

*ALL ANTI-COMMUNISTS
ARE SWINE*

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



“There is a new climate of intellectual opinion in France—a spirit of anti-Marxism and anti-Sovietism that will make it difficult to mobilize significant intellectual opposition to US policies.”- The CIA on the rise of postmodernist philosophers, from “France: Defection of the Leftist Intellectuals”

The current tendency of thought in the United States associated with, and giving backing to, a current of identity politics we call “identity opportunism” rests on a theoretical basis we heuristically label “postmodernism”. It is a heuristic because, as various mystifiers and eclectics claim in defense of postmodernist thought, it is impossible to pin down what Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Baudrillard, et al. “really meant”. Postmodernism as such is a moving target, able to slip and duck any attacks made against it.

Indeed, postmodernism as a tendency is difficult to chart and categorize or concretize and historicize precisely because of its diffuse status. One can trace the movements of, say, Freudian thought through its various reaction-formations, fidelities, half-fidelities, and eclectic watering-down, and the same with Marxism.

However, by proceeding historically we can determine a heuristic understanding of postmodernism and its movements, gestures, and class stand.

While we will expand more on this process below, first we claim that our current iteration of postmodernism moved into the United States via early and often sloppy translations of French critical theorists and the theorists of the Frankfurt School. From here the academic machine of the US churned up these theories and produced “identity politics” which, due to the strength of the US bourgeois cultural edifice has re-imported these now-Americanized theories back to continental Europe. Viewing postmodernism as a heuristic allows one to trace the effects of certain sometimes aligned, sometimes apparently opposed intellectual interventions or processes of labeling of the normative space of thought and theory which together are almost entirely outside of or even hostile to the proletarian political sphere.

Introduction

Postmodernism emerged as a rejection of classical liberalism, but is, in essence, anti-Marxist: it seeks to reject the kernel of truth in the Age of Enlightenment and turn us back to the shadows of metaphysics. If we turn back to the 1950s we can begin to shed a bit of light on the rise of this trend, and on why imperialist bourgeois forces from the US like the Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie foundations all favored and financed “the behavioral approach” instead of studying social relations as a product of the relations to production. This shift to the “behavioral world” attempts to displace the location of central social contradictions – contradictions are no longer to be understood as stemming from the struggle between mostly fixed classes, but instead from an amorphous mash of interpersonal contradictions, a perfectly tailored fit for the US consumer. Now the issues were not viewed as between systems, but between individuals and small groups. This approach was unable to gain a firm foothold and as humanity entered the 1960s, socialist revolution continued to break new ground alongside the raging movements of national liberation. The cold hard fact of politicized, economic crisis internal to

capitalist-imperialism would further postpone a significant embrace of the postmodernist diffusion of “power”. Nonetheless, the ruling class ideology must always find new and impressive (but still metaphysical) ways to rationalize a shift in blame, doing away with the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

From this point we must touch on existentialism, which emerged as an attack on rationalism, against both the age of enlightenment and German classic philosophy as well as attacking pre-Marxist materialism. Like behavioral theory, it locks onto the individual and centers on the question of choice divorced in many ways from circumstance or even objective social conditions— a philosophy of extreme individualism. While both behavioral theory and existentialism never accomplished hegemony, they were driven by the same bourgeois impulse which would propel postmodernism forward in the climate of capitalist restoration and the so-called “end of history”. The creative distortions that would finally stick can be seen, for example, in Derrida, who subordinated science to a mere literary act, and Foucault, who pontificated about the diffusion of power. In this way, the same hyper individualist core was captured in the new shell of postmodernism, even though this term itself was rejected by the majority of postmodernist trail blazers (Here, one is reminded of Lenin: “Can anything more shallow be imagined than an opinion of a whole tendency that is based on nothing more than what the representatives of that tendency say about themselves?”). It is no shock that thinkers like Paul de Man, a figure critical to the spread of postmodernism in the US (who also oversaw the dissertations of leading “postcolonial”* theorist Gayatri Spivak) would posthumously be discovered as a former Nazi collaborator; they are but soldiers on a shifting landscape of individualist, bourgeois ideology.

*[NB: Postmodernism/postcolonialism/poststructuralism/post-Marxism are all strands of the essentially the same metaphysics, here we use postmodernism as the umbrella terminology.]

