Global Capitalism and the Demise of the Left: Renewing Radicalism through Inclusive Democracy

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INTRODUCTION

CRISIS CULTURE AND THE WANING OF REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS

STEVEN BEST

Since the election of George Bush in 2000 (and his re-election in 2004), the tragedy of 9/11, the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and ever more indicators of human-induced global climate change, the crisis in the social and natural worlds has sharpened considerably. The deterioration of society and nature demands a profound, systematic, and radical political response, yet in recent decades Left opposition movements have grown weaker in proportion to their importance. As the globe spirals ever deeper into disaster, with all things becoming ever more tightly knit into the tentacles of global capitalism, and as oppositional voices propose programs of reform and moderation at best, there is an urgent need for new conceptual and political maps and compasses to help steer humanity into a viable mode of existence. Karl Marx's 1843 call for a "ruthless criticism of everything existing" has never been more pressing and profound than in contemporary times of predatory global capitalism, neoliberalism, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the demise of social democracies, the police states of George Bush and Tony Blair, the assault on liberties and the criminalization of dissent, species extinction, rainforest destruction, resource wars, and global warming.

Given the advances of capitalism and the cooptation and retreat of radical politics, it is urgent that genuine oppositional viewpoints be kept alive and nurtured in intellectual,

public, and political forums. When one considers the pau-
city of radical viewpoints that still survive, the project of
Inclusive Democracy immediately comes to mind as one of
the few, if not the only, coherent and comprehensive theo-
retical and political frameworks for systemic social change.
Inclusive Democracy aims to develop a radical theoretical
analysis of – and political solution to – the catastrophic
social and environmental impact of the market economies
spawned by Western capitalist nations. This approach is *in-
clusive* in two senses. First, it seeks to transform all realms
of public life, economic, political, legal, cultural, educa-
tional, and so on. Second, it aims to incorporate a wide
diversity of social voices (or at least those legitimate ex-
pressions of difference not dedicated to ending difference
and democracy by imposing authoritarian, elite, and fas-
cist systems onto others) into revitalized public spheres. It
is a form of radical *democracy* in its synthesis of classical
Greek and libertarian socialist outlooks, a perspective that
seeks to abolish all hierarchies and dissolve power into
confederated local direct, economic, social and ecological
democracies.

Cultures in Crisis

The Inclusive Democracy project was developed in the 1990s
by Takis Fotopoulos in the pages of *Society and Nature* and
Democracy and Nature. These journals were dedicated to
analyzing the broad social crisis, the ecological crisis, and
their interrelationships. In 1997, Fotopoulos systematized
his ideas in a landmark work entitled, *Towards An Inclusive
Democracy: The Crisis of the Growth Economy and the Need
for a New Liberatory Project* (London/New York: Cassell/

Continuum)[1]. The international character and influence of Inclusive Democracy is evident in the publication of Fotopoulos' book in Italian, Greek, French, Latin American, and German editions (with Chinese and Arabic editions also on the way), and debates and contributions generated by theorists throughout Europe, the UK, the US, and Latin America.[2]

The immense crisis that Inclusive Democracy seeks to analyze and solve is two-fold, defining both the realities of global capitalism and the numerous failed attempts to oppose it. Inclusive Democracy theorizes a multidimensional crisis (political, economic, social, ecological, and cultural) in the objective world which sharpened after World War II. Fuelled by new forms of science and technology, military expansion, and aggressive colonization of Southern nations, capitalism evolved into a truly global system, one inspired by neoliberal visions of nations as open markets that flow and grow without restrictions and regulations, driven by multinational corporations such as ExxonMobil and Monsanto, anchored in transnational institutions and courts like the WTO, and homogenizing nations into a single economic organism though arrangements such as NAFTA. As formulated by Fotopoulos, and developed in dialogue with radical theorists throughout the world, the Inclusive Democracy project considers the ultimate cause of the present multidimensional crisis to be the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of various elites. This power is maintained and reproduced by the dynamics of the global market economy and its political complement, "representative democracy" – a mys-

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[1] A concise version of the book is online at: http://www.inclusivedemocracy. org/journal/ss/ss.htm.
[2] See also the entry on Inclusive Democracy in *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of International Political Economy*, 2001.

tification that Fotopoulos dismisses as a form of "liberal technocracy" which disempowers citizens in the name of representing their interests.

Yet, where one might expect this multifaceted crisis to generate an appropriate political response, another crisis has formed. Theoretical and political opposition to global capitalism – in any significant and truly radical form embodying democratic social and political alternatives – has collapsed. Elitism, bureaucratic domination, and the destruction of nature was grotesquely replayed in various "communist" or "socialist" states that intended or alleged to present an "alternative" to capitalist systems. The European tradition of Social Democracy, dating back to Edward Bernstein and the German Social Democratic Party in the early 20th century, presented itself as an alternative to both capitalism and bureaucratic socialism, but unavoidably succumbed to the failed logic of reformism that attempted to repair rather than radically transform a system with inherent structural flaws. Social Democracy mounted no effective alternative or opposition and today is little but a museum piece amidst increasing the privatization and market domination of European nation states.

Inclusive Democracy seeks to show how the discourse of democracy has been distorted and perverted in order to build empires, dig graveyards, and wage wars in the name of "freedom, democracy, and progress" – three of the most distorted concepts in the modern lexicon, to which in the post-9/11 era we must also add "security." Yet no discourse or concept is more important today than that of *democracy*, and so Fotopoulos tries to clarify its real meaning and redeem the concept from limitless forms of corruption. In Western "liberal" form, for instance, Fotopoulos notes that "democracy has become a spectator sport in which the general public chooses sides among contending groups of

experts."[3] It is urgent, he insists, to recover the authentic meaning of democracy, such as it relates to autonomy, citizenship, education, and the self-management of people.

Since the 1960s, more current forms of critique and resistance have emerged, but none proved to be significant or enduring forces of opposition and radical change. From the "new social movements" and subsequent "identity politics" formations (feminism, civil rights, gay and lesbian liberation, multiculturalism, anti-nuclear groups, and so on) to apolitical, reformist, and esoteric postmodernism; from the Green movement to the mystical tendencies of deep ecology, Fotopoulos finds organizations and political expressions that are reformist, subjectivist, irrational, or coopted, leaving a barren political scene devoid of significant resistance to ever-destructive forms of capitalist domination. Beginning in the 1990s, a far more promising approach – variously described as "anti-globalization, "alter-globalization," or "globalization from below" (as opposed to "globalization from above") – has emerged to challenge transnational capitalism. Unlike the fragmentary nature of identity politics, alter-globalization movements often advance radical visions and have crossed various political lines and geographical boundaries to form alliances against global capitalism. While recognizing potential in these movements, Fotopoulos nonetheless finds that they lack an "anti-systemic" perspective (i.e., a holistic and radical critique of the totality of capitalist systems) and viable democratic alternative to market domination and manifold social hierarchies.

For Fotopoulos, a truly "radical" or "anti-systemic" viewpoint has a social not individual emphasis. It upholds the

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[3] "The Inclusive Democracy Project – A Rejoinder", Takis Fotopoulos, *Democracy and Nature*, Volume 9, Number 3, November 2003, p. 436.

importance of rational debate and criticism over mystical and subjective turns, avoids utopian fantasies in order to focus on real challenges and possibilities for change, links environmental problems to social and political problems, and understands capitalism and hierarchical social systems as interrelated problems that require overarching and coherent solutions. Moreover, such a standpoint insists on the crucial importance of articulating compelling alternatives to capitalism and of building transitional strategies. Its key objective is to tackle the most crucial and basic problem of all – the unequal distribution of political and economic power – and to solve it in favour of genuine democracy, rather than leaving corrosive and destructive arrangements intact so that the social and ecological crisis can deepen still further.

Where some people concede defeat, others declare this to be the best of all possible worlds (I'd hate to see the worst) with the entrenchment of Western "liberal democracy" (Francis Fukuyama). And while these self-ascribed prophets announce the "end of history" with the "death of the masses" (Jean Baudrillard), others fight for meaningless reforms and lesser evils (liberals, labor bureaucrats, democrats, et. al.). Against the prevailing forms of complacency and nihilism, one of the first conditions of change is the realization that things could and must be profoundly different than as organized by the prevailing social prisms/ prisons. Whereas Inclusive Democracy diagnoses crises, one of the gravest and most fundamental problems today is a *crisis of the political imagination*. Social critique and change in the slaughterhouse of global capitalism needs to be guided and informed by powerful descriptions of *what is* – the degraded forfeiture of human potential in a world where over a billion people struggle for mere existence. But social transformation must also be inspired by bold new visions of *what can be*, by imaginative projections of

how human beings might harmoniously relate to one another and the living/dying earth.

Radicals such as Herbert Marcuse and Murray Bookchin have recognized that so-called "utopian" visions are not – when authentic – starry-eyed dreams of abstract ideals, but rather can be empirically grounded in actual social tendencies and existing potential for a rational, egalitarian, and ecological society. It must be emphasized, however, that Inclusive Democracy explicitly differentiates itself from the "objective" rationalism of the Enlightenment, such as both Marcuse and Bookchin adopt, since "the project for a democratic society cannot be grounded on an evolutionary process of social change, either a teleological one (such as Marx's dialectical materialism) or a non-teleological one (such as Bookchin's dialectical naturalism)."[4]

Still, as Fotopoulos emphasizes "the fact that no grand evolutionary schemes of Progress are supported by History does not mean that we should overemphasise the significance of the 'social imaginary' (in the Castoriadian terminology) at the expense of the 'systemic' elements."[5] On this basis, the Inclusive Democracy project sees History "as the continuous interaction between creative human action and the existing institutional framework, i.e. as the interaction between the 'imaginary' and the 'systemic' elements, the outcome of which is always unpredictable."[6] Similarly, Inclusive Democracy envisions a true democratic society to be "a rupture, a break in the historical continuity that the heteronomous society has historically established."[7]

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[4] Takis Fotopoulos, "The ID project and Social Ecology", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (May 2005).
[5] ibid.
[6] ibid.
[7] ibid.

The Genealogy of Marketization

Beginning with the premise that capitalism is a grow-or-die system antithetical to democracy, human needs, and ecological sustainability, Fotopoulos provides a valuable overview of the restructuring of global capitalism. In his genealogy of the modern state and economy, he traces the "marketization" process (which transforms all goods and services into commodities as it transmogrifies the citizen into the consumer) through three phases: liberal, statist, and neoliberal. In the classic *liberal stage*, the market became separated from society for the first time in history, as competition within capitalist nations played out with little or no social control. In the *statist stage*, which in the U.S. emerged after the depression of the 1930s, the economy is partially managed by the state, and social welfare institutions are set in place. Finally, in the current *neoliberal stage*, which unfolded rapidly since the recent internationalization of the market economy and the conservative revolutions in Britain and the U.S. during the 1980s, marketization processes increasingly are universalized and the long-sought goal of the maximal role of the market and minimal role of the state is attained.

On Fotopoulos' reading, because of the growing globalization of the market economy and the triumph of commodity logic, capitalism has already passed through its "statist" phase of organization, where nation states intervened in the market in order to control its crisis tendencies and fashioned a social welfare state designed to secure full employment and allocate resources to those most in need. Forebodingly, Fotopoulos argues that the neoliberal stage is not merely a temporary phenomenon, but rather represents "the political consequence of structural changes in the market economy system that could lead to the completion of the marketization process – a

historical process that was merely interrupted by the statist phase."[8] Marketization dynamics have knitted capitalist nations into a global system dominated by institutions such as NAFTA, the European Union (EU), the Association of South-East Asian nations (ASEAN), the Southern Cone Common Market in Latin America (MERCOSUS), and the WTO. Nations still have interests and powers independent from transnational forces, but Fotopoulos insists that in a global competition among various economic blocs, this role is diminishing, while citizenship and democracy themselves slide into decline.

The implications of the neoliberal stage of capitalist marketization are enormous, as capitalism co-opts and defeats its enemies and thereby perfects itself through the autonomization of the economy from society. According to Fotopoulos, "A neoliberal consensus has swept over the advanced capitalist world and has replaced the social-democratic consensus of the early post-war period."[9] Not only have "existing socialist societies" been negated in the global triumph of capitalism (and Fotopoulos provides a lengthy and acute analysis of how socialist statism mirrored its capitalist "other" and dissolved through its own contradictions), so too have social democratic movements.

In support of this thesis, Fotopoulos observes that national governments such as Sweden increasingly have abandoned government regulation of the economy and attempts to provide effective social services, while social democratic parties themselves ignore or parody the social dimensions of their tradition in favor of neoliberal policies. If statism is now obsolete, the social democratic project becomes unrealizable and there cannot even be

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[8] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p.145.
[9] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 39.

moderate reforms able to withstand the assault of priva-
tization and demand to conform to global market impera-
tives. Thus, Fotopoulos insists, "no national government
today may follow economic policies that are disapproved
by the capital markets, which have the power to create an
intolerable economic pressure on the respective country's
borrowing ability, currency value and investment flows."[10]
Every "socialist" leader who has tried to maintain an ef-
fective social welfare system or any kind of protectionist
policies – whether Francois Mitterrand in France or George
Papandreou in Greece – has been forced to surrender to
transnational capitalist policies or be completely bull-
dozed by the juggernaut of marketization.[11]

Thus, Fotopoulos diagnoses troubled conditions where
both bureaucratic socialist countries and social democra-
cies have failed to overturn capitalism, let alone to reform
it in any enduring and substantive way. Fotopoulos shows
how Marx himself fetishized growth, industrialism, and
science and technology (which Marx argued would almost
automatically bring human liberation when fully devel-
oped), and how Marxists and dependency theorists alike
fail to challenge the socially and ecologically destructive

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[10] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 42.
[11] On the collapse and defeat of Social Democracy and
Eurocommunism, see Carl Boggs, *Social Movements and Political Power,*
*(*Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). One recent example of
the cooptation of Left resistance through neoliberal ideologies and
global capitalist structures involves the return to power of former
Sandinista leader and President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega. An
avowed enemy of the US and capitalism in the late 1970s and early
1980s (before the US destabilized the country by funding fascist
"contra" forces), Ortega was re-elected President in November 2006,
but this time ditching Marxist-Leninist posturing to affirm global
markets as key to national prosperity. See "Ortega, Again," *The New
York Times*, November 11, 2006.

logic of a growth-oriented economy. In *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, the consequences of such a system become staggeringly clear, when Fotopoulos takes the reader on a tour of Southern nations caught in the ravaging grip of debt, export, structural adjustment programs, poverty, hunger, disease, and environmental degradation, all of which he argues are inevitable consequences and by-products of neoliberal policies.[12]

Fotopoulos relates a crucial *grand narrative* of the life and death of social democracy and Leftist traditions, a story that is quite different from the *metanarrative* rightly criticized by Jean-Francois Lyotard and other postmodernists.[13] For, whereas a grand narrative is an empirically-grounded story of social change, a metanarrative is a metaphysical tale of unfolding social improvement and perfection. With postmodernists, Fotopoulos criticizes metanarratives as ideological mystifications that promote the modern ideology of Progress as attained through the development of science, technology, free markets, and the cult of expertise. Fotopoulos is relentless in his criticism of the unregulated (by society at large rather than only by elites) advance of these forces and the catastrophic social and environmental impact of economic growth and profit imperatives. He shows that the Western tradition of "heteronomy (i.e. the tradition of non-questioning of existing laws, traditions and beliefs that in a hierarchical society guarantee the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of elites), has never in fact led to a tradition of autonomy, and that the forms of freedom and democracy created remained partial, distorted, and wholly

[12] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, pp. 110-139.
[13] On this distinction, see Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations,* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991).

inadequate to the social forms human beings require for an autonomous existence with one another and a viable existence with the natural world.

Unlike most postmodernists, however, Fotopoulos describes the current global situation as one of advanced capitalism, as a new form of modernity, rather than as a vague and rootless "postmodernity." Whereas postmodernists emphasize breaks and discontinuities, Fotopoulos highlights the continuity of the last few centuries of capitalist social development in terms of privatization and market domination.[14] And whereas postmodernists typically espouse a relativism that disables normative and political criticism, Fotopoulos insists that ethical and political values can be grounded in non-arbitrary conditions. As he points out, agreeing with Castoriadis, "the type of general relativism, which is adopted by post-modernism, simply expresses the latter's abandonment of any critique of the institutionalised social reality and a general retreat to conformism."[15] Moreover, as he stresses in another passage, "once we have made a choice among the main traditions, in other words, once we have defined the content of the liberatory project in terms of the autonomy tradition, certain important implications follow at the ethical level, as well

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[14] One significant counterexample to this would be David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), which roots postmodern analysis and historical periodization in political economy and social theory. In this vein, also see the trilogy of postmodern works by Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*; *The Postmodern Turn: Paradigms Shifts in Art, Theory, and Science,* (Guilford Press, 1997), and *The Postmodern Adventure: Science, Technology, and Cultural Studies at the Third Millennium,* (Guilford Press, 2001).
[15] Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 348.

as at the interpretational level"[16]–a position that rules out any kind of subjectivist arbitrariness.[17] Fotopoulos rejects the individualism and fragmented identity politics of mul-ticulturalists and postmodernists in favor of emphasizing the need for social-institutional change and a global anti-capitalist politics of alliance. Finally, Fotopoulos finds that some explicit attempts at postmodern politics, such as the "radical democracy" of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, are simply fetid reformist wine repackaged in shiny new theoretical bottles.[18] Despite its one-time flair and flour-ish, postmodernism, for Fotopoulos, is just another dead-end road unable to carry humanity toward democracy and autonomy over and against domination and heteronomy.

The Road to Democracy

Either the vision of a radical democracy must die and we acquiesce to something like Fukuyama's notion of the "end of history"[19] (i.e., the triumph of capitalism at the alleged endgame of human moral and political evolution), or we radically reconstruct the democratic project. Fotopoulos of course takes the latter path, unwavering in his insist-ence that reform and social democratic projects are obso-lete and doomed to failure. Given the power of neoliberal, neoconservative, reformist, and pseudo-subversive ide-ologies, much debris has to be cleared out of the way, and

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[16] Ibid.
[17] See Takis Fotopoulos, 'Towards a democratic liberatory ethics', *Democracy & Nature,* Volume 8, Number 3, (November 2002)
[18] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Toward a Radical Democratic Politics,* (London: Verso Press, 2001).
[19] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man,* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993).

thus Fotopoulos critically engages Social Democracy, communitarianism, deep ecology, postmodernism, Greens, and various alter-globalization approaches.

In his examination, Fotopoulos finds various competing political perspectives to be both "ahistorical and utopian." They are *ahistorical* in that they fail to recognize the magnitude of the neoliberal restructuration of capital (and typically replicate its individualist and market-based ideologies). And they are *utopian* because they ignore the grow-or-die logic of the market economy, the universalization of this process, and the irreversibility of the post-statist phase of capitalist reconstruction which nullifies any attempt to return to social democracy policies for state protection of labor, various social groups, and the environment. The irony, Fotopoulos observes, is that Social Democracy and reform approaches in general are the real "utopian" project, because these perspectives believe that meaningful changes can emerge within neoliberal institutions that are antithetical to anything but crass market objectives and brute power politics. Inclusive Democracy, however, frankly recognizes the need for the complete transformation of the global capitalist system, as well as to offer *concrete alternatives and proposals* for rebuilding society along the lies of autonomy and ecology.

Fotopoulos draws inspiration from the classical democratic tradition which was born in classical Athens and libertarian socialism, along with their theorization by, among others, Castoriadis' autonomy project, and Bookchin's social ecology/communalist project. Also engaging various modern social movements (radical Green, libertarian, feminist), Fotopoulos seeks to develop a new liberatory synthesis. On the hypothesis (argued throughout the first part of *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*) that inequality and hierarchy are the sources of crises in culture, politics, economics, and ecology, Fotopoulos seeks the abolition of the unequal

distribution of political and economic power, as well as the elimination of all hierarchical relations in society.

Fotopoulos shows that the new democracy is *necessary*, given the multidimensional nature of the crisis which stems from the concentration of economic power that inevitably results from a market economy and its attendant representative "democracy." He also suggests some key institutional preconditions that can be constructed to abolish concentrated systems of power. Only in, decentralized, self-governing, interconnected communities can individuals realize the necessary and sufficient conditions of an inclusive democracy (conditions which Fotopoulos notes never have been realized historically), since only on a local scale can people participate meaningfully in society as citizens and attain "demotic" (or, community) ownership of productive resources and govern their allocation. Postcapitalist society, sprung from the political and cultural organization for a new economy and polity, begins with the transformation of city governments into inclusive democracies and their linkage into confederations.

Since political democracy requires economic democracy (as money creates hierarchies and controls votes), the contemporary liberation project must be rooted in a new theory of economics. Key to Fotopoulos' political position is the assertion that "the objective of a new liberatory project should not merely be the abolition of capitalist property relations but that of the market economy itself."[20] Whereas emphasis on confederalism is common among social anarchists and left libertarians, a distinguishing feature of Fotopoulos' analysis is his concrete emphasis on producing and exchanging goods in a non-market economy and democratically allocating scare resources in a way that

[20] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 6.

reconciles the social and individual dimensions of human life. This is what makes economic democracy necessary in the Inclusive Democracy project, in contrast to anarchists and social ecologists who, starting from an objective definition of human needs, believe in the communist myth of a "post-scarcity" society (rightly criticised by Hannah Arendt) in which no problem of democratic allocation of resources arises. Fotopoulos' approach therefore radically differs from Bookchin's notion of a "post-scarcity" anarchism and the economics of social ecology,[21] which he criticizes for lacking specifics on alternative economics and systems of resource allocation (which Bookchin phrases in the vague terms of a new "moral economy").[22]

Fotopoulos rejects attempts to reconcile capitalism and socialism by creating a "mixed economy" or market institutions democratically governed. For Fotopoulos, a "socialist market" is an oxymoron, since markets are growth mechanisms and commodity logic breeds uncontrollable expansion. Seeking to meet fundamental aims in satisfying human needs (both essential and non-essential) and to synthesize collective and individual decision making, Fotopoulos roots his vision of a decommodified economy in a voucher system.[23] There would be a social allocation of work, along with rotating functions, where necessary.[24] By placing heavy emphasis on freedom of choice and localized institutions, this theory differs significantly from socialist views of "economic democracy" and "participatory

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[21] See Janet Biehl, *The Politics of Social Ecology,* (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1998), Chapter 12.
[22] See Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism, (*Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004).
[23] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, pp. 257-262.
[24] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, pp. 262-6.

economics"[25] that fail to minimize the dangers of a new bureaucratic system of planning emerging.

No theory will be convincing if it does not offer realistic alternatives to the present set of arrangements that are so entrenched as to seem unshakeable or subject only to minor improvements. Thus, as Fotopoulos emphasizes: "all the proposed strategies for political and economic change and the transitional projects involved are useless unless they are part of a comprehensive program for social transformation that explicitly aims at replacing the market economy and statist democracy by an inclusive democracy."[26] Fotopoulos offers positive, constructive, and fairly detailed visions of how the future can come about and what it might look like, while trying to avoid the problem of dogmatism by dictating to the future what its society should be.

Thus, Inclusive Democracy seeks to construct a new form of decentralized democracy based on confederations of local inclusive democracies. This approach aims to reintegrate society with economy, polity, and nature by striving to achieve the equal distribution of power at all levels. Such a society can exist only in contradiction with capitalist institutions, rather than in compromise or accommodation to it. Inclusive Democracy seeks a break and rupture with capitalism, technocracy, bureaucratic domination, and, indeed, the entire classist, statist, and heteronomy tradition of the Western world. The primary values of Inclusive Democracy are autonomy (in the original sense of the word that involves "self rule") and democracy (the direct rule of citizens over their social life). For Fotopoulos,

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[25] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Participatory Economics (Parecon) and Inclusive Democracy", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 2005).
[26] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 275.

democracy has only one genuine meaning, and this entails the active involvement of informed citizens in the regulation of their own lives, without mediation of "experts" or elites of any kind.

Equally as important to the vision of a new society is a theory of how to get there, or, a transitional strategy. Fotopoulos opposes the Marxist-Leninist insurrectionist vision of precipitating a sudden and cataclysmic "revolution." One problem with this approach is that change unfolds too rapidly and new objective conditions are brought about without appropriate new subjective conditions. Moreover, this method invariably depends on a "vanguard" concept that involves elitism and authoritarianism, and thereby is a betrayal of progressive political ideals of equality and democracy. Through the critical education method of *paideia* and actual experience with building democracy, Inclusive Democracy envisions a manner in which people can create vital democracies uncontaminated with elitism and the cult of expertise. Against the criticism that people are fundamentally lazy, apathetic, and apolitical, Fotopoulos argues that people are capable of building democracies, new social forms they will identify with, value, and thus defend against inevitable reaction and counter-attacks. As for the ever-present threat of violence, Fotopoulos claims that it will be a real threat only when it is too late, already after the democratic "paradigm" would have become hegemonic in the Gramscian sense. These new democratic communities, of course, will be constructed in as many local bases as possible, but they must ultimately be interconnected into federations at the national and international levels. Just as "socialism in one country," "Inclusive Democracy in one country" is an oxymoron, for capitalism is global and isolated communities are highly vulnerable.

Thus, in place of antiquated and problematic visions of insurrection, convulsive revolution, and storming the

barricades (or centers of power that no longer exist in a rhizomatic global capitalist world), Inclusive Democracy emphasizes the need for preparatory transitions. To be sure, the radical vision here is optimistic, but it is grounded in existing historical possibilities and concrete ideas for new social forms. Fotopoulos believes that a revolutionary project is "realistic" to the extent local economic and political bases of Inclusive Democracy can take root, interconnect, nourish new cultures and subjectivities, and win over a majority of the population. Subsequently, "an alternative social paradigm will have become hegemonic and the break in the socialization process … will have occurred."[27]

Fotopoulos' vision, then, is creating and securing a counter-hegemonic inclusive democratic culture, stage-by-stage, until a new global economic, political, and cultural order is achieved. He offers a resolute, militant, holistic insistence on the need to negate hierarchies and power structures in order to comprehensively rebuild society from below: "Town by town, city by city, region by region will be taken away from the effective control of the market economy and the nation-state, their political and economic structures being replaced by the confederations of democratically run communities."[28]

Fotopoulos offers the kind of radical insights to be truly visionary, to be "utopian" in the best sense of the term which seeks to identify existing potentialities for systemic change. Inclusive Democracy thereby is not the *u-topos* of a non-society that cannot possibly exist, but rather the *eu-topos* of a good society existing *in potential*, to be born through radical struggle in building a new democratic

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[27] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 285.
[28] *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 285.

society. The approach of Inclusive Democracy shows that humankind must find a way beyond the Charybdis of an internationalized capitalism and the Scylla of socialist statism, between the false options of individualism and collectivism. Inclusive Democracy maps out a third way, one predicated on building a federation of self-organized political and economic institutions at local levels. With no guarantee of success, and few historical examples of genuine democracies, the Inclusive Democracy project is an experiment in human possibilities.

Whatever choices human beings make, they are not capricious; steering clear of the false dilemma of objectivism and relativism, Fotopoulos' *Towards an Inclusive Democracy* brings into play some elaborate philosophical machinery to demonstrate that while human choices cannot be justified or "proven" through appeal to Divine mandates, historical "laws," or "objective tendencies," neither are they arbitrary or of equal value. Laying claim to freedom as the highest human value, the task becomes to justify it as such, work through its implications, and struggle for the institutional mechanisms best able to realize it.

About This Volume

This book seeks to collect some of the most significant statements and critical reviews of the Inclusive Democracy project. *Global Capitalism and the Demise of the Left: Renewing Radicalism through Inclusive Democracy* is diverse in viewpoints and perspectives, yet it is thematically consistent in that all essays scrutinize the current social and environment crisis and critically engage the resources of Inclusive Democracy for diagnosing the predicament and proposing an alternative mode of social and political life. These perspectives raise numerous important issues about

human nature, the need and possibilities for genuine de-mocracy, and Fotopoulos' readings of various theorists and historical traditions.

While many writers affirm, develop, and apply the theoretical and political insights of Fotopoulos' work and Inclusive Democracy, others express scepticism and raise fundamental objections. In the spirit of the Inclusive Democracy project, there is no dogma laid down here, no party line to follow. The reader will find, rather, the expo-sition and application of a powerful and provocative new theory of hierarchy and domination, of historical develop-ment and social organization, of the relationship between society and ecology, and of democracy uniquely conceived apart from all markets and relations of domination and subordination. *Global Capitalism and the Demise of the Left* features fruitful dialogues that are dynamic and ongoing.

The *Introduction,* apart from this article includes also the statement "Our Aims," whereby the Inclusive Democracy International Network lays out its basic theoretical and political positions which other essayists develop and/or respond to. This is a succinct but eloquent statement of the traditions Fotopoulos seeks to advance, and those he works to renounce.

Part One begins with Takis Nikolopoulos' "Market and Society," where he has some reservations on Fotopoulos' rejection of the civil society approach on the grounds that citizens' movements could yet form the organic "systemic" parts of a wider movement for a radical change aiming at the inclusive and genuine democracy. He also applauds Inclusive Democracy as a new model of "democratic ra-tionalism" and interprets it as a liberating and historically plausible proposal. His conclusion is that although the Inclusive Democracy project includes elements of utopia, in the positive sense of the word, still, Fotopoulos "does not refer to an idealist kind ideal society, as he takes into

serious consideration reality." His model is rather based on realistic utopia (and) after all, "utopias may have died but utopia (as a vision) is still alive."

