find is subjection to the second, third, n^{th} degree.

The origin of power recedes higher and higher up and can be sized up in relation to the depth of our own impotence. Political relationships – called "democratic" – as we experience them on a daily basis, are at best *tropes-l'oeil*

when they don't throw us straight into pain and despair. This is the common feature, the unavoidable axiom of the capitalist or socialist restructuration of the political powers.

II. NORTH/SOUTH: TERROR AND HUNGER

As we have begun to see, the capitalist and/or socialist reaction of the 1970s integrates the world market according to a design for the exploitation of work and for political control which evolves in a homogeneous manner. The fundamental transition, in this sense, begins with the phase of Nixonian initiative in the monetary and international political arenas. Between 1971 and 1973, a series of operations lent a political character to the multinational network of exploitation which was already implanted in the world market. The take off of the dollar relative to the gold standard and the petroleum crisis articulated, under the same monetary command, (subtracted from all questions of value) the rules for the organization of work and those of the productive hierarchy on an international level. The petroleum crisis emptied the treasuries of countries and pushed financial centralization and unification to the point of paroxysm. Initially, this operation appeared, during the Kissinger era, as a great shock. The divisions within the capitalist and/or socialist political personnel reverberated successively in the Trilateral Commission, then through the agreements and the cooptations within Integrated World Capitalism, that is, in the new arrangements of the political will of domination. It is on this foundation that the effective political cartography of exploitation on a world scale is sketched out. Capitalist integration determines certain fundamental polarities around which move dependent subsystems, in partial rupture with the hierarchies of power which overcode the struggles for liberation and the class struggles, that permit capitalist integration to allow itself the luxury, on the level of these subsystems, of large scale modifications. At the heart of this complex play of multicentered systems, which disjoin the flows of struggle and carry out destabilizations and/or strategic stabilizations, a transnational mode of