

Anti State, Non Market Sector Groups

worldsocialistmovement/SPGB:

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Promotional Material for the World Socialist Movement:
See previous issues or contact
veronica.clanchy@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01202 569826

"Role Modeling Socialist Behaviour: The Life and Letters of Isaac Rab. Further details can be obtained by contacting the address below.

World Socialist Party US (WSPUS) website:
www.wspus.org Postal address: World Socialist Party, Box 440247, Boston, MA02144

<http://stephenshenfield.net> contains all issues of The Libertarian Communist and a host of useful articles for the ASN sector.

Andy Cox's website looks at how socialism might be developed: <http://socialistmatters.webs.com/>. See issue 27, page 2 in memory of Andy Cox

World In Common: www.worldincommon.org

Email worldincommon@yahoo.com

www.libcom.org; includes back issues of this journal

The Commune

For workers' self management and communism from below. Website: www.thecommune.co.uk

Postal address: The Commune, Freedom book shop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E17QX

Comrades may be interested in the following links:

For Libertarian Communists in Russia and Belarus:
<http://wiki.avtonom.org/index.php>

"Eretik" (Heretic) is a left communist journal in Russian and English that appears both on the net and in print. This is produced by a group in Moldova.

See: <http://eretik-samizdat.blogspot.com/2012/immunity-of-rich-and-powerful.html>

A couple of places to purchase Literature and help support the ASN sector.

"There is an Alternative!"

STIMULANTS: A collection of material highlighting an opposition to the Mantra that "There Is No Alternative" to how we live today. Journals, Pamphlets, Books, DVDs

and Cds etc available www.radicalbooks.co.uk

Libertarian Communist Literature has a selection of

pamphlets and journals related to the anti state, non Market sector. We also have a variety of pamphlets and a few books.

If you are interested please contact the postal or email address on Page 2 with your details

The Libertarian Communist is now available from
Housemans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX email shop@housemans.com
<http://www.housemans.com/>

And

News from Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY tel 0151 708 7270, email nfn@newsfromnowhere.org.uk
<http://www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/>

Chronos Publications

BM Chronos, London WC1N 3XX

The Life and Death of Capitalism Series No.1

No Revolution Anywhere By Robert Kurz

Available now

The Substance of Capital by Robert Kurz (forthcoming)

Worth taking a look at

The Socialist Labour Party of America (www.slp.org), and the Marxist Internet Archive Library and Marx Myths and Legends www.marxmyths.org

Direct Action Industrial Unions

Industrial Workers of the World: www.iww.org Or P/O Box 7593, Glasgow, G42 2EX Email: rocsec@iww.org.uk.

Workers International Industrial Union.

www.wiiu.org or www.deleonism.org/wiiu.htm see the article on Industrial Unionism in issue 9

See Also

International Libertarian Socialist Alliance: Formerly called the *World Libertarian Socialist Network*

www.libertyandsocialism.org

Wrekin Stop War www.wrekinstopwar.org or contact

Duncan Ball, 23 Sunderland Drive, Leegomery

Salop, TF1 6XX email: Duncan.ball@blueyonder.co.uk. Not sure this is still active (please inform)

The following are additions to the directory and well worth taking a look at:

www.theoryandpractice.org.uk

www.marxisthumanistinitiative.org

For information on issues related to Global Heating See:

<http://thinkprogress.org/climateissue/>

The Libertarian Communist

A Discussion Bulletin:

In Opposition to the Rule of Capital in all its forms and for Anti State, Non Market Communism

Issue 28: Winter 2015 £1.50

September 2014 saw, what is said to be **the largest mobilisation on climate change in history**. The march was "6 times" the size of anything before it!!! This was **80 city blocks of New York**:



Below are the demos that took place in London, Berlin, Bogota, Paris, Delhi, and Melbourne...



An Inescapable Truth:

Saving the Planet Entails working for the End of the Rule of Capital

The purpose of The Libertarian Communist is to promote discussion amongst the Anti-State, Non Market sector irrespective of whether individuals or groups consider themselves as Anarchist, Communist or Socialist as all such titles are in need of further qualification. If you have disagreements with an article in this or any other issue, wish to offer comment or want to contribute something else to the discussion then please get in touch. If any article focuses on a particular group then that group has, as a matter of course, the right to reply. So please get in touch with your article, letters and comments. You can do this by contacting libcom.bulletin@yahoo.co.uk or writing to Ray Carr, Flat 1, 99 Princess Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset, England, BH12 1BQ

Cover Picture avaz.org/cn/climate_march_reportback

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Corrections Arising from the Issue 27

On page 13 the first paragraph of the article **A Liquid Asset of Two Fluids** by Nicolas Holliman should have read as follows: "Things have changed so much since the Victorians left us with a tremendous legacy of infrastructure that their systems of combined drainage can no longer deal with the quantity and complexity of today's effluents, the changed pattern of rainfall and the demands of an increased population who have more expansive lifestyles and expectations. Neither can the systems cope with the increase in surface runoff, nor the impact of a decrease in permeable land area, precipitated by modern trends. A separation of rain and storm water from soil and wastewater drainage is long overdue. It is therefore surprising that Thames Water plc's £4.2 billion Thames Tideway Tunnel, now under construction, still follows the combined 'rule' and will be a conduit for a mixture of untreated soil and wastewater, rainwater and floodwater, all the way to Europe's largest sewage works at Beckton, where modernisation work is in progress."

On Page 22 in the article The Housing Question the reference to Grundrisse by Karl Marx should have read translated by Martin Nicolaus **Not** Marin. In the same article in the

second column under zone 2 this should read Shepherd's Bush and **not** Shepard's Bush.

The Editor takes full responsibility for these errors and apologies to all concerned.

La recession revient/Recession is making a comeback...

Fertur equis auriga nec audit currus habenas.

Les chevaux emportent le cocher et l'attelage n'obeit plus aux renes

The horses have swept away the coachman and the carriage no longer obeys the reins.

Virgile, Georgiques/Georgics, 1, V, 514..

A few days ago David Cameron was full of positive phrases about the economy. Yesterday it was different. He said recession could make a comeback.. Indeed Japan is going through a recession at present. Most economies in Europe hardly break even. And this is a month and a half before Xmas. A society of plenty which most people can't afford: some contradictions. But then contradictions are all around us at all levels. Most people on the left push the old traditional classist Marxist scenario, as if it was so simple. In fact it is much more

complex, states, governments, special forums of so-called experts like the Bildeberg Group may try to self-regulate the political economy but each time they seem to fail – especially these days when the crisis of the economy is severe, they all forget what Karl Marx said namely that : "value enters as subject". This cuts through many ideologies, especially today.

The law of value (1) mows down all illusions, the critique of value will eventually bring down about the collapse of capitalism. The Roman Empire took 300 years to collapse the empire of the commodity might take less. That is why we need to forge alliances with people who do not like this capitalist system in order to bring about a more humane society, where people can full-fill their needs without crushing their neighbours or people living in other countries. Otherwise barbarism will reappear. There is no guarantee about the future. Already there is talk of the Chinese economy overtaking the USA. It does not bode well, especially when you know what kind of society there is on mainland China. What Putin's Russia is doing in various countries next to Russia is also worrying. That is why the critique of value is important it can change how society is run. It is up to everyone to grasp this critical theory.

(1) **The law of value** (German: *Wertgesetz*) is a central concept in Karl Marx's critique of political economy, first expounded in his polemic **The Poverty of Philosophy** (1847) against Pierre-Joseph Proudhon with references to David Ricardo's economics. Most generally, it refers to a regulative principle of the economic exchange of the products of human work: the relative exchange-values of those products in trade, usually expressed by money-prices, are proportional to the average amounts of human labor-time which are currently socially necessary to produce them...
Source: Wikipedia.

Written on the 18 of November 2014 by M.P.W. Prigent. /with a footnote added on the 19 of November 2014...

The following article: *The Ontological Break: Before the Beginning of a Different World History* by Robert Kurz (2005) is from Marxism and the Critique of Value and can be found on pp. 357-372. This article was

originally published as "Der ontologische Bruch" and can be found at www.exit-online.org (9th February 2005).

The Ontological Break: Before the Beginning Of a Different World History

Robert Kurz (2005)

The debate over globalization seems to have come to a point of exhaustion. This is not, however, because the underlying social process has exhausted itself — the process itself is still in its incipient stage. Rather, the forms of interpretation have prematurely run out of steam. The guild of economists and political scientists has filled entire libraries with discussions of the boundaries of national economies blown open by the globalization of capital and with discussions of the resulting dissolution of the nation state and political regulation as a frame of reference. Yet this widespread set of realizations has largely remained without consequence. The more clearly analysis shows that nation and politics have become obsolete, the more stubbornly political and theoretical discourse tries to hold on to the concepts of nation and politics. The concepts that were developed to cope with the problem correspondingly appear weak and unpersuasive.

The problem is that there are no immanent alternatives to these concepts because, just like concepts such as labor, money, and market, they represent the petrified determinations of modern capitalist ontology — and thus also represent its categories. If we understand ontology not anthropologically or trans-historically, but rather as historically contingent, then ontological concepts or categories of sociality indicate distinct historical fields; in Marxian terms: a form of society or a mode of production and a mode of living. The modern system of commodity production constitutes a historical ontology of this kind.

Within such a field there exist at any given point in time a multitude of alternatives and arguments. These, however, remain confined to and move within the same historical-ontological categories. The critique and suspension of the categories themselves appears to be unthinkable. Thus, it is possible to critique a certain politics in order to replace it with another; but within modern ontology it is impossible to critique politics in itself and replace it with another mode of social regulation. For this we lack the appropriate form of thought, and therefore all

the concepts as well. Only the determinate content of politics is malleable, but not the categorical form or mode of all content. The same goes for the categories of nation, state, rights, labor, money, and market, as well as of the individual, subject, and gender relations (social masculinity and femininity). At any given point, any of these categorical forms can be modified, only in a quasi-adjectival sense. Yet the category itself and its corresponding social mode are never put up for substantial negotiation.

