

‘It Depends On All Of Us’

A Las Barricadas interviewing Peter Gelderloos

2019

[ed. – We present this interview, conducted early last year by the Spanish-language site A Las Barricadas, releasing it now in what may or may not be last days of Donald Trump’s U.S. presidency. Intended for those of us viewing events on that continent from afar, this provides a good look at the dynamics set off after the 2016 election and ongoing struggles which have led to wide-spread social unrest (the return of the anti-police riots that the interviewee notes below had subsided at the time of this interview) and looming threat of civil war that the so-called “United States” now face.]

We spoke broadly with Peter Gelderloos, activist of North American origin based in Spain. Peter is the author of numerous articles, especially analytical accounts about the processes he knows. For example he was very prolific explaining the process of the 15M *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg38**]* to the English-speaking public, in a way that part of the lessons that he got from the Iberian process could be moved to the Occupy movement. Additionally, he is the author of various books, namely *Anarchy Works* and *How Non-Violence Protects the State* among others.

With this interview we intend to get a closer look at the United States society in the Trump era. We want to learn how social movements are facing the reactionary offensive that the world is living through and what resistances are rising up right now. Likewise, from the resistances there’s been growing a very dynamic anarchist and revolutionary movement, each day more entrenched in new territories of that country the size of a continent. Transformative movements, as is logical, present new challenges, suffer menaces, so we will try to get him to introduce them to us. We also touch upon the debate about identities that is at its peak on the Left.

We hope this interview is of interest.

ALB: The arrival of Donald Trump to the White House has changed everything. As for the causes of his triumph, there has been talk of the rise of the Tea-Party *[ed. – conservative populists]* and then of the alt-right, of the crisis of the “white man”, of the frustration of the peripheral working class and the rural world... Do you think there is another factor that is often not mentioned? In the end there was also a very large percentage of women and immigrants that voted for him. And at the same time, there was great voter abstention. What can you contribute?

Peter: There are other key factors. Trump had an ideal opponent (for him) *[ed. – Hillary Clinton of the Democratic Party]*. A professional politician who generates equal parts of hatred and apathy and who thought that it would suffice to take control of the Democratic Party and

marginalize her opponents to the candidature. Also, Clinton comes from the conservative wing of the party, so she wasn't capable of inspiring the people most horrified by Trump.

Trump didn't win any majority. Less than 19% of the country and 26% of the possible voters voted for him. He won the election in great part thanks to the support of the multi-millionaire Mercer family, also the architect of the unexpected victory of Brexit. They used new algorithms – along with the capacity that Facebook allowed of targeting publicity to the most susceptible individuals to it – to design a much more effective propaganda campaign. With less money, they could reach almost exclusively the people that were vulnerable to his misogynist and xenophobic campaign, and this only in the districts or states that were important to win the election. **It was a turning point as far as it showed that now social media platforms like Facebook are more powerful than traditional media like newspapers and television. That's the last nail in the coffin of mass society. Atomized society is ruled by algorithms.** What happened was the right was the first in applying this knowledge to electoral campaigns (but it also didn't hurt him that the commercial press gifted him so much free publicity, due to its attraction to controversy.)

You ask about the women and immigrants that voted for him. The explicit misogyny of Trump was a very important factor to win the loyalty of the minority that voted for him. Conservatism has always been motivated by the obligation to defend the structures of privilege. Through this ideology, the privileges of a society are mobilized through victimization: when a person with social privileges feels attacked because their privileges have been questioned, their high status excluding others.

Contrary to this, the Left tries to make privilege and oppression something more inclusive: preserve structures of domination in the face of an increasing resistance, through a strategy of inclusion and equality. Formal education for the “minorities” so that they too can ascend in – and defend – the patriarchal and colonial structures of capitalism and the State. Normally, the Right makes no distinction between the reformists and the revolutionaries. They are all represented as menaces to the good order of society (“good order,” for these people, means hierarchy).

