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Contributions Toward the Resumption of Hostilities

Porfido

June 2001

On the G8 summit at Genoa, everything has been said and more. Accustomed as we are to the deliberate media confusionism, nothing any longer surprises us; not even when it is written in black and white, coming from “authoritative sources”, that Osama bin Laden has enlisted armies of European nazi skins to kill the American president during the G8 meeting; or that there is a threat hanging over Genoa of aircraft under remote control by terrorists that are ready to indiscriminately bombard the city with cans of AIDS-tainted blood; or even that the CIA is preparing stink-bombs capable of rousing guilt feelings in demonstrators and so on.

It would be enough to make one laugh if one were not weeping.

Of course, immediately afterwards, one hears that the G8 meeting will be animated by exactly the same preoccupations as the protesters (but how?!), that the latter are doing a referendum to see if Italians are agreeable to seeing their “engagements” with the police, and that, though determined to block the G8, they are also determined in demanding that the state finance and host them in Genoa in order to do so (?!).

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Brazen lies beside horrendous truths, true and false together in an exhibition of the incredible, in an asphyxiating confusionism interested in sanctioning the surrender of any critical good sense menace in the face of the delirium in which we are. Reality must be increasingly *incomprehensible* in order to support a survival that is more *unbearable* every day.

The obsessive chattering over the G8 event, and particularly over the so-called “galaxy” of protesters, confirms the triumph of the *reversal* of reality and representation: it creates a situation in which demonstrators are to conform themselves to their media image, constructing their roles, behaviors and identities on the basis of its dictates.

In this way, the spectacle invades the movement of contestation to the consequences of production with its mechanisms and its ideology of fictitious “participation”, removing the possibility of a serious critique and of real conflict. Such invasions, however, come to be quite well accepted by that portion of the protesters candidly convinced of being able to *use the journalists* (rather than being used by them) in order to swell their ranks, slavering after the consensus that a great media success would inevitably give them. Here it is, then, the so-called “hard wing” of the Social Forum (the dreadful *Tute Bianche*) inflicting a disgraceful pseudo-advertising campaign (to the sound of referendums, feigned conflicts, interviews and services of every sort) upon the already tormented summer TV spectators, a campaign directed at enrapturing the consensus of the citizen-consumer. In this way, it only acts to sanctify the role of passive spectator before a world that is distant and managed by others. But isn't this really the alienation on which current power relationships are based? Isn't this what any force interested in overturning the premises of power would have to fight on the field?

“Protesters” of what then? What does this “anti-globalization movement” place into question?

Certainly not the grey banality of spectacular democracy, that rather, due to a lack of arguments, precisely needs any sham oppo-

zens is a mystification already denounced a century and a half ago by Marx and by the revolutionary critique. A movement that seriously wants to face the concept of changing life can do no less than affirm its extraneousness and hostility in the face of democracy and of every “progressive” ideology with intransigence, reconnecting itself at the same time to the proletarian project of overcoming class society and to the luddite and anti-industrial traditions.

In order to set out again on the unexplored path of the free, conscious and collective control of technical means and organizational forms that confirm the end of prehistory and the dawn of a community of master without slaves.

Porfido — Torino, July, 2001

sition that contributes to artificially maintaining a credibility that has been damaged by the global outbreak of catastrophes and suffering.

Nor, so much the less, is the necessity of the market economy placed into question. Rather it finds a mouthful of oxygen in seeing its (potential) opponents fighting for capitalism “with a human face” rather than for its abolition.

The bourgeois ideology of progress, the illusion of planetary well-being that is the fruit of the abundance of commodities and is guaranteed by technological and scientific rationalism, has now shown its true self: its results, its disasters, are before everyone’s eyes — in our bodies, on our plates... There is certainly no need to list them (if a need is felt for something today, it is certainly not more *information*, or *counter-information* as it may be).

With every innovative function exhausted, nothing remains but the despotic reproduction and administration of a social organization that, *despite everything*, must go forward.