The analytical insight that the process of globalization renders nation and politics obsolete can therefore not be worked through with the means and methods the modern social sciences have to offer. It is today no longer the case that it is a matter of substituting a specific content with a different, new content within the same social form—say, the substitution of the dominant political constellation with another. Such strategies would, for example, propose that the world power United States could be replaced by a new Euro-Asian power bloc, or that the neoliberal political economy could be surpassed by the return to Keynesian paradigms. Rather, globalization questions the political mode and national form as such.

What this means is that contemporary analysis asserts more than it knows. With its insight into the loss of the regulatory capacity of the nation state and of politics, it involuntarily comes up against the limits of modern ontology itself. But when one category falls, all others must fall like dominoes. For the historical formation of the modern system of commodity production can only exist as a totality, in which one basic condition presupposes another and the different categories determine each other.

It is, therefore, not the case that the loss of political authority would not affect the economy or even allow it to run free. On the contrary, the political constitutes the mode of regulation of the modern system of commodity production, which cannot function economically without such regulation. Globalization itself, which blows up the frame of the national and thus destroys the political as mode of regulation, is conditioned, in turn, by the fact that abstract labor, as the form of productive value and surplus-value generating human activity within the development of productive forces, is increasingly replaced by fixed capital (*Sachkapital*). The resulting depreciation of

value pushes management toward the transnational rationalization of the business economy. In the same way that scientified objective capital substitutes for labor, capital is de-substantialized and the valorization of value reaches its historical limits; the "depreciation" of nation and politics is nothing more than a product of this process. Yet, once the categorical structure of forms of production, reproduction, and regulation has been diluted, forms of individuality, of the subject, and its andocentric determination of gender, also become obsolete.

What seems at first to be a particular crisis of the political and its national limits is in reality a crisis of modern ontology. Such a categorical crisis demands in response a categorical critique. Yet, such a project currently lacks both appropriate forms of imagination and adequate concepts. Until now, critique has been immanent to dominant categories, relating only to determinate content, and not to the ontological forms and modes of the modern system of commodity production—hence the current paralysis of thought and praxis. The planetary administration of this ontological crisis cannot hold back the dissolution into barbarism of a global society defined in capitalist terms. On the contrary, it becomes instead an integral part of the descent into barbarism. What is required here is an ontological break—from which global discourse, however, still shies away, even the radical Left.

What predominates in its place are regressive ideas that seek to reverse the movement of the wheel of history in order to avoid this utterly unthinkable ontological break. While the hardliners of crisis administration want to separate the majority of humanity from their own conditions of existence, most self-styled critics of globalization seek ideally to escape to the past from the very object of their critique; they fall back on hopelessly reactionary paradigms of nation, politics, and Keynesian regulation, or journey even further back in time to the ideals of romanticized agrarian societies. An integral part of this regressive tendency is the religious madness that rages in all cultural spheres and exceeds all comparable manifestations in the breaks in the history of modernization.

In order to be able to think clearly and question modern ontology as such it would be necessary to understand this ontology as historically determined. For only in this way

does the thought of its overcoming become possible. The ontological crisis of the twenty-first century can only be resolved if the history of the constitution of those apparently natural, a priori categories of modern commodity production from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century are not only newly illuminated but also fundamentally re-evaluated. This task, however, is blocked by an ideological apparatus, which is as constitutive of modernity as the categorical totality of its social reproduction. The foundation of this ideational, and, in its ontologically affirmative character, always already ideological apparatus is constituted by Enlightenment philosophy. All modern theories are equally derived from this root, liberalism just as Marxism, as well as the bourgeois-reactionary movements of counter-Enlightenment and anti-modernity. For this reason, all of these theories are equally incapable of formulating the required categorical critique and realizing the necessary ontological break.

The once world-shattering conflicts between liberalism, Marxism, and conservatism always addressed specific social, political, juridical, or ideological matters. However, they never addressed the categorical forms and ontological modes of sociality. In this sense, liberals, Marxists, conservatives, and the radical Right could equally be patriots, politicians, subjects, andocentric universalists, and statesmen, labor-, rights-, or finance-enthusiasts, and were distinguished only by nuances of content. Because of their common grounding in Enlightenment thinking, the seemingly conflicting ideologies of modernization reveal themselves in the context of the crisis of modern ontology to be one and the same ideological apparatus in the sense of a common persistence with this same ontology at any price.

The insight that can occasionally be gleaned in postmodern discourse since the 1980s—that Left, Right, and liberal ideologies have become interchangeable—points to the hidden foundation that is common to them in the same way that neoliberalism as an ideology of crisis currently determines, with only minimal variations, the entirety of the political spectrum across party lines. Postmodern thought, however, has noticed this interchangeability solely phenomenologically and superficially, and hence without questioning the underlying

ontology of modernity. Instead, postmodernism seeks to sneak past the ontological problem by means of simply rejecting all theories of modernity's ontology as dogmatic and totalitarian claims—as if the problem were inherently theoretical and not in fact a problem emerging from the reality of the social mode of reproduction. In this way, the basic categories of the modern system of commodity production are certainly not criticized, but are instead only removed from the focus of the critical gaze without, however, being escapable in social practice. Postmodernism, too, thus proves to be an integral part of the total ideological apparatus and, despite assertions to the contrary, a derivative of Enlightenment philosophy.

Enlightenment thought explicitly grounded, expanded, consolidated, and ideologically legitimated the categories of modern ontology that prior to the eighteenth century were still unstable. For this reason, the required ontological break must be accompanied by the radical critique of the Enlightenment and of all those forms of philosophy, theory, and ideology that emerged from it. In rejecting its foundations, all the rest is rejected as well. The ontological break consists precisely in this. However, the Enlightenment did not only develop the categories of labor, value, commodity, market, law and policy, legal status, andocentric universalism, subject, and notions of abstract individuality as conceptual reflections of a social ontology of modernity that was born out of a blind historical process; the Enlightenment simultaneously placed them within a logical and historical context so as to make them sacrosanct.

Earlier agrarian social forms also possessed their own respective historical ontology's: ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, no differently from Greco-Roman antiquity, imperial China, Islamic culture, and the Christian Middle Ages. But all of these ontology's were in a certain sense self-sufficient. They were defined in themselves, did not need to be assessed against any other ontology, and were under no pressure to justify themselves. While there existed in each case relationships with foreign cultures of the same period, these "others" were usually negatively defined as "barbarians," "unbelievers," or "pagans." Such definitions, however, were not based on historical-philosophical systems and only represented incidental limitations.

The modern system of commodity production, in contrast, needed to ground its ontology in a reflexive manner — reflexively, however, not in the sense of a critical project but rather in the sense of a project of legitimating itself as a system. Indeed, it was the compulsion to justify the new, foundational claim to the subjugation and battering of individuals that produced the Enlightenment's philosophy of history. The monstrous demands of capitalism, which directly aims to transform the process of life in its entirety into an immediate function of its logic of valorization, could no longer be based on a loose assemblage of traditions. On one hand, it was necessary to bestow upon the specifically modern ontology the dignity of an objective natural relation. That is, it was necessary explicitly to transform an historical ontology into a trans-historical and anthropological ontology — being-human as such. On the other, this resulted in the need to establish a logical relation between this modern, now trans-historically reasoned ontology and all previous historical formations and all concurrent non-capitalist (still predominantly agrarian) cultures.

The result could not have been any other than a stamping of the mark of inferiority on the past. This not only represented a new worldview, but also a revaluation afresh of all values. In agrarian societies, people understood themselves as the children of their parents not simply in the ontogenetic sense, but in the phylogenetic and socio-historical sense as well. The oldest people were celebrated in the same way as ancestors and mythic heroes of the past were. The golden age was located in the beginnings and not in the future; the unsurpassable ideal was the mythical "first time" and not the "end result" of a process of exerting effort.

Enlightenment philosophy of history did not reflect on this worldview in a critical way. Rather, it turned it on its head. Ancestors and "primitive men" were regarded as unemancipated children in a historico-phylogenetic sense, who only reached adulthood in modern ontology. All previous historical periods appeared first as errors of humanity, later becoming imperfect and immature prior stages of modernity, which, in turn, went on to represent the culmination and end point of a process of maturation — the "end of history" in the ontological sense. History was then for the first time

systemically defined as development — from simpler or ontological forms to higher and better ones. That is, as the progress from the primitive to the actual state of being human in the context of commodity-producing modernity.

On one hand, the specifically historical ontological categories of modernity were established trans-historically, as if they had always been there. Even the concept of ontology itself appeared to be synonymous with anthropological, Trans historical, or a historical circumstances. For this reason, it became impossible to seek other historical ontology's and to determine their own specificities. Instead, the Enlightenment projected its modern categories, which it constituted and legitimated, onto all of the past and the future. The only remaining questions all followed the same principle: what were "labor," the "nation," the "political," "value," the "market," "money," the "subject," and so on, like in ancient Egypt, among the Celts, or in the Christian Middle Ages; or, conversely, how will the same categories look in the future and how will they be modified? In adopting this ontologization of modern categories, Marxism, too, was merely able to formulate its "socialist alternative" in an adjectival sense, as simply another thematic accentuation or regulation within the same social and historical form.

On the other hand, from the perspective of such a projection, past societies inevitably appeared as categorically imperfect. What were, in fact, other historical ontology's were defined (and consequently disfigured) as categorically "immature," not yet sufficiently developed modern ontology. Similarly, all contemporary societies that had not yet been completely determined by modern ontology were fitted into the same schema; these were equally seen as underdeveloped, immature, and inferior. Constituted in this way, Enlightenment philosophy of history essentially served as the legitimating ideology of internal and external colonization. In the name of that philosophy of history and its schemata, the submission of society to a system of the valorization of value — as well as its associated abstract labor with intolerable and disciplinary demands — can be propagated as historically necessary and as part of a change for the better.

The concept of barbarism, borrowed from agrarian civilizations, emerged as a pejorative

definition of previous or contemporary non-capitalist humanity: "barbarism" became synonymous with a lack of civility in the sense of capitalist circulation (market subjectivity and legal form) and, as such, with a lack of submission to modern ontology. We still have no other concept at our disposition to characterize destructive, violent, and destabilizing tendencies that threaten the social context. Already Marx used the concept of "barbarism" critically by relating it to the history of the formation of the system of commodity production in reference to both "primitive accumulation" and the history of the disintegration of modernity in crises of capitalism.