It turns out that there are a lot of right-wing women. It should not surprise us, but we're living in an epoch in which identity labels are becoming substitute for any content. Feminist is confused with being a woman, as if any person vindicating their identity – an identity given by the current system – were fighting against patriarchy. A woman can have many motives to defend a system of privilege and oppression. Feeling culturally identified with Western society, trying to climb the economic ladder, the need of white women to attack racialized women or even the desire of someone screwed over by patriarchy to settle scores, but instead of attacking those with most power, they do the easy and cowardly thing of attacking other oppressed persons. **In a single society, the different axis of oppression tend to show up as a “pack.” They constitute the social structure in its totality.** So white women, rich women, Christian women, homophobic and transphobic women or simply women who feel Western have motives to identify with the totality of the social “order”, even with patriarchal values. But it's interesting that right-wing women (politicians and in the press) that win a lot of social power speaking in favor of patriarchy almost never behave like traditional women. They are eloquent, aggressive, independent. In a way, they're rebels, even if it's a counter-revolutionary rebellion.

Also, every oppressive system needs the participation of the oppressed people. Women are not weak and patriarchy would have never been able to reproduce without their inclusion. This has been achieved with a very great deal of violence, but also through certain rewards and above

all through an essentialist construction of gender categories, so that people identify with their categories and therefore identify with the system itself. **We must not forget that the most extreme violence has been aimed against the people who rejected their identitarian category** [*ed. – see Ghosts*].

The support for Trump by part of the immigrants is much easier to explain. They come from countries with the same structures and racialized histories as the United States. Many were racists in the countries of origin. In USA they become even more racist as a mechanism of integration. In the same manner, immigrants from Ireland, Italy and Eastern Europe in other epochs won their right to exist, attacking the blacks, the indigenous, the recently arrived and the poorly-integrated. Many nationalist movements – in Europe as well – have had an important support by immigrants.

A last observation that seems important to me is that Trump didn't have the support of the most powerful and intelligent sectors of North American capitalism. The consensus of the elite that has ruled for decades has broken. The rich that supported Trump – they weren't few – were from sectors that didn't have any strategy in how to resolve the ever greater crises that are menacing power. They represent an antiquated sector that was only capable of reacting in the face of the questioning of their supremacy that is occurring in many spheres of society. They weren't even capable of recognizing the structures on which their riches depend on.

Contrary to that, the technological sector – Silicon Valley – along with the great majority of corporations of strategic importance have been vehemently critical of Trump from day one. In the first months of Trump's administration, we could see how it was when the ruling classes themselves were in conflict.

But in the last two years [*ed. – the first two of his presidency*], Trump has shown that he is an idiot and limitless megalomaniac. A typical right-wing populist that takes advantage of offensive speeches while he protects the same interests as always, that is not even capable of recognizing what the interests of the State are. It seems he has definitively ended the global hegemony of USA. Therefore, a new consensus has been created of the elites against Trump.

ALB: How is society changing in the era of Trump? If there a face-off of ways of understanding the world between liberals and “trumpists”?

Peter: More people are talking of and in deeper ways of topics related to racism and sexism. There exists a very strong polarization between Right and Left without any possibility – at the moment – of a social consensus or a centrist position. In various moments in these last two years, it hasn't seemed exaggerated at all to talk of the possibility of a civil war.

The Right is divided between more numerous parts that don't hide their extremism, don't have qualms about embracing openly racist positions or in joining up with fascists; and another part that has institutional power that still wants to disguise conservatism like something respectable and human. In regards to the Democratic Party, their center now has to pretend to be progressive and the progressives are doing everything possible to capture the new wave of radical sensibilities and thoughts that are sweeping the country. For the first time in decades, they speak of socialism, of universal and free education and healthcare, of deep transformations to face climate change. And in great part the press is diffusing criticisms about the sexism and racism that go beyond institutional equality and “color blindness” of yesteryear. “Rape culture,” “white privilege,” “cultural appropriation,” “non-binary,” “toxic masculinity” and others are already terms adopted by the dominant media of the country.