Likewise, we can hardly be surprised that in a world where the socialist revolutions have been reversed, and capitalism has been fully restored post 1976, that a certain malaise has set in. This is a logical inevitability. This historic depression provides

ample space for the cultivation of a dejected cynicism and outright pessimistic approach which rejects revolution and the principal task of conquering power. Power itself becomes a specter, divorced of class character and reduced to a corrupted and corrupting influence. There is no way out of the misery for postmodernism. Everyone without power is a victim chained to a miserable existence competing with one another to have their unique oppression recognized and any talk of uniting, let alone conquering power, places you in the category of the now corrupted oppressor. The haves and the have-nots become a stasis: one does not turn into its opposite, and people can only 'switch places' in a very basic transactional sense.

The malaise caused by the decline of the revisionist social-imperialist Soviet Union as a spurring force for postmodernism was not lost on the CIA, who understood its ideological use value in their holy war against Communism. They understood quite well its inherently anti-Marxist nature. They often have a better grasp on the determinacy of internal contradictions than people who label themselves revolutionary; they know that to attack the left you must do it from within the left. In imperialist countries, academia and college campuses have historically produced Marxists, and Marxism maintained its clear presence. While academic and campus Marxism is less threatening than the guerrilla, both are dialectically related. To its credit, the CIA correctly understood the war of position, not as many revisionists like to grasp it, but as a battlefield where intrigue and strategic planning become necessary in conquering the university trench (and hence the intelligentsia) away from Marxism, or even away from simply encouraging the study of Marx. This is an effort to frame Marx as somehow outdated or incorrect, as nothing but a historic curiosity, in spite of the fact that his analysis is still useful and his predictions are still coming to fruition.

To understand how self-proclaimed Marxists worked their way into the campuses in France we can examine history. As waves of revolutionary energy and ideas swept the political landscape they were followed by decline and demoralization. The Communist Party of France (PCF) led the struggles against fascist occupation and earned a great amount of prestige for this struggle. While capitalist ideology remains dominant in the superstructure including education, Communist ideals had

become far more popular as it was mainly Communists who stood off against the Nazi horde. However, as the PCF began its degeneration into revisionism and following Moscow, the events of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution would resonate with the non-Party students and inspire them in great acts of rebellion, culminating in the May 1968 rebellion in Paris. Many intellectuals would come out in open support of this.

What follows was, to be brief, the lack of a clear and highly organized vanguard Party with established mass links, which doomed the rebellion and allowed an opening for the dejected sometimes former Marxists to enter a period of cynicism. This cynicism would create the conditions for the rise of postmodernism. These were conditions the CIA could act upon.

The CIA has a long history of cultural manipulation and holds a firm strategic position in the cultural combat trench. They have an advantageous position due to bourgeois control of the press, education, and entertainment. This gave the CIA an advantage as agents of the bourgeois class, providing a lot of leverage in literary, artistic, and academic institutions. The CIA had since 1947 operated a division known as the Propaganda Assets Inventory. Through this they would carry out the publication of literary journals and make interventions in art, mobilizing people like Nelson Rockefeller to promote abstract modern art against Soviet Socialist Realism by utilizing sometimes former Communist painters and the likes of Rothko and Pollock to remove the face of struggle from the art and demonstrate what Rockefeller would call “free enterprise painting”. Due to these paintings being expensive to transport and display they became an ideal form to represent the capitalist struggle against proletarian art. With this in their arsenal they would make similar interventions in philosophy, by utilizing sometimes former Marxists against Marxism itself in the period of morale decline post '68 France. They would set out to translate the works of the French Philosophers and import them to the United States.