The break with modern ontology as it is required today requires us to move beyond Marx and to reveal as barbaric (and thus to destroy the foundations of) the core of the capitalist social machine, to destroy abstract labor and its inner structure of discipline and reified human administration that is generally misunderstood as civilization. This task of the ontological break is nonetheless complex and difficult to grasp, since the philosophy of history produced by the Enlightenment is legitimated paradoxically not simply as affirmative, but also as critical. The ideological apparatus established by the Enlightenment blocks the necessary ontological break precisely because it has been able to move within this paradox for a long time. Liberal bourgeois criticism always focused solely on the social conditions that prevented the imposition of modern ontology. Both in the sense of internal and external colonization, this was a question of the remnants left behind by agrarian formations. Among these remnants were not only previous relations of domination in the form of personal dependencies, but also certain conditions of life that detracted from the modern demands of abstract labor. In this way, the majority of religious holidays of agrarian societies were abolished to provide a clear path for the transformation of the temporality of life into the functional temporality of the valorization of capital.

The Enlightenment criticized older forms of personal dependency solely to legitimate the new forms of reified dependency of abstract labor, market, and the state. This criticism contained repressive aspects because it was linked to the propaganda of abstract diligence, discipline, and submission to the new demands of capitalism, along with

destroying, together with old forms of domination, universal human achievements of agrarian relations. In fact, an older ailment was only replaced by a new, and in many ways even worse ailment. It was nevertheless possible for the liberal ideology of the Enlightenment to champion still-emergent modern relations as liberation from the feudal burden and to represent itself as shedding light on the dark superstitions of the Middle Ages. Feudal violence was condemned, while the abstract labor of modernity was "tortured into" people with an unprecedented violence, as expressed by Marx. The concept of criticism, in general, was identified by Enlightenment liberalism with the criticism of agrarian society, as capitalist modernity, with its atrocities, appeared as progress, even while in the real world it represented something very different for great masses of people.

During the late nineteenth century and even more in the twentieth, the concept of criticism shifted more and more to internal capitalist relations, after agrarian society had practically already disappeared along with its structures of personal dependency. Obviously, this was not a question of modern ontology and its categories, but only of the overcoming of old contents and structures through new structures, still founded on the same ontological ground. The system of commodity production, that is, capitalism, is inherently not a static situation, but rather a dynamic process of constant change and evolution: but it is a process that always develops in the same manner and under the same formal categories. It is a constant struggle between the new and the old, but it is at all times only the struggle between the capitalist new and the capitalist old. For the liberal understanding of criticism, the capitalist old has taken the place of the ontologically old, that is, of the now no-longer-existing feudal agrarian social relations. The ontological break between the proto-modern and the modern has been replaced by the permanent structural break internal to modernity and its ontology. This internal dynamic operates under the label "modernization." Henceforth, liberal criticism has been formulated in the sense of a modernization of modernity.

This process of permanent modernization in the ontological categories of modernity itself undergoes an additional legitimation by means of an opposite, complementary, and

immanent critique, which is in turn legitimated in a romantic or reactionary manner. The supposedly good "old" is cast against the nefarious "new," without, however, subjecting the modern ontology to the slightest criticism. This is not even a defense of the actual pre-modern ontology present in agrarian society. Rather, the reactionary or conservative movement of anti-modernity, too, is an invention of modernity and a derivative of the Enlightenment itself. This is a bourgeois critique of bourgeois existence, which, since the end of the eighteenth century, has been loaded with images of an idealized agrarian society and with a system of pseudo-feudal values — similar to an opposing liberalism, which is loaded with the ideals and values of capitalist circulation (freedom of the autonomous subject integrated into the market, and so on). Yet pseudo-agrarian ideals were from the beginning formulated from within the categories of modern ontology, and not against it. Just as romanticism helped in the birth of modern abstract individuality, conservatism and its more radical versions of reactionary thought became propagators of modern nationalism and its ethno-ideological, racist, and anti-Semitic legitimation. In the Protestant work ethic and in social Darwinism, there was always a commonality between conservatives and reactionaries with liberalism that suggests their common roots in Enlightenment thinking.

The more the ideological attachment of conservative and reactionary thought to the idealized agrarian society faded, the clearer its position within the modern ontology and its dynamic needed to be. In this context, the romantic and reactionary current followed in the same path as liberalism — only with reversed polarity. Just as liberal critique stood opposed to the capitalist old in the context of a permanent, modernization of modernity interior to capitalism, thus acting as the advocate of the capitalist new, so too did conservative and reactionary counter critique operate in the name and as advocate of the respective capitalistic old in opposition to the capitalist new, which was perceived as a force of demoralization and disintegration. Since this immanent polarity marked the same ontological field, however, their immanent opposition at the same time shielded this field from any possible met criticism. Apart from the intolerable demands on human beings, the discomfort and

destructive potential of the modern system of production created an increasing tension that could constantly be shifted to or canalized in the internal movement between progress and reaction, between liberalism and conservatism. The destructiveness of modernity should be redeemed by the ultimate impulse of modernization (progress), or, on the contrary, tamed by activism on behalf of the present situation of modernity directed against its own dynamic (conservatism or reaction). It is precisely for this reason that the critique of the social and historical ontology underlying this position was blocked.

However, the bourgeois-immanent contradiction inherent in liberalism on one hand, and conservative or romantic reaction on the other, formed far from the only obstacle for a critique of modern ontology. Instead, a second wave of criticism developed within this ontology that superimposed itself on the first. The second wave was sustained on one hand by the Western labor movement and on the other by so-called liberation movements on the periphery of the world market, including the Russian Revolution and the anti-colonial movements and regimes. In all of these historical movements, a fundamental critique of capitalism, which was articulated, in many ways, by recourse to Marxist theory, was officially established. Nevertheless, this second wave was also fundamentally limited primarily to the modern ontology of the system of commodity production and, thus, to its categories. The return to Marx was limited to the components of this ontology retained by Marx himself, while all of the other moments of his theory that went beyond this remained muted or ignored. The reason for the historical phenomenon of this second wave of affirmative criticism, which superimposes itself onto the opposition within the bourgeoisie, must be sought in the problem the social sciences call "historical non-contemporaneity." Modern ontology did not structurally or geographically develop in uniformity, but in discontinuous spurts.

In the countries of the West that gave rise to the system of commodity production, only a few categories were formed, while others remained underdeveloped. This was particularly true for the formation of the modern subject, of abstract individuality, and associated forms of law and politics. Neither the Enlightenment nor liberalism could

establish these categories as abstract and general, equally legitimate for all members of society. Universalism, formulated theoretically, fell apart as a consequence of its confrontation with social limits. Enlightenment thinkers and liberals persisted in the understanding of the "man" of modern ontology solely as the male, propertied citizen, while the mass of wage laborers, male and female, were on one hand subjugated to the discipline of abstract labor, yet remained on the other both on the juridical and on the political level ontologically extraterritorialized. In order to complete its process not of a subjective but of a reified form of dependence, modern ontology needed to generalize the former relation. Only by means of political and juridical integration could the categorical subjugation of man be completed.

From that constellation, the labor movement in the West assumed the specific function of a modernization of modernity that consisted in the struggle of wage laborers for recognition as integrated subjects of law, politics, and participation in the state (universal suffrage, freedom of coalition and assembly). But here categorical critique was also blocked, and instead of the ontological break, the labor movement undertook the completion of modern ontology. It assumed in part the role of liberalism in the actual, practical universalization of certain modern categories. Liberalism, in turn, proved to be incapable of such universalization, instead revealing itself as a conservative force in this respect. Consequently, the labor movement accused liberalism of betraying its own ideals and itself adopted the principal ideologemes of the Enlightenment, including the Protestant work ethic.

The modern ontology of the system of commodity production, however, also included specific gender relations insofar as all moments of life and reproduction, whether material, psychosocial, or cultural-symbolic, that were not subsumed by capitalist categories were designated as feminine and in practice delegated to women — throughout all historical developments internal to this ontology. The recognition of female wage laborers — and, in general, of women — in bourgeois society as subjects of law and of civil society and political life, a recognition that was denied by the majority of Enlightenment philosophers, possessed only limited validity even after the second wave of

value-immanent criticism: on one hand, they moved within the official spheres of society, but at the same time kept one foot "outside" because they continued to represent those dissociated moments that could not be systemically integrated. In this way, modern ontology is not a closed totality, but rather broken and self-contradictory, mediated by what Roswitha Scholz calls specifically gendered "relations of dissociation." As a result of the relation of dissociation corresponding with modern ontology, the bourgeois recognition of women had to remain correspondingly fragmented and incomplete. The abstract individual is, in reality and in its complete form, masculinized; in much the same way that abstract universalism for this reason always remains andocentric.

The positive dialectic of bourgeois recognition was repeated on a larger scale on the periphery by movements for national independence and free participation in the global market. In this case, the critique of capitalism referred to the structure of colonial and postcolonial domination in relation to the more advanced Western nations, but not to its basic social categories. Here too it was a question of a recognition perfectly situated in modern ontology rather than in its critique or overcoming. Thus, both the Russian and Chinese Revolution and subsequent liberation movements in the southern hemisphere assumed a function within the modernization of modernity, namely, the recuperative modernization of national economies and states on the periphery. Consequently, this historical movement also had to be grounded in the idealized categories of modernity and in their legitimation carried out by the Enlightenment, thus remaining confined within andocentric universalism.

The asynchrony at the heart of modern ontology produced a gap in development — geographically and within society itself — which gave rise to both the seemingly radical critique and the liberal critique of Enlightenment. The Western labor movement, the revolutions of the East, and the national liberation movements in the southern hemisphere were merely different versions of a recuperative modernization in the context of that asymmetry. These attempted to get into the system of commodity production, and not to get out of that historical ontology. That option could be taken positively as progress and

development, as long as the world system as a whole still afforded a space for a subsequent modernization of modernity.