The triumphalism that accompanied the spectacle of mercantile abundance at its dawn is finished, and all that is left is a world that is going to the dogs on all fronts, with a caste of functionaries to govern its agony. They don’t tell us that we are in the best of all possible worlds anymore — because that would be ridiculous — but simply that no one else is now capable of running such a battered planet. After having destroyed every form of community and sterilized all human relationships, after having expropriated all of our awareness and know-how, after having transformed us into appendages of an infernal and incomprehensible technological apparatus that are incapable of interacting with nature, our own bodies and other individuals of our species, they tell us that all that remains to us at this point is to trust our fate and the fate of the planet to technology (that is, to Capital) to resolve an emergency that we can neither understand nor, much less, confront. This is what is meant by the affirmation the “history is finished”, which

therefore means nothing more than that we must bow our heads and obey,... otherwise, the truncheon falls.

The signs of crisis accumulate to the point that the spectacle itself is not able to avoid speaking of its own ruin.

From the moment of its triumph, Capital has been able to convert the problems of management into which it fell — originating in crises, in resistance, in contradiction — into points of strength for a further affirmation of its class power. Today, in the face of the impossibility of hiding the gravity of a planetary disaster (ecological, epidemic, of life) that has no precedent, Capital finds the ultimate justification for its domination in the harmfulness that it has itself produced.

Really, the spreading “anxiety”, provoked by the prospects of a future governed in a blatantly authoritarian manner through the dictates of a global economy, is taken in tow by Capital and its supporters who, dressed in the costumes of ecologists and humanitarians, promote themselves as the only ones holding the means for confronting the impending catastrophe.

Time and time again, the general crisis of existence is passed off as crises of particular sectors, disconnected from the totality of industrial production and its basic contradictions. The unavoidable consequences of a mode of production that is structurally polluting, poisonous and productive of imbalances are made to pass for temporary incidents caused by poor management that therefore demand corrective interventions by the state. It is needless to say that, since such “adjustments” are themselves the harbingers of new harm, they will render further technological-bureaucratic “remedies” necessary in their turn...and this becomes a business called “reconstruction”, “regulation”, “conversion”, “reclamation”. Not being able to produce anything good, capitalism reproduces by living off its trash (the material as well as the ideological trash) and involving everyone in sharing its disastrous responsibility (various assemblies, catalytic converters, voluntary work, etc.).

This is the only way that Capital manages to put off the inevitable resolution of the conflict of classes, postponing the collapse of an obsolete and suicidal social organization and causing the entire human species to sink with it.

In such a scenario, where all human relations, social activities, the times and spaces of life are oppressively contaminated by separation and isolation, any opposition that is not moved by a hostility against the industrial *way of life* that is openly irreconcilable will only be a contribution to Capital keeping it up to date. The supposed autonomy of a civil society that would control the choices of power, guarantee a greater democracy and impose rules, controls and precautions, is the ultimate ideological lie formulated to democratically legitimate an ever greater artificialization of life. In the demands for fair and jointly responsible trade, for global rights and citizenship rights, for sustainable development, for a redistribution of market-based “wealth”, the absence of autonomy is revealed. And this constitutes the most serious limit of a movement that, even in its most violent manifestations, doesn’t go beyond reproaching the state and Capital for not being democratic enough and for paying too little attention to human needs.

But, no matter how infested with “reformist” and “progressive” ideology, the movement of contestation that is going on opens the possibility of a renewal of revolutionary “discourse”, because the “questions” posed, as opposed — for now — to the answers given, are objectively universal.

The contradiction inherent to capitalist society is always the same one, still unresolved, of the alienation of human beings from their production. This is the first real harm that presupposes and determines all the rest. It makes no sense to denounce the individual harms produced by capital if one does not denounce their historical cause: the separation of human beings from their creative activity and therefore from their world and their kind. Democracy is the principle state form of this separation, and its supposed neutrality, the idea that it is an inescapable system potentially usable by citi-