Revisionism itself plays a part as well, as a fretful and disgraced actor on this stage. Having followed the revisionist social imperialist Soviet Union, the PCF had squandered its hard earned revolutionary prestige post WWII. It failed to make use

of the crisis in '68 and in the interests of maintaining its parliamentary position, even went so far as to exercise its influence against the youth in revolt. It used its control in the unions (CGT mainly) to oppose the strikes and in some cases even sent cadres to pull people off of barricades at a point when the strikes and rebellions posed the greatest threat to the ruling class. France had reached a critical point and the revisionists fully realized their potential as traitors to our class and its mission. This without a doubt assisted in germinating the post '68 funk of demoralization and cynicism. Many incorrect interpretations presented themselves as analysis for what went wrong. This period was marked with a further degeneration as Soviet Social Imperialism would compete with US imperialism to the detriment of the third world. This crisis would produce the French New Philosophers who can only be understood as the archetypal trendy and eclectic anti-Communists. These philosophers would appear on popular television programs where they would propagate their views and reactionary ideology which neatly framed itself as progressive. These ideas would be translated (sometimes mis-translated) by the CIA and used as a weapon domestically. In this biting of the pear, the pear has been changed – it has now undergone a mutation and is being exported back to Europe, all in line with the nature of a commodity under imperialism.

One Divides into Two

To begin our closer examination, we must proceed with the great world-shaking junctures in mind with which all serious thought must grapple – first, there is the Paris Commune, 1917, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and the Peruvian People's War. Then, there is the so-called "Fukuyama Consensus" on the end of history and the final domination of capitalism after the "collapse" of the revisionist and social-imperialist Soviet Union, and, especially pertinent for our continental theorists under examination here, there is the question of the Parisian revolt of May 1968.

Alain Badiou stands out among the French theorists of May '68 as a defender of the events specifically along the lines of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (ML-

MZT, though he interchangeably calls this ML and, mistakenly, MLM).

“How many people have we not seen enraptured by the fact that ‘no one could have foreseen May ’68’! I even suspect that the ascent of anti-Oedipus and all the fabrications about the pure mysteries of Desire take off from this question. The question is, strictly speaking, stupid. Can one imagine a ‘foreseen’ May ’68? Foreseen by whom? Who does not see that the unforeseeable is a constitutive, essential component of the historical power of May ’68? To baptize this unforeseeable element ‘irruption of desire’ does not even have the soporific properties of opium. This baptism, however, is not innocent. It machinates the stage entrance of the irrational. Unforeseeable, desiring, irrational: follow your drift, my son, and you will make the Revolution” (“In the Margins of *Anti-Oedipus*” 173).

Above, the question of the foreseen and the unforeseen is Deleuze and Guattari’s [also referred to in this essay as “D+G”] theoretical movement—outlined here by Badiou—from 1) the unforeseeable act of rebellion, 2) through the mystified idea of supposedly liberatory Desire, to 3) the irrational. This movement quite directly voids Mao’s scientific formulation that “It is right [just, rational] to rebel”, that the masses make revolution via a contradictory unity—guaranteed by the mass line method of communist leadership—with the Party.

In “The Fascism of the Potato”, his review of D+G’s 1976 text *Rhizome*, Badiou links the absence of a true French Communist Party during the events of May ’68 to the formation of a spontaneous “pseudo-vanguard” of the intelligentsia who thus lead a revolt against the “pseudo-centres” of the bourgeois order, i.e. the thoroughly revisionist French Communist Party (PCF) and the PCF’s unions, etc (*The Adventure of French Philosophy* 191). Badiou claims that “The absence [of the proletarian class point of view] at bottom pleased these intellectuals” and that these intellectuals in the absence of proletarian leadership “forged in haste the concepts with which the organic weakness of the situation could be changed into so many apparent strengths” (192). Here precisely D+G come in with their talk of the “storm of the multiple against the pretensions of the One” (ibid).

The “One” which the multiple attacked in ’68, according to Badiou, was the revisionist mis-leadership of the PCF, but this attack precisely needed to re-constitute the proletarian movement for power around a new “One”, i.e. an anti-revisionist ML-MZT party. However, Deleuze and Guattari move in *Rhizome*—and elsewhere in *Anti-Oedipus* as briefly discussed above—to void the “One” which could suture the mass revolt into revolution precisely through an attack on the dialectical principle that “One divides into two”. For D+G, one does not divide into two, but rather “One becomes two”, which then becomes four, etc. via the process of rhizomatic growth. In this view, there is no politics, no central contradiction which creates movement via the temporary unity of opposites – this is the great and central trick of D+G, to posit the “One” as non-contradictory and monolithic and thus show only multiplicity, only contingency and thus no necessity.