Panayotis Koumentakis's article on "The Market Economy and the Biological Crisis," explores the lived effects of market capitalism on the body, as profit-oriented food and agricultural industries poison both external and internal environments. Mediating between macro and micro-dynamics, he steers our attention to a "biological crisis" in the human body that is an effect of the same dynamics degrading, exploiting, and polluting the earth. In the "developed" Western world, the biological crisis afflicts both body and mind in forms such as obesity, chronic disease (cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and so on), mental illness, and Alzheimer's. While the "undeveloped" world suffers from want and hunger, large numbers of citizens in Western nations grow obese from excess consumption, such as made available through ubiquitous fast food chains. The foundation of the Standard American Diet (SAD) is the toxic commodities of the meat and dairy industries which promote disease, befoul the air and water, contribute to global warming and rainforest destruction, and supply food "products" through barbaric methods of confining and slaughtering billions of animals each year. This, on top of employing immense areas of fertile land for harmful products and destroying immense quantities of good quality foods, in order to produce products of poor quality as well as unhealthy, processed and refined, disease-producing foods. As "health care" is nothing but profitable disease management, and the prevailing paradigms promote mechanistic rather than holistic concepts of the body, Koumentakis urges that new outlooks, lifestyles, and medical systems need to be adopted, such as cannot possibly grow and thrive in the profit-oriented institutions of capitalism. He thus concludes that, "Only a society of

Inclusive Democracy will ensure the objective and subjective conditions that are needed for the basic needs and the cultural requirements of the masses to be fully covered. Such a society will offer access to knowledge and information, as well as the ability to make good use of such knowledge, in order for the people to be able to organise their lives on sound biological and ecological foundations."

Rafael Spósito's essay, "Towards a New Vision for Global Society," draws from recent trends in contemporary social theory (particularly the postmodern break from foundationalism) to redefine categories such as human nature, freedom, and democracy and free them from ideologies of domination. Spósito addresses how such normative claims are no longer tied to timeless "truths," but rather must be rethought as thoroughly historical and embodied in social relations. He shows how this move helps to challenge power itself, and thereby promotes Fotopoulos' project of democratizing all existing social institutions.

Rounding off this section is "The Argentinean Insurrection and Inclusive Democracy" by the Argentinian author Guido Galafassi who analyzes how the popular Argentinean rebellion of December 2001 illustrated crises in the institutions of "representative democracy" and the capitalist market economy. These crises prompted the creation of neighbourhood assemblies which constituted embryonic mechanisms of direct democracy and a new integral vision of society. Galafassi shows that three of the main components of an Inclusive Democracy had been attempted in practice in Argentina: direct political democracy, economic democracy, and democracy in the social realm. According to Galafassi, a new form of confederal democracy emerged in Argentina which was based on nearby communities organized into a territorial network at a local and regional scale, and this event provides an important con-

crete example of the possibilities for Inclusive Democracy
and how it might work in an actual social setting.

*Part Two, examining the relation between the various cur-
rents of the Left and the Inclusive Democracy project,* fea-
tures authors who pose questions and challenges to the
Inclusive Democracy project. In "Inclusive Democracy
and its Prospects," David Freeman begins with the famil-
iar question: "Why has anarchism not attracted a greater
following, especially given the manifest failures of capi-
tal, the state, and 'actually existing socialism'?" Freeman
gives the frequent scholarly response that the problem is
not that anarchism cannot work, but that "its proponents
have not demonstrated that it can, especially in societies
of scale." Freeman aptly draws the conclusion that the
Inclusive Democracy project "fills in a number of these
gaps, proposing with clarity, thoughtfulness and original-
ity the key mechanisms that might enable and sustain such
a polity." Yet he also points out that after the nightmare of
the twentieth century and the debacle of "utopian" visions
of various sorts, one must greet the social transformation
project of Inclusive Democracy with healthy suspicion, as
it may share roots with the pathological nature of much
twentieth century political radicalism.

Arran Gare's essay, "Beyond Social Democracy?" demon-
strates how Fotopoulos' work merges Karl Polanyi's char-
acterization of the relationship between society and the
market and Cornelius Castoriadis' philosophy of autonomy.
Giving a different interpretation of Castoriadis' concept of
autonomy, however, Gare argues that Fotopoulos' "dualis-
tic" revolution/reform logic diminishes the contributions
the social democracy tradition can make to democracy and
autonomy. Gare calls for a synthesis of a radically reformed
social democracy and Inclusive Democracy as the best way
to challenge neo-liberalism and the emerging liberal fas-

cism taking hold in nations such as the US, Britain, and Australia.

In his contribution, "Can Democracy Solve All Problems?" Serge Latouche interprets Inclusive Democracy as an original and important contribution to radical democracy, but he raises doubts regarding the desirability of direct democracy and the rejection of representation in all possible forms. Latouche voices numerous objections to universalist projects – including, he claims, Fotopoulos' own version – as manifestations of Western ethnocentrism.

"Inclusive Democracy and Left Libertarianism," shows author Michael Levin sympathizing with Fotopoulos' aspirations, while rejecting what he takes to be his view that the Greek definition of democracy is a transhistorically valid notion and the "one meaning" of democracy. Like Freeman, Levin uses historical examples from the Left to warn that the transition to Inclusive Democracy is likely to be more difficult than Fotopoulos suggests.

This section ends with the review article "Recent Theoretical Developments in the Inclusive Democracy Project" in which Takis Fotopoulos' undertakes a critical review of theoretical issues, as well as debates relating to Inclusive Democracy such as emerged in the dynamic conversations following the publication of Fotopoulos' seminal work, *Toward an Inclusive Democracy*. This review includes the author's attempt to develop a democratic conception of science and technology, a new interpretation of the factors leading to the rise of the new irrationalism and its incompatibility with Inclusive Democracy, as well of the role of mass media and culture in a democratic society, the Inclusive Democracy approach to present class divisions, postmodernism and globalisation, an attempt to develop a new democratic liberatory ethics, a critique of traditional antisystemic movements, and a presentation of concrete proposals on developing transitional strategies.

Part Three focuses on a crucial concern of Inclusive Democracy: *paideia*, or, "education." Inclusive Democracy theorists employ the Greek term "paideia" in order to recall and reconstruct the classical Athenians' intimate linkage of education, autonomy, and democracy. Education is crucial to revolutionary change and social reorganization in that schooling systems at all levels socialize youth into capitalist ideologies and promote strictly utilitarian and careerist goals within the corporate job market. Radical methods of pedagogy, conversely, seek to break this ideological grip and to promote the forms of critical consciousness necessary for radical change.

David Gabbard and Karen Anijar Appleton analyze the strengths and implications of Fotopoulos' arguments as they relate to education in "The Democratic Paideia Project: Beginnings of an Emancipatory Paideia for Today." With Fotopoulos, Gabbard and Anijar note that the functionalist and hierarchical character of current institutions render authentically democratic education and autonomy impossible, and so one must theorize what necessary and sufficient conditions must exist in order for emancipatory education to become possible in the future. Yet they seek to correct what they claim to be Fotopoulos' misreading of Ivan Illich and his ideas for "deschooling" society, in order to show how Illich's writings can contribute to the conversation on Inclusive Democracy and strengthen Fotopoulos' own arguments for paideia. In addition, they investigate the potential contributions that "critical pedagogy" can make in helping the Inclusive Democracy project formulate an emancipatory theory of education.

The nature and importance of paideia is vividly illustrated in John Sargis's essay, "Education or Paideia? The US experience," Sargis reveals how the functionalist nature of the US (mis)education system, riddled with class and race biases, is designed to produce mindless, docile producers

and consumers who serve the interests of the ruling elite. In direct contrast to the repressive and hierarchical school-ing institutions that prevail throughout Western nations, Sargis sketches an outline of how genuine education might work in an autonomous society. For Sargis, "The highest goal of paideia is to create the democratic consciousness of explicit self-determination at the social and individual level –and this presupposes the equal distribution of power among citizens. A radical break with the present is needed to make room for new social domain."

Finally, in a dialogue-epilogue, Fotopoulos in his sec-ond contribution to this volume, appreciatively responds to the reservations and criticisms raised against Inclusive Democracy. His essay, "Is Inclusive Democracy Feasible and Desirable?" takes up themes such as the meaning of democracy, the plausibility and need for Inclusive Democracy, the relationship between Inclusive Democracy and the social democratic and libertarian traditions, and the formidable problems of transition to a post-capitalist society devoid of market institutions and hierarchical re-lations. Fotopoulos's essay clarifies the overall outlook of Inclusive Democracy, and sets the context for further de-bate and deepening of radical theory and politics, such as those playing out in the *International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* and other forums.[29]

This volume is rounded off with the two short essays in the appendix – "*Democracia incluyente*," by Jorge Camil, and **"*Vers une démocratie générale* ?"** from Jean-Claude Richard – introduce the Latin American and French edi-tions of *Towards an Inclusive Democracy* and demonstrate

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[29] See: http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/. Also, see Fotopoulos' archive of writings, at: http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/fotopoulos/.

the international character and importance of Fotopoulos' work and the Inclusive Democracy perspective.

The Need for a Renewed Radicalism

On the whole, *Global Capitalism and the Demise of the Left: Renewing Radicalism through Inclusive Democracy* is a significant and compelling contribution to social theory and political philosophy that deserves to be widely read and debated. Critics may disagree with key particulars and assumptions of Fotopoulos' theory, but nonetheless concur, in this era of severe social and ecological crisis, that without the kind of revolutionary changes envisioned by Inclusive Democracy, the future will become increasingly bleak. The social and environmental crises haunting global capitalism inevitably will deepen and darken, as evidenced in the disastrous US invasion of Iraq, the fascist administrations of George Bush and Tony Blair, failed neoliberal projects for spreading "democracy" to the Middle East, struggles over diminishing resources such as oil and water, "terrorism" and increasingly volatile geopolitical conflicts, global climate change, and environmental chaos such as portended by the destructive power of Hurricane Katrina.

More than ever before, the choice for humanity is between libertarian socialism and barbarism, democracy or authoritarianism, sustainability or collapse. In the audacious vision of Inclusive Democracy, the goal must be to create what never existed before, but which is more necessary than ever if there is to be a viable future whatsoever – a direct, decentralized, confederal democracy, one that aims to reintegrate society with economy, polity and nature by striving to achieve the equal distribution of power at all levels. The essays in this volume are offered in the

spirit of renewed radical thought, dialogue, and politics. They are beams of light in troubling, dark times.

OUR AIMS

I. The ultimate cause of the present multidimensional crisis (political, economic, social, ecological, cultural) is the concentration of power in the hands of various elites, which is maintained and reproduced by the dynamics of the system of the market economy (in its present internationalised form) and its political complement, representative "democracy", i.e. the economic and political system that emerged in the West just two centuries ago.

II. Overcoming, therefore, the chronic crisis which started with the emergence of this system, and has worsened in the last few years with the internationalisation of the market economy, is not possible through the reforming of the system – as is utopianly supported by civil societarians, Green parties and organisations, who in the final analysis function as its apologists. Overcoming the crisis is possible only through the creation of a new form of political, social and economic organisation which secures the equal distribution of power among citizens at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural). Inclusive Democracy, therefore, is not simply a new utopia, but a new form of social organisation which aims at securing the equal distribution of power at all

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[1] This text is published in various languages at: http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/englishaims.htm.

levels and consequently the final overcoming of the present multidimensional crisis. The ultimate aim is the creation of a Democratic World Order based on confederations of Inclusive Democracies, which will replace the hierarchical world orders of the present and the past.

III.   Inclusive Democracy constitutes the highest form of Democracy since it secures the institutional preconditions for political (or direct) democracy, economic democracy, democracy in the social realm and ecological democracy. At the subjective level, Inclusive Democracy is grounded on the conscious choice of citizens for autonomy, and not on dogmas, religions and irrational systems or closed theoretical systems, which rule out any questioning about the ultimate grounds of these beliefs – the cornerstone of democracy.

IV.   Political democracy involves the creation of institutions of direct democracy at the political level, so that all decisions are taken by the *demotic assemblies* (i.e. the local citizen assemblies at the level of the *demos)* which confederate at the regional, national, and ultimately continental and global levels and consist of delegates, who are subject to immediate recall by the demotic assemblies. The function of regional, national and confederal assemblies is only to implement and coordinate the policy decisions of the demotic assemblies. Political democracy secures, therefore, the re-integration of society with polity, and replaces the state as a separate authority over the citizens – an arrangement which, essentially, has transformed citizens into subjects.

V.   Economic democracy involves the creation of insti-
tutions of collective ownership of the productive re-
sources (i.e. of the sources of social wealth) and col-
lective control over them by the demotic assemblies.
The market economy system, which has led to the
present huge concentration of wealth at the hands of
the few, as well as to unemployment, underemploy-
ment, insecurity, the degradation of social services
and the ecological catastrophe, would be replaced
by new institutions of democratic control of the
means of production which aim at covering the ba-
sic needs of all citizens, as well as at securing the
individual citizen's freedom of choice with respect
to the covering of his/her non basic needs, accord-
ing to his/her choices for work/leisure. Economic
democracy secures, therefore, the re-integration of
society with economy, and replaces the money/mar-
ket economy, which divides citizens into privileged
ones, who more than cover every real or imaginary
need they may have, and non-privileged ones, who
are incapable of covering even their basic needs.

VI.   Democracy in the social realm involves the creation
of institutions of self-management in the facto-
ries, offices and generally the places of production,
as well as in educational and cultural institutions
(media, art, etc.) The worker councils, the student
councils, and so on, secure the self-management of
the production places, the education places, etc.,
guided by the general aims set by the demotic as-
semblies, as well as by the preferences of citizens as
producers but also as consumers. A model describ-
ing how an economic democracy might function in
general, and specifically how the decisions of citi-
zens as members of the demotic assemblies might

interrelate to the decisions of citizens as members of the self-managed institutions, is described in Vol. 3, No. 2 (1995) of the journal *Democracy & Nature*, and in more detail in the book *Towards an Inclusive Democracy* (Cassell/Continuum, 1997), ch.6.

VII. Ecological democracy involves the creation of institutions and a culture that secure the re-integration of society and nature. This means that the goal of economic activity is not the present eco-catastrophic "development" which is necessitated by competition and profit demands, but the covering of the needs of all citizens in a way that secures the true quality of life that only a harmonious relationship between society and nature can bring about. Ecological democracy, therefore, can be achieved neither within the present market economy system and the consequent 'growth economy', nor within any system mainly aiming at growth, like the centralised system of 'actually existing socialism'.

VIII. Inclusive Democracy is neither the outcome of a dialectical unfolding in Nature or Society determined by some "laws/tendencies" of natural or social evolution, nor just another utopia like the ones that appear in the libertarian space. Inclusive Democracy, therefore, is incompatible with any closed theoretical system and of course with any religious (or not) irrationalism. The Inclusive Democracy project aims at building a massive movement that will be the synthesis as well as the transcendence of the social movements for socialism, democracy and autonomy, as well as of the new social movements for equality regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, etc.

IX. The transition to Inclusive Democracy presupposes, therefore, the creation of a massive movement at the local, regional, national and ultimately continental and global levels aiming at replacing the system of the market economy and representative "democracy" with institutions of direct, economic, ecological democracy, as well as democracy in the social realm. This movement intervenes at all levels (political, economic, social, ecological, cultural) with the aim of creating new institutions and culture. This intervention does not manifest itself only through the creation of alternative forms of individual or social life ('by example'), direct action, or participation in the local elections, but through the combination of these and similar other forms of action on the condition that all these activities will be an integral part of a comprehensive political programme of radical social change for an Inclusive Democracy. Participating in the local elections (the only elections compatible with the goal of Inclusive Democracy) aims only at the creation of ID-based institutions and culture at a significant social scale. The ultimate goal is the creation of a dual power in relation to the existing system, through the development of the massive consciousness brought about by the struggle against the existing institutions, as well as the struggle for the new institutions and the setting up of the new institutions themselves. When the majority of citizens has accepted the principles of democratic organisation and takes part in the new institutions *en masse,* then no power on Earth could stop the collapse of the old system of concentration of power at the hands of the few – the cause of all troubles for the majority of the human race (the transition strategy towards an Inclusive Democracy

is described in detail in *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2002).

X.   The intermediate goal is the building of a Network of Citizens for Inclusive Democracy which will aim at the creation of an alternative democratic conscious-ness, through political intervention as well as cul-tural activities, with the final goal of contributing to the creation of a wider political movement for the transition to Inclusive Democracy. A first step in this direction might be the creation of study groups which provide the opportunity to deepen the knowl-edge of activists on the various aspects of the inclu-sive democracy project including the crucial issues of strategy and tactics.

PART I

GROWTH, MARKET, SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

MARKET AND SOCIETY[1]

TAKIS NIKOLOPOULOS

*T*akis Fotopoulos' book "Inclusive Democracy", first published in English, is characterised by features missing from most other similar books and articles dealing with the issue of the–mainly economic–global crisis: that is a global proposal for overcoming this crisis, a feasible-according to the writer-liberating proposal towards the creation of a real democracy which will overcome the present political, economic, social and ecological crisis.

In fact, whilst most writers and analysts of the current multidimensional crisis focus upon the diagnosis and the causes of it, Fotopoulos, apart from studying this crisis and its causes through its historical evolution, as this has been expressed in the various market forms, also ventures to propose an alternative scheme (which is by no means a magical recipe as he himself recognises) based on the one hand, upon the model of classical Athenian democracy, which he expands and enriches, and on the other, upon the synthesis and transcendence of the main social movements of the last century (democratic, socialist, radical, ecological, feminist and libertarian).

This "inclusive" democracy, a term used by Aristotle in a different context to denote the political organization of the city-market, will be based, technically and practi-

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[1] This review of *Periektiki Dimokratia (Inclusive Democracy),* (Athens, Kastaniotis, 1999) was first published (in Greek) in the Athens daily, *To Vima,* (16 January 2000).

cally, upon confederal communalism, whilst morally and philosophically upon "democratic rationalism".

It is worth noting that Fotopoulos has, for over twelve years, presented his views mainly in the journal *"Democracy and Nature"* (formerly *"Society and Nature"*) which he has been editing since 1992.

According to Fotopoulos, the main cause of this crisis is the liberal market economy that became a system only two centuries ago, when the process of marketisation began, which today has reached its current neo-liberal "internationalized" form –at least as far as the movement of capital and commodities is concerned. As a result, the socially controlled markets of the past have become the autonomous markets of the present. It should be noted that the writer is using the term "internationalization" instead of the widely used term "globalization", which for him is an erroneous term given that production has not as yet been internationalized, but only partially.

The market economy, which is based on individualism and competition, led to an unprecedented huge concentration of economic and political power.

This model, and the type of personal attitude it creates, has penetrated even countries like Greece, whose economy and society were to a great extent based upon communal values, such as cooperation and solidarity.

According to the writer, however, these values, which in many Western European countries have been associated with attempts to establish a so-called social economy, have very few chances to survive by themselves and even fewer chances to provide an integrated proposal for a way out of this crisis, as they ultimately get absorbed and integrated by the dominant economy.

Despite that, Fotopoulos believes that any attempt to transcend the market economy, as well as central planning, should start "from below"; the same applies as regards the

transition to what he calls, following Bookchin, a 'confederal' inclusive democracy, which is a new form of political organization based upon a geographically determined community ["*demos*"]. An inclusive democracy will include political, economic, social and ecological democracy and will mould a new kind of citizenship involving citizens as members of a genuinely open society, i.e. of a society of people with a high level of consciousness.

In this problematique, as the author argued in a recent conference in Greece on 'Globalisation and social economy', neither the social economy nor the so-called civil society could constitute a successful resistance to globalization. The writer, very carefully rejects the civil society as a vehicle towards a 'radical democracy'[2], on the basis that this approach is a-historical and utopian in the negative sense of the word:

• Ahistorical, since the state "castrated" citizens' associations in the context of the structural changes that led to the creation of an internationalized market economy and

• utopian, since, in the same context of the market economy which –like the state–has been taken for granted by the supporters of civil society, the encouragement and empowerment of such autonomous institutions and associations could only be feasible provided that they do not come in conflict with the logic and dynamics of market economy.

However, should there not be a starting point? Is it not the civil society, i.e. citizens themselves who will form the

[2] [Editor's note: For a systematic analysis and critique of the 'radical democracy' approaches by Takis Fotopoulos see chapter 5 of his *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*].

basis of local communities first, and confederal communities eventually? Are not these special citizens' movements, which will form the organic "systemic" parts of a wider movement for a radical change, aiming at the inclusive and genuine democracy? This being so, would they not have to fight against the existing market? In this respect, the writer proposes the creation of artificial markets which, even in the transitional stage, could satisfy the real needs of the community.

It may be that some may have reservations on the inclusive democracy project, as they have become tired in believing in radical social change and have identified themselves with present "reality", accepting the end of history. They cannot, however, remain aloof *vis-à-vis* this excellent and exemplary analysis of the current system and the causes of its multi-dimensional crisis offered by the author–an analysis that has to be read widely, particularly so by students of economics.

Fotopoulos's book includes elements of utopia, in the positive sense of the word. The writer does not just refer to an idealist kind of perfect society, as he takes into serious consideration reality and actual social trends. His model is rather based on realistic utopia. After all, "utopias may have died but utopia (as a vision) is still alive".

THE MARKET ECONOMY AND THE BIOLOGICAL CRISIS

DR. PANAYOTIS KOUMENTAKIS

E verybody talks these days about the ecological crisis while the media make frequent reference to a worsening ecological crisis, to the deterioration of the Environment and imminent ecological disasters. No one can of course dispute the extent and seriousness of this crisis, which has become an integral part of the general multidimensional crisis of our times (political, social and economic).

However, few specialists are seriously concerned over another crisis, equally severe and equally frightening in extent and in consequences: the biological crisis. It should be noted at this point that it was personally difficult to include the biological crisis in the ecological crisis, inasmuch as ecology in its ordinary sense has to do with the Environment and its deterioration, and very little with the biology of the human being. According, however, to a broader sense, which we will introduce in this essay, the biological crisis could be said to be part of the ecological crisis in that both are basically created by environmental factors as a result of the concentration of the economic and political power during the neoliberal phase of the internationalised market economy. Generally speaking, the biological crisis is part of the broader ecological crisis, inasmuch as humans constitute an integral part of the ecosystem. As we know, Ecology, being a branch of Biology, studies the ecosystem by investigating the interaction of organisms (plants, animals and human beings) with their

environment, and the consequences of the normal and ab-
normal relations among them.

Nearly all specialists believe that the biological crisis
is more or less unavoidable, as this is the natural course
of things, something like a natural disaster over which we
have no control whatsoever. As a matter of fact, special-
ists and medical doctors are simply turning a blind eye to
the basic causes of this problem. In this essay we will en-
deavour to present certain basic information, parameters
and aspects of the biological crisis.

No one can deny the fact that at present we are faced
with a multidimensional crisis, with political, economic,
social and ecological aspects. Those who believe in the
project of Inclusive Democracy, know that the basic cause
of these crises is the concentration of the economic and
political power in the hands of a small elite, which is gen-
erated by the system of market economy and development,
and its political complement, representative "democracy".
There is, however, a biological aspect of this multidimen-
sional crisis which has not been adequately explored and
studied, and has been greatly ignored as a global social
phenomenon. The fact that we avoid to face this crisis,
does not mean that it is not there, that it is not present in
all the communities and social classes of today.

Various studies during the last decades have shown that
the biological crisis has spread dangerously and tends to
get worse. Its existence is primarily owed to the social and
economic crisis, as well as to the medical crisis, which re-
sulted from the commercialisation of the medical system.

In a final analysis, the biological crisis is caused by a
wider deterioration of the Environment as a result of said
crises, owing to the unhealthy habits that people acquire
from an early age in the consuming society in which they
grow up (fast food, junk food, etc.), as well as to a gener-
alised pollution and deterioration of the air, water, earth,

sea, food and of the Environment at large. The roots of this crisis can be traced in the prevailing terrible socio-economic conditions, such as want, poverty, unemployment, social degradation, etc.

The medical system (big medical names, the medical academic establishment, etc.) has not taken any steps to restrain the factors of morbidity, being mainly controlled by those who dominate and direct the market, especially large multinational companies, which fund the medical research[1] and provide various other benefits in money and in kind to numerous medical doctors[2].

The biological crisis has an extensive symptomatology which is clearly visible all around us, such as chronic degenerative diseases which affect a great percentage of the adult population, mainly in the developed countries. Serious diseases are affecting increasingly larger numbers of young people at earlier ages (for instance, cancer is a leading cause of mortality in children between 3 and 17 years of age – second only to accidents). We note that a significant percentage of people in developed and developing countries suffer of an apparent physical and mental weakness, various types of anaemia, intellectual decline, alopecia and baldness from early age, bad teeth from early childhood, disfiguration of the spine, congenital abnormalities, eye diseases, sexual impotency even among young men, sterility in women and men, weakening of male semen (especially in young men), that is quite worrying. Depression tends to become an epidemic in

[1] see e.g. Philippe Riviere, "How big pharmaceutical companies control medicine" *Le Monde Diplomatique*, (November 2003).
[2] see e.g. Sarah Boseley, "Junket time in Munich for the medical profession–and it's all on the drug firms. How 'opinion leaders' among doctors are won over by cash on offer from the giants of the pharmaceutical trade", *The Guardian,* (October 5, 2004).

the developed societies, with a number of other psychiatric and neurological diseases and abnormalities such as atherosclerosis and high blood pressure, even among children and adolescents, an increasing frequency of child and adolescent diabetes, adult diabetes which tends to become an epidemic affecting even adolescences, epilepsy and multiple sclerosis, especially among young people, diseases of the kidneys and of the liver, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, ulcerous colitis, lupus erythematosus, and other autoimmune diseases, and all these with an upward trend. Alzheimer's disease also tends to become an epidemic in the developed societies, in parallel with digestive diseases and skin diseases. Coronary disease and various forms of cancer (breast, lung, prostate, colon, etc.) are the primary causes of death. Asthma, allergies and arthritis affect increasingly large numbers of adults, children and young people. Obesity is one of the greatest calamities of our time in the developed world, the Greek children being the fattest and most overweight children in the world. [3]

All these physical and psycho-mental problems affect a great part of the people living in developed countries. The cost for providing health care has greatly burdened the budgets of developed countries and of individuals themselves (the patient's participation in the private expenses for medical and pharmaceutical care in our country has reached at least 46% of the total cost). [4]

We will continue with certain basic figures concerning the extent and form of the biological crisis on an international scale.

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[3] There are numerous reports on this in various medical journals such as Lancet, New England Journal of Medicine, British Medical Journal, etc.

[4] see *Eleftherotypia,* 26/07/2006.

Basic causes of morbidity and mortality

According to the latest report of the World Health Organisation, which resulted from numerous research programs,[5] the death rate from diseases of the circulatory system represents nearly 50% of the deaths in the industrial countries, 20% of neoplasias, 5% of respiratory diseases, and 5% of traffic accidents.

Out of 11 million deaths that occurred in Europe, North America and the other industrial countries during 2002, 3 million occurred as a result of problems of the circulatory system and high blood pressure, and 2.3 million due to high cholesterol.

The World Health Organisation has based its findings on a significant statistical research which recorded facts from extensive research work on the main causes of mortality on the planet. According to this research, 55 million deaths occurred in 2002, 22% of which happened in the developed countries, for the following reasons:

• High blood pressure: 7.14 million deaths, with 3 million occurring in the developed countries.
• Smoking: 4.9 million deaths, with 2.5 million in the developed countries.
• High cholesterol: 4.4 million deaths owing to the great consumption of meat, and obesity.
• Low body weight: 3.75 million deaths, 3.5 million of which in countries with high poverty rates.
• Sexually transmitted diseases: 2.9 million deaths. This rate increased with the outbreak of AIDS in Africa.

[5] Research projects which were taken into account in this WHO report, apart from the ones by the World Health Organisation itself, were those prepared by other organisations such as the Club of Rome, the World Watch Institute and others.

• Deficiency of vitamins and antioxidants due to the absence of fruits and vegetables from the daily diet: 2.7 million deaths.
• Obesity causing wear damage and neoplasm: 2.5 million deaths, 60% in the developed countries.
• Absence of physical exercise: 1.9 million deaths from diabetes, osteoporosis, and various types of cancer in old persons and in younger persons with limited physical activity.
• Alcoholic beverages: 1.8 million deaths of persons who systematically consumed alcohol.

A large number of deaths is associated with the quality of life and poverty in developing countries: 1.73 million deaths resulted from drinking unclean water, lack of hygienic conditions and drainage; 1.6 million died from the use of wood and biomass in cooking and heating; 0.84 million died from iron deficiency; 0.77 million died from lack of vitamin A; and 0.79 million died from lack of zinc due to bad nutrition.

Urban air pollution is responsible for 0.8 million deaths, 3/4 of which occur in large cities of developing countries. Approximately 500,000 people die every year from unsafe and unsuitable medical services, especially in countries with a deficiently organised medical system. A number of other causes follow, such as exposure to carcinogenic substances at work (0.47 million deaths); labour accidents (0.31 million deaths, 70% of which occur in developing countries); air, water and soil pollution from lead (0.23 million deaths); narcotics (0.2 million deaths).

Dementia: The new threat of the West

Top doctors are warning that the West is being threatened by an increased frequency of cerebral dementia. Scientists

predict that within the next 10 to 20 years there will be a tremendous spread of this disease due to the anticipated increase of the average life expectancy.

Various and multiple damages of clinical incidents of the brain (such as strokes and dementia), the heart (heart attacks, angina, and sudden death), the peripheral arteries (intermittent claudication), and other organs of the body such as the eyes and kidneys are also on the rise.