The press and other institutions of opinion and culture production are almost entirely on the side of the Left, as much centrist as well as progressive. The dominant currents are attempting to renew egalitarian discourses, for example by reducing anti-racism to an obligation to be kind and clean oneself of prejudices. **But since it's a moment of paradigm shift in which the media of opinion and culture production are living a transformation that's difficult to understand, also there's quite a lot of space for more radical perspectives.** It seems that in these moments the clearest signal for distinguishing between recuperation and subversion hinges on integration. If you're an integrationist, you can make very radical critiques about racism, sexism, or institutional transphobia, with the objective of integrating these new subjectivities into the capitalist system. What's not being talked about is the afro-pessimism of James Baldwin and others, anti-colonialism as a rejection of the mere existence of the USA, queer in its original sense as negation of sexual and gender identities instead of queer as dance club and Tinder... These perspectives keep on being as invisible as in the years in which there couldn't even be an openly lesbian or gay person on television, except maybe a comedian.

At the same time that the press displays much overture towards radical but integrationist critiques, it also makes heroes out of the conservatives that break away from Trump's populism, they make a gala out of the norms of good political behavior and look for agreements and consensus with their political adversaries instead of chasing after those spectacular wars favored by Trump and the most extreme Republicans. When the right-wing politicians [John] McCain and [George W.] Bush died – the two war-like racists responsible for the murder of many racialized persons in other countries – the media which are generally center-left reacted as if Jesus or John Lennon had died.

ALB: We'd like you to tell us about some of the social struggles that are shaking the USA in these moments.

The strikes and riots in the prisons have been extremely important, not just because they've managed to carry them out despite exorbitant security measures, but also because it's a fight that affects many millions of people. And many of the strongest protests have occurred in the most conservative zones of the country. Some went much further than a strike: there have been prison occupations and dead guards. Now, I don't think it's any coincidence that this past year, in spite of Republican control of the three branches of the government, a legislative project was pushed forward that would reduce the penitentiary population and would open the path to decriminalization of many "victimless crimes".

The history of this movement is very interesting. An influence were the reading groups established by prisoners in many prisons after years of contact with anarchist groups from the outside of the prisons that during decades – without exaggerating – worked tirelessly sending books to any prisoner that asked for it. We're speaking of dozens of thousands of books gathered by projects that could have been dismissed as "social workers", that had nothing romantic about them but that were committed to the hard work of making sure that the most neglected population of the country had the necessary resources to sharpen their minds and feel the warmth of solidarity.

It must be said that many of the people accused of violent acts in the recent riots are facing trials.

Another struggle of very great importance is that of immigrants and the people in solidarity with them. In the first month of Trump's presidency, they occupied and blocked all the airports of the country to stop the prohibition of the entrance of people from Muslim countries. It was

the first protest of this kind and scale in history, and it worked (and anarchists played a key role in converting peaceful protests outside the airports into aggressive blockades that invaded the airports).

This movement has changed according to circumstances. With the controversy about the detention of minors (although this also happened during Obama's government¹), many anarchists and other started to occupy ICE [Immigration & Customs Enforcement] offices (*la Migra*). There's also been many attempts by immigrant communities and those in solidarity to stop raids and evictions.

Anti-fascism has also been growing since Trump's victory. In part, there has been a reduction in anti-police revolts, and that for me were more radical and were directed at the foundations of state power. Very many people have directed their energies towards small far-right groups that don't even represent nor have a connection with the hegemonic practices and ideologies of the State nowadays. **It makes me very uncomfortable when our comrades are sharing the same discourse that the executive bosses of Google or Amazon, who have also positioned themselves against fascists.**

On the other hand, anti-fascism in the USA has almost totally been constructed by anarchists. Before Trump, there was almost no existence of anti-fascists because there was almost no existence of fascist groups. The Yankee far-right was much more decentralized, it existed much more as a complement and not as an adversary of the existent party of the Right, due to the historical structure of North American capitalism. But the role of anarchists has meant that anti-fascism has been almost 100% anti-authoritarian: it has been a practice of community self-defense, of vigilance, of diffusion and of attack, nothing more. It has avoided the macho, leftist and Stalinist traits that have been abundant in many parts of Europe.

But being anti-fascism, it's very vulnerable to recuperation by the Left. Nowadays, the great majority of North American capitalists are anti-fascists. They prefer forms of racism and control much more subtle than those that fascism can provide. **The Democratic Party is also anti-fascist and in the 2020 elections it will take advantage of the sentiments of total rejection towards Trump and the racist groups that have been generated in these years.** The authoritarian Left has taken advantage of the anti-fascist umbrella. For the first time in a long time, the flag of the hammer and the sickle – a symbol that represents oppression and murder against the popular classes as much as the swastika – appear at demos and people don't throw them out.