Void of politics, the rhizome grows about apparently attacking power-as-such. Where does this power-as-such reside if it is not the power of one class over another, though? In desire, in “groups and individuals”, and in other vague and unscientific niceties. It is interesting to note that this attack on proletarian class power coincides with an attack on Freud, the great scientist and thinker of sex and the unconscious. D+G say that their rhizomatic politics give no guarantee against fascism, that “Groups and individuals contain microfascisms just waiting to crystallize”, and that the rhizomatic movement can lead to unforeseeable consequences from “Oedipal resurgences to fascist concretions”; thus, they strip the Freudian concept of the Father and the concept of fascism of their science and posit both as inherent to... whom, what? Desire, it would seem, which nevertheless “irrupts” against an equally mystified power-as-such.

Here comes in the famous and abused “interpellation”, as Badiou calls it, of Lacan against the student left of 1969 – “What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one”. This famous rebuke of the rebels of France takes on a zombie life now, in the US via Zizek et. al (including the contemporary writings of Badio as we shall discuss below!) who for their commendable efforts in overcoming base anti-communism and attacking economism and tailism still offer only what Badiou called in 1976 “the revenge of Pompidou’s parliamentarianism” by not positing the “new One”, the Communist Party. Indeed, Lacan’s statement could be read as a

tongue-in-cheek reference to the need for the formation of a new Party to suture the “hysteria” (the hysteric in Lacan looks for a master) of mass uprising.

All Anti-Communists are Swine

Let’s turn to another case study of the anti-communism of postmodernism.

A few years before Badiou’s polemics against D+G, in 1960, the great Frankfurt School theorist Theodor Adorno published his critique of Georg Lukács’ late work *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* in the US Army-founded and CIA-backed journal *Die Monat*. The general vacillations and revisionisms of Lukács are worthy of study in their own right, but for now we will only briefly focus on Adorno’s CIA-funded critique insofar as this critique fits nicely with the CIA and US Imperialist aesthetic-artistic-intellectual front against socialism.

In his editorial essays for the Verso text *Aesthetics and Politics* Frederic Jameson separates the “Cold War” anti-communism of Adorno from the Frankfurt School theory of the totalized “world system”, which Jameson correctly diagnoses as a foreclosure of politics. But we should not be so hasty to draw this distinction between an apparently “outmoded”—i.e. now that the Cold War is over that era’s specific rhetoric of anti-communism has lost its potency—form of anti-communism and the analysis of the “world system” which forecloses politics itself. We are arguing here for a continuity between anti-communism and postmodernism which pushes as common sense, as its background guiding thought, that communism as the real movement to overthrow the present state of things failed, is a failure, and will fail.

Without even a close reading, the CIA would have loved Adorno for his many throw-away jabs at socialist realism as trash, art-less, devoid of life or experimentation, devoid of soul, etc., and at the omni-present repressive commissar of the Eastern Bloc – the last of these, according to Adorno, apparently watching over Lukács like an obscene superego making him enjoy his own bad prose (*Aesthetics and Politics*

154). Here is someone quite useful for the US imperialists – an ostensibly leftist, well-respected scholar who writes of dialectics, and of freedom of the artistic pursuit, of proletarian art, and of the absolute evil of the party-form, of the twisted intellectual perversity of socialism, etc.

Our imagined CIA interlocutor or paid editor must have been even more delighted when they moved beyond the surface to Adorno's content, as he upholds against the supposedly philistine notions of Lukács the internal laws of artistic forms as mediators/processors of objective reality which thus produce a pure negativity in relation to the objective. What room does class have to enter as determinant in this magical formula of the purely negative critique of the objective world via the natural critique-machine of art? The objective world for Adorno is totally managed and bereft of contradiction that could move it *except* via the pure negativity emerging from the artistic mediation of this totality like a gift from God in the Gnostic tradition of pure spirit.

In a totally reified and totally mediated and controlled (by whom? etc.) world, Mao's great scientific condensation that "It is right [rational] to rebel" must be itself totalitarian trash, nonsense devoid of soul! For all of Lukács' flaws (on which much is already written including the useful parts of Adorno's essay now in question) he was struggling along with the other great artistic thinkers of our class for a political art and criticism of art, a project in service to the revolutionary project of the proletariat. Lukács' successes (attempting to delineate a socialist realism that embraces contradiction and the continuation of class struggle under socialism, for instance) and his failures (casting out Freud as a fascist, for instance) are all in service to this project, while Adorno's legacy of the "autonomous artwork", the freedom of play, and the totalized immovable society stand—at least in these debates on art here referenced—as so many bourgeois trinkets consignable to the waste bin of history by the revolutionary proletariat as it searches for an art in service to itself.