Cancer also had a frightening increase over the last years, especially in developed countries, even among children, and tends to surpass heart diseases in terms of mortality.

Epidemics in the USA

According to reliable international statistics, a large percentage of people living in modern societies are obese and sick. In the USA, for instance, the metropolis of the capitalist system of the market economy, statistics show:
The majority of people over 35 years old face one or more risk factors which predict that these people will suffer a serious disease such as heart attack.

1. The majority of these people (more than 1/2) have high levels of cholesterol.

2. More than 1/3 have high blood pressure.

3. Almost 2/3 of the people are obese, something that predicts health problems in the future. More than 30% are overweight.

4. 10% have diabetes.

5. 1/5 of adult Americans smoke and most of them lead a very stressed sedentary life.

As a result 1.2 million Americans die of heart attacks every year; 100,000 people suffer a stroke and more than 500,000 people die of cancer.

If has been noted that the American population suffers

of the highest cancer frequency ever seen in human history, much higher than the frequency encountered in less developed countries.

Since 1999 cancer has surpassed heart disease and has become the leading cause of mortality for Americans under 85 years old.

Similar percentages of morbidity and mortality are seen in the entire developed world, including Greece. According to recent European Union statistics (December 2005), the Greeks are the leaders in child and adult obesity among other Europeans. [6]

Out of ignorance or brainwashing as well as out of lack of willpower for material changes in their lives mainly in their eating habits, people prefer to take pills all their lives, or undergo operations rather than change their lifestyles and adopt better eating habits. A great number of people living under aweful socioeconomic conditions, which plague the whole world, find it easier to turn to pills instead of effecting lifestyle changes. As a matter of fact, this is the only basic approach to life and health proposed by the medical system and society in general.

Globalisation of disease

Here is what Dr. Dean Ornish[7], a heart specialist, researcher, internationally prominent writer of medical books, and clinical professor of Medicine at the University of California, said with regard to the globalisation of disease:

"Many developing countries copy and imitate the western way of life and nutrition and the western way of dying. Diseases like coronary heart disease that was very rare in

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[6] see *Eleftherotypia,* 8/1/2008.
[7] see Dr. Dean Ornish's webpage at: http://www.ornish.com.

Japan and other Asian countries have now become epidemic causing a great waste and bleeding of their economies and, at the same time, equally great personal suffering and premature deaths. A high percentage of this economic bleeding and wasting, as well as of the suffering, could be averted or prevented. The same applies to prostate cancer, breast cancer, colon cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, arthritis, etc. Trillions of dollars spent for direct or indirect expenses could be saved and tragedies could be spared if only we changed our way of living and eating."

Within the framework of the market economy and capitalist globalisation it is difficult to make this change for a number of reasons for the greatest part of the world.

Unfortunately the developing countries follow step by step the developed countries with all the ensuing consequences.

Children: The innocent victims

According to a joint Report by the World Health Organization and the European Committee for the Environment[8], children, more than adults, suffer the consequences of environmental pollution. This important Report states that the body of a child is more vulnerable than the body of an adult, and is incapable of sustaining the effects of the 15,000 synthetic chemical substances that accumulate in the environment and in food, among which are the residues of

[8] World Health Organization and the European Committee for the Environment (2003).

more than 300 chemical substances that were unknown in previous generations.

This burdening always, according to the Report, begins from the fetal stage and causes mutations and congenital abnormalities. More dangerous, for children up to 10 years old, are the residues of pesticides, which weaken the immune system, create problems in the endocrine system, which cause neurotoxic abnormalities and cancer.

A comparison of the consequences on children with those on adults, showed that the danger to get cancer from exposure to radiation is sixteen times greater for babies up to three months old than it is for adults, eight times greater for children up to one year old, four times greater for children of five years old and two times greater for children of ten years old.

This Report also says that the body of a child will absorb nearly 50% of the lead contained in foods, while an adult body will absorb a mere 10%.

Another characteristic example is the children's asthma for which the Report says: We are witnessing a tremendous increase of asthma among the children of Europe. In England these problems are encountered in 32.2% of the children. In developed countries, the frequency is 10 times higher than in third world countries.

Children, therefore, are the first victims of this insane behaviour against the Environment of the planet, in the name of "development", our consumerism and eudemonistic lifestyle.

As a result of the environmental conditions the following diseases will hit Athens and its residents:

Heart problems, respiratory problems, cancerous births, skin problems, headaches, etc. With a cocktail of diseases, Athens steals away 11 months of life from every Athenian

According to a report of the World Health Organisation [2] the average Athenian loses eleven months of life simply

because she/he resides in the city of Athens and her/his quality of life has become lamentable.

Thousands of deaths are attributed to air pollution in the region of Athens. According to the Report, cancer, heart and respiratory problems, and (for the first time) skin problems are also the cause of death.

Always according to the WHO Report[9], life in the city with its stress and anxiety causes damage to the neurological system of the inhabitants, weakens their reflexes, contributes to a bad physical condition, impairs hearing, causes headaches and migraines. Athens ruins, slowly but steadily, the life of its inhabitants even of children from 14 years old.

Based on the annual measurements appearing in the Report, out of 100,000 people who die every year in Athens – the city ranking third among the European capital cities in terms of pollution – 873 deaths are related to air pollution. Of this figure, 441 deaths occur from heart and cardiovascular diseases and 72 from respiratory problems. Particulate matter in the air, especially 2.5ppm to 10ppm, are responsible for hundreds of deaths in Athens. "The life-threatening pollutants in the capital are increasing instead of decreasing", says the Report.

The environment, throughout the district of Attica is burdened with dioxins and furans (dangerous chemical and toxic compounds that cause cell mutations and cancer both to animals and humans). These very dangerous compounds were found in plant products in Messogia, Keratea and North Attica. The WHO, however, has not set a safety limit yet, although they know that humans must not be exposed to such substances!

An increase, instead of a decrease, is noted in the

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[9] ibid.

nitrogen oxide emissions in Athens. The majority of the European countries were able to lower these emissions by 40%. In the Greater Athens area, there was a stabilization of these emissions after the imposed withdrawal of old cars during the period 1990-92. However, in the present decade, a steadily rising trend of such emissions is clear. [10]

Indifference is the main cause of 20% of the pollution in Attica. The catalystic converters that car drivers forget to replace, the filters that industries do not change, the central heating installations of apartment buildings that are not properly maintained create a nightmare and an air pollution cocktail which becomes all the more dangerous for the residents of the city. The same thing is noted in all the big cities of the world.

The existing system, with its acts and omissions, is basically responsible for the biological crisis, as its primary goals are profits and power, regardless of the consequences of its economical activities. It is also responsible for the greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, and for the repeated nutritional scandals coupled with the production of unsuitable and unhealthy foods. The endless development, which is the quintessence of the system's dynamics, is the basic cause of all the above problems. If we realise that this "development", being part of the neoliberal globalisation, is basically uncontrollable and beyond any social restrictions intended for the protection of the environment that would have resulted in lower competitiveness or lower ability to attract foreign investments, then we will be able to understand why the existing system is the basic cause of the biological crisis and the wider multidimensional crisis.

In the developed countries there is an enormous

[10] see the Athens daily *TO VIMA*, 1/8/2007.

consumption of alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, narcotic substances, medicines, pesticides, soft drinks (especially cola-type drinks) as well as animal food and refined processed foodstuffs, which altogether undermine the health and well-being of young and old people, and which unavoidably lead to a biological crisis. The system is also responsible for the deforestation of the planet, as more and more land is needed for the cultivation of animal feed (grain and soy), in order to cover the continuously increasing needs for meat. Vast areas of fertile land are used for the cultivation of grain and fruits intended for the production of alcoholic beverages, sugar beets intended for the production of sugar-–a leading cause of obesity and other pathological conditions. Also, extended areas are used for the cultivation of tobacco and coffee, which are sources of profits, but also important causes of disease and add to the biological crisis. All these areas could be used for the production of healthy foods to feed millions of hungry and undernourished people of our planet. It has also been reported that many developing countries cultivate fruits and other expensive foods intended for the rich people of the developed world, in an effort to bring in foreign exchange. Thus, the traditional and healthy foods that the people used to eat in the past are no longer produced, and the people are forced to consume industrialised, processed junk food.

Huge amounts of natural resources are being wasted for the production of numerous useless, unnecessary and harmful products for the sole purpose of generating profits for the multinational companies, with no concern to the basic and vital needs of the people. A leviathan civilisation has been gradually created within the framework of the market economy, whose target is the accumulation of profits from the production and the consumption of products and services which not only do not cover the basic needs

of people, but serve exclusively to satisfy the needs of the system for new markets and for more profits, which eventually leads to poverty, unemployment, undernourishment, morbidity and biological crisis, and of course, degradation of the Environment. For the sake of economic growth, the system spends inconceivable amounts of energy and allows waste of resources, causing infections, pollutions and an unimaginable human morbidity, in order to best serve its own interests. The reaction of the medical system to all these diseases and causes of morbidity and premature mortality is pills and operations.

Although the biological crisis is gradually worsening in the entire world, nothing is done to stop it. The medical profession is constantly trying to alleviate, relieve and suppress the symptoms of the biological crisis – that is the various forms of disease and morbidity in general – but nothing is done to eliminate and correct the basic causes of morbidity and biological crisis-decline. Nothing is done also for the thousands of premature deaths. The causes of morbidity and biological decline remain intact and have a steadily increasing trend, having become a threatening, deadly nightmare.

Never before in the history of humanity was there a greater production of useless and harmful products, using up the planet's resources and harming the health and well-being of the majority of the people for the sake of profits. All this, for the sake of economic development, which is the oxygen of the system.

Never before were there so many addictive substances produced and consumed, like tobacco, alcohol, narcotic substances, coffee, sugar, drugs and medicines, soft drinks, etc., as the law of economic development is "develop or die" without any regard to the consequences that these products may have on health, on the biological well-being of

the people, on the Environment and the resources of the planet.

Everything nowadays has become commercialised and humans themselves have become pieces of merchandise and a consumer of products, which in their majority are useless. Humans have become addicted to toxic substances. They are brainwashed by the Media and can hardly understand or claim their rights for health and clean environment, peace and quality of life.

Intensive agriculture and agro-business – which is a basic element of the economy of development – do not only entail an ecological crisis in general, but also a life-threatening biological crisis. The system pollutes in many ways the earth, the seas, the rivers, the air, the fields, the water and our homes with thousands of chemical toxic substances. The only concern of the system is the profit, offering to the ignorant false information, illusions and dreams for happiness and well-being instead of a real life, one that will satisfy the vital needs of every person.

A world of insanity is thus being created in which our children and following generations will grow up, and will be obliged to live in an unnatural way, within a toxic and ill environment from the moment they are born, with tragic consequences to their health and their biological existence. The market economy places its so called "economic" development over and above prosperity, health, welfare and biological well-being of the people.

People live in full ignorance and confusion not knowing which are the means and factors that promote real life. They ignore, in other words the causes of illness, morbidity and biological decline.

The system does not give the precious knowledge of how to walk safely through life, for, if such a thing were known, big economic interests would be put at stake.

Because of a deficient and directed education, doctors

believe that all these things could easily be remedied with an antidote, a drug, a pill, a medical prescription or an operation, which will temporarily relieve and alleviate the symptoms, showing total indifference to the causes that produce them. Books, foods, ideas and products are being introduced by the system in support and promotion of its interests.

The system ignores and puts aside every idea or effort or personality that stands in the way and is an obstacle to its long range targets and puts at stake its uncontrollable activities and interests. There are a number of studies that show, beyond any doubt, that poverty, unemployment, insecurity and underemployment, unavoidably lead to a very low quality of life, to bad habits, stress, malnutrition and bad health, illnesses of the body and the mind and to a biological degradation, without precedent in the history of humankind. If this crisis is not halted and stopped in time, it will lead, in a foreseeable future, to a tragic decline of the human being, on account of the damages and mutations of the genetic material. As a recent Lancet study showed,[11] the effect on health, because of the huge inequalities engineered by neoliberal globalisation is that an enormous 30 years gap has been created in life expectancy between the world's rich and poor peoples!

No one will be the winner in the end, just like in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Under the moonlight of the end, there are no winners or losers. Everyone sinks in this Shakespearian tragedy.

It ensues, therefore, that the system of the market economy and development, together with the capitalist globalisation, not only cause the concentration of the

[11] Jeremy Laurance, "Thirty years: difference in life expectancy between the world's rich and poor peoples", *Independent,* (7/9/2007).

economic power, with the usual consequences of the po-litical, economic and social crisis, in terms of unemploy-ment, poverty, injustice, exploitation, inequalities, crime, violence, pollution, wars, etc., but also a number of other social and individual problems, which will endanger in the long run the ecological and social future of humankind. In other words it will lead to an unprecedented biological cri-sis as part of an incredible ecological crisis.

After many years of studies on the matter, I have come to the conclusion that humans are the ultimate recipient of this multidimensional and multifaceted crisis.

The different crises that comprise the multidimensional crisis, perpetuate and gradually worsen the biological cri-sis, which embraces not only humans as biological beings, but also the animals and plants – fauna and flora – of the planet, which suffer all the adverse consequences of the multidimensional crisis.

The biological crisis, like all the other dimensions of the general crisis, cannot be examined or dealt with by a system or project of political ideas that is unidimensional and not anti-systemic. The project must be one that will in-vestigate and examine the deepest and basic causes of the multidimensional crisis and not a system or project trying to bring about some improvements and reforms, aiming to relieve or diminish the symptoms of the general crisis.

The project of Inclusive Democracy is the only political proposal which is capable of investigating the basic rea-sons of the general crisis aiming at first to eradicate the basic causes of the crisis, and find a way out from the eco-logical crisis, and the biological crisis in particular.

The existing system has created a social, economic and ecological environment, that is unnatural, strange and hostile to the interests of humans. Humankind has, since a long time ago, been placed in the Procrustean bed of the system, but no-one knows for sure what is the ultimate

aim. The greediness and brutality of the New Order is lead-
ing to an unprecedented barbarism. We allow, out of igno-
rance and lack of determination, the system to deregulate,
distort and destroy everything around us, only because it
serves the interests of a small minority on this planet.

It is, therefore, the duty of every well-intentioned and
sensitised individual to fight as far as possible for the re-
versal of this inhuman and merciless mechanism that is the
market economy.

We all know the ancient myth, which perfectly illus-
trates the present impasse to which the market economy
and development has led us. According to this myth, what-
ever King Midas touched turned into gold, but in the end
he died of starvation. A similar situation is now prevailing
in the developed countries. Whatever the system touches,
unavoidably becomes polluted, poisoned, distorted or mu-
tated for the sake of profits and power. The system's prod-
ucts yield big profits and power only for the privileged and
the elites in general. To the majority of the people, who are
the recipients of the unneeded and harmful products and
services, destructive acts and omissions, the system offers
poverty, unemployment, misery, want, insecurity, malnu-
trition, a degraded social and natural environment, dis-
ease, premature death, and an extended biological crisis.

The system pushes us to cut the branch of the tree we
sit on. People nowadays are spending in a stupid and des-
perate manner, trying to buy health, happiness, creativity
and quality of life, and the tasteless and silly "bread and
spectacles" that the system has to offer.

The existing system must at all cost be overthrown and
replaced by a system of genuine Inclusive Democracy, un-
der which people will overthrow hierarchies and give an
end to exploitations of centuries and millenniuma, and
open a new way in human history.

The effort towards a gradual reversal of the system that

the project of Inclusive Democracy has in mind will become humankind's greatest motivation for the first half of the 21st century. The struggle for change and for replacement of the existing structures, organisations and institutions of the market economy and representative "democracy", with new political, economic and social structures, with new organisations and institutions of a genuine inclusive democracy and autonomy, will definitely determine whether we will survive on this planet or not.

Different approaches to deal with the biological and the ecological crisis in genaral

The views of neoliberals and social liberals, social democrats, even of ecologists on how to face the phenomenon of both the biological and the ecological crisis, are totally different from the views of Inclusive Democracy. An unbridgeable chasm separates them. The followers of Inclusive Democracy search and investigate in depth and beyond any prejudice, dogmas, and personal interests of minorities and social classes, the basic causes of this multidimensional crisis, which can be traced as deep as the very structure of the system, and which lead to the concentration of the political and economic power in the hands of the few: the market economy and the representative "democracy". Inclusive Democracy does not rest nor aims to alleviate or relieve the symptoms of any crisis, as the reformist Left or the Ecologists do. Inclusive Democracy believes that both the proximate and the ultimate causes of the biological and the ecological crisis in general, must be eradicated.

On the other hand, the reformist Left, social liberals, ecologists, etc. naively believe that the problems of the biological and the ecological crisis in general are not

systemic, i.e. they do not originate from the system of the market economy, and what we have to do is try to reduce and improve the symptoms of the crises within the existing system.[12] What we have to do, they say, is constantly press the politicians for improvements of the conditions of life, and disregard the reasons that generate, reproduce and perpetuate the multidimensional crisis. We must also forget that professional politicians are the mouthpieces and puppets of the economically strong, being obliged – for reasons inherent to the system – to blindly obey the orders of the system (to sustain the perpetual "development" on which the survival of millions of people depend), as the political system of representative "democracy" is an integral part – the political complement – of the existing system. Politicians greatly depend on the dominant economic elites who finance their expensive election campaigns and promote them through the Media they control. All measures taken by the politicians, in all sectors of individual and social life, go therefore hand in hand with the broader interests of the market economy.

There are however a few exceptions, which prove and corroborate the rule. Only an Inclusive Democracy based society will ensure the objective and subjective conditions that are needed for the basic needs and the cultural requirements of the masses to be fully covered. Such a society will offer access to knowledge and information, as well as the ability to make good use of such knowledge, in order for the people to be able to organise their lives on sound biological and ecological foundations. The people will take decisions offered by detailed information on how to satisfy their basic needs. Coverage of the basic needs

[12] See T. Fotopoulos, "Globalisation, the reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation 'Movement'", *Democracy & Nature* (Volume 7, Number 2, July 2001).

will be totally feasible in a society of Inclusive Democracy as the umbilical cord connecting the production and distribution of the goods with the interests and privileges of a small minority of powerful elites and their race for "development" and profits, is cut off. Then, the basic criteria will be prosperity, health and wel-lbeing for all, and the rule will be for an ecological and rational management of the planet's resources, and not their depletion for the sake of profit. Only what is friendly to the environment will be produced. The persons who will decide on what, how much and how it will be produced, will not have any economic interests so as to put at stake their quality of life, if not their life itself. All products will be of high quality and will be aimed strictly to cover the basic needs of the people, as these will be decided by the democratic assemblies. There will not be products serving the greediness of the few and the extreme exploitation of people and resources, as it happens in the system of the market economy. Under Inclusive Democracy there will be no interwoven interests of businessmen, multinational companies and professional politicians. The causes leading to the destruction of the fauna and flora, devastation of forests, deterioration and poisoning of food, depletion of the ozone layer, creation of the greenhouse effect, production of genetically modified foods and degradation of natural foods, which is the reason of the repeated food scandals – all for the sake of profits. All these contribute to the general morbidity of the population and put at stake the future of the new generations, gradually leading to a deeper and irreversible biological crisis.

Could these changes take place within the framework of the market economy as the reformists of the Left believe? The answer is no, for a number of reasons. The objections that many people have, that Inclusive Democracy is allegedly a mistake and an utopia, are inconsistent and

incompatible with the history of humankind and the admirable achievements of the Homo sapiens through the millenniuma.

People will not stop dreaming of a better world as otherwise they will feel mentally mutilated and politico-economically bankrupt. The solutions proposed by the Neoliberals and the Social Democrats as well as the Social Liberals and Green ecologists for dealing with the biological and ecological crisis are only offering a temporary relief, suppress the symptoms and definitely do not touch the actual causes of the problems. Most of these solutions may have some usefulness, but only during a transition period of social development. They are wishful hopes for improvements, but they do not solve the problems. They simply relieve or suppress the worsening symptoms of the multidimensional crisis.

Drastic, radical and systemic measures are therefore needed, which cannot originate from and materialise within the system of market economy, capitalist globalisation and representative "democracy".

There is nothing on the horizon suggesting that this multidimensional crisis, especially the biological crisis, will start to recede within the framework of the system of the market economy. On the contrary: everything indicates that the general crisis, especially the biological, will be getting deeper and wider. The sooner the people will understand this and take drastic measures, the better for humankind.

If all reasonable and sensible people of this planet wish to see their children grow up in a better and more humane world and not in a hell of fear, terrorism of the system, lack of freedom, insecurity, poverty, unemployment, want, extreme inequalities, pollution and general deterioration of the Environment, repeated food scandals, general morbidity and premature mortality, social conflicts, soaring

criminality and local wars, they must wake up and forget their apathy and easy living. Drastic measures must therefore be taken now, that it is time, putting aside individual interests, partiality, selfishness, opportunism and prejudice, and disregard the plasmatic, temporary benefits and baites that the system offers in order to fool and befuddle the masses. Collective action, based on a coordinated program, must be taken within the framework of a massive liberating movement, where every person will do their best to gradually overthrow the existing system.

This must be done before it is too late, before unbearable and irreversible situations harm the lives of the many, society in general, the Environment and the biological existence of the human being. If we do not do something to overthrow this existing system now, we will not be on top of the situation, and we will only have to blame ourselves. We will lose the opportunity to build a human world for all.

We sincerely hope that in the not-so-distant future people will think wisely and maturely, and become committed and determined to bring about the necessary radical changes.

TOWARDS A NEW VISION FOR GLOBAL SOCIETY[1]

RAFAEL SPÓSITO

> The dog sees other dogs die, but he
> does not know –at least, not by the
> force of syllogism – that he himself
> is mortal as well. Socrates knows.
> And because he knows he is capa-
> ble of irony.
>
> **Umberto Eco**

The orthodox economist, a not very prestigious and short run cultural hero –or, which is the same thing, the governability political scientist, or the consensus sociologist, pecuniarily acknowledged by the market and able of repeated gestures of "seriousness", "citizen responsibility", "good behaviour" and so on– sees, sooner or later his pragmatic equals' prosperity plans plunge one by one. However, he does not realise –because he is hindered by the formalisms of his theory construction, the content of his thoughts and the social articulations he is involved in– that, despite the effort, he himself will have to give up his own plans and nonsense, at some unpredictable moment in a future that we imagine, we fancy, or we wish to come soon. Takis Fotopoulos–as radically Greek as Socrates–does realise and he knows. And because he

[1] The above text constitutes the Introduction to the Spanish edition of *Towards An Inclusive Democracy, Hacia Una Democracia Inclusiva,* (Nordan: Montevideo, 2002).

realises and knows, he is able, as many others, to overcome blackmailing by those who award themselves the right to determine the possible and the impossible, to think of the present world crisis with an alternative vocation, and to join the overflowing stream of those who continue, perseveringly and with good reason, plotting truly liberating Utopias and projects.

Towards an Inclusive Democracy takes place exactly within these coordinates–if it is possible to call them this way–and, at least to the Spanish speaking reader, it does it in the best and the most convenient of the circumstances. It is a time of multiple threats, several catastrophes and uncertainty galore, as well as of the decline and suspense of that reactionary biblical promise that believed in its definitive institutionalisation. It is a politically fermenting, agitated and convulsed time that recovers emancipatory longings and energy, and, once more, lodges wide spaces of redesigning and work for that unwithering aim: a society with neither dominated nor dominators.

A little of recent history

To evaluate what I mentioned above, it is worth going through part of recent history–indicating only those points relevant to my reasoning. In the late 1960's, the foundations of the Welfare State announced its eventual break down. Likewise, the dynamics of capitalist growth –which seemed happy and uncontainable during the first two and a half decades after the Second World War–offered already some, and very serious, symptoms of weakness. The crisis of this age, though, going beyond those variables, was setting up already as a civilization crisis; the "French May" was not its exclusive effect, but the most symbolic one ever since. The 1970's seemed to be a revolutionary time at

the beginning, and they were lived as such by huge sectors of left activists in the five continents, and particularly so in Latin America.[2]

The advanced capitalist countries' tremors would only confirm that this was a revolutionary time. These tremors led to important fissures, such as the collapse of the International Monetary System born in Bretton Woods, and the questioning of its active matrix, following the abandonment of dollar inconvertibility in 1971 and the oil crisis between 1973 and 1975, respectively. It is true that military dictatorships represented a clear retrogression and a dampening down of the enthusiasm, but it was also possible in those years to be inspired by the embarrassing US troop withdrawal from South East Asia, and so enhance the hope for the advance of the "socialist" camp. That was what, deceptively, appeared to happen in Ethiopia, Angola or Mozambique, in Vietnam, Cambodia or Afghanistan. It should be reminded, as well, that the 1970's ended with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and of the dynasty of Somoza in Nicaragua.

While the 1970's were years of complete trust in a determinist and evolutionist conception of history, whose unyielding spreading out was supposedly assisted by revolutionary action, the 1980's would see tendencies in the opposite direction express themselves. The characters of the decade were, in order of appearance, Margaret Thatcher,

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[2] For an approach, backed by strong empirical evidence, expressing that feeling of generalised crisis and menacing revolutionary perspectives, I recommend consulting Abraham Guillén–*La década crítica de América Latina*, (Sandino, Montevideo, 1971)–specially useful for the beginning of the period and for the tones, events and expectations inherent to our continent. And, for the final years and with more general reach, I recommend André Gunder Frank, *La crisis mundial (1. Occidente, Países del Este y Sur y 2. El Tercer Mundo)*, (Bruguera, Barcelona, 1980).

Ronald Reagan and Mijail Gorbachov. The first two–with
the *Chicago boys'* invaluable help–were in charge of renew-
ing the potentials of capitalis growth[3], at the same time
that they also undertook a vast and still unfinished re-
conversion of their own states and economies (and those
within their sphere of influence). Meanwhile, the third
(Gorbachov) will initially proceeded to restructure his field,
to become, finally, the unintentional spectator of his im-
plosion and shatter. In the late 1980's, then, the "domino
effect" will lead to quite a different scenario to what was
expected: now those who will fall one by one, as well as and
in a block, were the countries in the Soviet block, offering
a major symbolic finis with the tumbling down, stone by
stone, of the foreboding Berlin Wall.

Everything was well set so that, at the dawn of the
1990's, people would have to accept–assimilating retro-
gression and defeat begrudgingly angrily–the emergence
of one of the major theoretical–ideological examples of
foolishness of the concluding century of the millennium.
That absurdity was what Francis Fukuyama announced, in
Hegelian code used in a completely different way than in
the Marxist tradition, that the end of history had come and
that man's ultimate fate was none other than the empire
of parliamentary democracy and of an unrestricted glo-
bal market capitalism.[4] The only missing element, which
would later on join the other elements and impose itself
as an outstanding pillar, was the "globalisation" notion –
as if to complete the trilogy and the salvation message of
the three world power centres and perhaps also suggest

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[3] A growth, as Fotopoulos accurately points out in this book, that
will not offer during the 80's and 90's the same blooming rates as
those boasted of in the 50's and 60's.
[4] By Francis Fukuyama, *El fin de la historia y el último hombre*,
(Planeta, Barcelona, 1992).

that from then on there were no other alternatives but to subscribe and sign a uniformed convenience project. The end of the second millennium in the Christian Era did not look like welcoming the Utopian vibrations coming from the end of the previous millennium. Or, even worse, at the beginning of the 1990's, the Utopia was believed to have come true, under its new neo-liberal clothing, and all that was left was to wait for the indefinite extension of their domains in the years to come.

However, the unconscious joy and triumphant rapture that came with this new ideological hegemony did not last long. And, although it was announced to be progressive, it turned out to be radically reactionary. First, the Zapatistas shook the Lacandona forest and spoiled the party for the newly signed NAFTA agreement among U.S.A., Canada and Mexico. Then, huge strikes in France and Korea took charge putting up rough resistance to "neo-liberal" reforms in the field of social security and labour contracts, respectively. Later, popular uprisings in Indonesia and Ecuador made the political-institutional balances stagger in both countries. Besides, the Arcadia, re-conquered through "free" capitalist markets, globalisation and the commercial and indiscriminate appropriation of nature, saw its ephemeral days of wine and roses darken from its own development logic. The financial bubble first collapsed in Mexico in 1994, followed by the corresponding "Tequila Effect". Then, it left a lavish covering of damage in South East Asia during 1997. Almost immediately after, in 1998, it would mark Russia with its foot prints. Finally, since 1999, it would establish itself with its pressures and perturbations in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. As a culmination and confluence of both sequences, the 20th century would not end before immersing itself in the baptismal font of the so-called "anti-globalisation" movement, as a major summary of the new movements' flow.

In this picture of events, it can well be stated that the English edition of *Towards an Inclusive Democracy* (1997) represented on that occasion, in its articulation of that picture, a lucid warning related to the deep meaning of a crisis that already could be sensed and which was not limited then, nor is limited now, to its more evident expressions. The crisis, according to Fotopoulos, is a crisis of the market economy in its very essence, as well as of the growth economy, as its logical consequence.[5] A crisis –which has deadly injured the market's variations and its developmental strategies–that now falls over its own core. A crisis that (I may add, in the same vein of radicalism) can also be interpreted as a shudder for modernity and its power bases. A crisis that must require a lot more to be solved than a rearrangement, a fine tuning and a renovation. Thus, the Spanish edition that I am now presenting finds its exact opportunity–its *kairós*, as would an ancient Greek say–at this very moment that, once more, people see themselves increasingly pushed, encouraged and urged to think and reanimate new liberating projects.