And so, the majority of the structures, the hours and hours of surveillance and doxxing, the security workshops on the internet and in the streets, the armed escorts, the people trading blows with the Nazis, the experiences in solidarity and anti-repression resources for the inevitable detentions... all these things come from libertarian spaces; if not from explicitly anarchist people, from anti-authoritarian people, including many activists from racialized communities. But on many occasions it has been the authoritarian groups, from the Democratic Party to even small Maoist sects, that have taken advantage of all this (for example by winning a lot of money through crowdfunding after cases of repression or violent attacks and then not sharing this money with any of the victims of repression). And these groups are growing quite a lot.

¹ ed. – In fact, this previous president (Barack Obama of the Democratic Party) deported more people during the duration of his administration than the previous nineteen presidents combined.

The good thing about all this is that people are winning against the Nazis, in spite of their protection by police and by the biggest television channel in the country. They haven't managed to come together in many parts of the country, nor to organize demos. This is thanks to the attacks with fists and baseball bats; the public presence of armed formations (which is legal in the USA); boycotts at their meet-ups in university campuses; propaganda through posters, stickers, graffiti, banners and our counter-information media; demonstrations, vigils and riots; work in coalition with other anti-racist people; and all the necessary research to reveal their identities and afterwards exposing them to ostracism by contacting their neighbors, employers, landlords, etc. **Another good thing is that at last pacifists have realized that the Black Bloc was right, that they need our structures and practices of self-defense [ed. – see *The Siege of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis*], and that struggles aren't a walk in the park but that they're dangerous (if we're doing it right).** What happens is that the majority had already forgotten that even Martin Luther King was armed.

And lastly, I'll mention the struggles against the oil and gas pipelines. The resistance in Standing Rock [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg16*] – it wasn't an occupation, because, it being indigenous land, the occupying force were the police and the workers – was very important. In the beginning they won the cancellation of the oil pipeline, but one of the first actions of Trump was ordering that the construction was completed. Nonetheless, the resistance inspired a dozen of encampments against other pipelines and similar projects and considerably raised the budget cost for their construction. Some projects were cancelled as soon as there was an announcement of starting a resistance encampment. Others continue in battle, like in West Virginia and Louisiana.

But in these moments, the strongest fight against a pipeline is being waged the territory of the Wet'suwet'en. Legally, they're located in the western province of Canada, but indigenous resistance does not recognize borders that were imposed by colonizers and the influence between Standing Rock and a few other encampments is more than clear. Currently, in many places there are blockades being carried out and other actions in solidarity.

The context is that in North America is undergoing an aggressive expansion of the exploitation of fossil fuels that is totally integrated between Canada and USA at the financial and infrastructural level.

ALB: Is there an uptick in syndicalist or self-organized worker action?

Peter: Yes, the IWW [ed. – *Industrial Workers of the World; previously a major force in 19th and early 20th century struggles and with much anarchist participation*] is growing quite a lot and they've won some labor conflicts through the organization of workers (normally in rather small places of work like restaurants), solidarity, strikes and public harassment. Same with the Solidarity Networks, the model which inspired the mutual aid groups here on the [Iberian] Peninsula.

Nonetheless, they're still anecdotal cases in a situation defined by the generalized decomposition of the working class as such. Out of those the few exceptions would be the teacher strikes – illegal in some states and partly on the margins of unions – that began some states like West Virginia and Kentucky and won some of their demands. Just now another teacher's strike has ended in Los Angeles. **It's a sign that syndicalist actions could regain strengths in some sectors, but I think that robotization has already ended that possibility in the majority of the industrial sector. And for it to take place in the service sector, there would have to be seen an immense change in society.** Generally, during the last decade, the strongest economic actions have been realized through sabotage and above all by blockages from the outside, not through organizing workers.

That's also the case with the IWW. The bulk of their action and their new wave of participation is directly related not with labor conflicts, but with its role in anti-fascist mobilization and prisoner support campaigns.