If you want to know the taste of a pear

It is important in our historical account to remember that the set of thinkers imported into the US from France and Germany we label “postmodernist” are not homogenous and contain contradictions internal to their own thought as well as differences between thinkers as opposed as Foucault and Lacan, Deleuze and Adorno (and many of these thinkers have directly polemicized each other cf. the famous polemic between Derrida and Foucault on madness). Indeed, we must proceed through the movement of the dialectic which unfolds into truth-content or essence this set of thought as and precisely through its movements from—excluding the Frankfurt school—post-’68 France to the US academy, then back to France as a “new return”. The mechanisms and questions which produced this theoretical set in Europe—debates on proletarian art, debates on the lessons and Truth of May ’68—were left behind as Francois Cusset argues in *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. The theoretical set was then shoved ill-fittingly into the American reactionary field of “conservatives versus multiculturalists” (*How Foucault... 7*).

There are ironies here, but it is the irony of the dialectic which unfolds Truth in the alien sphere, as for instance the Truth of MLM unfolded in Peru as the Fukuyama consensus coalesced itself.

Cusset reminds us that the importation and interpretation of specific translations of our authors and theories in question was met by a spectacle of shock and academic and media debate ringing from the hollow chambers of the “Left” and the obscene reactionaries both. In fact, this set called “French Theory” or post-structuralism or postmodernism was in large part constituted by this spectacle. This American spectacle of left-and-right, “conservative versus multiculturalist” debate was toothless in terms of its impact on the masses and their need for a proletarian, communist party as it dodged the question of power and entered the fascistic terrain of “culture wars”, and here in the 1980s and 1990s produced “distinctly American” usage of postmodernism to call out the concept of the “Author” and the “Meaning” of a text as fallacies, universalism and reason as imperialist, Western Chauvinist, or hold-overs from European Enlightenment despotism, etc. (ibid 8).

More recently in Sarkozy-era France, the re-importation of this now Americanized postmodernism has led to a pseudo-fascist backlash against “cultural relativism” and “the decline of Western values”, etc. (ibid xix) by Sarkozy and his ilk while, simultaneously or just before, the old radicals and theorists have died, disappeared, or become neo-con hacks (Bernard-Henri Levi for instance) of the very anti-totalitarian school—or logical conclusion of it—that Deleuze and Guattari’s subtle libidinal or desirous “politics of the potato” put forward.

It is no great leap or piece of ultra-left bombast to link the identarian Right to the identarian Left. In fact, our very own intellectual historian Cusset here, in this situation of identarian Right backlash, calls for precisely the “libidinal” opening up of texts to multiply rebellion against the canon, the “one-sided meaning” of the text, the Event, and the One. Hopefully by now we can see through this anti-dialectical trickery masquerading as radical critique of the “totalitarian”. The reader should note, also, that this usage of the term “libido” is a hazy metaphor built around the Freudian libido which itself is far from “liberatory” or opposed in-itself to codification, science, the Master-Signifier, Truth, etcetera).

Le Vide Bourgeois et le terrorisme obscurantiste

Let us change pace somewhat to turn to a case study in the transfer of French Theory (as it came to be known via this very process of transfer) to the United States and back out again into the world in a new form: *Triple Canopy*, a critical and aesthetic theory journal published an article in May 2012 called “international Art English” which made quite a splash for its sharp analysis of the linguistic trends of art theory and the art show press release as an artifact in itself. The piece traces the obscure, ultra-high-brow, vaguely scientific-feeling language of these artifacts to the 1970s art criticism magazine *October*, whose editors turned to the post-structuralists of France in the hopes of finding a rigorous, scientific language to discuss art — Deleuze, Derrida, Baudrillard, etc.