History and autonomy

Having said that, the question is which are the images history gives back, and which are the representations of those images that people describe? Is history actually designed

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[5] Note that in Uruguay, and particularly, in the financial turbulences in 2002, it becomes extraordinarily advantageous to apply the elements of this model of analysis. For the moment, the insistence in the decline of the "neo-liberal" model shows up as a quick answer and with immediate ideological resonances. However, it would be rather more critical and penetrating to get deeper into an explanatory discourse that would precisely recount the boisterous tumbling down of the "Uruguayan" –and perhaps regional– growth model.

by our superiors? A succession of ways of production? A linear and foreseeable path of progress? A repetition of eternal cycles? A stockyard beyond which, it is not possible to search for any future? Or, is it still possible for people to find a place for fantasy and conceive History like a chaotic picture in some hyper-space without limits, imaginary and metaphorical, where defiles, ambushes, mazes, transversalities, networks and bifurcations are combined?

According to Fotopoulos, history is, clearly and overwhelmingly, virtuality, bet and risk; *polemos*, *poíesis* and *praxis*; the scenography that the magic hazard of autonomy will offer people. Autonomy, this post-tragic or para-tragic possibility, in which the individuals' and collectives' capacity to give themselves their own laws and set their own means is expressed. Autonomic virtualities, is an attribute that neither all societies nor all periods offered or consummated with the same intensity. Nevertheless, it is not bold to say that all societies were able to make their own laws, rather than laws supposedly originated from divinity, or based on immanence, i.e. laws emanating from their hypothetically own and uncontrollable mechanism–a mechanism that takes place above or outside its non-transferable future. Fotopoulos states that this alchemy, this mysterious conjunction, undecipherable in its inner dynamisms, found its first magnificence in the old democratic Athens, between 6th and 4th centuries BC, to be repeated later only in very few occasions along the human adventure.[6]

Autonomy is, therefore, nothing else but society's

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[6] Fotopoulos' most obvious theoretical ascendant here is Cornelius Castoriadis. Notwithstanding, certain tints between them, one should notice, particularly, Fotopoulos' major generosity when he considers societies and periods which offer examples where a radical autonomy extends, or may extend; see Castoriadis, *La institución imaginaria de la sociedad*, (Tusquets, Barcelona, 1983).

capacity, which is generated consciously and expressly, to think itself, to overcome conditioning and extortion whatever its origin, and fix, with the maximum margin of freedom historically possible, its own cohabitation relations and its own action lines. Moreover, this societal acquisition does not result from any predestination, from any conspiracy, from any fortuity, from any engineering and from any omniscient power able to solve and apply, by its own development, a never-failing construction algorithm. There is no science there, but conscience, as a historical variable, product of the free play of opinions and of the synthesis that this product causes. Conscience of itself, conscience of its needs and wishes, and conscience of its possibilities.

In other words, the autonomy of any collective expresses exactly the opposite of the two great historical conceptions that have predominated throughout the two last centuries. On the one hand, a conception that conceives history as a martial and unrestrained procession of rationality and progress, as the consequence of the "freedom to choose" among the indeterminate market operations. On the other hand, a conception that assumes history to be predetermined to set out from a hidden but all-powerful mechanism, according to which the development of the productive forces can by itself lead to revolution, socialism, and equally unyielding emancipation.

Seeing things this way, the fashionable technocrats will object that it only deals with an undesirable and delighting revival of political philosophy, which is just an eccentricity of thought, decaying already and definitely overcome by the capitalist market's self regulation mechanisms. Or they will say it is a last desperate attempt to question and go beyond the parliamentary democracy institution, or an endeavour bound to fail in view of the inevitable and irreversible consequences of "globalisation victories".

However, these individuals cannot exhibit more than their radical short-sightedness and they ignore boastfully that their episodic victories are not absolute nor definitive, but historically limited. They ignore as well, or they resist to acknowledge, of course, their own and evident failure. They also ignore that these things are concrete effects of certain power relations and not the spontaneous spreading out of an invisible and unbeatable rationality. Even worse, they ignore that the liberal tradition itself, to which they claim to belong, has restored long ago in its own field, the reflection on political philosophy. And they ignore that even today's liberal thinkers do not expect justice to be an automatic product, independent from intentional collective action. [7]

Autonomy, then, comes to be the key element of a certain philosophy of history, of a foundational project and also, by extension, of a consequent political practice. For those who have been formed in some of the socialist traditions that have their origin in the First International, it will be easy to find proximities and kinship with the classical anarchism; particularly with the most markedly "voluntarist" inflection to which Errico Malatesta belongs, in friendly opposition to Mijail Bakunin's almost "millennarist" and prophetic optimism, or Piotr Kropotkin's equally trustful scientism. Despite this implicit familiarity, which Fotopoulos does not explore, it is obvious that his conception draws from an ideologically different genealogy. He leans this genealogy on a slightly diverse theoretical

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[7] In fact, at present, there are two great tendencies, which come from the old liberal stem and seek to legitimate and orientate political acting in the context of a renewed reflection on justice: development liberalism –which inscribe philosophers as Isaiah Berlin and Brough McPherson–and neo-contractualism –in which such authors as John Rawls, James Buchanan and Robert Nozick can be placed.

scheme, even when both show various contact and inter-section points with the anarchist tradition, especially ever since the "French May". Thus, the autonomic conception also re-takes and extends egalitarian assumptions, on the basis of a criticism of the domination relation, and tacitly conjectures about the probable subjects of a liberating project around the new social movements.

The liberating project

Autonomy expresses itself in the formulation, adoption and starting of a liberating project and leads to, and is car-ried about, in a conscious construction of the Utopia. By saying this, I do not consider autonomy as the certainty of a "millennarist" future, or based on delicate social en-gineering operations (which had such devastating conse-quences in some classical socialist tendencies), but as the collective ability to build history itself. It is a Utopia that is irrelevant to a neat, finished, architectonic authoritar-ian design, but that could not do less than recognise it-self as libertarian from the start. If autonomy is the basis and the condition for possibility, and freedom the aim of change, an inclusive democracy is the most appropriate ex-pression that Fotopoulos finds to name the character of the organisation scheme, the liberating project, he affiliates to. A project that is fed with those activist stems, whose identity has reached the present day undamaged. Thus, inclusive democracy has developed as a summary, as a synthesis, of the best project traditions in libertarian "mu-nicipalism" and social ecology, in feminism and of course, in the autonomist tendencies themselves. Despite being a synthesis, it does not lack those multiple counterpoints with those elements from the different tendencies which Fotopoulos "feeds" on. Besides, according to him, these

elements represent insufficient developments, mistaken intuitions, or even contradictions and incongruities with the global and coherent formulation this liberating project is asking for.

Inclusive democracy contains, according to Fotopoulos, at least four dimensions: the political, and also the economic, social and ecological. It is only to this extent–which includes the exhaustion of democracy in all the cohabitation fields–and in its relation to nature, that it is possible to avoid the indeterminate degradation of democracy. The common and predominant use of the concept of democracy has lost its sense, impulse and deep meanings that it once had–even when it was not used. I refer to ancient Athens, the free medieval cities, the Renaissance, the French Revolution, the trade unionism in the 19th century and the changes driven by the Spanish anarchist trade unions between 1936 and 1939. Consequently, to avoid this degradation, society has to be fed with its own roots, be fertilised as a space for equality and be founded on a new assembly culture. That is, it has to constitute and complete itself as a public meeting democracy, as a self-managed society, in short, as a direct democracy without mediations. This, Fotopoulos suggests, is the only way the word "democracy" may regain its recollections and original meaning. Thus, it will conceptually purge itself from the old confusion that has merely identified democracy with a kind of government, with a way of representation and with its corresponding parliamentary containers. All this, in turn, makes a way for a citizenship notion that is far from limiting itself to that voting exercise, through which citizens abandon sovereignty and give up all responsibility.

Having made these defining clarifications, the circle has now to close logically. Fotopoulos will close it resorting to old organisational principles and interconnection principles among democratic cores. Both kinds of principles

will probably find their remote origin in the classic Greek leagues and amphictyonies, which contemporaneously are shown as federations and confederations.[8] The municipality and the confederation happen to change Utopia into pan-topia and what now is nowhere tends desideratively to consummate itself everywhere. That is so, taking the municipality as a probable cell but not as necessarily the only one, and the confederation as a conjunctive tissue. Among all these places, the productive cores, self-management will be found as the moment for work liberation, and as a basic plot which the economic dimension of inclusive democracy will be fed from, exercised and orientated. Notwithstanding, it will acknowledge its main axles around its territorial support. These territories will not be able to be capsuled in the tribute and servitude to the Nation-State, whatever their dimension might be. That is independent as well, from the density and thickness of the agreements that they would decide to establish with the fraternal autonomous societies which they are bound to, either within or outside the confederation.

I have pointed out that this elaboration expands on the detailed counterpoints with the previous theories it finds closest to, and extends in the details that separates it from them. Notwithstanding, it seems quite clear this does not mean that it lacks quite recognisable records and forerunners. I should mention some examples, and I will not hide my own preferences in my selection. While Cornelius Castoriadis has to do with autonomy and the democratic future, Murray Bookchin and Piotr Kropotkin are involved in the design and shaping of the liberating

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[8] In this ground, a quite obvious record, in the socialist field, could be found in Pierre Joseph Proudhon. *El principio federativo*, *passim*; by this author is an edition prepared by Juan Gómez Casas in Nacional, Madrid, 1977.

project.[9] Fotopoulos opens, with them and some others, a rich space for dialogues and questioning. Therefore, their project aims cannot be minimized, as if they were a common futuristic speculation, but should rather be considered as part of a trend with well defined political roots, which has nowadays regained an important part of its strengths and virtualities, particularly, in the new-born "anti-globalisation" movement.

Theoretical "realism" and political "possibilism" will probably close ranks once more and will hurry to start, for the 10th time, its methodical condemnatory and degradatory routine exercises, and so, they will complaisantly look down on this ambitious large-scale project, as they would have done on any other which offered a liberating change. Moreover, they will continue insisting, to the point of their own fatigue and the others' annoyance, that there is no other scope for change than the narrow parapet of colourless philanthropy or "development aid". This will be so, despite the fact that they may already be convinced that history is not a blind alley, and despite the fact that they may have abandoned the idea that society change has arrived to its destination.

Nevertheless, the margin that has nowadays turned narrower again, in several parts of the world, is that of the prestidigitators and illusionists, the space for demagogues, politicians and power dealers. Perhaps people are not in

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[9] To evaluate proximities and roots, it is of use to consult Castoriadis' text, which has previously been quoted; also, *Fields, Factories and Work-shops* by Piotr Kropotkin, (Júcar, Madrid, 1978) and Murray Bookchin, *La ecología de la libertad. La emergencia y la disolución de las jerarquías*, (Nossa y Jara Editores, Madrid, 1999). Obviously, Kropotkin is not taken –nor could never be–in its detailed aspects, once the long separating century has been sifted, in his social reorganisation proposition's internationality and derivations.

the presence of the successors of those ghosts, who, back in the 19th century, travelled and scared Europe. Probably there are no trumpets playing at Jericho's Wall, and the possibility that an apocalyptic outburst takes place in the immediacies of this age is totally uncertain. But one thing is definitely sure: the libertarian breaths and blowings, even the libertarian strong winds have not died, nor retreated. They have still a lot to do today. In this clamour, in this noisy and renewed din, Takis Fotopoulos' text-pretext will have found more than one echo, more than one chorus of expression.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CONFLICTS AND A PERSPECTIVE OF INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY IN ARGENTINA[1]

GUIDO GALAFASSI

ABSTRACT The aim of this paper is to show that the popular rebellion of December 2001 in Argentina had a double meaning: first, it illustrated the crisis of the system itself in terms of its two basic constituent elements, representative 'democracy' and the capitalist market economy; second, it led to the creation of neighbourhood assemblies which, together with some movements of unemployed workers, and certain companies taken over by workers, constituted embryonic mechanisms of direct democracy that even extended their demands towards a new integral vision of society, very close to the project of Inclusive Democracy. In fact, important elements of three of the main components of an Inclusive Democracy had been attempted in practice in Argentina: direct political democracy, economic democracy, and democracy in the social realm, whereas issues relating to an ecological democracy had also been raised. At the same time, a new form of confederal democracy emerged which was based on nearby communities organized into a territorial network at a local and regional scale. Although the majority of the population still remain today detached from any perspective of social change, it is significant to note the kind of alternative institutions that people attempt to set up –whenever the opportunity arises –as the only way out of the present multidimensional crisis

The recent series of events in Argentina could be fruitfully used for an exercise of reflection on the Inclusive Democracy project in the process of analysing the different strategies facing those suffering the hard

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[1] This article was first published in *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (November 2003).

economic, social and political crisis of this country. For this reason, the notions of direct and participative democracy will be taken into account, since these notions are the ones in fact present in the current discussion in Argentina, maintaining in general terms, a common ground with the important project of Inclusive Democracy.

The notion of representative democracy has reached a crisis point for the first time in relatively massive form. Apart from the discredit suffered by the democracy notion in a strictly political sense in the last decades, today, it is the deeper notion of democratic representation together with the capitalist regime themselves that began to be questioned since the popular rebellion of December 2001. This way, out of the discredit of the political system, an attempt of critical reflection to revalue the community notions of democracy in accordance with a participative-inclusive democracy, started to emerge. In the months following the popular rebellion, this debate took pace in most of the political and social organisations and also in the media (which are run, as in the entire world, by big economic-financial corporations). But this debate, as well as the state of social and political upheaval, was fading slowly as the economic situation entered a plateau of certain stability (although this did not mean any amelioration of the deep and almost terminal crisis into which the development model has entered). Only those social actors who have been most critical of the dominant system (movements of unemployed workers, workers of taken over factories and what was left of popular assemblies) continue to support some form of direct democracy approaches, while the rest of the population returned somehow to the apathy of the last decade.

Collective action and social movements

The watchword *"que se vayan todos"* (leave you all) used in the popular protest of December 2001 surprised everybody not only because of its spontaneity but also because of its sudden and unexpected appearance. But this original *"que se vayan todos"* was sustained in a naive way, i.e. in the belief that it was "politics" (in the sense of the activity of professional politicians, statecraft) the cause of all the problems in Argentina. In spite of this, a strongly critical spirit to the model of representative democracy which is dominated by professional politicians was very much present in the popular rebellion. This is what led in the following months firstly to the organisation of the popular assemblies (based on a system of direct democracy) in Buenos Aires and other urban centres and, secondly a joint action with the social actors (the movement of unemployed workers and the workers of taken over factories) who were already opposing the system with diverse strategies and objectives. In this process of debate, reflection and collective action, the watchword *"que se vayan todos"* was being qualified and filled with a more complex content, meaning incipiently "that all the mentors of the neoliberal model should leave, including the economic power". Therefore, from a critical viewpoint, the issue of the validity of the professional politicians' representative democracy together with the issue of the existence of a growth economy started to be regarded as the same issue.

While most of the population was not interested in government policies, since the "cacerolazo" (pot banging protest) of 19 and 20 December the issue of a desired society started to be discussed in a deeper way, at least for some months. An expression of this change was the neighbourhood assemblies, a new form of social and political organisation that was born in various neighbourhoods of the

metropolitan area of Buenos Aires and in some other cities of the country. In these assemblies the local problems related to work, health and urban infrastructure were open to discussion together with the general economic and political situation of the country[2]. It was a relatively heterogeneous phenomenon that hardly developed from the gestation stage, since these assemblies lost momentum in various ways in the second half of 2002. In some cases these assemblies were "taken over" by the most orthodox left parties that ended up dissolving them and fundamentally removing any possibility to carry out some exercise of participative or inclusive democracy, as was expected from the beginning. In 2003, only some of the assemblies still remained with a lot fewer participants who represented those citizens with a higher level of commitment to the struggle. The rest of the population has returned to their habitual "internal exile", playing the role assigned to them by the rules established by the market economy and representative democracy.

To sum up, as the year 2002 advanced, the protest was watered down in intensity and the spontaneous middle class mobilisation of the beginning of the year was restricted only to the popular assemblies. However, the popular organisations based on the various movements of unemployed workers not only continued their fight but also deepened their demands. Also, these unemployed workers' organisations at the beginning of 2002 achieved some of their goals: unity and solidarity as well as understanding from the rest of the society. At the end of 2002, in the context of the watering down of the general protest, this unity and understanding was slowly fading. As a result, the

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[2] See Hernan Ouviña, "Las asambleas barriales: apuntes a modo de hipótesis de trabajo", *Theomai Journal*, Special Issue, Winter 2002.

movements of unemployed workers started once more to be seen through their traditional historical image of marginal groups.

These movements of "piqueteros" (so called because of the highway blockades or pickets) spread their activities extensively in the last few years in different types of organisations as well as in different political projects. At present, all unemployed workers' organisations share the idea that it is not enough in order to find a way out of the social crisis simply to protest and resist to the crisis through the highways blockade, the taking over or occupation of public buildings, the negotiation with public officials, the food demands to supermarkets, the maintenance of soup kitchens in neighbourhoods, the opening of health community centres, etc. Instead, the way out of the social crisis is considered in political terms. However, it is important to take into account that there is not only one picketer political project, but several. On the one hand, there are those projects that adopt a stand of constructive dialogue with the various left and centre-left parties or mildly militant unions, and on the other, there are those other projects that focus on strengthening the social mobilisation with the aim of building new power and solidarity bonds in a kind of a "parallel society."

The picketers organisations that respond to leaders Luis D´Elia and Juan Carlos Alderete, that is to say "Federación de Tierra y Vivienda – FTV" (Land and Housing Federation) and "Corriente Clasista y Combativa – CCC" (Classist and Combative Grouping), propose the formation of a government of national unity embodying a populist and reformist ideology. In this proposal the picketers would be part of a bigger coalition. This political imaginary includes a reformist workers Union ("Central de Trabajadores Argentinos"), the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (APYMES), a National Front against Poverty ("Frente Nacional de

Lucha contra la Pobreza"), the Association of University Students ("Federación Universitaria Argentina"), the Association of Small and Medium Farmers ("Federación Agraria Argentina") and some Human Rights Organisations. On the other hand, the "Coordinadora Anibal Verón" (Aníbal Verón Coordinating), mobilises a wide-ranging series of groupings of unemployed workers who maintain their autonomy and independence, although they agree that the issue is not to reach power now, since this power would be coloured by the values of a system which can give no answers to society's problems[3]. These groupings fight to radically change the system and they claim that they are doing it right now, from the bottom (with no need to conquest power). It is for this reason that direct democracy and political and social 'horizontality' are constituent parts of their working practices. The unemployed workers' movements are located fundamentally in spaces forgotten by the system and they are creating a kind of parallel society that includes the world of production, health, education and political formation. The idea of "Counterpower" constitutes the theoretical base of some of these groups[4]. Finally, there are some groups under the denomination of "Bloque Piquetero Nacional" (National Picketer Block), which includes the groupings of unemployed workers who are bound to the orthodox Marxists parties. They believe

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[3] These groupings are located mostly in the south of the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires and in Neuquen Province. Most of these groupings respond to the acronym MTD, that is to say "Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados" (Unemployed Workers Movement).
[4] Some of these groupings have adopted the ideas of "Counterpower" developed by Toni Negri & Michael Hardt in *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2001) and of "Antipoder" developed by John Holloway in *Cambiar el mundo sin tomar el poder. El significado de la revolución hoy* (Buenos Aires-México, Herramienta y Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2002).

that Argentina, after the events of 19 and 20 December, entered in a revolutionary process and therefore they tried to win the streets and to recruit the biggest number possible of militants with the aim to deepen their political strategy for the taking over of power [5].

Also the process of setting under workers' control the companies which went   bankrupt or were abandoned by their owners, gained more and more importance in the last two years. In spite of the differences, the recent history of those companies that ended up under workers' control, followed a similar course as in the past: delay in workers' payments, abandonment of the companies by their employers, passivity of the bureaucratic unions, and occupation as a last resort for maintaining their working posts[6]. About 200 factories are estimated to be under workers' control in the whole country; these workers are also constituting an integral movement of recovered enterprises as alternative bases to capitalism and representative democracy. This organisation of the workers of recovered companies has already published a newspaper and they hold assemblies in which two options for the administration of the factories are been debated: one option is to continue developing co-operatives which aim at a horizontal and equitable

[5] The "Bloque Nacional Piquetero" is formed by the "Movimiento Territorial de Liberación" (Territorial Movement of Liberation of the Communist Party); the "Movimiento Teresa Rodriguez" (of Guevarist tendency); the "Federación de Trabajadores Combativos" (Federation of Combative Workers, with several Trotskyist parties like Movement toward Socialism, Party of the Socialist Revolution and Socialist Labor Front); the "Movimiento Sin Trabajo" (Jobless Movement, linked to Socialist Workers Movement Party, of Trotskyist tendency) and the "Polo Obrero" (Labor Pole, of the Labor Party, also of Trotskyist tendency).
[6] Alejandro Gaggero, "Algunos por la autonomía, otros por la estatización", *Página 12*, (8 September 2002).

organisation (in contrast to most of the historical co-oper-
atives in the country); another option proposed by a minor-
ity is to nationalise the recovered enterprises maintaining
the workers' control. While the first option usually has a
bigger acceptance among national and municipal officials,
left parties and militant unions mainly support the second.

From market economy and representative democracy to inclusive democracy

The Argentina Republic represents undoubtedly one of the
highest exponents in the so-called 'Washington Consent'
that proposed for Latin America a post-dictatorship era
based on representative democracy and on the empow-
erment of the market economy[7]. This democracy formally
contrasted with the authoritarian governments of the past
whereas the empowerment of the market economy repre-
sented continuity and the deepening of the new form of
capitalism that expanded after the protectionist period.
Far from any Keynesian vision, this consent (resembling
the original pure liberalism) opposes any significant state
presence in the free game of the market forces. The nation
is also attacked in this new consent (justifying the capital-
ist globalisation), as long as it offers serious limitations
to the expansion of the market. The democracy conception
is also more than superficial, legitimating only formally
this new stage without proposing any revision of the Latin
American dictatorial past[8]. However the important thing is

[7] Guido Galafassi, "Argentina on Fire: People´s Rebellion Facing the
Deep Crisis of the Neoliberal Market Economy", *Democracy & Nature*,
Vol.8, No. 2, (July 2002).
[8] See Alfredo Pucciarelli, *La democracia que tenemos. Declinación
económica, decadencia social y degradación política en la Argentina
actual,* (Buenos Aires, Libros del Rojas UBA, 2002).

that the strong limitations of the democratic model present in capitalist societies become evident once again. This capitalist representative democracy is principally based on the concentration of power at the hands of the representatives and the submission of the ones represented. The neoliberal practices, based primarily on financial and fiscal changes that favour the growth of inequality under the alleged aim to achieve a macroeconomic equilibrium, encouraged various types of economic procedures in which the transparency in the transactions was absent. The new prophets of the Argentinian economy, all of them "Chicago boys", defenders of the Consent of Washington, generated an ideology (through the political elites and the media) aiming to mask the deep process of social exclusion that the global capitalism was developing. The political representatives began to use the power of their represented fellows increasingly, with the sole aim to come to terms with the economic elites, in exchange for various personal benefits. This way it became impossible to separate neoliberal capitalism, systemic corruption and representative democracy. Whereas the capitalist nation-state with representative democracy has always been a system based on inequality and individualistic competition, the neoliberal capitalism has vastly enhanced inequality, destroying the existing scarce control mechanisms and imposing the free market. To sum up, the Argentine Republic has since 1983 been immersed in a "democratic process" which sets the market against the modern nation-state. This way, the work begun by the dictatorships in the 1960s and the 1970s has continued through the installed weak democracies which simply aimed at imposing the reforms needed for the total success of the market economy.

In this context, new social movements and processes of collective action began to emerge with the intention to re-

sist market expansion[9]. Among the existent diversity, only few among the various organisations which emerged started to practise new forms of non-capitalist democracy. For example, some neighbourhood assemblies played an outstanding, but sometimes ephemeral role due to the loss of interest by most of the citizens in the second half of 2002. Some picketers grouped in the Anibal Verón Movement also began to practise new democratic forms, in which the concept of direct and participative democracy assumed a fundamental importance, together with the ideas of autonomy and counterpower. These movements developed their collective action independently of formal mechanisms of representative democracy, since they refused to participate in any election for national or regional authorities. The recovered companies also started to practise a direct democracy in their internal organisation, and in some cases in their community area as well. Until now, only those who proposed to nationalise these companies under workers' control can show a political project extending beyond the work environment and aiming at radical social change.

Thus, neighbourhood assemblies, some movements of unemployed workers, and some recovered companies are among those that somehow have rejected, or at least have questioned, the representative and capitalist democracy. Also, the above-mentioned movements represent the emergence of embryonic mechanisms of direct or participative democracy that even extend their demands towards

[9] For additional consideration on popular resistance see Marcelo Gomez, "Crisis del capitalismo, formas de conciencia y resurgir de la acción colectiva", *Theomai Journal*, Special Issue, Winter 2002); Timothy W. Luke, "Globalization, Popular Resistance and Postmodernity", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (July 2001); and Alexandros Gezerlis, "Latin America: Popular Movements in Neoliberal Modernity", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (March 2002).

a new integral vision of society, very close to the project of Inclusive Democracy. All these movements, together with some small political and social organisations (for example, Cabildo Abierto Latinoamericano) that promote the theory of participative democracy[10], base their work on criticising liberal democracy and on practising radical forms of democracy. However, in all of these popular organisations, differences regarding the new type of democratic organisation exist. Direct democracy practices have been important in almost all the neighbourhood assemblies from the beginning, but later on the practice of direct democracy in some cases vanished, while many of these assemblies decreased in size and/or disappeared. Some orthodox left parties (organised on democratic centralism principles) have controlled many of these assemblies and as a consequence, direct democratic practices in them have weakened. In contrast, some of these groupings advanced and deepened their vision of politics closer to the postulates of Inclusive Democracy, not only in terms of political, economic and social democracy, but also in terms of a new citizenship concept. In some cases, the question of ecological democracy has also become pivotal. Such is the case, for example, of the assemblies of the region of Esquel in Patagonia that are fighting against a project of mining exploitation which, if carried out, would end up in an environmental disaster of enormous dimensions[11]. As regards the movements of unemployed workers, it is possible to see important links to the project of Inclusive Democracy in those MTD grouped under Coordinadora Anibal Verón. Despite the autonomy (they manage different conceptions of internal organisation) that characterises all of them,

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[10] Heinz Dieterich, *Bases del nuevo socialismo* (Buenos Aires, Editorial 21, 2001).
[11] See: http://www.sospatagonia.netfirms.com.

they focus their work on the practice of direct and partici-
pative democracy in political, economic and social terms.
This means that the "community" notion (ecumenicity, au-
tonomy and democracy) has a crucial importance in these
groupings. Moreover, an embryonic development of the
idea of confederated communities can be observed, since
in some cases various solidarity mechanisms among differ-
ent popular organisations started to develop. As a result,
a new form of confederal democracy is emerging based on
nearby communities organised into a territorial network at
a local and regional scale[12]. Some examples of this proc-
ess are the networks created among the MTD, the recovered
enterprise Zanon (a ceramics enterprise) and some unions
in Neuquén, or among some popular assemblies and the re-
covered enterprise Brukman (clothes enterprise) in Buenos
Aires, or among some unemployed workers' movements
and Tigre Supermarket under workers' control in Rosario.

The above-mentioned examples are still marginal phe-
nomena, while the majority of the population still remain
detached from any perspective of social change, as it was
shown in the recent elections in which the various pro-
posals tainted by conservative ideology raised more than
80% of the votes. Moreover, two of the candidates (Carlos
Menem and Ricardo Lopez Murphy) who received 40% of
the votes, had openly threatened with a strong suppres-
sion of the social protest by military means.

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[12] See Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy* (London,
Cassell, 1997), p. 224.

PART II

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY
AND THE LEFT

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY AND ITS PROSPECTS[1]

DAVID FREEMAN

ABSTRACT: Takis Fotopoulos' inclusive democracy project has generated one of the most interesting and ambitious undertakings within contemporary political philosophy. Fotopoulos synthesises what he regards as the principal contributions of five discrete traditions, retrieves classical Athens as democratic exemplar, thinks through and extrapolates the implications of his vision for daily life, and seeks to anticipate and resolve conundrums likely to follow. Any one of these dimensions would render his project noteworthy. Nonetheless, his project occurs within a historic moment that limits its prospects of consideration beyond its own political constituency. However unfairly, Fotopoulos' proposals will struggle for mass attention for reasons not principally of his creation. A leading reason for this is the widespread and probably reasonable leeriness toward large-scale alternatives borne of the pathological nature of much twentieth century political radicalism.

Introduction

This article is organised into two parts. Part I revisits Takis Fotopoulos' (1997) *Towards An Inclusive Democracy* and deploys the discursive and interlocutory device of seeking to anticipate the likely response of three political and intellectual constituencies. Part II locates Fotopoulos' project relative to the difficulties likely to confront any alternative politics early in the twenty-first century.

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[1] This essay is based on a book review article first published in the philosophical journal *Thesis Eleven,* no 69, May 2002.

Part I: Towards an Inclusive Democracy

Why has anarchism not attracted a greater following, espe-
cially given manifest failures of capital, the state and 'ac-
tually existing socialism'? The frequent scholarly response
is not that anarchism cannot work but that its proponents
have not demonstrated that it can, especially in socie-
ties of scale. Woodcock's classic (1971) study, *Anarchism,*
concluded that, however principled, anarchist refusal to
provide such detail had encouraged its limited support.[2]
Takis Fotopoulos' *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*[3] fills in a
number of these gaps, proposing with clarity, thoughtful-
ness and originality the key mechanisms that might enable
and sustain such a polity. Fotopoulos' approach is not de-
claredly anarchist, presumably to navigate the widespread
misperception of anarchism as chaos-advocating, and to
synthesise and transcend liberal socialist, feminist, Green,
and classical and contemporary autonomy/democracy in-
sights. Anarchism seems nevertheless the most proximate
formal category, given his radical decentralisation, direct
democracy, municipalism and abolition of state, money
and market economy.