Such a space for development, however, no longer exists. In the third industrial revolution, modern ontology as such reaches its historical limit. The very same categories within which the entire process of modernization took place are becoming obsolete, as is clearly illustrated on the level of labor as well as in concepts such as nation and politics. With that, the asynchrony internal to the system of commodity production also disappears. But this, of course, does not mean that all societies have reached the highest level of modern development or that we have surpassed situations of uneven development and reached a new situation of positive planetary contemporaneity. Rather, asynchrony ceases to exist because the system of commodity production is experiencing a large-scale ontological crisis. Whatever the level of development achieved by particular societies, they are all hit by this ontological or categorical crisis.

The different world societies still very much experience decidedly different material, social, and political structural situations. Many countries are only in the beginnings of modern "development"; others remain stuck in the intermediate stages of this development. Yet the gap between such societies no longer mobilizes a dynamic of recuperative modernization — it only mobilizes the dynamic of barbarism. The ontological crisis produces a negative contemporaneity, a doomsday of modern categories, which gradually travels across still-unequal conditions. There is no going back to the old agrarian society, but the development of modern ontological forms, inasmuch as it has taken place, has broken down. Entire industries disappear; entire continents are decoupled; and in the Western core countries, too, the growing crisis is simply managed without any prospects for change.

Everywhere and on all levels of the exhausted capitalist ontology the crisis hits not only capitalist categories, but also the gendered relations of dissociation. Gender relations are "out of control"; the increasingly fragile masculine identity corresponding to the total and one-dimensional subjectivity of abstract labor, law, politics, and so on, begins to break apart. It decomposes into a "feral"

state (Roswitha Scholz), which becomes an integral component of the tendency toward barbarism and sets loose a new potential for gratuitous violence against women. Barbarism can no longer be held at bay by a simple and already failed inherent recognition of women. Rather, it requires an ontological break with the totality of the historical field of capitalist modernity, a field in which the relations of dissociation are inherently gendered.

The same ontological crisis, however, paralyzes critique more than ever. The paradigms of socialist critique of capitalism (immanent to its categories and ontologically positive) are so deeply rooted in asynchrony that they seem unable to surpass a general paralysis of thought. The ghostly reiteration of such forms of thought remains unsuccessful, since they are unable to reach the necessary complexity of categorical critique to respond to the context of the ontological break. In a way, liberalism, conservatism, and classical Marxism have all together become reactionary. The ideologies of modernization decompose and mingle. Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment have become identical. Today there are anti-Semitic communists and racist liberals, conservative Enlightenment thinkers, radical premarket socialists, and sexist and misogynist utopians. Recent social movements have, up until, now proven to be impotent in the face of the problems of ontological critique and negative contemporaneity. Despite the enormous diversity of inherited conditions, these problems can be formulated and resolved only in common, as those of a planetary society.

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Marxism and the Critique of Value

Marxism and the Critique of Value is edited by Neil Larsen, Mathias Nilges, Josh Robinson and Nicholas Brown and is published by MCM Publishing, Chicago 60608 (2014) www.mcmprime.com

At the beginning of the Introduction the editors state: "*Marxism and the Critique of Value is the first broadly representative book-length collection in English translation of work from the contemporary German-language school of Marxian critical theory known as Wertkritik, or as we have opted to translate the term value-critique or the critique of*

value".

Apart from Robert Kurz (1943-2012) there are also contributions from Norbert Trenkle, Claus Peter Ortlieb, Roswitha Scholz, Ernst Lohoff and Karl-Heinz Lewed.

Marxism and the Critique of Value is also available as a PDF:

www.mcmprime.com/files/marxism-and-the-critique-of-value.pdf

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Some thoughts on the Critique of Value

In the *Guardian* [22nd Sept. 2014], there was an article by Paul Mason: "Scotland's young, feisty Yes Generation has nowhere to go". "There is a political vacuum in working-class Glasgow -and beyond". Mason sticks to a class analysis. It is safer that way. But in fact the problem is more complex. All classes have been incorporated into the capital automaton. And yet Karl Marx was able to say in the *Grundrisse*, written in the winter of 1857-8: "Value enters as subject". For a long time the critique of value was left on the side by many so-called Marxists.

Some eventually ventured to rescue that idea. Recently those who have taken up that critique are Moishe Postone in his *Time, Labor and Social Domination. A reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory*. [first published by Cambridge University Press in 1993.]. Other people have written about the critique of value. Robert Kurz [*No Revolution Anywhere*, published by Chronos Publications in October 2012], see also the forthcoming *The Substance of Capital* which is being translated at present. More Kurz works have been published in France. (1)

So Mason has missed the value-critique boat. He saw it on the quayside, he heard the last call, but failed to get on board.

It is a thorny subject. Many avoid it. In his *Grauniad* article, the Economics editor at Channel 4, i.e. Paul Mason speaks of Tommy Sheridan and his rant about posh Edinburgh suburbs where "there is no political vacuum". But even in posh Edinburgh alienation is there. And value is everywhere. Mason will have to branch out to really report on what is happening all over the world. That is the challenge. You have to shed your leftist baggage to reach what Karl Marx, Moishe Postone and Robert Kurz are saying.

That is the dilemma that many people face.

(1). In France, some excellent critical material has been translated and published notably: *Robert Kurz/Vies et Mort Du Capitalisme/ Lignes*, 2011. [translated from the German by Olivier Galtier, Wolfgang Kukulies, and Luc Mercier]. Also *Moishe Postone/ Critique du Fetichisme Capital/ Puf*, 2013. [translated from the English by Olivier Galtier and Luc Mercier].

** The Endie is nigh

The apparent economic recovery, which is already restricted to the South East, has given rise to a new London phenomenon: 'Endies': Employed with No Disposable Income. These are people who earn an average wage but struggle to live in the capital. All their salary goes on housing and travel: "Rent now accounts for about 41% of their incomes. A zone four resident on an annual salary of £22,000 spends the first 55 minutes of their working day just paying for their commute to and from work." (See: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/13/endies-employed-no-disposable-income-struggling-in-london>)

Further evidence that an economic system based on the production of value is unsustainable. The days of the yuppie are over. So much for the economic recovery. The crisis of value production deepens.

Footnote by Slim Pickings

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Greenland Rising By Joe Hopkins

Greenland is considered the largest island on earth. The Arctic Circle extends southward from the North Pole, which is not on land but beneath the frozen surface of the Arctic Ocean, to 66° 33' N. Lat... Greenland's most extreme Southern Coast, Cape Farewell (Nunap / sua) is precisely on 60° N. Lat. , i.e., Greenland extends six lines of latitude south of the Arctic Circle — meaning that — 80 per cent of the island's 840,000 square miles of surface area lies within the Arctic Circle itself. As of 2006 ~ 131,931 square miles of Greenland's surface area was ice free; one sixth of its total.

The massive expanse of Greenland is populated by a mere ~ 56,000 people — 89%

of whom are of Inuit descent – living in just 74 towns. To put this in perspective, Greenland is close to nine times the size of Great Britain; it is nearly three times the size of the U.S state of Texas. But Greenland's entire population gathered together would do little more than fill half of the seats in the Dallas Cowboys gridiron football team's home stadium. The entire island has just three traffic lights and all three of them are along a single stretch of road in the capital city of Nuuk, (population 16,454).

Greenland was a Danish colony from the early 1700s until 1953. It was then that Denmark designated the island as an officially autonomous country within the kingdom of Denmark (e.g. like County Wicklow of Ireland or a county in a U.S state). In matters of national security and foreign policy Denmark retained jurisdiction – but the Greenland government became responsible for its own domestic affairs. Denmark provides an actual grant of k3.6 billion (Danish kroner) which is about equal to \$660 million. It is a subsidy of close to \$12,000 for each one of Greenland's residents – who were all granted full Danish citizenship in 1953 – and makes up about a quarter of Greenland's GDP.

Denmark's relationship to Greenland, as one of its colonies, has always been more paternalistic and commercial than exploitative. In 1953 Denmark removed the "yoke" of colonialism from the islands' shoulders and an effort was made to bring the largely traditional population and economy into its own modern Danish welfare economy. The Danish government let it be known to the seal hunters that their future lay in commercial fishing. Many of the smaller settlements were shut down and their residents were relocated to be closer to work and services.

Fishing now accounts for 90 per cent of Greenland's exports – but its fish stocks have come under stress. The island imports the great majority of its food and almost all of its manufactured goods; its industrial manufacturing sector is virtually non-existent and the extent of its natural resource extraction is also tiny. As a consequence Greenland does not produce or export more than a minuscule amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or any other greenhouse gas related to global heating. This may all be about to change.

Global Heating Effects Culprits and Innocents Alike

Greenland lost 500,000 square miles (two Texases) of arctic sea ice in the summer of 2007. Since 2003 the island's ice cap has bled more than 600 billion tonnes of melt water into the ocean; so much weight has been shed that the bedrock beneath the ice cap has risen an average of four centimetres per year since then. Paradoxically, Greenland is rising faster than the level of the sea. The loss of melt water has been increasing since 1996 at a rate of 7 per cent each year.

According to Wikipedia.org/Greenland_ice_sheet the Greenland Ice sheet is a vast body of ice covering 1,710,000 square kilometres, 660,000 square miles, roughly 80% of the surface of Greenland. It is the second largest ice block in the world after Antarctica ice sheet. The ice sheet is almost 2,400 kilometres (1,500 miles) long in a north-south direction. Its greatest width is 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) at a latitude of 77° N near its northern margin. The mean altitude of the ice is 2,135 metres (7,005 ft) The thickness is more than 2km (1.2 miles) and over 3 km (1.9 mi) at its thickest point. Some scientists predict that climate change may be near a tipping point where the entire ice sheet will melt in about 2,000 years. If the entire 2,850,000 cubic km (684,000 cubic mi) of ice were to melt it would lead to a global sea level rise of 7.2m (24ft).

There is a "tipping point" (a systems forcing) to Greenland's ice cap. When certain people try to make light of the serious problem of global heating you are apt to hear them utter the phrase, "Ecology Ain't Rocket Science" – which is very true – there is nothing involved in rocket science that even comes close to approaching the complexity of ecological systems science; the effects are often staggered and non-linear.

The thick ice sheets atop Greenland and Antarctica exert a strong gravitational attraction, a pull on ocean water surrounding the earth's Polar Regions, keeping depth and sea level constant. As the polar ice sheets melt and the melt water joins the ocean water the sea level rises while the gravitational pull decreases. When this happens the water that has been held in place by the gravitational pull is released to flow toward the earth's equator.