Translating their works in a flat, fancy, affected bourgeois way, the editors of *October* created a new high-brow English imbued with the form or sense of scientificity without any of science's explanatory power or content. For instance, "*le vide*" becomes "the Void" (always with a capital "V" for emphasis) rather than merely "emptiness" or "empty space" — "*le néant*" is must better translated as "the void". Here the *terrorisme obscurantiste* enters a subset of the bourgeois linguistic world in such a banal, indeed in such a *voided* way that only the chase after capital—and social capital—could spur.

So while Adorno may have gone down the wrong road in his search for an art and theory in service to the proletariat (high modernism, Schoenberg, Abstract Expressionism, etc) the Americanized bourgeois parasitism of this road is altogether more cynical, in service to no class even in intention — and thus ends in service to the bourgeoisie (though with Adorno we must remember that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions). The editors of the ironically-named *October* magazine muck about only with the affect or the aesthetic of radical-ness ("radicality" they may say in the art world) in a precisely postmodernist manner. So while Foucault et. al scorned the label "post-modernist", the transfer of their form of thought into a new essence in itself is postmodernism.

As the *Triple Canopy* essay describes, the high-brow language of "International Art English" puts a veneer of radicalism onto every art installation or gallery showing, where every piece "interrogates", "troubles", "questions", intersections between X or Y, with the nebulous concept of "space" often filling in one of these variables.

Le Corbusier wanted new, brutally beautiful apartment buildings for the masses? Rip it to Los Angeles and build new, sloping and beautifully brutal office buildings and gentrifier condos. The scientism of Althusser's "problematic" (noun) becomes the call-out of the militant "He's problematic" (adjective). Again, form becomes a new essence, class project is voided, and the intelligentsia struggling to serve the proletariat becomes the intelligentsia serving themselves.

Lenin lived, Lenin lives, and Lenin will live forever!

We hope the reader will approach all these detours with generosity.

We must now return to the Badiou of post-Sarkozy France, this time as a case-study of the effects of the “re-importation”, as we are calling it, of Americanized postmodernism on the leftist intellectual. By 2010 when he produced his essay “The Idea of Communism” and the concomitant academic conferences and Verso texts, Badiou had liquidated the Party as the advanced wing and—to mix metaphors—the spine of the proletariat. This liquidation is into the form of the spectral mass party, or, even more formless than the mass party, into *the sense or scene of solidarity* – say between French students and immigrant workers meeting in a banlieue bookshop which thus gives rise to a formless spirit or Idea of communism. This maneuver by Badiou thus liquidates the hard-core, disciplined organization needed to overthrow the bourgeoisie and institute the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Indeed, the dictatorship of the proletariat, says Badiou, is a reaction-formation to the oxymoron of the “communist state” supposedly because 1) under communism there are no classes and thus no state—a basic Marxist truth elaborated clearly by Lenin—but also 2) because communism is at base an Idea, an ideological “projection” via the Imaginary (ideology itself?) of the Real of politics into the symbolic of history (*The Idea of Communism Vol. 1* 4,5). Thus Badiou throws out the materialist basis for the existence of socialism, which is a real, contradictory or “checker-board” state or process in the unfolding of class struggle. This is because history is the foreclosure of possibility and the obscuring or resolution of contradiction – the reader may be reminded of the Deleuzian mystification of “One divides into two” via the rhizomatic “One becomes two”.

Badiou now claims that we must no longer “adjectify” communism into such formations as a communist party, a communist militant, etc. This “adjectification” would for Badiou entail a “subordination of Truths to their historical meaning” (ibid 6). So again we come back to the “rupture” which produces subjects of the Event—but not communist militants or communist parties!—but from what are we rupturing? The bourgeois state of class rule?

But the state for Badiou is not a state of class rule, not any more. Now it is that which sets the limits of possibility as such which the communist Idea must break open. With the class character of the state and communism as a movement thus stripped down we are again reminded of the desirous Deleuzian revolution Badiou himself railed against 30 years earlier. Does a communist party or the socialist state merely define the limits of possibility-as-such as well? If so, we have thrown out revolution and accepted the Totalitarianism power-as-such thesis of the anarchists and our postmodernists!

By or in not embracing Marxism-Leninism-Maoism Badiou has let slip his prior Marxism-Leninism. MLM shows that militarization of the Party plus concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution leading to the armed sea of the masses propels us from socialism to communism, an “event” *within* the state which is the contradictory unity of the Party and the masses.