I've known of a few cases of informal resistance in Amazon's warehouses, an important sector in the new economy. It's all about small sabotages, the development and spread of tricks to evade the system of total control of the workers. I've not heard of a more robust action like strikes, like there has been in a couple of European countries where the Amazon model is met with more resistance.

ALB: The Women's March against Trump in 2017 was huge; did this represent a re-birth of self-organized feminism? Or was it in the hands of liberal women? Does an autonomous feminism exist in these times of hegemonic machismo (one only has to look at what type of TV series and cartoons come to us from there)?

Peter: The Women's March was a successful attempt by the Democrat Party to capture a great part of the rejection of Trump. I'd say that machismo is not hegemonic there. All of the press except for a single television channel has been constantly paying attention to all the micro-machismos in each of Trump's speeches, it was the press and the institutional society who launched #MeToo as a great movement. Yes, the Right managed to appoint a judge to the Supreme Court who was accused of multiple counts of misogynist aggression, but his candidature provoked a great public conversation in which the majority position was analyzing how men can use power to silence the assaulted persons. The judge won the process in the end only because the Republican Party still controlled the two houses of the legislature. Their support of the aggressor was one of the factors which lead to them losing one of the houses.

It must be understood that the Right has a declining support base, but the Republican Party is capable of sometimes winning a majority in government because they've rigged the electoral system and done gerrymandering [manipulating district boundaries to a party's advantage] very effectively. In various states, they keep the half of the posts in spite of only winning 40% of the votes (compared to 55% for the Democrats, for example).

Another factor is that Facebook and Youtube give much more of a platform to very fringe positions when they're from the far-right (especially if they're undercover right-wingers, misogynists and anti-leftists instead of explicit fascists). These are two structural factors that give quite a lot of power to the Right. But the Right is not hegemonic, it lost the culture war.

The new hegemony is still being sketched out, it's still unresolved. Obviously it's still a patriarchal society, but one that no longer tolerates openly macho attitudes. Machismo as a doctrine of supremacy has been replaced by egalitarianism inside supposedly neutral structures that are actually of patriarchal origin. Some ideologies that are gaining majoritarian positions with institutional support are the feminism of equality, trans-integrationism, the transformation of the queer – that has its origins in subversive practices, in being an anti-identity – into another consumerist identity protected by laws.

All of this is a very complicated matter. What is the relationship between a system of values that rejects prejudices and oppressions of the past-present, and the oppressive institutions that know very well how to manipulate society to get away with what they want? It can't be denied that the feminist, queer and trans movements have had a key role in changing the opinions and the conscience regarding questions of gender. We should not undervalue the fact that the comments that normalize rape or stigmatize any person that is not cis [*ed. – i.e., who doesn't identify with the sex they were assigned at birth*] and heterosexual are already badly looked upon by almost

everyone and result in grave consequences when public personalities voice them. These changes in perception can facilitate the growth of many autonomous struggles, but normally they end up absorbing and institutionalizing a part of said struggles while taking away the urgency or the polarization that animated their more radical visions and their awareness that the realization of their goals would mean the destruction of this current society.

ALB: Another focus of resistance has recently been mutual aid in solidarity, in the face of big natural catastrophes. It's an evident case of going where the State can't (and doesn't want) to reach, like Puerto Rico and others before (Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg31*]...) Can you go over what kind of people are involved in those projects?

Peter: In 2005, hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the incompetent and racist response by the State was evident. Anarchists from elsewhere and ex-Black Panthers and community activists from New Orleans set up some quick responses of support, rescue and medical first aid. A couple of these initiatives lasted and generated an important infrastructure for what is often forgotten in these disasters: long term support and organized resistance against the inevitable attempts by the capitalists and the government to take advantage of the resulting weakness of the neighborhoods. For example the “gentrification by God” that took place in New Orleans.

Many anarchists went by there, a lot has been said and written about the model and suddenly in the last two years, there has been a boom as a very frequent activity in anarchist circles: “mutual aid disaster relief” or “rescue through mutual aid”. Campaigns have been organized in agile and quick ways in the case of hurricanes, floods and forest fires.