With at least 50 trillion gallons of Greenland's melt water flowing into the ocean per year no

longer being stabilised by the gravitational pull it once had the counterintuitive result is a smaller sea level rise in the northern latitudes than at the equator – known as the geo-political Global South; the "short list" of islands that will go under if (when) this happens will include: the Maldives; Tuvalu; Kiribati; The Marshall Islands; The Seychelles; The Bahamas; The Carteret's; and many others. A fifth of Bangladesh will be inundated; much of Manila, Alexandra, Lagos, Karachi, Kolkata, Jakarta, Dakar, Rio, Miami and Ho Chi Minh City will share the same fate (or worse) of Bangladesh. It's anyone's worst nightmare what will happen to the U.S state of Louisiana's gulf coast in this event; China's coastline will be dramatically effected too.

The Politics – The Political Economy of Profit

In 2013 Aleqa Hammond was the first woman to ever be elected as Prime Minister, Greenland's highest office. The differences between Kuupik Kleist, Hammond's predecessor as Prime Minister, and herself are small and perhaps mostly a matter of tone. Hammond came to power on promises to mine the country and put it on the path to independence. It is the issue of independence that set her and her Siumut Party apart from her electoral competition. She has said,

"I am the first premier of Greenland that talks about independence so freely, so openly. The former premiers talked about higher autonomy and taking over jurisdiction from Denmark bit by bit. Maybe I'm saying it a little louder and a little different. Maybe I'm not as diplomatic as others, I say, get used to it, that's the way we're going".

Kuupik Kleist shares Hammond's vision of mining as a way to modernise Greenland's economy through mineral extraction; it's the only game Greenland has the cards to play.

As the climate heats up and the ice sheets dwindle away more and more land is exposed for the drilling bit and the mining machine. Hammond has said,

"We have mountains with gold, we have mountains with iron, we have mountains with zinc and lead. We have mountains with diamonds. We have mountains that are there for us to use and bring prosperity to our people".

During her campaign for Prime Minister, Kuupik Kleist, though ousted by Hammond in the 2013 referendum, remains her most powerful opponent. But even he, belonging to the left-wing Inuit Ataqatigiit Party in opposition to Hammond is pragmatic,

nuanced, and sees clearly the social and economic realities. He has said,

"What you can fish is no longer sufficient to cover all the cost of today's society. My fear is that if we don't see new activity and create new incentives and new jobs, then we will be facing very hard times"

The one "mountain" Aleqa Hammond didn't mention on the campaign trail is the one with uranium. In October 2013 – after a fierce political fight – Hammond pushed a bill through parliament that overturned a 25 – year-old ban on the extraction of radioactive minerals, including uranium. It was passed by a one – vote margin; this move toward uranium was very unpopular. The next day, perhaps to divert attention, Hammond's Minister for Industry and Mineral Resources announced the construction of an iron mine at the foot of the ice cap about 90 miles north of Nuuk. It was billed as *"the largest commercial project to date in Greenland"*. In March 2014 the Hammond government approved an open-pit ruby mine much closer to the capital city. Applications for a large zinc mine in the north of the country, a nickel mine in the west, and a small rare earths mine in the south are being processed. But the uranium issue did not fade in the face of all the mining news; in fact it divided the country. Hammond lost her majority in parliament and the support of many in her own party. Denmark says its approval is required before any radioactive material can be moved, putting Hammond's political opponents and Denmark on the same side against her. The island's elite in Nuuk are in open revolt over the jurisdictional problems brought on by Hammond's moves toward extraction and export of uranium. "Greenland Minerals and Energy", a locally named, Australian owned and Chinese financed company, wants to be the first corporation to build an open-pit URANIUM MINE IN GREENLAND.

It is easy to see that Hammond and Kleist are both in favour of very similar developmental programmes; the differences between them being mostly in the details. The right/left divide of the political spectrum is a false dichotomy, and is, at all times, more apparent than real. This becomes most obvious when parties and politicians are *"on the same page"* and the book happens to be Milton Friedman's CAPITALISM AND FREEDOM. The "details" do, though, have consequences. The Greenlanders do not have

the wherewithal – the financial capital, skills and experience, business expertise, or population base – to transform their island's traditional economy to an industrial economy. They are de facto TRADING a benevolent colonial "overlord" for the rapacious wealthy outsider investor, speculator, and corporate overlords of capital that will get most of the profit. While the Greenlanders will no doubt gain more money to spend, their culture and pristine land will go the way of the Dodo and Passenger Pigeon; they will disappear.

In *The Nature of Things*, Lucretius wrote, "Nothing from nothing ever yet was born." A Greek maxim proclaimed, "Happy he who has learned to know the causes of things". Greenland seems to be benefiting from global heating in some respects. It's obvious the island has not so far made much of a contribution to the factors causing global heating. It's just as obvious Greenlanders are now embracing an economic system that will compel them to be culprits in the drowning of many small islands and the devastation of many of the world's coastlines.

The Economist (July 12th 2014) in an article, "Polar-Bearings" (p.39) reports that China (not coincidentally the financial force behind "Greenland Minerals and Energy" the Australian mining company) sent two of its iconic and treasured panda 'bears' to the Copenhagen zoo causing public media commentators to suggest that this political ploy "was all about the Arctic and especially Greenland". The North Sea Route (NSR) is becoming more viable for shipping cargo as global heating causes the ice to recede; in 2010 four ships made the trek; 2013 saw 71 vessels ply NSR waters. "Some climate models predict the Arctic Ocean could be ice-free in summer by the middle of this century". The NSR is 22% shorter than the current route used between Shanghai and Rotterdam and the Polar Research Institute of China figures 5-15% of China's international trade will travel the NSR by 2020. China too faces the monstrous dichotomy of the for-profit system: economic gain at the expense of hundreds of thousands of square miles of their extremely long coastline as the ocean rises.

Private Property; National Property = Legal Fictions

China is domestically an energy hungry nation; China is one of the largest investors in Greenland's burgeoning mining sector; mining is an energy intensive operation.

There are huge offshore oil deposits in the Arctic. You do the math. China has struck a deal with Rosneft, a state – controlled Russian oil company, to scout the Arctic sea-bottom for petroleum deposits. There was no way round this deal other than war (the furtherance of capitalism by extraordinary means) because

"Undersea resources in the Arctic are largely within the Exclusive Economic Zones of the littoral [zone along the shore] states"

i.e., Russia; the sea bottom is largely Russia's private property.

What is to become of an island people (Greenlanders) rich in resources but barely a generation away from a subsistence economy, when two powerful authoritarian nations are bound and determined to exploit them and their home for even more power, and the lever of power, profit? Stay tuned-in and pay attention!

The master class lives by the industrial community rather than in it. We will see a great cluster of the captains of industry and masters of the universe, capitalist pendaragons all, migrate to Greenland's vast countryside in future. "Greenland's Rising" is truly a double-entendre that cuts both ways – the Sword of Damocles too is double edged. The result of the capitalist for profit system is that humanity is cleaved into two; a small minority portion gains wealth almost beyond belief while the working majority can barely afford to live.

P.S. Hint: A tycoon named Huang Nubo bought 100 hectares of land in Norway and put a bid in for part of the island of Svalbard to develop a resort to attract Chinese tourism. Having tried the same thing in Iceland in 2011 but local popular protest dashed his efforts.

"A Norwegian has called [Mr. Huang] a 'suspected imperialist'. PANDAS for Norway? Any one?"

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Some Notes on Climate Change

"There is no Planet B"/ poster at the Climate Change March in London, 21st of September 2014.

It took a long time (about 45 yearssince the IPCC meeting) for the pollution tarnished penny to drop. A lot of people were in denial. People with hoards of capital to protect- the oil companies, gas companies, PHILIP MORRIS & Co (the PR and political lobbying arm, you know, the same guys who told the world that smoking tobacco was relatively harmless), all the energy suppliers -all making vast profits from expensive -to-extract-, produce, and sell fossil fuels. Then there were the keep-the-job-at-any-cost-Stalinists. They want to keep the jobs of workers in the coalmines, oil fields, refineries, gas plants, power stations and energy companies as safe as possible. All of these are indeed key industries, with a lot of power in the union's hands. They care little about what they deride as "Tree hugger" politics. Sadly for them, and us, we only have old mother earth to rely on. She has been plundered, exploited and abused, and is reaching a point of unsustainability. With the growing demand for meat, bottled water (SIC!!) and a growing population - the toxic mess of foul air, contaminated food, religious zealot and dwindling resources means action is needed on a global scale.

"Scouse Pete".

The Oxford Street Blues.

Some years ago a poet wrote about the Oxford Blues,
It was a fine poem;
Unfortunately the poem has morphed
Into The Oxford Street Blues.
According to *Le Monde* of August 1st 2014 Oxford street is the most polluted street in the world.
Nothing will be done
Until people die in the streets.
Don't count on the present Mayor
A certain Boris Johnson to do something about it.
The Oxford Street Blues is here.
Soon or later we will have to walk around with gas masks.

The Oxford Street Blues is here!
It was said recently that Oxford Street was the worst polluted place in the world. It

seems that street is not alone.

There are some worst places in the world. Beijing comes to mind, here is an entry from Reuters: Pollution "worst record" in Beijing. [Greenpeace]. "Air quality in Beijing was the "worst on record" on Saturday and Sunday, according to environmentalists, as the City's pollution monitoring centre warned residents to stay indoors with 30-45 times above recommended safety levels. The Chinese Capital, home to 20 million, has been wrapped in thick smog since Friday, reducing visibility and disrupting traffic. Data posted on Sunday by the monitoring centre (www.bjmemc.com.cn) showed particulate matter measuring less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM2.5) had reached more than 600 micrograms per square meter at some monitoring stations in Beijing, and was as high as 900 on Saturday evening. The recommended daily level for PM2.5 is 20, according to the World Health Organization. Such pollution has been identified as a major cause of asthma and respiratory diseases. (...) Reporting by David Stanway. Editing by Michael Perry. Sunday Jan. 13th, 2013.

More on Climate Change.