Nevertheless, Badiou does call the Event of the Idea of communism the creation of the state that withers itself away (ibid 9) and also links Khrushchev’s denunciation of the “cult of personality” to the rise of the above-mentioned New Philosophers “a decade later” (ibid 10) – as in a criticism-self-criticism session we must tally up Badiou’s service along with his disservice. However, we must view this Leninist gesture towards the socialist state as only a half-fidelity to revolutionary science, as Badiou says that the New Break of the Idea via an Event *cannot be planned for*, or that our plans are always retroactive. If so, then what is the launching of the Protracted People’s War by a party? Were the PCP betraying their fidelity to the Idea of communism by planning and then initiating scientifically the very Event or events which would lead Peru to socialism and that gave the world proletariat a heightened form of its ideology (MLM)? Compare this to Badiou’s more dialectical conception of revolutionary theory and practice elaborated in his work from the 1970s.

In fact, it would seem we are back in Delueze and Guattari’s territory of the 1970s again, where the intelligentsia as the would-be “pseudo-vanguard” substitute themselves for the proletarian vanguard the only way they can – by enshrining weakness and dis-organization as strength and as “the new forms of organization

that our situation calls for” and other such platitudes. So Badiou lists as equally interesting “experiments” the Polish Solidarity movement, the Iranian Revolution, the *Organisation Politique* in France, the Zapatista movement, and the Protracted People’s War in Nepal, as if these events are in any way structurally or historically homologous! And this concession to postmodernism—here made perhaps predictably through a gesture backwards into historical oblivion and forgetfulness—is precisely why Badiou ends his essay by claiming we are back in the 19th century and thus need to begin anew to avoid the dogmatism and horrors of the 20th century “adjectification” of the Idea of communism – dogmatism and horror? As if the masses have not stormed the skies time and again and thus given us our ideology, our revolutionary science! The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution shows *tout court* according to Badiou that the Party and the socialist state as such are overcome—not that they must be overcome, or any other lesson, but just that these events happened once and thus reveal the inherent awful-ness of the party-form, etc. A subjectivist error of the first magnitude.

Let us spend some more time on Badiou’s “coming full circle” by turning to a more thorough examination of his idea of the three “sequences” of the Idea of communism as explained in *The Meaning of Sarkozy*. This revolving back is based on the a-historical, idealist notion of the 3 sequences of the Idea of communism which is a mechanical understanding of historical development of class struggle. All that was gained in moving from the second (Russian Revolution up to the triumph of revisionism over the Soviet Union and China) to the third (current) sequence was the knowledge that the Party-form and the socialist state *don’t work* because they didn’t work – how? He doesn’t say. Or he cannot say, because to make an analysis of the second sequence would be to make a M-L-M analysis of the 20th century and thus to present a real, dangerous (to the enemy) politics for the 21st century following Chairman Gonzalo and the PCP’s synthesis of M-L-M in the Peruvian People’s War.

Instead of presenting and contending with the internal contradictions exposed or generated by the Russian and Chinese revolutions as they progressed down the twists and turns of the socialist road, Badiou doubles back to the old “totalitarian thesis” of the bloated and overly-confident bourgeois intellectuals — “The party, in

fact, appropriate for insurrectionary or military victory over weakened reactionary powers, proved ill-adapted for the construction of a state of proletarian dictatorship in Marx's sense, in other words a state organizing the transition towards a non-state..." and "... The state principle was inherently tainted and in the end ineffective" relying on "the deployment of extreme and bloody police violence" (*The Meaning of Sarkozy* 109).

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism can speak of the armed sea of the masses, of concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution, etc, in contending with the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but in his haste to speak of a rupture between his second and third sequences of the communist Idea, Badiou must flatten out the contradictions of the Party so that it is constructed merely as an instrument for taking power, and not one which organizes line struggle and the revolutionary violence of the masses. There is left to take from this second sequence only police violence, and then capitalist restoration.