Fotopoulos seeks "to show that the way out of the
present multidimensional crisis can only be found from
without rather than within the present institutional frame-
work. The ambition is to initiate a discussion concerning
the need for a new liberatory project and the strategies
for implementing it". He analyses economic, political, so-
cial and ecological problems, indicates consequent civi-
lisational crises, and responds with a manifesto scarcely

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[2] George Woodcock, *Anarchism* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1971).
[3] Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy: The Crisis of the
Growth Economy and the Need For a New Liberatory Project (* London/
NY: Cassell/Continuum, 1997).

less ambitious than that of 1848. He contends that state socialism, market capitalism and liberal oligarchy all support the growth economy, false science and economics, the domination of people and concentration of power. All of this precipitates ecological, North-South and other crises. Market economies are inefficient; 'liberal democracy' is actually liberal oligarchy. Crises will increasingly pressure social democracy toward Thatcherite and American practices. He argues that the traditional political science distinction between direct and representative democracy is based upon a false premise. There are not multiple forms of democracy; "in the political realm there can only be one form of democracy, what we may call political or direct democracy, where political power is shared equally among all citizens...the self-instituting of society". Contemporary, atomised 'autonomy' would be unrecognisable to ancient Athenians, for whom it meant a synthesis of collective and individual determination. The legacy of Athenian democracy (594-427 BC) is that direct democracy is possible, and economic oligarchy and political democracy incompatible. Athenian democracy did not collapse, as some claim, due to inherent contradictions within democracy, but because inclusive democracy was not allowed to mature.

Fotopoulos reworks Castoriadis and Lefort; the choice today is barbarism or democracy. An inclusive democracy includes individual and collective decision-making, safeguards that ensure the rights of minorities, and a constellation of institutions and values with citizens socialised into its precepts via *paedeia* (the classical Athenian tradition of broadly-based, self-questioning civic education). The municipality is the most appropriate economic unit; inclusive democracy is possible today only at this level. A municipality must be sufficiently large for economic viability yet not so large as to undermine direct democracy. Thirty thousand members is perhaps the minimum; cities larger

than this can comprise any number of these organisational units. He proposes "demotic (community) ownership", not nationalised or collectivised enterprises. Fotopoulos accepts scale, contemporary industrial techniques and a division of labour provided that domination is avoided. Municipalities may choose to confederate. Municipal self-reliance is supported, but autarky rejected. Trade between confederally united communities is acceptable and desirable once communities rather than markets control the exchange and thereby replace domination and dependency with mutual self-reliance and collective support. This will require a framework for confederated democratic processes as well as decisions at the regional, national and supranational level.

Vouchers replace money; they are issued on a personal basis, unavailable for exchange or as a store of wealth. There are two categories of voucher, providing entitlement to basic and non-basic goods respectively. Allocation of resources occurs collectively via decisions at meetings and individually through voucher choices. Community assemblies establish policy and send rotating, recallable delegates to regional and confederal administrative councils; rotation prevents the emergence of a brahmin caste of professional politicians. Productive resources belong to the *demos*, leased through long-term contract to employees of an enterprise. Production is aimed not at growth but the satisfaction of basic needs; when these are satisfied, those desirous of non-basic goods may volunteer to work hours additional to the minimum agreed amount and receive non-basic vouchers. The community establishes an "index of desirability", ranking jobs relative to inherent capacity for satisfaction. Less satisfying jobs provide a slightly higher income of non-basic vouchers. This will produce a certain amount of inequality, tolerable because small-scale and related to work voluntarily chosen. Where

some communities enjoy natural endowments that others
in their confederation do not, there should be a mechanism
for cross-subsidisation. Barter and basic vouchers provide
the medium of trade. If trading outside the federation or
with countries still in a market economy, the form can be
determined through bilateral or multilateral agreements.
The transitional strategy develops small-scale, working
models of democracy across numerous spheres, gradually
forging alternate values and institutions. As they strength-
en, there is a commensurate phasing out of existing insti-
tutions. Transition contains political and economic dimen-
sions, toward a new kind of politics and a gradual shifting
of labour, capital and land in favour of the new economy.
Left reformers excoriated by Fotopoulos may recognise
some of these transitional components; presumably he will
respond that, unlike them, he has linked these elements
meaningfully, pedagogically and toward an exit strategy.

Fotopoulos' purposes are proselytising as well as schol-
arly; his normative orientation renders it appropriate to
consider what others will make of his proposals. If welfare
capitalism contains three worlds, three others might be
delineated in their treatment of its proposed alternatives.
The first comprises critics of capitalism convinced that an
alternative must be rendered workable; their question is
which model offers most. His book warrants prominence
in their deliberations. Fotopoulos enhances prospects of
a broad base of progressive support by respectfully draw-
ing upon a number of traditions. Like most anarchists since
Kropotkin and Bakunin, he repudiates reformism as flawed
from the outset. He balances this with a transitional pe-
riod, reducing his vulnerability to millenarianism. His
policy detail implicitly accepts difficult choices between
competing virtues, and is thus refreshing. He avoids the
tease of many critics of capitalism who conclude either
with suggestions disproportionately minute relative to

the problems identified, or the so-what final page 'the task now is to develop alternatives'. Fotopoulos deftly negotiates the highwire, providing specificity yet avoiding an excessively universal prescriptivism or a disenfranchising 'scientific' blueprint fixed in stone. His confederal inclusive democracy redresses a frequent gap in anarchism, how communities might relate and forge mechanisms for joint decision-making as required, yet avoid a *de facto* state.

The significance for anarchism of what Fotopoulos has attempted here is underscored by revisiting Woodcock's conclusion that at the heart of anarchism's political failure was the weakness of their practical proposals for the society that would follow, "There was much honesty in their refusal to make elaborate blueprints...but their disinclination to attempt specific proposals led to their producing a vague and vapid vision of an idyllic society...achievement was indefinitely postponed until the millennial day of reckoning; it was a kind of revolutionary pie-in-the-sky and one was expected to fast until mealtime. For the anarchists who followed Bakunin and Kropotkin were political and social absolutists, and they displayed an infinite and consistent contempt for piecemeal reform...They believed that all such gains must be illusory, and that only in the anarchist millennium would the poor really better themselves...the anarchist movement failed to present an alternative to the state or the capitalist economy that lastingly convinced any large section of the world's population.[4]

While technical questions may be asked of Fotopoulos' model, its more profound problem is that few outside of the first constituency (those already opposed to capitalism) will seriously consider it until their prior concerns about all large-scale alternatives are relieved. To imagine that they

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[4] Woodcock, *Anarchism,* pp. 446-447.

might be persuaded because Fotopoulos indicts what is, and offers a conceivably plausible alternative, would mis-recognise these concerns. Responses will be historically mediated through the prism of high-modern engineering and state socialisms, notwithstanding anarchist contempt for the latter. Fotopoulos will be deemed a fellow traveller within the larger field of romanticism, redemptive politics and the belief in the possibility and desirability of radical reinvention of societies. Some will detect little difference from earlier socialist forms of Rousseauian optimism and the false consciousness two-step that foundationalises democracy only to discount the majoritarianism at least partially implicit in the persistence of capitalism and rep-resentative government. They will be apprehensive of one more grand scheme hell-bent on hitching the social project to Icarus and knowing what's best for others. They will sug-gest a formalism in Fotopoulos' confidence that the model works, irrespective of whether it works; Fotopoulos will respond by noting his extensive provision for early, small-scale trials. That he offers a transitional period and the absence of violence will likely be insufficient to surmount such concerns.

The second constituency comprises those indisposed to capitalism yet unconvinced by alternatives to date and exit ramps thereto. They locate capitalism and most of the alternatives proposed to it as equally generated within the logic and terms of modernity. They may ask whether moder-nity's civilisational conundrums can be resolved by shift-ing from the abode of one of its offspring to that of anoth-er. They may wonder if Fotopoulos uncritically replicates modernity's Enlightenment architectural aspirations for societies and even the human condition, and Romanticist over-investment in conversation, direct democracy, *pae-deia* and the presumption of a free choice of polity inde-pendent of history, culture and political economy. They

suspect that the critique of capitalism exists symbiotically with, even integral to, capitalism rather than as a concrete alternative patiently awaiting its moment. They wonder if the benefits of modernity generate its problems, our existences consequently a wry, semi-intractable Faustian pact, our homes betwixt Scylla and Charybdis. They may fear that Fotopoulos' model reprises the modern illusion– shared by capitalism and socialism alike–that it is possible to choose a future that provides gains without losses. This second constituency may wonder if his model assumes that order may be imposed upon life once mechanisms conducive to proper, rational conversation and deliberation are established.

This constituency may also indicate that they searched in vain for Weberian sensitivities. Fotopoulos would presumably respond that his Athenian components predate modernity, that his rejection of the growth economy is premised upon a repudiation of instrumental rationality, and that his entire project is anything but prone to Weber's suggestion of a growing inability in modernity to conceptualise ultimate ends. All true. Yet Weber and the Frankfurt School's sense of unintended, often paradoxical, consequences, such as hyper-rationalisation so thorough as to spawn generalised irrationality, might ultimately be seen as in the tradition of Greek tragedy, where fortunes are ultimately reversed. They may suggest, then, that Fotopoulos has drawn on only some parts of the Greek legacy that remains instructive, overlooking the fables that provide timeless insights into the human condition and its limitations, including the sense that hubris will always come unstuck. As well as the perennial Prometheus and aforementioned references to Icarus, Scylla and Charybdis, we can also recall Tantalus, son of Zeus, who was immersed in a lake up to his chin because he offended the gods. The waters receded whenever he sought to allay his thirst, only to

return once he stopped trying. Branches overflowed with ripe fruit just above his head, similarly receding whenever he reached for them and returning whenever he stopped.[5] He was tormented by this combination of unfulfilled thirst, hunger and anticipation. Extrapolated to daily life, we might say that life has a way of confounding our preferences. One can be 'tantalised' only to find one's heart's desire just out of reach; resisting this sometimes only worsens the consequences. How, then, do such Greek fables pertain to this discussion? For starters, given the mixed blessing that was the twentieth century, it is not enough to be well-intended. If asking a polity to embark on a new road, one will be required to demonstrate well before-the-fact that this road cannot possibly be the harbinger of disaster. Otherwise, the public response will surely be 'better the devil you know'.

This constituency may also suggest that Fotopoulos conceptualises community in a periodised, bucolic fashion that is especially dated given recent transformations in subjectivity and the rise and rise of communication unrelated to spatial proximity. (His response will observe that he encourages email and the internet; the option of casting preferences electronically addresses problems of scale, and renders direct democracy even more attractive and practicable.)

They may allege that Fotopoulos duplicates the gap alleged of Callenbach's *Ecotopia*; how is the fragmented public sphere and subject of late capitalism reinvented as to possess sufficient desire and judgement to underpin a

[5] cf. E. H. Cobham Brewer, *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (1870). Fifteenth Edition (Revised by Adrian Room), (London: Cassell, 1996), p. 1054; Zygmunt Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity, (2001), pp.7-20.

vibrant local and civic culture?[6] *Paedeia* may or may not
produce such a citizen over time; in the interim, how or
why would most experience the absence of its values and
practices as deficit? This constituency may also wonder if
his severity on Left reformers misrecognises that they do
not claim deep solutions but merely the least objection-
able of practicable choices. The juxtaposition of his model
arrangements with their compromises may be unfair. They
could wonder if vouchers will inadvertently reprise pro-
ductivism and subsumptions of citizenship to productiv-
ity. They will fear that a city, region or country attempt-
ing Fotopoulos' model would be vulnerable to (putatively)
'democracy-defending' invasion by the armed forces of a
major capitalist power intent on reinstating repatriated
transnational corporations and investments and warning
other polities off a similar road. Fotopoulos may in turn al-
lege a cerebral, fatalistic passivity, an intellectual ambiva-
lence and fair-minded measuredness so chronic as to be
politically paralysing, and the effective abandonment of
civic engagement and the most destitute despite formally
supporting both.

The third constituency comprises those who effectively
support the *status quo*—the apolitical, those gaining most
from existing arrangements, those who regard capitalism
or the state as net contributors to humanity, those who
believe that, however paradoxical, collective well-being
is best served by the pursuit of self-interest, and those
comforted by liberal, republican and constitutional for-
mulations that separate powers and formally enshrine the
rule of law over that of people. This constituency will re-
gard as definitionally adroit but unconvincing his avowed

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[6] cf. Peter Christoff, 'Post-industrial utopias', *Arena*, Vol. 84,
(September 1988), pp. 161-166, 163.

innocence of utopianism because his is a liberatory project and Left and Right critics are, with unsustainable policies, the real utopians. The third constituency may regard the state as a buffer against the 'problem of evil' and unintended consequences, despite sometimes manifesting each. State absence could generate a vacuum, providing malevolence/human nature especial opportunity without accountability or state-administered recourse. If the jury is out on whether evil is the consequence of nature, nurture or their interaction, many will regard the state as a hedge against the worst case and treat Fotopoulos' state-as-dominatrix as reductionist. Multiple, countervailing forms of power might protect against tyranny. Ironically, this is one of many reasons Fotopoulos supports direct democracy; he and this constituency concur in abhorring domination, locating its sources and nature differently. Fotopoulos needs to rebut Hobbes, as well as Michels' and Pareto's suggestion that élites are likely to emerge in any form of social organisation, even in those committed to the absence of élites. In the interim, liberal and republican representative government will be embraced as a compromise position on human nature, with prescribed and proscribed powers deemed the less risky arrangement. Fotopoulos needs to respond to intimations, notably from Freud, totalitarianism, pogroms and popular wars, that collectivities and not only élites can support murderousness; this goes directly to why people might seek the rule of law with state-as-enforcer. His greatest problem could be that, after such traumas, many are circumspect about intensively trusting each other, and especially nervous of vulnerable, unpredictable or new arrangements. Fotopoulos will likely be incredulous if those thus persuaded do not object to neoliberal global capitalism and oligarchy on similar grounds.

Fotopoulos' discussion of Athenian checks and balances will mitigate some concerns. He notes, for example,

rotation of the Council of Five Hundred after one year, and the capacity to annually vote to ostracise one dangerously powerful person. This constituency will nevertheless remain concerned about safeguards. What, for example, prevents a cabal from undertaking (the stateless equivalent of) a coup, seizing the voucher repository, distributing vouchers to enjoin any with weapons or substantial musculature to their cause, and banishing all democratic practice? Fotopoulos needs to satisfy as to how internal and external aggression is prevented or resolved; simply expressing his confidence in the assembly to develop appropriate means will revisit anxieties provoked by Marx's similar assurances. Many regard private property as a buffer for the individual and not simply a mechanism of domination; he will need to show that demotic ownership could not prove demonic. Fotopoulos will presumably be nonplussed that this constituency should impose such a rigorous burden of proof of oligarchy's impossibility upon him, while apparently nonchalant about its currently thick presence.

His position is invidious; without detail, a dreamy optimist; with it, deemed a dangerous social engineer. This renders all the more necessary the demonstration of interpenetrating ontologies upon which Fotopoulos' edifice rests. He tacitly claims that liberal individualism, oligarchy and the growth economy skew and atomise our nature. This constituency will require detail as to the degree of renunciation required in Fotopoulos' scarcity-accepting society. The historically minded in this constituency may detect resonances with Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846) and concur with Marx, for once, in his 1847 response, *The Poverty of Philosophy*. The middle class will be nervous; the destitute may require less evidence if they believe that they can scarcely fare worse. It is unclear if Fotopoulos appeals to our self-interest or selflessness; probably both, especially given his retrieval of Athenian

syntheses of personal and collective self-interest. The prospects of renunciation's embrace will be mediated through contemporary, eudemonistic constructions of the good life that assume it to be found in the explicit pursuit of happiness and hedonism. Fotopoulos' implicit claim is that genuine happiness aggregates paradoxically, through repudiating its narcissistic, relentless pursuit and settling instead for a communitarianism that is subtly but deeply fulfilling over time, because built upon such substance as suitably human values and practices. Another ontology is whether one privileges a positive freedom to build social-ity or a negative freedom from such a responsibility, open-ing in turn to questions of the appropriate deference the atom ought accord the molecule.

Notwithstanding transitional strategies, it is not clear how this model will be culturally attractive to people who do not share its values. If consumption is today part of iden-tity construction in all western and some other countries, and if Fotopoulos proposes consumption's reinvention as peripheral, will not many anxiously anticipate becoming emperors without clothing, robbed of props, sources of conversation and personal expression, suddenly at risk of feeling or seeming boring or personality-free? However much there is a vacuum at its heart, modernity (includ-ing capitalism and the growth economy) is often deemed stimulating in a way that other cultural processes strug-gle to compete with. Speed, adrenalin, the new, hedonism, and narcissism allure to an extent that Fotopoulos needs to respond to, for his tacit assumption is that their attrac-tions fade in *demos*-directed communities saturated with the satisfactions of participation, connectedness and 'real' values instilled through *paedeia*. Yet however damaged, indigenous and traditional communities with substantive meaning systems and modes of transmission have through-out the twentieth century advanced similar propositions

to their teenagers contemplating the big smoke, only to be saddened if home somehow paled. It may be that one could be better off if never exposed to global/American culture but, once one has been, arguably-richer local meaning systems can be deemed pedestrian. Fotopoulos will insist that participation is exciting, sociable and meaning-giving, just as his model is commensurable with the metropole and its stimulations. However unjustly, many in rich countries will deem his vision a dour monasticism to which they do not hear a calling, preferring death by chocolate to death by meetings. So we are back to assumptions of *tabula rasa*, palimpsests and that people socialised into one culture could or would choose *en masse* a different culture if they experienced a foretaste through the transition strategy. *Per contra*, Fotopoulos might convince given that most today self-constitute as democrats; he is persuasive that his approach is infinitely more democratic than what is.

Many will fear that his economics would pauperise, levelling down when feasible to level up. They will point to Europe and East Asia to suggest that capitalism is history's most rapid poverty removalist, however crude, cruel and asymmetrically distributed are its costs and benefits. Some may allege two false premises, that capitalism necessarily means the growth economy which necessarily means anti-environmentalism, and that scarcity is compelled only if renewable resources and technologies cannot be developed. Capitalism is only now perceiving its self-interest in environmental solutions, and its capacity to resolve the ecological problems it generates may be currently indeterminate. However slowly, business decision-makers and farmers increasingly concede that altering their practices will allow people, the environment and enterprises to live for another day. Green technologies and even holidays ('eco-tourism') are increasingly deemed a form of value-adding, and premium-priced accordingly.

Marketeers seem to be positioning themselves behind this emergent trend toward green products and processes, with greenness the product line currently furthest from market saturation. The environment may finally be embraced precisely because there is a buck in it. Given the prominence of the tertiary sector and intellectual property in the 'new economy', so long as profits grow it is conceivable that ever-greater extraction and *per capita* consumption of natural resources could prove a phase and not a necessary constituent of capitalism. Some will challenge Fotopoulos' environmentally-based rejection of the growth economy via such claims as those advanced by Hollander's (2003) *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, Is the Environment's Number One Enemy*.[7]

Constituencies two and three will share several concerns. They may regard Left crisis-talk as tired given its historic propensities for slipperiness, reification, formalism, self-valorisation and wishful thinking. Again, Fotopoulos will be punished for that which precedes him. The horrors he identifies are largely so, yet it is not clear that representative government and capitalism are in crisis in a literal sense. To be sure, they ever-reinvent themselves in response to new pressures, and confront real problems and challenges not least from new social movements that are today frequently international in scale. Yet this arguably creates pressure to deliver on their rhetorical claims rather than compel their abandonment. Only two crises he identifies are indisputable, ecological and North-South. Other ontologies require explicit defence. Do most desire extensive participation, as direct democracy assumes? He presumes but does not demonstrate the proposition that to be

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[7] Jack M. Hollander, *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, Is the Environment's Number One Enemy* (Berkeley: University of California Press (2003).

apolitical is to be alienated from one's true nature, a temporary by-product of a dysfunctional society. This may be so–or another instance of natural human diversity. Some who deny politics as universal vocation will fear its colonisation of their life-world. The artist of relentless muse desperate to maximise every free hour and kilojoule of energy may ask why the specialisation permitted of every other endeavour cannot be allowed of politics, and insist upon guarantees constraining participation's intrusion. The role accorded *paedeia* may be regarded as reworking false consciousness, as if 'once correct inputs occur (culture, values, education), correct outputs (including preferences) will result'. This too may be so, but has a Skinnerian vulnerability. What next if, post-*paedeia* and post-capitalism, sociopaths, psychopaths and pro-capitalists continue to emerge? Notwithstanding Fotopoulos' provisions for minorities, iron-clad provisions would be required that guarantee the right to dissent and to referenda that reverse his policies, such as the right to vote to re-marketise. Whether embracing the minimal or enabling state, most conservatives and progressives concur that the state is uniquely situated to perform important tasks, however much they differ over which tasks. Refusing achievements of representative government and its bureaucracy will antagonise, seemingly oblivious to the magnitude of accomplishment relative to even less accountable predecessors, such as feudal serfdom, divine right, monarchy and slavery. One reason the state was embraced was to bring capitalism under a modicum of social control, especially after the Great Depression.

Fotopoulos' model may be deemed vulnerable to unintended consequences, partially because redemptive politics is. Social Darwinism is probably integral to laissez-faire capitalism but might also be possible in anarchism-gone-awry, whereas social democracy may suggest lesser

risk in this regard. In this optic, aiming for a lower level of freedom and justice might produce more of it than a purer model. Contemporary parlance might capture this idea with the zen aphorism that less is more. Similarly, confederated municipalities might inadvertently intensify contemporary, ethnically-driven micronationalisms. Socialists and others may suggest that socialist internationalism remains instructive in holding that warmongering will persist until community is conceptualised within a larger, not smaller, frame (and testosterone rendered more peripheral). Fotopoulos anticipates environmental crisis prompting questioning of economics and politics but plays as trump card that which could also prove joker or wild card. Especially given late twentieth century naturalisations of individualism, scarcity could atomise or tribalise just as it could socialise; *Lord of the Flies* was, one hopes, merely fictional. If crisis forces people to their senses, by this logic the Great Depression should have ended capitalism. That it did not illustrates a capacity of capitalism that he does not engage with, self-reinvention so as to survive and fight another day, whether engineered via conspiracy, compromise, consensus or systemic autopoeisis.

This is an erudite, elegant book, with a sophistication undiminished by its polemicism. It is a work of philosophical and empirical substance, affirming agency and human hope over domination. Its limitations are relative to its ambition rather than its achievements. Democracy was one of the most uttered 'motherhood statements' of the twentieth century. Yet citizens everywhere allege democratic deficits in their own and other polities. Whatever my other reservations, a richness and sincerity of democratic impulse animates Fotopoulos' project, coursing through its veins. Irrespective of one's politics, Fotopoulos' explication of Athenian political practice and philosophy–aided by Castoriadis, Arendt and others–reveals the thinness of

contemporary understandings of autonomy, freedom, democracy and deliberation. We return to early Athens, notwithstanding its anti-democratic contradictions, and it is always an interesting journey. Archaeologists and philologists of democracy will enjoy the company this book provides, say Castoriadis (1991)[8], Hansen (1991)[9] and Arnason and Murphy (2001).[10] Fotopoulos convinces that a no-state, no-money existence offers high returns but will not satisfy those who will regard it as simultaneously high-risk, and therefore excessively fraught. This is an important book, but unless the questions noted here are plausibly responded to, it is likely to persuade few beyond those already seeking an alternative to market and state.

Part II: Revisiting the Inclusive Democracy project

My purpose in Part II is to consider Fotopoulos' approach as indeed a politics and suggest that it may thus be contra-distinguished from many other progressive undertakings. Let me commence with several caveats. It will already be apparent that I am doubtful about the prospects for several of Fotopoulos' proposals, and ambivalent about some others. I cannot as a matter of empirical observation concur with Fotopoulos' implicit argument that representative democracy, the state and reformism have generated nothing of value. My sense is that the efficacy of each varies,

[8] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*: *Essays in Political Philosophy* (David Ames Curtis, Ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press [Odéon), 1991).
[9] Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oxford: Blackwell (1991).
[10] Johann P. Arnason and Peter Murphy (Eds.), (eds.) *Agon, Logos, Polis: The Greek Achievement and its Aftermath* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag (2001).

chronologically, across polities and relative to that which precedes them. What one finds rather depends upon what one looks at, where and when. Parenthetically, I am yet to settle upon the form of society I regard as optimally desirable and plausible. Notwithstanding various reservations, my purpose in Part II is to suggest several commendable dimensions of Fotopoulos' project; it is less material here that I think some of it improbable.

I regard it as a positive and rare virtue that Fotopoulos tacitly adopts a First Principle approach to politics, in at least three respects. One, it is implicit that prior to writing, he has posed to himself such foundational questions as: what is the good life, and hence the good society? This indicates, of course, another sense in which his project might be seen as eminently Greek. Two, whatever other problems follow, it is surely to assert First Principles to, in effect, ask 'what is a society that could instantiate my values?', and to be undeterred if one's conclusion has few antecedents. Political preferences ought be acts of anthropological creativity that assert human agency and, for that matter, Vico's Principle. Three, expressed in First Principles, democracies need a vibrant public sphere, and the advocacy of a multiplicity of versions of the good life, around which conversations and policy preferences gradually crystallise. This is so (or at least ought be) whether one supports the case for representative government[11] or regards 'representative democracy' as oxymoronic, insisting instead with Fotopoulos that 'democracy' is necessarily a synonym for 'direct democracy'.

Every politics must contain prognosis (including strategy and detail), and not only diagnosis. The effective

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[11] cf. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*. (Introduction: A. D. Lindsay), Everyman's Library (London: Dent, (1910). pp. 175-295.

absence of the former is a principal reason why many forms of radicalism, especially those of Jacobinist hue, do not in truth constitute a politics at all, but are rather closer to millenarian sects. It is not, as they believe, their misfortune that the polity rarely contemplates their views; rather, because they do not represent or offer a politics, this is not a possibility. To know what you are against but not what you are for is not a politics. That their advocates are oblivious to this, as they are to being walking advertisements against their own position, is immaterial. It is a monument to their self-deception that they often attribute their political marginality principally to the capacity of the *status quo* to enculturate and reify, and to thereby distort human values–which is not to suggest that these processes never occur. It is of course foundational to anthropology, sociology and critical theory that the world as it manifests itself in a particular time and place is not the only one possible. All progressives who cannot or will not contemplate in concrete terms the world they would prefer unwittingly undermine such assertions of anthropological choice, for they effectively indicate that they cannot conceive outside the terms of that which they purport to oppose.

Fotopoulos, by contrast, has a politics to advocate, and it does not matter if I am unpersuaded by various of its detail. In this trope, the important thing is to have a thousand debates, a thousand attempts to 'sharpen the pencil' as many people and organisations each propose the best version they can around that which will enable all to flourish. Put differently, the prospects for vibrant democracies would be vastly enlivened if all who are passionate about politics–of every ideological persuasion–got into the habit of thinking through the detail implicit in their world-view, and then heaved this package into the public domain. We have in Fotopoulos' project an exemplar of such a commit-

ment; in this sense we might experience it as 'democratic gift'.

Moreover, Fotopoulos is grappling for a politics that rejects all forms of domination, yet which is practicable rather than fantastical. If realisable, this would contradistinguish his approach not only from almost every attempt of market capitalism or state socialism, but from almost every society in human history. Such a society may or may not be possible, but if the general proposition is even halfway true that human dignity and well-being are undermined by domination, his proposals merit deliberation at a minimum.

Yet here Fotopoulos will be hindered by that which precedes him. In most western and many other polities today, many do not regard various emancipatory politics as forms of ethical practice. It is beyond the scope of this article to develop my thesis that this has often been an entirely reasonable conclusion. If emancipatory politics often commences in the first instance as ethical response to problems of suffering, dignity and community, how on earth has there been such 'dissociation' between ethical aspiration and practice? This is, I suspect, a matter that supporters of such politics might need to ponder over decades before there can be any prospect of the polity even considering their views. While Fotopoulos comprehensively indicts state socialism, my own sense is that there remains much to be done within progressive politics more broadly if its pathologies are to be confronted. For example, the spirit that fuses certainty with self-righteousness is central to the widespread unattractiveness of radical politics. One sees therein the genesis of an authoritarian style of inner life and self-talk that has often manifested itself in commensurate practices wherever it has sufficient power to do so. At least four overlapping problems might be delineated here: mental health, intermittent misanthropy, the subsumption of the ethical and low levels of

self-knowledge. This may be the gravest problem likely to confront Fotopoulos' project: presumed guilt by association. The contribution of a project such as Fotopoulos' is that his approach implicitly makes the case that radicalism need not be mentally unhinged. This is, to put it mildly, a prerequisite if those thus inclined wish to be actors in the contest of ideas. Moreover, Fotopoulos expresses interest in a radicalism that seeks to be ethical[12], rather than the usual self-serving presumption that one is automatically ethical, because radical. One might say that Fotopoulos is feeling for ways in which the economic, political and social might be integrated, ethical and practicable, which I for one regard as itself an eminently ethical thought exercise.