It may surprise people living outside the USA that know it as the richest country in the world, but the majority of the country has very bad infrastructure – worse than than in Europe, for example – and very extreme poverty. It makes total sense, given that it's a country in which capitalism faces very few limitations. Furthermore, North America is suffering especially grave consequences due to climate change. More and stronger hurricanes each year, fires in California in 2018 that destroyed 767.000ha. of forest, that would be like one fourth of the surface of Catalunya. It would be poetic justice, but – of course – those that suffer are the poor and other species.

The responses in solidarity have been important, because they tend to be more agile and effective – especially from the perspective of poor people – than state responses, that prove that the State will not protect us from climate change and also help us understand that these disasters are not natural, they are aggravated by social and economic problems like pollution, poverty, bad construction, capitalist urbanism, the destruction of the integral habitats that used to protect communities in the cases of fires and hurricanes before capitalism.

They're also good preparation. Often during catastrophic disasters you can see a polarization. There occurs as much a collapse in state power, as a totalitarianism under states of emergency. Learning to survive amidst chaos, generalizing the measures for collective survival in solidarity and subverting state control would be very necessary activities if the entangled and synergistic crises of capitalism, of democracy and of the environment blow up at once.

ALB: In a society as atomized as the USA, how can community be built? Is there a community that lasts through time? One of the problems endemic to the Leftists over there has been the great instability of the people, moving to various cities throughout their lives. This is very noticeable in the activism. Are the Leftists reaching out to

the community? Or maybe on the contrary, the boom of Trump has come because the communities have politicized towards the Right because the Left did not exist there (or it was centered in the cities)? Is it so?

Peter: In the United States, communities don't exist, with very few exceptions and almost always between racialized people. Capitalism is permanently mobilizing to make sure no one grows roots. I would say that is the main problem that doesn't permit the possibility of revolutionary movements there.

The United States is a settler state, a state of colonizers like Canada, Argentina, Australia. In societies of this type, I'd say that it's impossible to speak of revolution without destroying whiteness, because in these countries capitalism only managed to be installed through the invention of the white race.

The hyper-atomization typical of there depends on the unlimited mobilization of capitalism, which depends on whiteness and colonization as a continuous process. None of these elements can be touched without touching the others.

ALB: Speak to us about the state of the anarchist movement in the USA. There's been an evident growth in the last years. We could always see its more spectacular face from here: disruptions, black blocks... Does North American anarchism have any possibilities of growing roots in any particular social body?

Peter: I'd say that currently in almost every movement and evermore sectors of the population, but social alienation makes any rooting very difficult. I believe that the main question is if the integrationist tendency wins in the upcoming years, which would favor the institutional Left, or the rupture-ist tendency wins, within which anarchism is increasingly serving as a pole.

ALB: Which new groups or anarchist scenes have emerged recently that are worth mentioning? Recently we've seen RAM, Indigenous Anarchist Federation, or the support groups for Rojava and the Kurdish struggle.

Peter: I think you just named them! The Revolutionary Anarchist Movement [*transl. – sic; Peter is referring to the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement, ALB erroneously links to Revolutionary Action Movement*] is a formal group that centers anti-racism in their analysis and the support of pro-prisoner and counter-police struggles. Increasingly there's more affinity between indigenous and anarchist struggles, with more traditional indigenous fighters also adopting some identification with anarchism [*ed. – see **Indigenous Anarchist Convergence – Report Back***], and increasingly there's more non-indigenous anarchists letting themselves be influenced by indigenous concepts and practices. There's also quite a lot of organized support in solidarity of the Kurdish people. Lastly, one could name the Black Rose / Rosa Negra federation, a bilingual platformist organization. But most of the movement in the country keeps on being either informal or linked to concrete local projects instead of agglomerating organizations.

ALB: One of the current debates on the Left in the West is class vs identity. Identity politics are deeply seated among the North American Left. How can one build an ample subject capable of defeating the big (and super-armed) elites?

Peter: There's a lot of debate with respect to that topic, given that the Left has taken advantage of a watered down anti-racism and feminism to attempt to change the masks of power while protecting its own structures. The identity politics that serve state power are essentialist and representative.