To put the issue another way using artistic metaphors which can perhaps allow us to draw out more clearly the connection of Badiou's coming full circle, as we've called it, to the issue of postmodernism: if the Party is the screen of the painting or the narrative, then the postmodernist posits the Thing-Itself behind the screen which is merely the outward-presenting phenomenon. Whether this thing-itself is the Void, pure contingency, the organic Multiplicity, it attempts to "fill in the gap" of the modernist artwork, film, or literature which itself presents "merely" the screen, or the screen itself as the Thing-Itself, containing contradiction and thus allowing movement. The Party is the party of one dividing into two, while the postmodernist conception of the Party is of the party which presents itself as capable of taking power, but which conceals behind its screen or its presentation the void or contingency of "police terror". So, again, while Badiou attempts to preserve the usefulness of the past of communism (his second sequence), he does so precisely in order to rupture from it, thus throwing out materialism with the bathwater.

Conclusion

Postmodernism proves to be an intoxicating distraction which refuses to focus on the core of oppression and instead focuses on the dispersed items of the periphery.

In the US, the ideas spewing from postmodernism, i.e. identity politics, intersectionality, queer theory, radical feminism, emotional labor, “sex work”, horizontal organizational principles, and the rejection of the vanguard Party, etc., have been a great boon to division of the class and the people into small hostile camps operating on a diffused conception of power, seeing interpersonal struggle as the main avenue for social justice. Beyond dividing our class, this framework presents the world in a way where the bourgeoisie cannot be contested ideologically, so that capitalism becomes natural, static, and immovable. This permanence of capitalism holds a real danger in that diffused power and scapegoating among the people pose a powerful recruitment mechanism for class collaboration and ultimately fascism which can give itself a neat disguise by being the right wing critics of postmodernism. Fascists are able to identify their base in this country—dejected and demoralized whites—and they no longer have to compete with progressive movements in terms of recruitment. They can build appeal based on the real defects of the postmodernist approach and attract the intermediate to a backward position as postmodernism is bent on alienating the masses who, now divided, become susceptible ideologically more than ever to fascist views.

Fascist intellectuals like Jordan Peterson have made good use of postmodernism in the classic fascist scapegoating maneuver by claiming that postmodernism is Marxism and has infected campuses. In reality it is anti-Marxism but this is inconsequential to the likes of Peterson who, also in the fascist tradition, relies on slippery ideology and eclecticism, borrowing from sources more akin to postmodernism than Marxism himself. This substitution of a thing for its opposite is fascist metaphysics and he relies on both Carl Jung and Friedrich Nietzsche to do this, claiming western culture as the Übermensch. Nietzsche himself is the philosophical godfather of fascism and a big influence on postmodernist thought.

Trends like anarchism and revisionism cannot meaningfully compete with or oppose postmodernism, as it has reached near total hegemony among left-celebrities they cannot challenge it without losing face. They have to tail it, as

inherent to their makeup and class interests are conditions which make postmodernism appealing to begin with. Anarchists on one hand already have a metaphysical view of the state as an objectively 'bad' phenomena with no real class character—states are always inherently evil and immoral, not a tool but a monolithic beast. This leads them to the view that all power leads to statehood and is hence something to avoid – a sort of hot potato to be tossed away as soon as possible. Anarchists like Scott Crowe will argue in the postmodern tradition of overemphasizing words that “Power” is not the same as power, that by capitalizing the word they can now accomplish their lower case power with a tidy return to utopian socialism in the form of small businesses, they can identify Power as totalitarian and evil—to carry this out of course they must oppose “making any demands”, hence by prescribing small business ventures which barely stay afloat, they can oppose the basic demands of the workers as themselves futile demands which lead to totalitarianism. These types are already influenced by identity politics etc. and mesh their old ideas with the newer and more exciting postmodernist ideas. For the revisionists, they have formed a long time habit of supporting anything counter-revolutionary which itself comes packaged in a progressive form. This resonates well with the core of their own identity which is capitalism with a red flag—an easy step to make is postmodernism as long as it waves its own red flag.

Time and time again, postmodernism is a negative, pessimistic and counter-revolutionary response to setbacks in the class struggle. We see this in the period of the 1980s and in post-1968 France especially. Crisis is always the simultaneous creation of an opening – the crisis of proletarian power is the opening for extreme individualist cynicism, with one of its 'progressive' masks the categorical condemnation of all pursuits of political power as totalitarian catastrophe. This outlook is fine for those with power; it is poison for those without it.

Article by S. Hausner and Kavga

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