Fotopoulos' approach is admirable for yet another reason. The academy is built extensively upon _agon_. There are sound reasons for this, but–perhaps as unintended consequence–critique and deconstruction became markers of virtue that are arguably disproportionately rewarded relative to their contribution to humanity. One can build an eminent career in the humanities and social sciences upon taking apart the ideas of others, provided this is accomplished in devastating fashion. One is not required (by oneself or others) to show an alternate approach to the _status quo_ or one's interlocutors that is, on balance, preferable. In academia as in Left politics, a 'strategy of negation' is not only deemed to suffice, but works as heroic self-advertisement: clearly my integrity remains intact. In contrast, it requires courage, generosity, clarity of mind and years of painstaking work to put a set of proposals together as Fotopoulos has. These are passed into the public domain, allowing all and sundry to gain kudos through

[12] cf. Takis Fotopoulos, http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol8/takis_ethics.htm, (1997).

taking potshots, even cheap shots. This is another reason why I regard his project as an honourable one; Fotopoulos has effectively made himself a juicy target, and all for the sake of a bigger idea than himself. In narcissistic times, that is noteworthy. Moreover, Fotopoulos surmounts the usually-intractable binary split where those able to think practically often possess no apparent vision, and those possessed of a decent vision for humans and societies would seemingly be pressed to coordinate their socks, let alone more pressing matters.

In sum, I welcome all thoughtful attempts that meditate upon how the requirements of ethics, economics, politics, community and self might fruitfully be reconciled. Attempts that seek to meld practical detail with a dignified, even uplifted, vision of the human person are especially noteworthy. As I have suggested, I think it much less important that I concur with the detail than that such attempts occur. For all the reasons noted here, I must regard Fotopoulos' inclusive democracy project as one that makes a genuine contribution to debates about human and environmental well-being.

BEYOND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY?[1]

ARRAN GARE

ABSTRACT: T*owards an Inclusive Democracy*, it is argued, offers a powerful new interpretation of the history and destructive dynamics of the market and provides an inspiring new vision of the future in place of both neo-liberalism and existing forms of socialism. It is shown how this work synthesizes and develops Karl Polanyi's characterization of the relationship between society and the market and Cornelius Castoriadis' philosophy of autonomy. A central component of Fotopoulos' argument is that social democracy can provide no answer to neo-liberalism, so the only viable alternative to neo-liberalism is the form of inclusive democracy he elaborates. Reviewing Castoriadis' concept of autonomy, it is argued that while Fotopoulos is certainly correct given the present deformed nature of social democracy, there is no reason to exclude social democracy as such from what Fotopoulos calls the tradition of autonomy. It is suggested that if the working class movement could free itself from the capitalist imaginary and return to its quest for autonomy, a synthesis of a radically reformed social democracy and inclusive democracy could greatly improve the prospects of each to successfully challenge not only neo-liberalism, but also the emerging liberal fascism of USA, Britain and Australia.

Takis Fotopoulos' *Towards an Inclusive Democracy* is a comprehensive response to the global triumph of neo-liberalism and the failure of socialism. It analyses the present state and past history of the world economy, offers a vision of an alternative future for the world, and offers a philosophical justification for this

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[1] This essay is based on a book review article first published in the journal *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 34, No.1 (Winter 2002).

vision. While Fotopoulos is highly critical of the socialism of former communist countries, his more important argu- ments are directed against social democrats who believe that social justice can be achieved through state control of the market. The only realistic response to a looming social and environmental crises engendered by neo-liberalism, Fotopoulos argues, is 'inclusive democracy'. Is socialism dead? And is Fotopoulos' new liberatory project a viable alternative to it?

The analysis of the global economy exposes the illusions perpetrated by neo-liberals that the growth of the market ultimately benefits all, or at least most of the world's pop- ulation. Significantly, this work is not undertaken from a Marxist perspective. Fotopoulos' study of the global econ- omy develops Karl Polanyi's analysis of the separation of the market economy from society and the subordination of society to the laws of the market. For Fotopoulos, the fundamental conflict is not that between the forces and the relations of production, but between the market domi- nated economy and society. The extension of the market has never been inevitable, Fotopoulos argues. The history of capitalism is not merely a sequence of objective phases in the accumulation of capital. It is always the outcome of power struggles between those in control of the market and the rest of society.

This framework provides a new perspective on the his- tory of capitalism, including its recent developments. Fotopoulos reviews debates over whether the growth of international trade heralds a new era, whether the division between the first and third world is breaking down, and whether capitalism is now disorganized or is being reor- ganized at an international level. To show what is distinc- tive about the present Fotopoulos explains each phase of capitalism as the result of efforts by those controlling the market to maintain the conditions for its expansion. The

shift from socially controlled markets to self-regulating markets occurred at the end of the eighteenth century. This was followed by an explosion of legislation removing restrictions on the market. But this proved to be unviable at the time. Efforts to protect businessmen and industrialists led after the 1870s to the growth of protectionism, the expansion of the state and the growth of nationalism. Fotopoulos acknowledges that these developments led to an amelioration of the effects of the market through social welfare, particularly after the Great Depression. This was not only the period of the statist phase of capitalism; it was also the period of the 'social-democratic consensus', and as such was at least in part an achievement in the struggle of society against the market. But with the concentration of power generated by the statist phase of capitalism, this consensus could only be sustained while it served the market elites. The collapse of statism and the social-democratic consensus heralds a new phase whereby those in control of the market are extending it at the expense of society to further augment their power, completing the marketization process that was interrupted by the rise of statism.

In the new order, the state's role, along with a range of new institutional structures ranging from the local to the international level, is exclusively to create the stable framework for the efficient functioning of the market. Although this phase extends the market into the Third World, power is concentrated as never before with the elites of the core zones. Civil society has dissolved almost completely, people have been brutalized, and politics and democracy rendered superfluous. Only a small minority of the world population, mostly in a few affluent regions in North America, Western Europe and East Asia are benefiting from these developments. And the consequence of the internationalization of the market economy and the concentration of economic power it engenders, is "an

ecological crisis that threatens to develop into an eco-
catastrophe, the destruction of the countryside, the crea-
tion of monstrous mega-cities and the uprooting of local
communities and cultures' (p. 116). Fotopoulos argues that
with liberalized commodity and capital markets, the inter-
nationalization of the market economy with an over-riding
commitment to economic growth, it is impossible to regu-
late the market to control its destructive imperatives. Any
country that attempts to do so (for instance Sweden), will
lose its international competitiveness (p.86ff). Market ef-
ficiency in an internationalized economy and social control
of the market are irreconcilable.

This argument provides the background for the defence
of inclusive democracy. Going beyond efforts to democra-
tize industrial production and focusing on the community
rather than merely the economy, the project of inclusive
democracy encompasses the political, economic, social
and ecological realms; that is, any area of human activity
where decisions can be taken collectively and democrati-
cally. Democracy is defined as the 'institutional framework
that aims at the equal distribution of political, economic
and social power... in other words, as the system which
aims at the effective elimination of the domination of hu-
man beings over human being' (p.206f). Ecological democ-
racy is defined as the institutional framework that aims to
reintegrate humans and nature. The original example of
genuine democracy (although it was confined to a small
proportion of the total population) is taken to be ancient
Athens of Pericles. The liberal 'democracies' of the modern
world, social democratic models and Marxist socialism that
reduce politics to the scientific management of production,
are dismissed as various forms of oligarchy. Fotopoulos
traces the history of these social forms, claiming them to
be perversions of the democratic ideal.

Fotopoulos offers an historical, social and economic

analysis of ancient Greek democracy to show what true de-
mocracy is and the conditions for its success. The basis of
democracy must be the choice of people for individual and
collective autonomy. Political decisions should be made by
citizens collectively in community assemblies, not through
representatives. Positions to which authority is delegated
should be filled by lot on a rotation basis. All residents in
a particular geographical area should be directly involved
in decision-taking processes and should be educated to
enable them to do so. Political rights should be accom-
panied by social and economic rights and, to ensure this,
productive resources should be owned by the demos (the
people). In one of the most important sections of the book,
Fotopoulos provides a detailed model of a production and
distribution system simulating and gaining the benefits of
a market economy while avoiding the destructive effects
of real markets. This involves a combination of democratic
planning and a voucher system, securing the satisfaction
of basic needs for everyone while enabling individuals to
maintain their sovereignty as consumers. Satisfaction of
basic needs involving more than one community should
be coordinated through a confederal plan formulated in
regional and confederal assemblies made up of delegates.
Fotopoulos shows how such a system could be made work-
able economically and politically.

The point of offering such a model is not to prescribe
how people should organize themselves but to demon-
strate that direct democracy is feasible. Fotopoulos ar-
gues we do not have to wait for the conditions for inclusive
democracies to evolve. They can be created at almost any
time, although it is easier at some times rather than others.
Fotopoulos argues that to escape the destructive impera-
tives and brutalizing effects of the present order, 'The im-
mediate objective should ... be the creation, from below,
of "popular bases of political and economic power", that is,

the establishment of local and public realms of direct and economic democracy which, at some stage, will confeder- ate in order to create the conditions for the establishment of a new society' (p.284). This struggle must be under- taken simultaneously at the political, economic, social and cultural levels.

The final part of the book is devoted to the philo- sophical justification of inclusive democracy. Essentially, Fotopoulos develops Castoriadis' arguments that the core of democracy is autonomy – the freedom of people to be self-instituting, that is, to be able to put into question and transform their existing institutions and their dominant social paradigm (beliefs, ideas and values).[2] Any philoso- phy that denies the possibility of such autonomy is criti- cised. In particular, Fotopoulos attacks those who see de- mocracy as the outcome of something other than the free choice of people, whether this be the truths of religion, the laws of nature, the cunning of reason or the evolution of society. The question then is whether people are prepared to struggle for democracy now, given that their failure to do so not only means accepting their subjugation and bru- talization, but also the destruction of the ecological con- ditions of their existence.

Evaluating Fotopoulos' Argument

How convincing is Fotopoulos' argument? There are four basic components of this to consider: the analysis of the

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[2] On this notion of autonomy see Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Kathleen Blamey, Trans.), (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), pp.101-108; Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy: Essays in Political Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), esp. ch.7.

history of the market and of the present state of the world economy, the evaluation of the prospects for socialism, the model of a fully democratic society as a realistic alternative to neo-liberalism, and the philosophical argument underlying these three components. Since the philosophical argument underlies all the others, this would appear to be the logical place to begin.

Here Fotopoulos proceeds by criticizing a number of alternative positions before presenting his own. Most of the argument is taken up with exposing the limitations of the opposing positions before presenting the view to be defended. The defended view is held to be superior primarily because it is free of the objections raised against the other positions. The problem with this approach is that the argument depends on having identified all significant opposing positions. In this case, Fotopoulos is concerned to defend Castoriadis' philosophy which grants a central place to free agency based on imagination by pointing out the failures of various forms of objectivism, whether empiricist, rationalist or dialectical, including Bookchin's effort to ground ethics in a dialectical naturalism. One of the central points made is that of the positions reviewed, only Castoriadis' philosophy is able to grant a proper place to freedom and to spell out the implications of this for politics. Acceptance of this philosophy is used by Fotopoulos to justify a sharp dichotomy between ways of understanding nature and understanding history. The latter is seen as creation (p.320). Correspondingly, Fotopoulos argues for a sharp qualitative distinction between the 'tradition of autonomy' in which people explicitly recognize themselves as the creators of their institutions and the 'tradition of heteronomy' that excludes from questioning the laws, traditions and beliefs of a society (p.334).

Following Castoriadis, Fotopoulos then goes on to identify the tradition of autonomy with the development

of direct democracy, while all political movements not concerned to promote direct democracy are relegated to the heteronomous tradition. Fotopoulos acknowledges that there can be developments in what he calls the heteronomous tradition. Parliamentary 'democracy' was an advance over constitutional monarchy which in turn was an advance over absolute monarchy, and presumably social 'democracy' is an advance over liberal 'democracy', but these are held to be nothing to do with the quest for autonomy or real democracy. There are also developments in the autonomous tradition. Spanish collectives with some element of economic democracy were an advance not only over Parisian assemblies, but also over Athenian democracy. Fotopoulos' model of an inclusively democratic political order will be a further advance. But developments of one tradition are totally unrelated to developments in the other. While Fotopoulos accepts that there may be mixtures of heteronomy and autonomy in society, he refuses to allow the possibility of traditions characterized by degrees of hetermonomy and autonomy. As he argued in opposition to Bookchin:

> "According to dialectical naturalism, 'between [autonomy and heteronomy] is a dialectic that has to be unravelled in all its complexity, involving interrelationships as well as antagonisms', whereas according to the view presented here, despite the development *within* each tradition and the possible interaction, still, no development *between* them may be established (p.335)."

This is an extremely important passage, since it highlights the source of Fotopoulos' tendency to treat all those attempting to reform existing institutions as part of the heteronomous tradition and thereby irrelevant to the project of autonomy.

Without going into the complex arguments surrounding

these issues, it is important to note that, firstly, Castoriadis' position is more complex and perhaps more contradictory than Fotopoulos acknowledges, and secondly, that there is a richer tradition of thought than Fotopoulos considers which has sought to grant a place to human freedom while denying a sharp dichotomy between the understanding of nature and the understanding of history, and which, as a consequence, provides a new way to understand the relationship between necessity and creativity. Here I will focus on Fotopoulos' and Castoriadis' notion of autonomy and its implications, although I will also allude to new approaches to defending human freedom and its role in history.

To begin with, Castordiadis simply identified autonomy with self-management, but went on to develop a subtle analysis of this concept. In 1974 he wrote:

> "I had first given to the concept of autonomy, as extended to society, the meaning of "collective management". I have now been led to give it a more radical content, which is no longer simply collective management ("self-management") but the *permanent and explicit self-institution of society;* that is to say, a state in which the collectivity knows that its institutions are its own creation and has become capable of regarding them as such, of taking them up again and transforming them."[3]

Castoriadis did not abandon his view that only where there is direct democracy can society be regarded as autonomous.[4] But this claim sits uneasily with other aspects of Castordiadis' philosophy of autonomy. As Castoriadis developed the notion, autonomy was portrayed as something aimed at and achieved by degrees:

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[3] David Ames Curtis (Ed.), *The Castoriadis Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.29f.
[4] Ibid., p.407ff.

> "As a germ, autonomy emerges when explicit and unlim-
> ited interrogation explodes on the scene...I am speak-
> ing intentionally of *germ*, for autonomy, social as well as
> individual, is a *project*...The questions raised are, on the
> social level: Are our laws good? Are they just? Which laws
> *ought* we to make? And, on the individual level: Is what
> I think true? Can I know if it is true – and if so, how? ...
> Autonomy ... is the unlimited self-questioning about the
> law and its foundations as well as the capacity, in light of
> this interrogation, *to make, to do* and *to institute*."[5]

Such questioning began in Ancient Greece and re-
vived with modernity, reaching a new intensity with the
Enlightenment. The emancipation of philosophy and art
from religion in the eighteenth century, which generated
enormous creativity in these fields, was an aspect of au-
tonomy. This would suggest that while direct democracy
might be something to be aimed at by a tradition of au-
tonomy, autonomy is a broader project and cannot be iden-
tified with direct democracy. Castoriadis then went on to
argue that the project of autonomy took a radically defec-
tive form first in the liberal republic and then in Marxist-
Leninist 'socialism' with the quest for unlimited expansion
of (pseudo-)rational (pseudo-)mastery.[6] There are two
aspects to this defective path, the degradation of reason
from critique to mechanical reckoning on the one hand,
and the development of reason into a supposedly universal
and all-encompassing system on the other.[7] My conten-
tion is that by construing this degradation as nothing but
a development of the alternative tradition of heteronomy,
even if such an interpretation can be justified on the basis

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[5] Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy,* p.163f.
[6] Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments,* (David Ames Curtis,
(Trans. and Ed.) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p.43.
[7] Ibid., p.38.

of Castoriadis' identification of autonomous society with direct democracy, Fotopoulos simplifies what is at issue in the failure of the social democrats and thereby, what paths there are to overcoming their failures. With this in mind, we can now consider the other components of Fotopoulos' argument.

Fotopoulos' Analysis of the Market Economy

To begin with, let us consider Fotopoulos' analysis of the history of the market and the present stage of capitalism. It is my belief that this analysis is a major achievement, superior to Marxist histories because it highlights the struggles of people against the market and its elites and allows the social-democratic consensus to be appreciated as a real achievement that is now being lost. However, it appears there is an ambiguity in Fotopoulos' work that to some extent obscures this achievement, and this derives from Fotopoulos' way of construing the opposition between the traditions of heteronomy and autonomy. On the one hand, the development of the social-democratic consensus appears simultaneously as a major achievement in the struggle of society against the market and as the strategy the market elites had to adopt in their struggle for profits. The latter position (denying the importance of the struggle by society against the market, the different strategies used in different countries and the different degrees of success) appears to derive from an overestimation of the effects of objective circumstances and of the power and role of the market elites. Thus, Fotopoulos portrays German social democracy as merely 'a remnant of the statist phase of marketization' and argues that 'in the competition between the USA/UK model of liberalization and the Rhineland social market model, it is the former that

is the clear winner' (p.97). This leads to an acceptance of the triumph of neo-liberalism over social democracy as inevitable given the logic of the market and the power of its elites, absolving socialists from blame for their increasing managerialism and corruption, their involvement in undermining trade barriers and controls on finance required to control the market and their capitulation to neo-liberalism. Fotopoulos' ambiguous attitude towards the achievements of the social-democratic consensus and to the role of the workers' movements achieving this appears to be influenced by his characterization of all activity associated with the institutions of the state as part of the tradition of heteronomy, which, as such, has nothing to do with the tradition aspiring to autonomy. It is this dismissal of the role of the social democrats and overestimation of the power of the market elites that allows Fotopoulos to deny any other path to the future is conceivable than a continuation of neo-liberalism or the development of inclusive democracy consisting of confederations of communities organized as direct democracies.

The problematic nature of this characterization of the social-democratic consensus becomes clearer in the light of Castoriadis' more encompassing notion of autonomy, specifically in relation to the working class. As noted, for Castoriadis, the quest for emancipation and autonomy (originating in ancient Greece) died, but was reborn in the twelfth century and reached a new level of intensity between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. It then began to retreat in the second half of the twentieth century, leading to the conformism of postmodernism.[8] That is, although Castoriadis believed that the quest for autonomy might have emerged only twice in human history, he

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[8] Ibid., p.36ff.

included far more in the autonomous tradition than does Fotopoulos. This is evident in Castoriadis' characterization of the working class and its historical role. Prior to Marxism, Castoriadis claimed, the working class had 'brought itself through a process of self-constitution, taught itself to read and write and educated itself, and gave rise to a type of self-reliant individual who was confident in their own forces and his own judgement, who taught himself as much as he could, who thought for himself, and who never aban-doned critical reflection.'[9] He argued that 'the press organs and the self-organizing activity of English workers' which preceded Marx were 'the logical continuation of a demo-cratic movement.'[10] For Castoriadis it was this movement which was primarily responsible for what Fotopoulos refers to as the 'social-democratic consensus'. As he asserted, 'it was under pressure from the worker's struggle, which con-tinued nonstop, [that] capitalism was obliged to transform itself.'[11] '[C]apitalism changed and became somewhat tol-erable' Castoriadis proclaimed, 'only as a function of the economic, social, and political struggles that have marked the last two centuries.'[12]

Does the fact that the workers did not aspire to cre-ate political communities based on direct democracy but instead struggled to transform the institutions of the state mean that they ceased being part of the tradition aspiring to emancipation and autonomy? As we have seen, Castoriadis believed that this workers' movement was cap-tured by the capitalist imaginary which subordinates every-thing to the development of the forces of production: 'peo-ple as producers, and then as consumers, are to be made

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[9] Ibid., p.64.
[10] Ibid., p.61.
[11] Ibid., p.63.
[12] Ibid., p.68.

completely subordinate to it.'[13] And in Castordiadis' view it was primarily Marxism, particularly as it was reformulated by Lenin, which effected this capture, assimilating the capitalist imaginary into the workers' movement and reorienting it around issues of organization, technique and production, and upholding a notion of historical necessity 'capable of justifying everything in the name of ultimate salvation.'[14] As a consequence, Castoriadis argued, workers ceased being autonomous agents and became militant activists indoctrinated into the teachings of a gospel. What had emerged from the quest for autonomy was a new form of heteronomy in the guise of the quest for autonomy. But this is something different from being part of the tradition of heteronomy.

Clearly, Castoriadis' broader notion of autonomy could not justify Fotopoulos' division of the modern political world into two, totally separate traditions. Drawing a sharp line between those in the labour movement who founded the socialist and labour parties and attempted to gain control of and to transform the institutions of the nation state and those people who have sought to develop direct democracies obscures the complex relations between these two traditions. Among all those striving for emancipation as construed by Castoriadis there have been struggles, never entirely successful, with successes prone to corruption or attack and reversal, to overcome elites and for people to aspire to autonomy and to take control of their own destinies. The quest for autonomy in the broader sense is a project that can never be fully realized. Measures of autonomy can emerge from and then be corrupted or subverted by new forms of heteronomy. As Fotopoulos himself

[13] Ibid., p.61.
[14] Ibid., p.64.

acknowledges, even in the direct democracies of the past there were serious imperfections. Autonomy, broadly conceived, has never been completely achieved with representative democracy, but neither has it ever been completely achieved with forms of direct democracy. And just as Fotopoulos is proposing a new model to overcome the limitations of earlier forms of direct democracy, it is possible that social democrats, recognizing the failure of earlier or existing forms of social democracy, could propose a new, more democratic model to aspire to.

Inclusive Democracy Versus Social Democracy? Or, Inclusive Democracy and Social Democracy?

Still, the fact that Fotopoulos does not take into account the broader sense of Castoriadis' notion of autonomy does not mean that he is wrong, although given the time devoted by Castoriadis to this issue, it should at least be noted. Still, there is a valid point being made by Fotopoulos. The real problem with those aspiring to emancipation and autonomy within nation states is that apart from their capture by the capitalist imaginary, their aspirations are likely to be frustrated by the size of these societies. Their territories and populations are too big to achieve the more complete form of autonomy possible in the kind of municipal democracy proposed by Fotopoulos. That is, even when people aspire to greater autonomy in such large territories, they are likely to institute inferior forms of democracy (i.e., representative democracy, which Fotopoulos characterizes as a form of oligarchy) compared to those who aspire to democracy in smaller communities, and this must limit their capacity to be autonomous, particularly where the economy is concerned. It is notable that many of the transformations of working class activists described so well by

Castoriadis took place in countries where Marxism had little influence. An alternative explanation is provided by Robert Michels, that there is an iron law of oligarchy that overtakes all large-scale organizations, including those of radical political parties.[15] It was this, along with the corrupting effect of markets that could have reoriented the organizations developed by the working class away from the quest for autonomy to developing the means of production. Typically, oligarchs, to legitimate the power they have seized and to compensate those who have been rendered powerless, promise to provide those without power with more to consume. This tendency within all large-scale organizations, irrespective of whether they have been influenced by Marxist-Leninism, provides a justification for the form of inclusive democracy Fotopoulos is defending.

Does this mean that we can dismiss those who aspire to autonomy within the context of the nation state because the degree of democracy and autonomy realizable in municipalities is impossible, and because whatever autonomy is achieved will inevitably be destroyed by the iron law of oligarchy? This brings us to a different problem in Fotopoulos' work. While Fotopoulos' model for a democratically organized community encompassing the economy is radical, it is plausible so long as each community is conceived in isolation from its relation from other communities and societies. It is an inspiring model to strive for. Fotopoulos's proposals for how such communities could relate to each other in confederations, share necessary resources and organize to confront and defeat existing states, is far less convincing. This is a major problem when one thinks of small-scale communities in the past, including those in ancient Greece

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[15] Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy,* (Eden and Cedar Paul, Trans.), (New York: the Free Press, 1962).

and Renaissance Italy. These were perpetually in conflict with each other, and as a consequence, were able to be sub-jugated by larger, more powerful societies. This problem is accentuated in the present by the power of existing states. This is illustrated by the recent history of Argentina. After the collapse of the economy due to US and the IMF spon-sored neo-liberal economic policies, a major proportion of the population mobilized in 2001 and 2002, forcing the President to resign and developing forms of direct democ-racy to take over many of the functions of the market and the state.[16] The members of these democracies embraced autonomy as their basic principle and goal of political and economic action. However, after they abandoned any ef-fort to influence national elections, the discredited neo-liberals were able to regain control of the institutions of the state and then use these to attack the movement for democracy.[17] The whole movement for direct democracy is dissolving under pressure from these institutions. Given the incredible power and brutality of the new liberal fas-cist regimes led by USA, and considering realistically the prospects of reining in such rogue states, this defect in Fotopoulos' thinking could lead to the dismissal of all his proposals. To avoid this it is necessary to re-examine ef-forts by social democrats to transform the institutions of the nation-state to bring the economy under democratic control. Castoriadis' broader notion of autonomy facili-tates this.

    If we abandon the tendency to dismiss the working class efforts to create a social democracy as part of the tradi-tion of heteronomy—and therefore completely separate

[16] Graciela Monteagudo, 'The Argentine Autonomist Movement And The Elections', Znet.
[17] Naomi Klein, 'Election vs. Democracy in Argentina', *The Nation*, (May 14, 2003).

from the tradition of autonomy–new possibilities open up. Instead of seeing the struggle to reform social democracy and the development of inclusive democracy as rival programs, they could be seen as complementary projects separated more by the corrupt state of social democratic movements than by the social democratic project as such.[18] Fotopoulos is surely right in identifying a major problem in the social democratic consensus that it had led to a massive concentration of power, characterized by an increasing tendency of ruling elites, even where social democratic parties maintained power, to regard government as a technical problem of achieving economic growth. This has been associated with an increasing cynicism towards even the possibility of democracy in any form. It is this concentration of power that enabled the market elites to co-opt social democratic political parties and unions to implement neo-liberal policies and which has led to passivity and cynicism among the working class–which now includes people who used to be regarded as professionals: teachers, medical doctors, academics and civil servants. However, there is no reason apart from its present state of decadence why members of the social democratic movement should not abandon the capitalist imaginary, uphold autonomy as their main goal and then mobilize against global markets. In fact, as is evident from the electoral successes of social democratic parties in Sweden and Germany in 2002 after they affirmed their commitment to radical policies,

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[18] This does not mean that the commitment to democracy was central to the thinking of all social democrats. In Britain the democratic wing of the labour movement, the 'Guild Socialists', was overwhelmed by the authoritarian Fabians. See S.T. Glass, *The Responsible Society: The Ideas of Guild Socialism*, (London: Longmans, 1966). Social democrats with a strong commitment to democracy were more successful in Sweden.

that social democrats will have to abandon their previous technocratic orientation and rethink their attitudes to democracy while at the same time working to wrest economic power from international financial institutions and transnational corporations if they are to maintain or regain public support. Ultimately this will require of them that they rethink their attitudes towards economic growth. The failure of the German social democrats in this regard has paved the way for their demise.

With widespread decay of the trade union movement, which increasingly is becoming a business selling services to clients for a profit, such social democrats will have to develop a new base to support their efforts to recapture and transform the institutions of the state. One possible solution to all these problems, and in light of the massive problem of dealing with the power of transnational corporations and financial institutions to withdraw capital and with treaties entered into by governments crippling their ability to deal with these, perhaps the only possible solution, is for social democrats to work towards creating the kind of inclusive democracies proposed by Fotopoulos. Allied with such radical social democracy, the members of these democratic communities would then actively support these social democratic movements. The goal would not be to overthrow the state but to transform it into an institution for producing and sustaining the environment within which inclusive democracies could flourish while at the same time serving to mediate their relations to each other, to the rest of society and, collectively, to other societies. This might not involve an immediate replacement of the market for society as a whole, although it would involve a radical re-regulation of markets, particularly of trade and finance, and it could uphold as a long-term goal the replacement of the market completely by inclusive democracies. At the same time this would involve working

through such states to transform supranational organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations to bring them under more democratic control, wresting power from the technocrats while at the same time using these institutions to oppose the power of rogue states like USA and Britain and to control global finance and transnational corporations. Achieving this might only be possible by synthesizing radical social democracy and inclusive democracy.

Creativity and Agency in History

Presenting this possibility illuminates another problem generated by Fotopoulos' dualistic thinking, a dichotomy between subjective or creative aspects of history and objective or deterministic aspects of history. In opposing any form of evolutionary justification for the struggle for autonomy, Fotopoulos argues that autonomous forms of organization are creations breaking with past developments (p.336). Although Fotopoulos grants a more significant place to external constraints and objective conditions on choices for action than did Castoriadis, he still presents this as a choice between two possibilities: heteronomy or autonomy (p.338). This is a somewhat different notion of creativity and of its relationship to the past than that defended by Castoriadis, although Castoriadis is not entirely clear on this issue. To begin with, Castoriadis argued for a notion of emergence in claiming that something radically new came into existence with the quest for autonomy in Ancient Greece that generated democracy and philosophy, and with the rebirth of this quest at the end of the twelfth century.[19] That is, it was real creation and as such,

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[19] Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, p.14ff.

could not be deduced or explained from past conditions. However, creation in this sense cannot be equated with deliberate action or a choice, since before the emergence of autonomy people were bound by their roles and except in rare instances were virtually incapable of thinking beyond these.[20] In his characterization of autonomy, Castoriadis emphasized that creation must always be understood in relation to the situation involving other people within which individuals find themselves. As he put it, '[t]he subject in question is ... not the abstract moment of philosophical subjectivity; it is the actual subject traversed through and through by the world and by others.'[21] That is, instituting democracy is not simply a matter of people choosing to create a new form of autonomous society from what had been a heteronomous tradition. It is only in a society within which the tradition of autonomy survives to some extent despite the prevalence of heteronomy that people can actually choose to fight for democracy, and under these circumstances, we have to understand the tendencies operating in the present, on others and ourselves, from which, with imagination, we can create the future.