Instead of subverting the categorical lines between people, they reinforce them, insisting that each person's identity labels tell us more about that person than their personal experiences and

their actions. And in each fiefdom, there are grassroots politicians to speak in name of the totality of their category. These people are almost always university students and somehow have more power than many of the people of their category, but that power was granted by a social axis that's not often spoken of and that's not so visible, like for example formal education or family circumstances.

Identity politics as such and how I've described them are abundant in the university world and in NGOs, but also impact anarchist spaces. On one hand that's because many anarchists are university students or work for NGOs when they distance themselves from more radical ideas or they begin to need more economic stability. On the other hand it's because many anarchists participated in the development of discourses and practices against police racism or gender violence (to name two examples) which are then reappropriated by the institutional Left and transformed into practices which can be compatible with the judicial system and the logic of forgiveness and reform towards institutions and control or punishment towards people.

The fact that now the extreme Right has appropriated a lot of techniques from identity politics to create an "identity politics for white people" has shown to a lot of people that there's nothing radical about essentialism, that in fact it's also a foundation of fascism, of nationalism, of patriarchy itself. But people forget very quickly.

Look at how the Negri-ist Leftist position [*transl. – referring to Toni Negri*] – that neo-liberalism constituted an assault to the sovereignty of the nation-states – was captured and utilized with more effectiveness by the far-right. But nowadays the Left keeps on going with the lie that capitalism is counterpoised to the State or has surpassed the State because they have an ideological interest in covering up all their failed alliances with state power during the last two centuries and thus convincing people to once again go to the polls or to await a Blanquist-Leninist² revolution.

In the same manner, identity politics has interested defenders because it generates unquestionable positions of power within a movement. **But, to be honest, one must recognize that there doesn't exist any conflict between the concept of class warfare and identity politics.** The analysis parting from belonging to different economic classes was the first identity politics and it's not difficult to find Leninist pseudo-arguments or from even Marx himself that deny a critical interlocutor of any legitimacy, labeling their position as "petit-bourgeois" or as "lumpen" [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.5 pg11*].

Nowadays, identity politics don't speak so much of class because they've positioned themselves as alternatives to the workerist Left and unions. Currently it's a university practice and pro-capitalist; it's the feminism or the anti-racism of those that are making a career or preparing the electoral campaign and it benefits them to exploit the struggles of the common folk on the streets. But in any moment it's capable of reappropriating class discourses to clean up their image if that lack starts to become more criticized.

² Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known as Lenin, headed Soviet Russia 1917–1924 and the Soviet Union 1922–1924, developing a variant of Marxism known as Marxist-Leninism and establishing a one-party totalitarian state. In this so-called "workers' dictatorship", Lenin was inspired by earlier French socialist Louis Auguste Blanqui who had bid to dominate revolutionary moments in his day and treated the multitude of those subjected by the system as existing only to be led by an elite of revolutionaries, as a supposedly "transitional" stage following revolution before handing power back to the people. The experience of the Soviet Union (as well as North Korea, Cuba, China...) shows just how likely this "transition" is to actually pass and not just become the new status quo. Blanqui was admired by aspiring statist of various types; Benito Mussolini, before becoming the dictator of Italy, founded a fascist paper *Il Popolo d'Italia* with a Blanqui quote on its masthead: "He who has iron, has bread".

ALB: To conclude... is revolution possible in the USA?

In the next 5 years, I think most likely thing is a strong growth of the institutional Left and the continuation of the current development of technological dystopia.

Another eventuality, with quite a lot less likelihood but not outside of the possible, would be a civil war between racists and anti-racists.

The good thing is that revolution is always possible. The sad thing is that it depends on all of us, and nowadays, people raised in consumerist societies and socialized in the virtual environment of Facebook and Twitter aren't even capable of taking care of their own people. There's a lot of accumulated rage, so I see it as totally possible that an insurrection decides to burn it all. But for the moment I don't see that we're very capable of building something different to the shit that we know. I'll just as easily change my opinion when in the resolution of our conflicts, we learn to heal collectively instead of resorting to wishful thinking, to "this is an individual and private problem", to ghosting those who have dared to criticize us, or to the reproduction of judicial and Christian logic.

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