In fact you can't stop climate change without abolishing capitalism on Earth. It is not possible to reform the system at that level. The polar caps are melting that means that in a few years the world temperature will increase by 2 degrees centigrade. It will have catastrophic effects on the conditions of survival/life on Earth. There are no easy solutions. It is better to have no illusions on these grave matters. You only have to see the traffic in big towns. On the Marylebone flyover here in the centre of London thousands of cars, lorries, buses, go by every day. It is incredible. The dictatorship of the commodity on four wheels is there which helps all those who sell their labour-time in order to survive and buy more commodities. A never ending system which makes sure that value is produced. All classes are harnessed to modern capital. That is why a modern critique of capital is needed. Many on the Left still stick to old definitions. It won't do.

Some people have complained at the rubbish left behind by those who attended *The Climate Change March*. They have a point, or

to be precise half a point, since nothing was provided for people to leave their trash. Skips should have been available. It seems some people will always look for something to denigrate the actions of people on the march. As for me and my friend, we had nothing; hence we could not throw anything away!!! See the website: http://gothamist.com/2014/09/22/climate_march_trash.php

DROUGHT BLAMED ON GASES.

America: The drought hitting California is 'very likely' to be linked to man-made climate change, researchers say. The persistent region of high atmospheric pressure over the region is likely to be caused by greenhouse gas concentrations, the Stanford University team found.

Notes added on the 24th and 25th of September 2014, written by Michel Prigent, 'Scouse Pete and Slim Pickings

The Case against Fracking

1) Natural gas is not a cleaner source of energy when compared to coal or oil when it is extracted via fracking as using this method it has at least 30 per cent higher emissions than using conventional methods. This is due to methane leaking at the production, processing, storage and distributions stages. Methane is a highly lethal form of greenhouse gas 30 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide (based on Inter-governmental Panel. A study at Cornell University concluded that fracked gas has a greater gas impact than oil and may rival coal when both sources of energy are studied over a prolonged life cycle. [Source: Naomi Klein, 2014, page 143: *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs the Climate*].

2) In the U.S the surge of natural gas due to Fracking led to a decline in the use of renewable forms of energy. The share of wind power in new electricity declined from around 40 per cent in 2009 to 25 per cent in 2010 and 32 per cent in 2011 these were the key years when the fracking craze was at its height. The decline in the use of wind power was a missed opportunity to help phase out gas extraction as gas is a major source of greenhouse gasses. [Ibid:p.129]

Capitalism: thy end is near. Or is it? By Ricardo Monde

Following the 2008 economic crisis the future of the capitalist system has been a much discussed topic. The problem is that in most cases what is being questioned is the form the system has taken since the late 1970s, termed mainly as neo liberalism. According to some the system has broken down, due to a breakdown of regulation and increasing inequalities. However the alternative, if it could be described as such, is merely a rebranding of the same system with increasing state intervention, tighter regulation, especially in the financial sector, and action to curb the increasing inequalities between rich and poor. So leaving aside the last point what is being muted is a return to a brand of capitalism that was in crisis, a crisis to which neo liberalism was supposed to provide the answer. It would appear that if neither a regulated or unregulated form of capitalism works then a further and different question needs to be asked. We therefore need to be cautious when we see articles predicting an end or a collapse of capitalism; we need to ask what is it that is supposed to be ending and what is being advocated as replacing it.

In the March 2014 edition of the Socialist Standard [Cooking the books, p.18] there was an article entitled "*Capitalism will not Collapse*"; in the main this was a favourable response to a piece by Razmig Keucheyan in The Guardian on March 6th 2014: "*Not Even Climate Change Will Kill off Capitalism*". Latter in the year there was an article in New Left Review by Wolfgang Streeck: "*The End of Capitalism*". The intention here is to examine both pieces of work and analyse which is correct.

How Will Capitalism End? Wolfgang Streeck (1)

In predicting the end of capitalism Streeck does include the ecological problems it faces as the system's main aim that of infinite expansion is in conflict with the finite supply of natural resources. However central to his argument are three main areas which he sees as fundamental to capitalism's demise and these are 1) economic crisis: 2) the breakdown of democracy: 3) whilst capitalism has defeated its supposed opposition this has had a negative rather than positive impact. The latter being the case means, Streeck suggests, that Capitalism can end, even if there is no oppositional movement in place to

end it or any vision of an alternative to replace it.

Economic

In terms of its economic problems capitalism, Streeck's suggests, is facing a long-term crisis that dates back to the 1970s, and the crash of 2008 has to be viewed in these terms. He suggests that this crisis has three main symptoms: 1) A decline in the rate of economic growth which was aggravated by the 2008 crisis. 2) A Persistent rise in overall indebtedness as governments, households and financial and non financial firms have continued to pile up financial obligations over a period of 40 years. 3) Rising economic inequalities. This crisis, he claims, is different to the type of cyclical downturns which are evident in the system's history and which allow the system to recover and begin a new period of growth. The present crisis is a process of gradual decay and recovery is more difficult from this than it is from cyclical short-term movements. Lower growth, continuing rising debt and growing inequality are, Streeck argues, not sustainable in the long-term and could lead to a crisis that is ("systemic in nature"). Streeck notes how the 2008 crisis was followed with international conferences and summit meetings which called for measures which could prevent a repeat performance but the outcome of this process were very disappointing as in the financial sector where the crisis begun things all too quickly returned to normal and profits, dividends and bonuses quickly returned to where they were and little came from calls for regulation [Wolfgang Streeck, *How will Capitalism End?* pp 35-40].

Capitalism and democracy

Streeck considers that, in real terms the link between capitalism and democracy dates only from the end of WW2 when the Cold War and economic progress persuaded the working class majority to accept the free market and profit system. In this period there was a belief that the state could intervene in the market system to benefit ordinary citizens but this belief gradually declined as growing inequality developed well before the 2008 crisis and has continued since. For some time now, Streeck notes, many people have grown to doubt that the political system can have much, if any impact on their lives. A commonly held view of the political system is that it is ridden with incompetence and corruption and serves only the political class

on the basis of the "*There is no alternative*" slogan. The result of this disillusionment with the political system is declining electoral turnouts and greater voter volatility leading to increased electoral fragmentation. The resulting increase in populist political parties leads to greater government instability. However this loss of faith in democracy is not only found amongst the mass of the electorate, it is shared by the elite in society who feel that market capitalism would be more efficient if it is freed from democratic politics. The democratic system has been further weakened, Streeck argues, by the decline of movements that might have kept capitalism in some sort of check and provided a defence for those lacking economic power – most notably trade unions. There has also been a centralisation of economic control with power turned over to independent and uncontrollable central banks concerned solely with the health of financial markets. In Europe a dominant economic role is played by the European Commission and European central banks which are beyond the reach of democratic control [Ibid, pages 40-45].

The end of capitalism: how the victory over its opposition has had a negative impact.

In Streeck's view the series of economic crisis that has plagued the system over the last forty year or so means that capitalism has an end, as well as a beginning. This process is already underway as the social system is in chronic disrepair due to its own internal reasons. He dismisses the idea that capitalism can only end when there is a clear vision of the society which will replace it and where there exists a revolutionary subject capable of bringing that change about. Whilst this long lasting crisis would be expected to open up the way for both reformist and revolutionary movements to oppose the system, capitalism has succeeded in not only disorganising itself but also any opposition to it. Despite the 2008 crisis the old left is on the brink of extinction everywhere and no alternative to it is in view [Ibid pages 45-47].

The destruction of oppositional or counter movements to it has, in Streeck's view, had a negative effect on capitalism. Oppositional groups whether of the reformist political "socialist" type or industrial opposition from trade unions served the purpose of putting a break on capitalist excesses in terms of commodification which left unopposed would have the effect of destabilizing the system. Streeck refers to Geoffrey Hodgson argument

that capitalism could only survive as long as it is not completely capitalist, therefore the victory of capitalism over its opposition was counter productive. In this analysis the problems that capitalism faces stem partially from a moral decline. The public perception of the system is deeply cynical, as it is perceived as a world of dirty tricks for ensuring the further enrichment of the already rich. In Streeck's opinion the future of capitalism is bleak as on the basis of its recent historical record of cumulative decay what lays ahead is an intensification of friction, fragility and uncertainty and a steady succession of normal accidents, which could quite possibly be on the scale of the 1930s [Ibid pages 48-50].

The End of Capitalism: Some points

From Streeck's article there arises the question of whether or not he gets to the core of the internal contradictions of the capital system. He defines capitalism: "...as a modern society that secures its collective reproduction as an unintended side effect of individually rational, competitive profit maximization in pursuit of capital accumulation, through a 'labour process' combining privately owned capital with commodified labour power, fulfilling the Mandevillean promise of private vices turning into public benefits." [Ibid page.48] He suggests that this is a promise that capitalism can no longer satisfy and this puts an end to its, "...historical existence as a self re-producing, sustainable, predictable and legitimate social order". [ibid] He gets near to the core when describing the collective reproduction as an unintended side effect of the pursuit of capital accumulation. It is open to interpretation as to whether capitalism can be described as rational if so this is limited to its internal logic and only then up to the point where it ends up in a deeper and deeper crisis. As a way of satisfying human needs which must include not destroying the basis of human existence, it can be described as irrational as it puts barriers between the ability to provide directly for human needs and the delivery of the same. Those barriers are inherent to the system of commodity production where the expenditure of human energy is used for value expansion for the purpose, as Streeck indicates, of capital accumulation. A major irrationality in the capital system is that it is forced to raise productive capacity to a point where it comes into contradiction with its own main purpose, the use of labour power to create surplus value. This is the main cause of the crisis of modern capitalism. For

example Trenkle, 1998 writes about a process beginning in the 1970s resulting from: "... the worldwide, absolute displacement of living labour from the process of valorization, capital has reached the historical limits of its power to expand, and thus also of its capacity to exist. In other words modern commodity production has entered a fundamental process of crisis which can only result in its downfall". (2) Rather than this type of analysis Streeck concentrates on more surface effects such as a decline in the rate of economic growth, general indebtedness which are related to these underlying causes. As for inequalities in income and wealth distribution these are nothing new and related to the internal workings of the system.