Fotopoulos' voluntarism where the possibility of creating direct democracies is concerned is accompanied by what appears to be an excessively deterministic understanding of the evolution of the market and the actions of its elites in recent history. This is associated with another ambiguity in Fotopoulos' work where allusions to the struggle between the market and society and a superb overview of the failures of the market and its theoretical defence[22] are obscured by simultaneously construing the advance of the

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[20] Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy,* p.146.
[21] Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society,* p.106.
[22] See in particular Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, pp. 248-250.

market as inexorable. The USA/UK model of deregulated markets is presented as the end to which all markets must evolve under pressure from the international market. Other models are relics of an earlier phase of development. Yet the USA/UK model sent Argentina bankrupt, almost destroyed Russia and crippled a number of other countries. Countries that defied this model and attempted to re-regulate the market such as Malaysia have been far more successful economically. With its neo-liberal policies, USA itself is losing its economic competitiveness. It is de-industrializing. It suffers from a growing national debt and relative decline in labour productivity. Airbus now outsells Boeing, and Japan has faster computers. USA's apparently low unemployment rate is due to the high proportion of its population in prison, or, working in a state of utter poverty. The massive concentration of wealth in USA is associated with the corruption of its political institutions and legal system and even of the economy itself. The shift by USA and its cronies from neo-liberalism to liberal fascism is a symptom of the economic crises they are confronting, crises that are evolving towards a global economic crisis.[23]

An alternative to Fotopoulos' opposition between creativity and a deterministic account of the evolution of the market is to recognize that evolutionary processes, including the evolution of social forms, are not deterministic and can allow for different directions to be taken and also that there can be radical emergence with creative imagination playing a central role in this. I believe that this provides a better grasp of the place of creativity and agency in history. From this perspective, however, it is only when there are

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[23] See Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble: The US in the World Economy*, (London: Verso, 2002) and Giovanni Arrighi, 'The Social and Political Economy of Global Turbulence', *New Left Review,* (March/April, 2003), pp.5-71.

major crises that radically new forms, natural or social, are likely to emerge, and it is only when there are pre-existing projects that choice becomes a major influence on out-comes. From the perspective of complexity theory, these are bifurcation points. Which social forms will emerge and, more importantly, survive, will depend to some extent upon the preparedness of their proponents (and nascent mem-bers) and how effectively they fight for their goals. There is no guarantee of a happy ending. The Great Depression pre-cipitated a crisis the outcome of which was the triumph of a weak form of the welfare state in USA, Nazism in Germany and social democracy in Sweden. It was the welfare state that came to dominate for the next thirty years until the far less severe crisis of the 1970s led to the rise and dominance of neo-liberalism. Yet this move to neo-liberalism was not inevitable, particularly in the more advanced social demo-cratic countries. Magnus Ryner has pointed out that the blue-trade union *Landsorganisationen* had promoted a policy of using union controlled pension funds to buy and take control of all major Swedish private companies and introducing industrial democracy, totally subordinating the market to society.[24] It was because the more timid so-cial democrats in government prevailed that the power of the working class and of Swedish society were undermined. So, neo-liberalism prevailed almost everywhere. But it is becoming increasingly clear, even to a billionaire financier like George Soros, that we are facing another major crisis.[25]

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[24] Magnus Ryner, *Capitalist Restructuring, Globalization and the Third Way: Lessons from the Swedish Model,* (London, Routledge, 2002) and 'Neoliberal Globalization and the Crisis of Swedish Social Democracy', *Economic and Industrial Democracy,* Vol. 20, (London: Sage, 1999), pp.39-79, esp. p.54.
[25] George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered*, (London: Little, Brown, 1998).

The collapse of the Russian and Argentine economies was just the beginning. A major global depression could open a whole new set of possibilities, ranging from a further development of the liberal fascism being pursued by USA and Australia and to some extent in Britain to efforts to create radically new forms of democracy. The Chavez government of Venezuela, cultivating direct democracy and using the power base generated by this to overcome the corruption of the institutions of State and to reclaim them for the nation, while simultaneously reviving the Bolivarian vision of a united South America to overcome its domination by North America, indicates what new paths could be pursued. A similar path is being pursued in Kerala, India by its communist government.[26] My contention is that a form of social democracy embracing radical decentralization of power and promoting and supporting inclusive democratic communities to address the causes of capitalism's downfall and the failures of past social democracies, is most likely to succeed against liberal fascism. It is in this context that the potential of the form of inclusive democracy proposed by Fotopoulos could be realized.

Conclusion

What are the implications of all this for Fotopoulos' analyses and proposals? To begin with, it is necessary to appreciate the importance of Fotopoulos' work. Confronting the collapse of communism, Castoriadis wrote:

"As it collapses, Marxism-Leninism seems to be burying beneath its ruins both the project of autonomy and politics itself. The active hate on the part of those, in the

[26] See Robin Hahnel, *Economic Justice and Democracy,* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p.280ff.

East, who have suffered under it leads them to reject any project other than the rapid adoption of the liberal-capitalist model. In the West, people's conviction that they live under the least bad regime possible will be reinforced, and this will hasten their sinking even further into irresponsibility, distraction, and withdrawal in the "private" sphere (now obviously less "private" than ever)."[27]

Castoriadis also predicted that a capitalism without conflict and strong internal opposition, a capitalism dealing only with lobbies and corporations, will not be the benign capitalism of the recent past. We can now see how prescient Castoriadis was. In this environment it is essential that new visions for the future be elaborated. Fotopoulos is one of the few thinkers seriously attempting to envisage an alternative future to the nightmare promised by the further development of neo-liberalism and liberal fascism. Even if the details of this vision need to be modified, Fotopoulos has provided a starting point for further efforts in this direction. My criticisms of Fotopoulos' work should in no way be seen as belittling his achievement. What I am suggesting are revisions that would make the proposals more relevant to the present and more likely to be taken up in the immediate future.

[27] Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, p. 68.

CAN DEMOCRACY SOLVE ALL PROBLEMS?[1]

SERGE LATOUCHE

ABSTRACT: This paper assesses the ID project as an original, provocative–in the positive sense of the word– and very ambitious endeavour, which constitutes a considerable contribution to the debate about democracy as a solution to the deep multidimensional crisis of globalised mankind. However, although one may sympathise with the overall aims of this project, doubts could be raised as regards the desirability of direct democracy and the ID project's complete rejection of representation, including, one might suppose, forms of improved representation, with recallable officers and direct participation in some cases. Last, but not least, one may raise strong reservations against any universalist project, even a radical or subversive one, both with regards to the possibility of detecting in them some residual smell of Western ethnocentrism and also with regards to their relevance to our egalitarian imaginary.

From the beginning, Takis Fotopoulos' book aims very high, intending "to propose a new liberatory project, not just as a new utopia but as perhaps the only way out of the crisis" (p. 11). This inclusive democracy project is "an effort to integrate society with polity, the economy, and Nature" (p. 9). In order to make wholly clear the originality of the author's work, it may be useful to reverse the exposing order by showing first the consistency of the project as laid out in the second part, before surveying its justifications given in the first part.

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[1] This essay by Serge Latouche is based on his article for the journal *Revue du MAUSS (*2 semestre 2003) and refers to the French edition of Fotopoulos' Inclusive Democracy *Vers une démocratie generale. Une démocratie directe, économique, écologique et sociale.* (Paris: Seuil,, 2001).

It means no less than the building of a new institutional framework securing an equal distribution of power. The author rightly starts from the fact that today "any talk about democracy which does not also refer to the question of economic power" is "hollow": "To talk about the equal sharing of political power, without conditioning it on the equal sharing of economic power, is at best meaningless and at worse deceptive" (p. 206). Therefore, "the objective of a new liberatory project should not merely be the abolition of capitalist property relations but of the market economy itself" (p. 23). Largely relying on Karl Polanyi, Takis Fotopoulos concludes that the reintegration of society with the economy is a necessity if an autonomous society is to be built. "The choice of autonomy implies that the institution of society is not based on any kind of irrationalism (faith in God, mystical beliefs, etc.), as well as on 'objective truths' about social evolution grounded on social or natural 'laws' " (p. 183).

"The main characteristic of the proposed model, which also differentiates it from socialist planning models, is that it explicitly presupposes a stateless, moneyless and marketless economy that precludes private accumulation of wealth and the institutionalisation of privileges for some sections of society, without having to rely on a mythical post-scarcity state of abundance, or having to sacrifice freedom of choice" (p. 209). Direct democracy could be seen as the solution to both economic and political contradictions. "The *demos* becomes the authentic unit of economic life" (p. 205). This inclusive democracy project was first expressed dramatically by May 1968 and is active, according to the author, in the antiglobalisation movement.

Finally, concurring with our own analysis, Takis Fotopoulos, more or less, comes to the idea that organizing the new society implies moving away from a 'growth

economy'(i.e. a society whose main aim is economic growth) to 'ungrowth' (i.e. a society that has not growth as an aim), to localism.

Growth ideology constitutes indeed, in his opinion, the dominant social paradigm, and in both the East and the West. "Although the growth economy is the offspring of the dynamic of the market economy, the two concepts should not be confused since it is possible to have a growth economy which is not also a market economy–notably the case of 'actually existing socialism'" (p. 39). Growth economy may be defined as the system of economic organisation that is geared, either "objectively" or deliberately, toward maximising economic growth. It is founded on the social imaginary signification, identified by Castoriadis, that "the unlimited growth of production and of the productive forces is *in fact* the central objective of human existence"[2], or the boundless spreading of "rational domination". "The growth economy has already created a growth society, the main characteristics of which are consumerism, privacy, alienation and the subsequent disintegration of social ties. The growth society, in turn, inexorably leads toward a 'non-society' " (p. 149). The critique of the growth economy and society is without any doubt the starting point of the author's project. "The central contradiction of the market economy today is the one arising from the fact that any effective control of the ecological implications of growth is incompatible with the requirements of competitiveness, which neoliberal globalisation process imposes" (p. 161). In order to side-track this contradiction, we have to get out of the economy. "The main issue today cannot be reduced to just a matter of changing our values, as some

[2] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1991, p. 184.

radical greens naively argue, or even condemning eco-
nomic growth per se. The crucial issue today is how we may
create a new society where institutionalised domination of
human being over human being and the consequent idea of
dominating nature are ruled out. The search for such a sys-
tem will lead us to the conclusion that it is not just growth
ideology, which has to be abandoned, but the market econ-
omy itself" (p. 85). "But the economy itself", I would say.

Ecological democracy will be established through "lo-
calism". Localism is first and foremost considered by the
author under its political dimension, while it is also viewed
as the solution to the economic contradictions. Inclusive
democracy implies a "confederation of *demoi*", i.e. little
homogeneous units of 30,000 inhabitants or so. This fig-
ure would allow, according to the author, the local satis-
faction of most basic needs. "Given the huge size of many
modern cities, this implies that many of them will have to
be broken up" in several demoi (p. 215). Notwithstanding
conventional wisdom, "economic viability is not deter-
mined exclusively or even decisively by size" (p. 215).
"The new political organisation could, for instance, take
the form of a confederation of autonomous groups (at re-
gional, national, continental and world levels) aiming at
the democratic transformation of their respective com-
munities" (p. 243). "Politics in this sense is not anymore
a technique for holding and exercising power but becomes
again the self-management of society by its members" (p.
15). Local initiative even constitutes a way out of global
deadlocks. "Contesting local elections gives the chance to
start changing society from below, which is the only demo-
cratic strategy, as against the statist approaches, which
aim to change society from above through the conquest of
state power, and the 'civil society' approaches, which do
not aim to a systemic change at all. It is because the demos
is the fundamental social and economic unit of a future

democratic society that we have to start from the local lev-
el to change society" (p. 241). Under these circumstances,
"the problem for emancipatory politics today is how all the
social groups which potentially form the basis of a new lib-
eratory subject would be united by a common worldview, a
common paradigm, which sees the ultimate cause of the
present multidimensional crisis in the existing structures
that secure the concentration of power at all levels, as
well as the corresponding value systems". So, "the vari-
ous social groups which form the new liberatory subject
could function as the catalyst for a new society that would
reintegrate society with polity, the economy and Nature"
(p. 244). The growing realization of global contradictions
raises up local initiatives setting out the process of change.
If we rightly understand the author, inclusive democracy
would result, then, from a dialectic between institutional
and human change. "In the last instance, it is *paedeia* that
may effectively condition democratic practice" (p. 196). A
new education will intend to shape a new man.

Clearly, the realization of such an ambitious project
cannot be the result of a reformist patching up. In fact,
"within the present internationalised market economy, no
controls to protect society and nature effectively from the
workings of the market, not even the type of controls in-
troduced by socialdemocratic governments in the past, are
feasible anymore" (p. 8). The building of the new society
implies, therefore, a radical break – hence the very long list
of criticisms, score settlements, ostracisms making up the
first part of the book, and justifying the project. To begin
with a re-reading of history, as, for instance, with respect
to the decline of national economies and social-democrat-
ic states: "The crisis of the early 1970s [...] was not mainly
due to the oil crisis but to the fact that the degree of inter-
nationalisation of the market economy achieved by then
was not compatible anymore with statism" (p. 41). The

social-democratic state protected society from the work-
ings of the market. Domestic demand accounted for 90
percent of economic growth. "Organised labour could press
successfully for wage rises that exceeded significantly the
increase in productivity" (p. 47). So, free trade was the best
means to "destroy the self-reliance of local economies and
effect their integration into the internationalised market
economy". "The fundamental reason for the historic failure
of socialist statism in both its versions lies in its attempt
to merge two incompatible elements: the 'growth' element,
which expressed the logic of the market economy, with the
social justice element, which expressed socialist ethics"
(p. 98). Growth implies a concentration of economic power.
So, the dilemma for the Left is "either to adopt the present
globalisation with some qualifications (as social-liberals
do) or reject it altogether and challenge the fundamental
institution that led to it in the first place: the system of the
market economy itself" (p. 78).

Basically, the failure of the Left can be explained in
terms of the absence of *real* democracy. Takis Fotopoulos
pursues here a type of Castoriadian critique of representa-
tive democracy : "The introduction of representative 'de-
mocracy' had nothing to do with the size of the population"
: it "was intended to act as a filter, i.e. as the very antithesis
of *isegoria,* which means *equality of speech* – a necessary re-
quirement of classical democracy" (p. 32). "The idea of the
modern state, according to John Dunn, quoted p. 174, was
invented precisely to repudiate the possible coherence of
democratic claims to rule, or even take genuinely political
action (...) Representative democracy is democracy made
safe for the modern state". Eventually, representative "de-
mocracy" is oligarchy, i.e., as in the Aristotelian tradition,
domination by the rich.

One of the preferred targets of the author is "postmod-
ernists" (in the context of the ideological debate in the

English-speaking world) and their illusory project of "radical democracy", which is "both a-historical and utopian in the negative sense of the word" (p. 14). Takis Fotopoulos sternly criticizes Habermas and Chantal Mouffe. Her radical democracy, notably, implies no break with "a negative conception of freedom and an individualistic conception of autonomy, which is assumed separate from collective autonomy" (p. 189). "Although one may accept the post-modernist view that history cannot be seen as a linear (Kant, et. al.) or dialectical (Hegel, Marx) process of Progress that embodies reason, this does not imply that we should assign equal value to all historical forms of social organisation: from classical Athens, the Swiss cantons and the Parisian Sections, to the present 'democratic' regimes. This type of general relativism, which is adopted by post-modernism, simply expresses the latter's abandonment of any critique of the institutionalised social reality and a general retreat to conformism, as Castoriadis rightly points out. Furthermore, adopting the post-modern rejection of universalism implies the abandonment of any idea of a liberatory project, as the project of autonomy/democracy is of course very much a 'universal' one" (p. 183).

Greens, antiglobalizers, new Keynesians, even, by the way, Castoriadis himself, do not escape criticism…"Despite the anti-growth rhetoric of mainstream green economists, as long as they take for granted the system of the market economy and its 'grow-or-die' dynamic, they indirectly adopt the growth economy itself" (p. 203). They indulge the fantasy of a "green techno-science", if not of a "green capitalism" (p. 117). The antiglobalisation movement is not an antisystemic movement, it may "resist", but its political platform remains reformist, it is unable to advance a systemic change. "The reformist Left on globalisation includes post-Marxists, social democrats and others in the broad Left (Pierre Bourdieu, Immanuel Wallerstein, Noam

Chomsky, Samir Amin, John Gray, Leo Panitch among them)"
(p. 67). They are willing to resist, but, unlike the "much
more realistic" social-liberals, they are doomed to power-
lessness. "A new Europe-wide Keynesianism is not feasible
either, unless it is combined with a self-reliant growth led
by a highly protected internal market economy. But, such a
solution is in direct contradiction to the system's logic and
dynamics" (p. 111).

Finally, "the public realm, contrary to the practice of
many supporters of the republican or democratic project
(Arendt, Castoriadis, Bookchin, et. al.) includes not just
the political realm, but any area of human activity where
decisions can be taken collectively and democratically" (p.
190).

After reading this complex and sometimes difficult work,
what is to be thought of its author's great design? Although I
am viewing myself, more or less, as a heir of Castoriadis, and
developing ideas fairly close to those of Takis Fotopoulos, I
confess this provocative book, in the positive sense of the
word, puzzled me on several respects. In spite of my great
sympathy for direct democracy, I am not convinced the de-
sire for it is so widely shared (and surely not universally),
nor it is in my view a panacea. Aristotle noted that "as for
the poor, they are ready to keep quiet, even when excluded
from office, provided they are not subjected to violence or
to confiscation of their property"[3]. "For, while the masses
take no great offence of being excluded from office, (on
the contrary, they may even be glad of this opportunity to
look after their private affairs)"[4]. In Athens, 9 citizens out
of 10 were more often than not absent from the debates,
and, in spite of the fees paid for being there, public officers

[3] Aristotle, *Politics*, IV, 13, 1297 b 5.
[4] ibid. V, 8, 1308 b 30.

had a lot of trouble dragging the crowd from agora to ec-
clesia. So, did the Athenian people favour an antidemo-
cratic system? Surely not. We probably have to agree with
Tocqueville when he sees "the principle of popular sover-
eignty at the bottom of all governments and hidden under
the less freedom-prone institutions"[5]. In this context, rad-
ical rejection of representative "democracy" is somewhat
excessive. It is now part of our tradition, whether we like
it or not. And it isn't necessarily the embodiment of evil.
There is indeed some refreshing ingenuousness in the au-
thor's assertions: "Once citizens have tasted a real democ-
racy, no amount of physical or economic violence will be
enough to persuade them to return to pseudo-democratic
forms of organisation" (p. 242). Athens' experiment, with
decisions finally taken by less than 400 out of 200,000 in-
habitants of classical Attica, doesn't confirm this. All in all,
is representation by elected officers less democratic than
lazily or carelessly giving up the city's affairs to notabili-
ties and demagogues? In this respect, it must be admitted
that Paul Veyne's analysis[6], although disillusioned, is fairly
convincing. Improved representation, with recallable of-
ficers and direct participation in some cases (e.g. the par-
ticipative budget in Porto Alegre), may constitute a satis-
factory compromise. The key issue of the equal distribution
of economic power will indeed remain unsolved, but it is
somewhat illusory to envision solving it at a stroke with
the magic wand of direct democracy. Lastly, I distrust any
universalist project, even a radical or subversive one: I am
prone to detect in it some residual smell of Western ethno-
centrism. I already disagreed with Castoriadis about this.
Reading Takis Fotopoulos strengthens my doubts. As Louis

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[5] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Souvenirs*, 1942 edition, p. 220.
[6] Paul Veyne, *Le Pain et le Cirque* (Paris: Seuil, 1976).

Dumont perfectly showed, the holistic imaginary of most human societies, if not unacquainted with some requirement of due consideration for dignity of individuals and attention to their will, is largely irrelevant to our egalitarian imaginary.

On the whole, we have here an invigorating essay, which constitutes a considerable contribution to the debate about democracy as a solution to the deep multidimensional crisis (political, economic, social, cultural) of globalized mankind.

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY AND LEFT LIBERTARIANISM[1]

MICHAEL LEVIN

ABSTRACT: Towards an Inclusive Democracy was published during a decade of widespread western self-congratulation. Communism had collapsed as a global power and liberal democracy enjoyed a sense of triumph. Fotopoulos shows that this self-satisfaction is unjustified. For him the promise of democracy is still to be met. This article sympathises with his aspirations but rejects the notion that the Greek definition of democracy can be taken as the trans-historical true one. It also uses historical examples from the left to warn that the transition to Inclusive Democracy is likely to be even more difficult than the book suggests.

$\mathcal{D}$o we not all take democracy seriously? It is, after all, the badge we pin on ourselves, the status symbol that we take to elevate our country above others that don't manage it so well. And the last decades have been a successful time for democracy. We have witnessed the fall of communism, the defeat of apartheid and the end of the military régimes in South America. The keystatement for the initial phase of self-congratulation was Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*.[2]

Takis Fotopoulos's very first sentence puts Fukuyama in his place: "The collapse of 'actually existing socialism' does not reflect the 'triumph of capitalism', as celebrated

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[1] A much shorter version of this article was first published in the journal *Anarchist Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (October 1997) and in an expanded version in *Democracy & Nature, Vol.5, No.2 (July 1999)*.

[2] F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Harmondsworth, 1992).

by its ideologues."(ix) However, the democracy that "we" celebrate can more precisely be designated as liberal democracy, that is, democracy within a capitalist framework. Here, with one person one vote, we are all equal on our occasional visits to the polling-booth but in no other respect.

To defenders of liberal democracy this is adequate. Hayek was keen to point out that democracy refers only to a type of government and so has no application to other organisations. This is in contrast to the designation given by Alexis de Tocqueville just over a century and a half ago. For Tocqueville political democracy was merely one aspect of a wider phenomenon. Democracy as a whole was the levelling process that had, over centuries, worn down the hierarchical aristocratic gradations so enjoyed by his own forebears. Tocqueville described this process as inevitable, yet simultaneously warned of the emergence of an aristocracy of manufacturers, a class that might acquire powers equal to those of the displaced landed aristocracy but was unlikely to match their sense of social responsibility. Do we not, in this sub-theme, find a presentiment of our current situation?

What we have reached might be described as the paradox of liberal democracy – that the parts are in contradiction, for how can we be equal politically when we are so unequal economically? Consider the case of the current British Labour government, swept to power in 1997 by a wave of popular enthusiasm. Do those of you who voted for it have the same degree of influence on it as Bernie Ecclestone of Formula One fame, or of Rupert Murdoch, the Australian-American newspaper magnate? These cases remind one of James Mill's dictum "that the business of gov-

ernment is properly the business of the rich; and that they will always obtain it, either by bad means, or good."[3]

Of course, it was precisely this situation that socialism emerged to overcome. However, to cut a long story short, the current tendency is to regard socialism as discredited. Its communist variant has fallen in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Its remaining outposts in China and East Asia are unlikely to be extended. The notion that communism might introduce or deepen democracy proved an illusion of their initial phase of power. The Leninist idea of the soviet as a higher form of democracy disintegrated into the Stalinist one-party state.

Western Social Democracy, however, never sought to challenge parliamentary democracy. When in power, the rights of other parties and the freedoms of association and of the press were never threatened. Social Democracy has to its credit a significant democratic achievement for through its impetus the class disqualification to political participation was overcome and, in its best phase, it sought to obtain both full employment and adequate welfare provision.

However, beyond that, the democratic thrust of Social Democracy was thwarted, both by its Fabian managerialism and by the society's capitalist framework. Throughout the 1970s those on the left subjected social democracy to a withering critique[4] that may, partially and ironically, have led to a loss of self-confidence that, in combination with other factors, facilitated its downfall and replacement by the New Right. However, as Bob Dylan so memorably put it "the wheel's still in spin" and Social Democracy re-emerged

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[3] From J. Mill, 'The Ballot' (1830), in T. Ball (Ed.), *James Mill. Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 265.
[4] See, for example, David Coates, *The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism* (London, 1975).

in the late 1990s into a brief period of unparalleled dominance in European governments. However, although it still bears the label, it was not the Social Democracy that we knew before. Fotopoulos reminds us that as "these parties (...) bear almost no relation at all to the traditional social-democratic parties of the 1950-75 period, they should more accurately be called 'social liberal' rather than social-democratic parties" (p.86).

Social Democracy's opportunity has come both through a withdrawal of support from the full New Right doctrine and from the fact that it can no longer be feared as an agent of Soviet power. However, liberation from that context has been countered by at least two disadvantages. Firstly, the reduced preponderance of the industrial working class has increased Social Democracy's need to appeal to the middle classes. Secondly, the power of the state has been reduced by further globalization and so governments now have less control of economic management.

This is the logical starting-point of Fotopoulos's book. In one sense it belongs to the genre of pre-Thatcherite critiques of Social Democracy in that it seeks to analyse its failings and find a way of overcoming them. It is, then, an updating of that debate for it commences with a thorough analysis of the significantly changed current situation. Its point of continuity with earlier debate is that it takes the bold and currently unpopular view that the socialist project is still a plausible one. Fotopoulos, then, is not among those on the left who have collapsed into the individualist paradise of post-modernism. Nor is he among those who call on Social Democracy to return to its traditional path. "Social democracy (...) is dead", he tells us in the book's very first paragraph (ix. Also see pp.74, 85-100, 102). It has been undermined by globalization and the consequent decline of the state, which was the prime site of Social Democratic activity (see pp. 29, 32, 42). At one

time the United States of America was considered excep-
tional amongst modern industrial societies in that the land
without socialism was simultaneously, or one might say
consequently, the land with poor welfare provision, weak
trade unions and a particularly deep divide between rich
and poor. What should have been a warning to other coun-
tries seems instead to have become a model. Fotopoulos
notes "the 'Americanization' of the political process all
over the advanced capitalist world" (p. 39 and see p. 95).
We thus join the USA in, if not "The End of Ideology", then
the end of ideological competition. If the loss of old Social
Democracy and the decline of state welfarism produces,
among other things, a narrowing of the political spectrum,
then we simultaneously impoverish both the needy and our
liberal democratic system. Old Social Democracy, as should
now be clear, is no longer a plausible option. It emerged at
a time when ecological concerns had no impact. However
much might divide capitalism from socialism, both shared
a "growth ideology" as their "ultimate ideological founda-
tion" (p. 66). Furthermore, global capital now dominates
global labour. The state is caught in the middle between
international economic power on the one side and, on the
other, the real communities where people live and work.
Fotopoulos's project is to recommend that the latter re-
claim the power that has been usurped by the former.

The project

Fukuyama thought that we were there. For him there was
no further project. This is it. Not, as sometimes assumed,
that there would be no further changes, but rather that
they would all be within the mind-set of liberal democ-
racy, which apparently fulfills mankind's psychological
needs. Fukuyama, of course, was writing in the immediate

aftermath of the fall of communism and his book bears wit-
ness to the widespread complacency of that phase. Since
then the dominant mood has altered. The New World Order
seems less under control than its proponents imagined.
Parts of the globe have been resistant to American po-
litical hegemony (and a war on this issue is underway as I
write) and the international economic structure has suf-
fered embarrassing instabilities. An influential American
statement of this phase is the far less optimistic *The Clash
of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order* by Samuel
P. Huntington[5]. In Britain recently one of the most pub-
licized accounts of the current situation has been John
Gray's *False Dawn. The Delusions of Global Capitalism*.[6] Gray
provides a powerful account of the depredations of glo-
bal capitalism, yet his solution seems too slight. For him
capitalism remains but should be controlled and stabilized
by better regulation. This is largely a recommendation to
carry on as before but within a more safeguarded structure.
For Fotopoulos carrying on as before is what got us where
we are now. It would involve a failure to learn from previ-
ous errors. Only a new structure of life based on different
principles would meet the needs of justice and survival. So,
where Gray looks for global regulation, Fotopoulos propos-
es the local community as the prime agency of a renewed
and deepened democracy.

For Fotopoulos, as we shall see, a whole change of di-
rection is necessary. Gray's answer, difficult though it
might be to achieve, seems unlikely to remedy the condi-
tion it describes, particularly as he wants it based on the
support of the United States of America. As he tells us:

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[5] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of
World Order* (London, 1998) (First published 1996).
[6] John Gray, *False Dawn. The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (London:
Granta, 2002) (First published in 1998).

"A vital condition of reform of the international economy is that it be supported by the world's single most important power. Without active and continuing American endorsement there can be no workable institutions of global governance."[7]

Fotopoulos, in contrast, doesn't want us to carry on with a modified version of what we had before; indeed, he doesn't think it possible to do so. Fundamental change is necessary, but precisely for that reason it is bound to be much harder to achieve. Fotopoulos could have set himself a more limited, easier and less controversial task; that of delineating our current condition. That would have been a service in itself and the part of the book that deals with it (Part 1) is clear and enlightening. However, our author has a political project, that of fulfilling the democratic ideal that the West nominally professes.

For Fotopoulos "today's 'politics' and 'democracy' represent a flagrant distortion of the real meaning of these terms" (p. 54 and see pp. 175-6). He wants a return to the ancient Greek understanding of the concept, which is fair enough in the sense that the word does derive from them, though he does not sufficiently integrate his awareness that the Greeks left out of their democracy those not qualifying for citizenship, "women, slaves, immigrants". (p. 185) He takes to task A. H. Birch, the author of a recent textbook on the subject, who, as he realises, is representative of a wide body of current opinion. For most academics in the social sciences, your reviewer included, "democracy" is regarded as an "essentially contested concept", whose meaning has altered over time, often according to the wider political purposes being proposed.