Streeck suggests that in the last thirty years or so capitalism has successfully defeated institutions, which although oppositional once helped to limit the commodification zeal of an unrestrained capitalism. In Britain, we could include trade unions and the Labour Party. The latter at least promoted a mixture of private and state ownership and some state regulation over the system, whilst the former never promoted an alternative to capitalism as trade unions were born out of and operated within the system but at their strongest points could act as a leash on capitalism. The Labour Party has since the Blair years and even prior to that been nothing more than a pale imitation of the Conservative Party whilst trade unions are in respect of being any opposition at all more or less dead and buried. All this is just a question of how you wish your capitalism served up with a slice of regulation and limited opposition or unfettered with any topping. Any analysis of the capital system from the bottom up would show that such reformist institutions had no chance of saving capitalism from itself and in this case the old adage that rather than changing capitalism, capitalism has changed such institutions rings true. So Streeck is correct when he suggests the organisations seeking to change the capital system have been largely destroyed or at least sidelined as far as their original purposes are concerned.

Streeck makes an interesting point when he writes of a breakdown between capitalism and democracy as its usefulness is questioned both from people at the base of society and the elite. According to Streeck capitalism relationship with democracy has been rather short-lived as it only dates back to the period following the end of the Second

World War. In truth capitalism was never really interested in democracy, if that word is to mean anything. How could a system where a tiny minority control the means of living be compatible with concepts such as freedom and democracy? What it has done, and done very well is to create an illusionary link between an inhuman system and concepts such as freedom and democracy and obscure its fundamental core. Capitalism has found benefits in its use of a multi party system so that if a party in government is failing the system there is a ready replacement for it. If a particular party tries to run the system in a way that harms capital accumulation it will soon have a crisis on its hands and be out of power. It is also useful to have this pretence of democracy and create an illusion that only a market system is compatible with political freedom of choice and it has been greatly aided by totalitarian systems such as Fascism and so-called Communism (State Capitalism) which of course were merely forms of capitalism. As far as capitalism is concerned there is no great harm in returning to its non-'democratic' naked self providing it retains the pretence of some form of democracy. Here Streeck may well have a point, because whilst the illusion of democracy remains in most so-called advanced capitalist countries, the multi party system resembles the choice of shampoos or some other commodity on the supermarket shelves, the choice is there but they all do the same job.

Is describing capitalism in our age as a totalitarian society going over the top? Some think not and maybe they have a point. For example on the home page of the *Revolt against plenty* (www.revoltagainstplenty) website they rightly draw a distinction between the type of totalitarian regimes depicted in novels such as *Orwell's "1984"* and *Huxley's "Brave New World"* and what exists today which is far more obfuscated. Today, in most major capitalist countries we have a multi-party system but as already mentioned they stand for the same system and whilst other parties putting forward some version of an alternative message are tolerated they are never going to be given the necessary media time and other resources to be able to break through the wall of propaganda that protects the system. In addition to this the state has only diminished in terms of having a seemingly smaller role in terms of industrial ownership but in terms of control over people's lives its role has expanded aided by the use of up to

dated technology.

The end of capitalism according to Streeck will not come about due to an oppositional organised movement armed with mass participation, a vision of a society that will replace it and clarity of thought of how to proceed, but because of its own internal contradictions. Infact Streeck notes that capitalism has rid itself of more or less all opposition; however it must be added that the opposition was rather muted. Capitalism ending due to its own internal contradiction is quite possible but without the existence of a clear idea of how it can be replaced and a vision of something which can replace it that prospect, despite the horrific nature of capitalism, is a quite disconcerting, if not a terrifying one. Streeck could be correct about the descent into some sort of barbarism. Other have also commented on the prospect of the system collapsing due to its internal contradictions but rather than using the term collapse Streeck writes about the *end*. This does seem to suggest and this is indicated at the end of his article that Streeck envisions a long process of a decaying capitalism which has already started but will take some considerable time to play out. But even given this long process Streeck clearly does not regard it very likely that we will see the development of a movement that could challenge capitalism and help pave the way for an alternative that would be a real improvement.

Not even Climate Change will kill off Capitalism:
Razmig Keucheyan: The Guardian March 6th 2014
(3)

As the title of his article suggests Keucheyan take an opposite view to that of Streeck arguing that without a movement to bring it to end capitalism can overcome its inherent problems and contradictions and will not collapse. The article begins with the view that the mistake of the revolutionary movements in the 1960s and 70s was that they failed to take into account the resilience of capitalism. There was a belief, according to Keucheyan, in *Catastrophism* where the system would crumple under the pressure of its own contradictions. Such an idea was that the bourgeoisie produces its own gravediggers [Marx The Communist Manifesto]. However capitalism was able to overcome the economic crisis that ensued in the first half of the 1970s by replacing the redistribution policies installed at the end of World War 2 with neoliberal policies The resilience of

capitalism, the author argues, is not a case of the ruling class being exceptionally clever or far sighted but the fact that capitalism is based on a core set of simple mechanisms that can easily adapt to adversity.

Whilst admitting that the present situation is much different to the 60s and 70s, Keucheyan believes that the left is in danger of making the same error. This time the issue linked to *Catastrophism* is climate change and the general ecological crisis. The belief, in left-wing circles, Keucheyan, suggests, is that capitalism cannot survive the environmental crisis. The system, according to many, has reached its absolute limits and without natural resources, oil included, it cannot function and these resources are depleting fast. Growing ecological disasters will increase the cost of maintaining the infrastructure to unsustainable levels. Climate change will also have the effect of increasing food prices which are likely to induce riots and eventually society will become ungovernable. In Keucheyan opinion the benefits of *Catastrophism* for the left is that if capitalism crumbles under the weight of its internal contradictions the weakness of the left is no longer a problem. The end of Capitalism is seen, in this scenario as an act of suicide rather than murder, the role of the murderer, a revolutionary movement no longer matters.

Contrary to collapsing due to its internal contradictions, Keucheyan believes that capitalism is able to respond to the ecological crisis with its two favourite weapons of financialisation and militarisation. Regarding the former, in a time of economic crisis markets require cuts in wages whilst people keep consuming, and opening the flow of credit allows the reconciliation of two contradictory injunctions – until, at least the next financial crisis. Using the analysis of Costas Lapavistas, Keucheyan suggests that finance has penetrated deeply into peoples' everyday lives, including housing, health, education and even nature. Carbon markets, weather or biodiversity derivatives, catastrophe bonds and so on belong to a new variety of "environmental finance" products and their overall purpose is to alleviate or spread the costs of climate change and the super exploitation of the environment.

In terms of militarisation, Keucheyan argues that since the second half of the last decade all major armies of the world have compiled detailed reports on the military consequences

of climate change. Amongst the different sectors of the ruling class, Keucheyan suggests, it is the military that takes the environmental crisis most seriously. A report published in the U.S in 2007 entitled "*National Security and the Threat of Climate Change*", looks, for example at how climate migration will destabilise the regions where migrants arrive and raise levels of ethnic conflict. The report concluded that the U.S army should adapt its tactics and equipment to a changing situation. Financialisation and militarisation are, Keucheyan argues about reducing risks and creating or maintaining a physical and social environment favourable to capital accumulation – it is a kind of "antibody" that the system secretes when menace looms. In summary Keucheyan argues that nothing in the systems logic will make it go away. A world of environmental desolation and conflict will work for capitalism as long as conditions for investment and profit are guaranteed. To this end finance and the military are ready to serve. Building a revolutionary movement to put a stop to this insane logic is not optional it is a necessity because even if capitalism can survive it does not mean that lives worth living will.

Capitalism can survive Climate Change: some points

Is Keucheyan claim that the revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 70s made the mistake of underestimating the resilience of capitalism valid? This argument tends to imply that had they not made such a mistake they would or might have been successful and this seems to be an oversimplification. It might well be that the reason for this underestimating of their task was due to the fact that they failed to comprehend the true nature of the system they were supposed to be confronting. It is probably nearer the truth to argue that the similarities of the 1960s and 70s with today is that then as now what is lacking is a meaningful critique of capitalism as the basis for the development of a movement that is capable of growing and challenging the system. It is difficult to offer a precise critique of the so-called revolutionary movements of the 60s and 70s as Keucheyan does not give any details of the movements he is referring to. It seems far fetched to argue that in that period there was a well supported movement that was capable of challenging capitalism? Keucheyan analysis goes on to suggest that the left today is once again guilty of underestimating the resilience

of capitalism. However, and as Streeck notes in his article, the left is in terminal decline everywhere and is very unlikely to be able to reverse this trend. The obvious weakness of the left today is a major difference between the two periods. We need no time to mourn the demise of the left, it was never revolutionary and was detrimental to that cause, spreading confusion and frustration. One thing that Keucheyan is correct about when suggesting that it is no use waiting for capitalism to collapse due to its internal contradictions is the idea that the system produces its own gravediggers in the working class. This is an idea that what remains of the modern left and beyond have in common with the movements of the 60s and 70s but goes far further back in time, right to the time of Marx and *The Communist Manifesto*. In all that time the working class has showed no intention of burying capitalism but has limited itself to gaining rights and improvements within the system, the class struggle is internal to capitalism not one to end it, it is time for the dreamers to awake.

Keucheyan suggests that today there is a belief, in left-wing circles that capitalism cannot survive the environmental crisis and that this is the *Catastrophism* that will cause capitalism to collapse of its own accord even if the movement or movements opposed to it are in a weakened state. The question here is where are these groups that consider that we can all just stand back and climate change will do the job for us? As in the case of the 60s and 70s the problem is lack of coherent opposition to capitalism. As with the previous period all that exists are groups seeking to remodel the system rather than getting to the core as the basis for abolishing it. For example there are many on the green left, including the Green Party and spokespersons such as Jonathon Porritt who are promoting green capitalism as a solution to the global heating crisis. Many, (see for example, Naomi Klein latest book) (4) speak in radical terms about capitalism being the problem but what this boils down to is an opposition to de-regulated capitalism they fail to see capitalism itself as the problem and are failing to advocate an alternative to the system of value expansion. Capitalism, Keucheyan argues, will survive climate change as long as the conditions for investment and profit making remain. This analysis is supported in a *Cooking the Books* article in the *Socialist Standard* in April 2014. However the *Socialist Standard* article

indicates that capitalism is incapable of solving what they term as the "environmental crisis". Arguing that Capitalism can survive the ongoing ecological crisis under the conditions suggested by Keucheyan whilst accepting that the capital system cannot solve the ecological problems it is inflicting on the planet is really only saying that capitalism as we know it today can only survive for a certain period. Because if it cannot solve the problem, and all indicators suggest that there are many spokespersons within the hierarchy of the system who are climate change deniers then its time and that of the human race is limited. What type of society we may end up with, even if some might still regard it as capitalism is indicated at the end of Keucheyan article when he states: "*Building a revolutionary movement to put a stop to this insane logic is not optional it is a necessity because even if capitalism can survive it does not mean that lives worth living will*". **Maybe that indicates that the capitalism Keucheyan envisages here is a form of barbarism.**

Concluding Remarks

Are the articles by Streeck and Keucheyan diametrically opposed? Streeck states that capitalism can end despite the lack of a viable alternative to it due to its internal problems; Keucheyan argues that capitalism will survive unless there is a movement to end it. Clearly on the face of it there is little agreement between the two however Streeck writes about capitalism having an end and he sees this as a lengthy process, a gradual decay. Keucheyan whilst suggesting that capitalism can survive admits that the way in which it might change would probably mean, for a large minority at least, a life hardly worth living, so the gradual decay forecast by Streeck may not be that far removed from the type of capitalist survival envisaged by Keucheyan. Neither author use the term collapse but write about an end or ability to survive. Often in discussions of this kind the term collapse is used and it tends to conjure up a vision of something sudden and dramatic. However Kurz [1986:57-8] whilst using the term collapse suggested that it is unlikely to be a "... sudden and one off event" but rather an "... historical process, a whole epoch lasting perhaps several decades ..." (5)

If we define opposition to the capital system as left wing (a pretty dodgy definition) then both authors see this movement as weak and getting weaker. Whilst Keucheyan writes about the problem being an underestimation

of the resilience of the capital system he also sees the left as being so weak that it has to rely on some form of *Catastrophism* to bring capitalism to an end. Keucheyan is wrong if he believes that capitalism can survive anything global heating especially but he is right that we need an educated and organised movement to bring about fundamental change because otherwise we may indeed see the gradual decay suggested by Streeck and the barbaric society envisaged by Keucheyan.

Streeck has a point the system is in many respects fragile. Global heating is a vast problem but it is of course a vast problem for us all not just the capital system. Alongside this is the ongoing economic crisis which some view as natural to capitalism and necessary for a new period of growth to begin. But it is not quite as simple as that. As Kurz has argued capitalism is a dynamic rather than a static system so each major crisis takes place at a different, higher level in terms of accumulation and productivity than the one preceding it. Kurz goes on to state: "That is why the question of knowing if the crisis can be overcome or not arises each time in a different manner. Certain mechanisms used in previous situations lose their validity" (6) In other words it is just too simplistic to view each economic crisis as merely part and parcel of the normal workings of the capital system as each major crisis has to be considered in the light of the prevailing situation.

The perspective that Streeck puts forward is quite possible but does he get to the root of the problem or is his overriding focus on the effects generated by the system rather than the system itself? Whatever way one puts it be it end or collapse or gradual disintegration any of these would lead us into an unknown and more than likely dark forbidding future which well may be developing before our eyes. So it is difficult to agree with Keucheyan that the opposition to capitalism is waiting for it to crumble due to some form of *Catastrophism* such as global heating, if such movements exist they are living in a fantasy world and in for a nasty shock. He is of course correct that the capital system needs to be brought to an end rather than just collapsing or disintegrating of its own accord. However the problem with the supposed opposition to capitalism is that it is opposed only to surface appearances that much was evident with the last crisis when all the focus

was on greedy bankers and of late there has been much talk about inequality both greed and inequalities are nothing new to capitalism. What is rarely mentioned from these supposed opponents of the capital system is the insane logic of the commodity system that dominates our lives. As discussed earlier this insanity is based on the purpose of production, value expansion/capital accumulation which acts as a barrier to the satisfaction of human needs and is the underlying cause of the modern crisis as it is in conflict with the advancements made in productive capacity.

So who is right Streeck or Keucheyan? It would seem that the former is much nearer the mark. If Keucheyan is suggesting that capitalism will always survive until there is a movement to end it, (while this seems to be his argument other aspects of his article cast doubt on this), he is wrong because one cannot just assume that any system is capable of surviving anything and everything. In addition there are many signs that as a way of organising society it has inherent unstable and contradictory features in an economic sense and ecological problems it has no answer to because a solution to them is in contradiction with the logic of the capital system. However the fact that capitalism can end without a movement to see it off is nothing to celebrate. What we have to conclude is that if something positive is to come out of the end of the reign of capital we do need a movement or the development of several movements perhaps with similar but not identical ideas but based on a critique of the capital system and with a vision that goes beyond the insanity of what exists at present. These movements would need to be like minded enough to come together to enable further development. As Claus Peter Ortlieb [2008, 117] stated the argument "...the only chance for some sort of liberated postcapitalist society presents itself to us as the overcoming of capitalism – and therefore of wealth in the value form, and of the subject form, that it constitutes – brought about by conscious human action. This must come, however, before the compulsion to growth in the valorization of capital, in combination with the production of relative surplus value, leaves behind nothing other than scorched earth. Time is running out." (7)

Footnotes and References

- 1) Wolfgang Streeck: How Will Capitalism End? New Left Review 87, May/June 2014, pp.35-64.

www.newleftreview.org/11/87/wolfgangstreeckhowwillcapitalismend?

- 2) For a more thorough article on this critique see for example Norbert Trenkle Terror of Labour, pages 3-8 in *Krisis: Contributions to the Critique of Commodity Society*, Chronos Publications and Norbert Trenkle Value and Crisis: Basic Questions pages 1-15 In Larsen, Nilges, Robinson and Brown Edited Marxism and the Critique of Value. Published by MCM publishing 2014. This article was originally published as "Was ist der Wert? Was soll die Krise? Given June 1998 at University of Vienna, published www.krisis.org 27 December 1998.

- 3) Online at www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/march/06/not-even-climate-change-will-kill-off-capitalism

- 4) Naomi Klein: This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate, Published by Allen Lane 2014

On page 63 Klein states: "...the real reason we are failing to rise to the climate moment is because the actions required directly challenge our reigning economic paradigm (deregulated capitalism combined with public austerity)..."

However despite this limitation this is a book well worth reading with plenty of information concerning the impact of climate change and despite the author's conclusions why the continuation of the capital system is at odds with protecting the planet.

In issue 1 of Principia Dialectica, page 8 Nik Holliman stated the following truth: "An outright critique of the capitalist system by environmental organisations and pressure groups is long overdue but instead there is conformity and acquiescence, patchy reforms and gesture politics. By not embodying a total critique they risk being left on the 'wrong' side of history.

- 5) This is taken from Robert Kurz 1986 article; The Crisis of Exchange Value: Science as Productivity, Productive Labor, and Capitalist Reproduction. Pp.17-75 in *Marxism and the Critique of Value*, Edited by Neil Larsen, Mathias Nilges, Josh Robinson and Nicholas Brown. MCM publishing 2014. Originally published as "Die Krise des Tauschwerths," Marxistische Kritik 1 (1986) 7-48

- 6) See: *By Way of Presentation*, pages 10-29 In *No Revolution Anywhere*, Chronos Publications October 2012. The quote, taken from page 10, is the beginning of an answer to a question put to Kurz, *What Distinguishes the Present Crisis from the Preceding ones?*

- 7) Claus Peter Ortlieb: A contradiction between Matter and Form: On the Significance of the Production of Relative Surplus Value in the Dynamic of Terminal Crisis [pp.77-121] in *Marxism and the Critique of Value*. (See Note 5) (Originally Published as "Ein Widerspruch von Stoff und Form" www.exit-online (12 September 2008

Toward A New Critique of Modern Capitalism

Welcome to the Aquarium I hope you can Swim!

Many will come here with both positive and nostalgic ideas about the *Situationist International*. Many will regret the passing of the first period of the *Situationist International*; that is to say the artistic period. Today the *Situationist International* has been accepted as a whole

by society and most of its ideas have either been co-opted or else superseded by modern capitalism. **The Situationist International is DEAD and the grieving is over. It is imperative for us to come to terms with this reality and to move on.**

The purpose of this so-called exhibition is quite clear: some of us wish to move forward out of the *Situationist* trenches where the usual classist discourses can still be heard (as if it were so simple!). Already some people here and there are formulating new critiques but in order for us to find a new 'Northwest Passage' we must go back to the Marx of *Capital* (the deep Marx, so to speak) and not to the Marx of *The Communist Manifesto*.

For the *Situationist International*, as for Marx of the *Manifesto*, the class struggles remained the driving force of emancipation. But as some people have pointed out, the class struggles are part of capitalism. We need to update our theory in order to bring about change. What governs people is *capital* as an *automated subject* or *self-valorising value*. Many are still stuck in the *classist* quagmire. The *Situationist International* cannot help them get out of it and this is a well known fact!

Work is a specific activity to capitalism. It is at the heart of the system, which *auto-reproduces itself* without end and which makes of men and women *the human resources* of its infinite auto-reproduction.

It is not a matter of liberating work (the entire left, including ATTAC, demand that speculation stops hindering the creation of jobs)! On the contrary, we need to *free* ourselves from work, and to achieve this *without* leaning on any 'law of history' but instead on the disgust that each individual experiences when faced with his or her own existence as a subject of *work* and *competition*. Trade unions and political parties have reproduced in their midst the hierarchical structures of the dominant society; hence the *stagnation* and *Modern misery* which we find around us.

If you understand some of the critical points developed here, you won't have wasted your time! Indeed, Guy Debord once said that the *Situationist international* would be superseded. He welcomed the idea! It is thus important for everyone who visits The Aquarium to try and contribute in this direction.

Nostalgic positions will be met by the *Silence of the Sea*.

Those who are keen to develop a new critique can delve into Moishe Postone's book *Time, Labor and Social Domination*, a reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory. They may find there that which they seek.

Written by a friend of Junius on 22nd July 2003 in London.