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[7] Ibid., p. 200. For a contrary view, see W. Hutton, *The World We're In* (London, 2002).

Greek democracy was a form of rule by the largest class of citizens in a society based on slavery. Since then direct democracy of the citizens has, after a very long interval in which democracy in all its possible forms was totally denigrated, given way to modern representative democracy, with distinct variations between western liberal democracy, third world democracy and even the claims once made by Soviet democracy.[8] The western orthodoxy is that parliamentary liberal democracy is the real thing and that those countries that possess it can enjoy the satisfaction of having fulfilled the democratic ideal. However, Fotopoulos wants a genuine democracy that extends beyond equal voting rights and into the economic sphere. This is a more extended notion of democracy than currently prevails, but one cannot say precisely which definition is right and which is wrong. The contest over the use of political and social words is in itself a political one and so Fotopoulos' claim to his sense of the term cannot be accepted as replacing a wrong usage by a right one but merely of stipulating the sense that he will use and the claims that can be made on its behalf.[9] This approach has been strongly challenged in his response to the original version of this review.[10] Fotopoulos asserts that his "criterion is derived from the Greek etymology of the word" and on that basis concludes "that any definition that does not involve *direct* self-government of the people is not a proper definition". He seems to regard all the current understandings of the term as an "abuse of the word."[11] On this point I would reply

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[8] See C. B. Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy* (Oxford, 1966).
[9] See M. Cranston, *Freedom. A New Analysis* (London, 1954), ch. 4 for the distinction between stipulative and lexicographical definitions.
[10] See T. Fotopoulos, "A Response to Michael Levin's Review Article", *Democracy and Nature*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 1999), pp. 395-406.
[11] Fotopoulos, "Response", pp. 397, 398.

that the English language is full of words whose current meanings have departed from their etymology. Anyone now using current concepts in accord with their supposed original meaning would be incomprehensible to almost everyone else. Consequently, in order to communicate effectively, it is advisable to use words in accord with current usage. Words have their own histories, which are, like all histories, chronologies of change.[12] Here we have a clear clash of approaches, but it is worth stating that this disagreement concerns the philosophy of language rather than the analysis of current politics and society. In conclusion on this issue, I am in full agreement with Fotopoulos when he notes that the contestability of the concept "is not the real issue. The real issue is which is our primary choice of social paradigm."[13]

It should be noted that Fotopoulos's definition of democracy is not fully identical with the ancient Greek one. He shares their basic assumption of the "incompatibility of democracy with any form of concentration of power" and, on that basis, seeks "a *new* conception of inclusive democracy" (p. 171, emphasis added). This involves "the extension of the classical conception of democracy to the social, economic and ecological realms" (p. 176), a demand which, interestingly, had already been made by Pericles (see p. 192). To note that Fotopoulos wants democracy extended should not be taken to imply that he finds it satisfactory in the spheres where it now operates. He seems to have scant regard for liberal democracy. In his "Response" to me, he declared it "not difficult to show (...) that liberal democracy does not secure human liberation and it is therefore

[12] See R. Williams, *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Glasgow, 1976).
[13] Fotopoulos, "Response", p. 398.

'wrong'"[14]. This is a rather summary dismissal. I would pre-
fer to say that, as against its predecessors, feudalism and
absolute monarchy, liberal democracy represented a major
step in a liberatory direction. Indeed, there are vast por-
tions of the globe where it would still do so. This, however,
is not Fotopoulos's prime concern. He, rightly, wants to
move onward from where we are now. The core of his re-
jection of liberal democracy is expressed in his quotation
from Bhikhu Parekh:

> "Representatives were to be elected by the people, but
> once elected they were to remain free to manage public
> affairs as they saw fit. This highly effective way of insu-
> lating the government against the full impact of universal
> franchise lies at the heart of liberal democracy. Strictly
> speaking liberal democracy is not representative democ-
> racy but representative government (p. 184)."[15]

For this reason, even under liberal democracy the po-
litical structure is as élite dominated as the economic one
(see p. 135). Consequently there is apathy and low turnout,
especially among the poor (see p. 171).

In outlining his model of inclusive democracy Fotopoulos
combines and builds on the lessons of ancient Greek de-
mocracy and the radical critiques of Murray Bookchin and
Cornelius Castoriadis. He also works through the radical
democratic proposals of Norbert Bobbio, Jürgen Habermas,
Chantal Mouffe, Paul Hirst, David Miller and David Held.
Fotopolous points out that economic democracy is neces-
sary but not sufficient. Democracy must also extend into
the social and the ecological realm; a democracy that

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[14] Fotopoulos, "Response", p. 399.
[15]. It is worth drawing attention to the full article. See B. Parekh,
"The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy" in D. Held (Ed.),
Prospects for Democracy (Oxford, 1992).

centres not so much on the workplace as on the community as a whole. In his plan there are "no institutionalized political *structures* embodying unequal power relations" for "the delegation is assigned, on principle, by *lot* [emphasis added], on a rotation basis, and it is always recallable by the citizen body" (p. 207).

This idea of selection by lot rather than election is, of course, historically prior to selection by election and is, again, part of the model of ancient Greek democracy. It is in many ways a surprise to see it resurrected in modern (or post-modern?) times. However, Fotopoulos is here not alone amongst current thinkers. Professor Bernard Manin has recently outlined the contrasts between ancient and modern democracy. Manin compared selection by lot with election by representation. He pointed out that lot is in many ways more democratic. "Pre-modern republicans valued above all (...) the possibility of holding office."[16] Lot gave them all an equal chance. Now with representative government we are all equal as choosers but have quite unequal chances to be chosen. Just compare the social composition of parliament with that of the society as a whole to realise how over-represented lawyers and teachers, and under-represented women and the working class, are. Thus, though our age congratulates itself on its democratic ethos, it actually has a narrower concept of citizenship than did the republicans of pre-modern times.[17] This rejection of a democracy of the chosen, rather than of

[16] *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 135. See also the discussion on "Election by lot", in B. Barber, *Strong Democracy. Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley, CA, 1984), pp. 290-3. Barber's book can be recommended as sharing the spirit of that by Fotopoulos, though it lacks the economic basis.
[17] Compare also Q. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998).

the choosers, is not merely unlamented; it is now scarcely noticed although the idea of selection by lot lasted as a matter of serious concern for far longer than commonly assumed, through to Harrington, Montesquieu and Rousseau. However, powerful élites preferred election, not just because it was a means of adapting democracy to large countries, but rather because it served to filter the democratic input. Thus a political form now regarded as the essence of democracy was actually introduced to counter it. Manin also deals with how western parliaments shook off the idea of "imperative mandates" (i.e. binding instructions from the electorate to their representatives). The ideological ploy here, as in a famous speech from Edmund Burke, was to claim ultimate responsibility to the nation as a whole rather than to the constituency in particular.

Fotopoulos rejects what he calls the "myth of the 'experts'" (p. 207) and imagines that a modern industrial state can operate without them and that even economic decisions can be "taken by the citizen body collectively and without representation" (p. 211). Concerning this question it might be helpful to recall the experiences of three twentieth-century thinkers, all of whom claimed to wish democracy well. In 1911 Robert Michels produced what has become a classic of Political Sociology, *Political Parties*, revealingly sub-titled *A Sociological Examination of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Here, to be cryptic, he concluded that organisation produces oligarchy. Any organisation pursuing particular ends would elevate adminstrators who gain or claim expertise in their particular niche, and so become indispensable to the organisation. In that way they become separated from the mass they were originally meant to serve and so develop an interest apart and different from them. Secondly, we can turn to Lenin who, in *State and Revolution*, foresaw political representation in the manner suggested by the

1871 Paris Commune, that is, without parliamentarism "as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies."[18] The combination of proletarian rule and modern scientific developments was assumed to facilitate the gradual withering away of the state through the performance of necessary administrative tasks devolving to the community as a whole. A few months later Lenin abandoned *State and Revolution* for the tasks of actual revolution. He soon found that economic understanding and administrative ability were less widespread than he had assumed. Large sections of the Czarist bureaucracy had to be retained although the attempt was made to control them through a system of "workers' and peasants' inspectors".

Let's leave backward Russia and move forward to the United States of the 1960s and 1970s. Theodor Roszak was one of the spokesmen of the counter-culture in that radical phase. In *Where the Wasteland Ends* he pondered the intellectual demands of contemporary political involvement:

"Nothing is any longer simply and straightforwardly accessible to the layman. Everything – economics, foreign policy, war and peace, city planning, education, environmental design, business administration, human psychology – now requires the benefit of professional training to be comprehensible (…) Does our democracy not continue to be a spectator sport in which the general public chooses up sides among contending groups of experts, looking on stupidly as the specialists exchange the facts and figures, debate the esoteric details, challenge

[18] *Selected Works* (London, 1950), 2 volumes, Vol. 2, p. 173.

one another's statistics, and question one another's prognostications?"[19]

All of this should serve as a warning to later opponents of hierarchy, but Fotopoulos does not seem to regard this warning as appropriate. In his "Response" to my points he regrets the extent to which I rely "on generalisations derived from sociological or historical studies" and declares that "any attempt to generalise about the relationship of organisation to oligarchy, which emanates from present experience, is irrelevant."[20] As I see it, present and past experience is relevant and important, because it is all we have to go on. My historical examples were intended as reminders that egalitarian projects have been attempted before and that there is much to learn from them. If I generalised it was simply because, whereas he had written a full-length book, I was merely contributing a review article. I am very definitely not saying that the attempt at reform should be abandoned, but rather that we should be aware of what we are up against, given the uneven distribution of intelligence, aptitude, ambition and position.

The ambitious nature of Fotopoulos's project extends to "the workplace, the household, the educational institution and indeed any economic or cultural institution which constitutes an element of this realm" (pp. 211-2). The proposed confederation of communities would be stateless and, in the economic sphere, would dispense with both money and the market. This is what Marx and Lenin also wanted, but, in contrast to them, Fotopoulos assumes that scarcity will continue. He rejects the Marxist notion that there are material pre-conditions for inclusive democracy.

[19] T. Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends. Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society* (London, 1973), pp. 50-55.
[20] Fotopoulos, "Response", pp. 399, 400.

In an implicit farewell to the Euro, money is replaced by vouchers of either a basic or non-basic designation. Each community would be fairly self-reliant and would collectively decide what tasks should be done and how work should be distributed and remunerated.

This confederal, inclusive democracy is only outlined in very general terms. We have no precise blueprint for the new order, but only the principles and mentality required. One can have two contradictory responses to this. On the one hand it seems slightly inadequate. If we are to replace our present order we need a closer vision of what we are to put in its place. If, on the other hand, we engage in detailed planning, as did Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon and other nineteenth-century radicals, we are open to ridicule in the way that they were, and also to charges of authoritarian élitism in that we try to pre-empt decisions that should be taken democratically at the time by the communities involved.

Problems of transition

Having a plan or a vision is one thing. Outlining the means of implementing it is quite another. The policy of transition is usually the weakest part of projects for social reform, for the simple reason that it is the hardest one. In the words of Machiavelli, "there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things."[21] It was precisely on this issue that Marx and Engels ridiculed the thinkers they chose to term "Utopian Socialists." Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon and others of their kind were accused of naivety in believing that transformation required no

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[21] N. Machiavelli, *The Prince* (New York, 1952), p. 49.

socio-economic pre-conditions and that prejudice would fall before rational persuasion. Marx and Engels tried to improve upon their "utopian" predecessors by insisting that history had a definite logic of development. No new order could emerge before its predecessor had laid down the necessary socio-economic basis. Furthermore, each transition required a plausible social agency; a class that had to have both the will to carry out a revolution and the key location in the production process that provided the necessary power. On all these counts they judged the modern proletariat as becoming willing and able to replace capitalism with communism.

We can now say that even with their thorough consideration of the necessary means of transformation, Marx and Engels got it wrong, and for the following reasons:

1. That capitalism replaced feudalism throughout Europe did not imply that communism was bound to replace it. The analogy did not work.
2. Capitalism had instabilities, as Marx and Engels were pleased to point out, but they were not fatal to it.
3. The most developed capitalist industrial states were not those in which the system was overthrown in the name of Marxism.
4. The working class did not come to form overwhelming majorities in the way that Marx and Engels expected nor, even more detrimental to the project, did they develop the requisite class consciousness.

With that thorough but flawed analysis in mind, let us ask on what basis Fotopoulos thinks that he has found a way forward.

First, Fotopoulos regards the *present order as unsustainable*. "Old politics is doomed" (p. 276). In the era of globalization even the democratic states cannot meet the

demands that their electorate make. There is a "huge 'objective' crisis" in "that the present economic system cannot meet even the basic needs of at least one-fifth of the world's population" (p. 143). Since the book was written nothing has occurred to upset that analysis. We have seen the collapse of some of the Asian' "tiger" economies and witnessed the loss of faith suffered by international financier George Soros. In *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* he declared that 'market fundamentalism' might be "a greater threat to open society than totalitarian government today."[22]

For Fotopoulos the opportunity of transformation occurs because the system is in crisis. However, we must note that a crisis does not always lead to a desirable solution. Russia could be said to have been in crisis a few times during the 1990s but it did not lead to an obviously favourable outcome.[23] Nor were their crises unprecedented. Russia was in crisis in 1917. A re-reading of *State and Revolution* will remind us that what Lenin planned was a higher form of democracy in which the centralised state would wither away, class distinctions would disappear and all would live cooperatively in equality and harmony; instead of which Russia got Stalin and the gulag. Fotopoulos himself notes that all forms of socialism "failed to change the world, at least in accordance with their proclaimed declarations and expectations" (p. 74). This, obviously, is a warning to all who attempt to change the world, not that they should despair but merely be soberly aware of what they are up against.

One of Marxism's disadvantages was that communists

[22] Quoted in George Soros and Jeff Madrick, "The International Crisis: An Interview", *The New York Review of Books* (January 14, 1999), p. 36.
[23] Ibid., p. 40.

presumed to know the "real will" of the proletariat and so underestimated the importance of their actual outlook and beliefs. Fotopoulos clearly does not repeat this error. He acknowledges that "the world market economy is not widely questioned" (p. 143) and, as a second basis for reform, sees a big *educational task* as a pre-requisite. He mentions the need for "a new moral code" (p. 233) in which the right "community spirit" (p. 297) prevails. Not for the first time the Greek tradition shows the way. "A crucial role in the education of citizens is played by *paedeia*. *Paedeia* is not just education but character development and a well-rounded education in knowledge and skills, i.e. the education of the individual citizen which can only give valuable, substantive content to the public space" (p. 209).

Fotopoulos wants "the development of a similar mass consciousness about the failure of 'actually existing capitalism' to the one that led to the collapse of 'actually existing socialism'" (p. 165). The problem here is that the collapse of socialism occurred in the context of a real alternative. Of course, opposition in Eastern Europe was not only anti-communist. It included nationalism, anti-imperialism, anti-atheism as well as anti-Stalinism. Also, horrific and bizarre though it might sound, Margaret Thatcher was one of the most popular names in Eastern Europe during the 1980s[24]. East Europeans had a gilded image of the West as a real alternative, not that far away, and visible in its self-presentation on film and television screens. Nothing so visible now exists as an alternative to prevailing capitalism.

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[24] Isaiah Berlin once asked Andre Sakharov: "'Who are the people you most admire in the West?' He and his wife both said 'No difficulty about that,–Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher'." From "Isaiah Berlin. Between Philosophy and the History of Ideas. A Conversation with Steven Lukes", Berlin Archive, Wolfson College, p. 59.

Fotopoulos notes that a "power base is needed to destroy power" (p. 277). For this reason, as we have noted, Marx chose the large and strategically located industrial proletariat as his agency of transformation. Herbert Marcuse was one of those within the Marxist tradition who sought an alternative to a working class clearly not sufficiently willing to perform its scripted task. For Fotopoulos the third basis of transformation is the core agency of radicals, greens, libertarians, and feminists, in short the members of what are called the "new social movements". They are to provide a base of local activism from which a majority might eventually grow. In time Fotopoulos believes that inclusive democracy might appeal "to all those alienated by the present statecraft which passes as 'politics'; workers who are alienated by the hierarchical structures at the workplace; women who are alienated by the hierarchical structures both at home and the workplace; ethnic or racial minorities who are alienated by a discriminatory 'statist' democracy, and so on" (pp. 286-7).

In direct contradiction to normal current tendencies this new movement will contest local elections but not national ones. Thus they will fortify the sense of local community and simultaneously hope to diminish the role and power of the state. What should occur is "the gradual involvement of increasing numbers of people in a new kind of politics, and the parallel shifting of economic resources (labour, capital, land) away from the market economy" (p. 282).

Once again we can say that we have been here before. At the demise of communism in East Germany some of the category of people that Fotopoulos favours were at the forefront of opposition: radical democrats, democratic socialists, and environmentalists. Their moment came and went. They were swept aside by those with more economic power.

This brings us to the issue of the opposition that any

radical proposals are bound to produce. The "utopian so-
cialists" gave scant attention to this theme. To an extent
they thought that appeals to superior rationality would be
enough. Otherwise, for them the problem was reduced to
the extent that they planned only small communities of be-
lievers and so did not challenge the might of the prevailing
political and economic order. For Marx and Engels opposi-
tion was sociologically determined. Those who were to be
dispossessed, those who had an interest in the prevailing
order, would do all in their power to resist, and that was
precisely why only a revolution could bring about the re-
quired changes.

It is a measure of the realism with which Fotopoulos
examines this question that he is clearly aware of the
opposition his proposals will produce. He has, after all,
declared war on "statism and the market economy'" (p.
287), threatened the "penalization of anti-ecological ac-
tivities" (p. 291) and declared that hierarchical economic
structures will be "eliminated" (p. 242). The Inclusive
Democracy movement takes on might opponents and one
wonders how a policy of statelessness will find the means
of controlling them. We have seen in the United Kingdom
the kind of scurrilous press campaigns that over the years
have been waged against the likes of Michael Foot, Tony
Benn, Arthur Scargill and Ken Livingstone. On this basis we
can begin to imagine the media backlash that would lam-
poon and vilify the Inclusive Democracy movement should
it begin to make serious inroads into popular beliefs. What,
for example, would be the reaction to the attempt to "ex-
propriate" such "privately owned big enterprises" (p. 298)
as MacDonalds, Coca-Cola and Shell? And how would the
state react to the gradual taking over of its fiscal powers?
(See p. 299). I found nothing in this book on the conse-
quences of breaching our international obligations. Would,
for example, ecologically inclined communities still be

prepared to allow 40 ton lorries along their streets? If not, we would have broken European Union regulations. Even if the Inclusive Democracy movement is able to "eventually capture the imagination of the majority of the population" (p. 284) and achieve sanity in one country, how would the insane world react? Insanely but powerfully, I expect, as the United States once did against Allende's Chile. Fotopoulos is aware of the difficulty, and in a crucial passage notes that:

> "at some stage, the ruling elites and their supporters (who will surely object to the idea of their privileges being gradually eroded) after they have exhausted subtler means of control (mass media, economic violence, etc.), may be tempted to use physical violence to protect their privileges, as they have always done in the past. But, by then, an alternative social paradigm will have become hegemonic and the break in the socialization process (…) will have occurred (p. 285)."

Thus where Fotopoulos imagines an intervening "period of tension" (p. 282), I would envisage civil war.

Does that mean, then, that nothing will happen; that society is frozen into its current structures? One thing that is clear about history is that it moves. The Roman Empire fell, as did apartheid and the British and the Communist empires. All must at one time have appeared solid and impregnable. Henry Miller, no less, was once bold enough to suggest that even the American empire would one day crumble into dust.[25] Even George Soros, that brilliant arch-manipulator of global markets regards the whole system as unstable. Indeed, as compared with the Fukuyama-led

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[25] "Everything American will disappear one day, more completely than that which was Greek, or Roman, or Egyptian." H. Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn* (London, 1966), p. 52.

complacency at the beginning of the 1990s, the mood now is more one of disquiet concerning global political and economic tendencies. The dominant tone from the United States is now, after the New York trade towers massacres, more assertive and, simultaneously, less secure and self-confident. The most obvious force challenging the West is in the name of Islam. This cannot be seen as emancipatory, even though one branch of its proponents appeal to western intellectuals in the name of anti-capitalism.[26] An alternative and much more positive movement against the current world order has been the anti-globalisation movement and, in 2003, the massive anti-war demonstrations that have emerged in all western countries. I think it clear that a significant shift in sensibilities is occurring; a shift consonant, in broad terms, with the mentality of the Inclusive Democracy project. Where this shift will lead cannot, of course, be definitively predicted. However, we can be sure that, *contra* Fukuyama, there is no "end to history." Furthermore, I doubt if we will get any improvement unless we dare to think of it, dare to outline its principles and purpose, dare to consider how we might move towards it. The attempt made by Fotopoulos is bold and brave, for it can provoke ridicule from those who too easily dismiss anything different as utopian; anyway perhaps a touch of utopianism is precisely what we need at the moment.

This book is remarkable for the clarity of its exposition and for its sophisticated grasp of economics, sociology, politics and philosophy. It can be strongly recommended to anyone who wants to know what is going on in the world. It is, hopefully, clear that the criticisms offered are made

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[26] See *The West's Weapons of Mass Destruction and Colonialist Foreign Policy. The Assessment of the Muslim Community in Britain*, published for Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain by Khilafah Publications (London, 2002).

from within the spirit of the enterprise, with which your reviewer is very much in agreement.

RECENT THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY PROJECT

TAKIS FOTOPOULOS

The aim of this article is to present briefly the vast amount of theoretical work that has followed the publication of *Towards An Inclusive Democracy* (TID) more than ten years ago, and its translation in several languages. I thought that, as almost the entire discussion in this book concentrates on TID, the reader should be, also, made aware of the fact that the Inclusive Democracy (ID) project is not just a static theoretical work, but a wide-ranging political project enriched with a dynamic theory, which has been constantly expanding in new areas of research, apart from deepening and widening the areas already covered by TID. Almost all of the recent theoretical developments have been published in the international theoretical journals of the ID project, i.e. *Democracy & Nature* and its successor, *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*. I have classified the new theoretical developments on the ID project in four main thematic sections, which cover all the main aspects of recent theoretical work.

The first part investigates further certain theoretical issues of the ID project, which were only touched on in TID–if at all. It presents, first, the class theory of the ID project and its view on postmodernism. It, then, proceeds to examine the ID attempt to develop a new liberatory theory of ethics and Paedeia. Next, the work is presented which aims to further delineate democratic rationalism (adopted by the ID project) from irrationalism, objective rationalism, as well as from recent scientific developments like systems

theory and complexity. This part concludes with a presentation of the ID view on the 'neutrality' and 'autonomy' of science and technology.

The second part presents the theory on globalisation developed by the ID project and delineates it from the usual non-systemic globalisation approaches of the Left. It, then, discusses the main aspects of globalisation (economic, political, ideological, cultural) with respect to the main components of the present multidimensional crisis (economic, political, cultural, social and ecological) which were discussed in TID.

Next, the third part attempts to show why according to the ID approach both the old antisystemic movements (Marxism, anarchism) as well as the 'new' social movements which developed in the 1960s and the 1970s (Green, feminism, etc.) are either in a stage of decline or simply have been integrated into the System.

Finally, the fourth part aims to briefly delineate ID from other recent radical projects (project of autonomy, communalism, Parecon, de-growth and ecovillage movement). This part concludes with an outline of the ID approach to transitional strategies.

A. THEORETICAL ISSUES

1. The ID class theory and postmodernism

The starting point in the ID class analysis[1] is that the collapse of the socialist project, and the consequent abandonment of 'grand narratives', should not be followed by

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[1] See T. Fotopoulos, "Class divisions today-the Inclusive Democracy approach", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 6, No. 2, (July 2000).

the rejection of every type of class analysis and politics, or, even more so, by the abandonment of every attempt to develop a universal project for human emancipation. Instead, class divisions have to be redefined to extend beyond the original conception of them, which was restricted to the economic sphere, and a new class model should be developed, which would embrace the politics of 'difference' and 'identity' and, therefore, be appropriate to the era of an internationalised market economy.

Thus, the post-modernist view –that the post-industrial era swept aside not just the notion of a particular type of class society based on economic relations, but, also, any notion of a society split by class divisions, in the sense of systemic social divisions– is contrasted to evidence and shown to be at best a fantasy and at worst an ideological justification of the present class ridden society. Particularly so, when the obvious conclusion of such an analysis is that in a 'post-class' society (i.e. a society that is 'internally' differentiated in terms of access to economic resources, political power and prestige) there are neither dominant social groups and a 'ruling elite' based on them, nor an institutional framework which gives rise to and reproduces them, and that therefore, there is no need to develop an emancipatory politics or to attempt to identify the subject for such a politics. All that is needed, instead, is to reject all ideologies as metanarratives and adopt a kind of politics which would explicitly take into account the above 'differentiations' in an effort to achieve progressive equalisation and social harmony.

In this context, the ID approach examines the historical development of economic class divisions, within the framework of the periodisation of modernity which it introduces, namely, liberal, statist and neoliberal modernity. Thus,

• First, the emergence of economic classes (in the Marxist sense) during the era of liberal modernity is examined and the inadequacies of the Marxist class categories are assessed.

• Next, the class restructuring of the statist era is described and the effective decomposition of the Marxist class divisions is discussed.

• Then, the new class divisions of the present neoliberal form are assessed and the conclusion is derived that not only class divisions defined in economic terms (though not necessarily in strict Marxist terms) still exist today, but also new class divisions, classified also as systemic, have been added to them.

• Finally, it is shown that gender, race, ethnicity and nationality maintained their transclass character throughout the period of modernity following the emergence of classes. A new power-based model of class divisions is developed, which focuses on the unequal distribution of power in all its forms, and at the same time an attempt is made to define the subject of emancipatory politics today.

The postmodernist dismissal of the need for a class analysis today, and the consequent need for a new liberatory project was taken further by a systematic critique of postmodernism[2]. The claim that the advanced market economies have entered a new era of post modernity (or a post-modern turn) was critically assessed and found to be unjustified by the changes at the economic, political, cultural, or scientific and theoretical levels of the last quarter of a century or so. Although it is true that there have been significant changes at these levels in the last quarter of

[2] T. Fotopoulos, "The Myth of Post modernity", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No 1, (March 2001).

a century or so, these changes in no way justify the view that the advanced market economies have entered a new era. Not only the main political and economic structures, which were institutionalised in the move from the traditional to the modern society, are still dominant in the North, but in fact they are spreading all over the globe at the moment. Also, the changes at the other levels could be shown to represent either an evolution of trends already existing rather than any sort of break or rupture with the past (science), or the development of new trends, particularly at the theoretical and cultural levels, which reflect the emergence of the present neoliberal form of modernity. In this sense, post-modern theory, in all its variants, plays the role of justifying either deliberately, (as in the case of the liberal side of postmodernism), or objectively, (as in the case of mainstream and 'oppositional' postmodernism) the universalisation of liberal 'democracy' and the present marketisation of the economy and society. In other words, it plays the role of an emerging dominant social paradigm[3] which is consistent with the neoliberal form of modernity.

In conclusion, the changes in neoliberal modernity could in no way be taken to reflect a kind of break with the past, similar to the one marking the transition from the 'traditional' society to modernity. It could therefore be shown, instead, that advanced market economies, following the collapse of *liberal modernity* in the 19th century and that of *statist modernity* (in both its versions of social democracy and Soviet statism) in the 20th century, have, in fact, entered a new form of modernity that we

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[3] The dominant social paradigm is defined as the system of beliefs, ideas and the corresponding values, which are dominant in a particular society at a particular moment of its history, as consistent with the existing institutional framework; see T. Fotopoulos, "Mass media, Culture and Democracy", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 5, No. 1, (March 1999).

may call *neoliberal modernity*, rather than a post moder-
nity. Neoliberal modernity, in fact, represents a synthesis
of the previous forms of modernity and at the same time
completes the process which began with the institutionali-
sation of the market economy and representative 'democ-
racy' that have been presently universalised in the form of
the internationalised market economy and the developing
supra-national forms of governance respectively.

It is therefore obvious that today the chronic multi-di-
mensional crisis (political, economic, ecological, cultural
and social in a broad sense) that was created during the
modern era, which has worsened rapidly in the present neo-
liberal form of modernity, creates the need, more than ever
before during modern times, for a new universal project
that would represent a synthesis of the best traditions of
the premodern and modern eras: the classical democratic
tradition, the socialist tradition, as well as the radical cur-
rents in the Green, the feminist, and the other identity
movements. The aim of such a project can be no other than
the creation of a truly post-modern society[4] –like the one
proposed by the Inclusive Democracy project.

2. The need for a new liberatory ethics and Paedeia

As it was attempted to be shown in the article on postmod-
ernism, scientism and objectivism in general entered a se-
rious crisis in the present phase of neoliberal modernity (or
as postmodernists call it the era of post modernity). This

[4] Although one may raise serious reservations against the modern/
postmodern typology, as Castoriadis pointed out, see C. Castoriadis,
'The Retreat from Autonomy: Postmodernism as Generalised
Conformism' in *World in Fragments,* ed. by David Ames Curtis,
(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) pp. 32-43.

had inevitable consequences on ethics[5], since the ethics of the early phases of modernity, both the orthodox and the liberatory[6] ones, was based on objectivism in general and scientism in particular. Postmodernists were among the first who attempted to theorise the crisis of 'objective' ethics, both orthodox and liberatory. No wonder the post-modern approach to morality has often been celebrated as the 'demise of the ethical', the substitution of aesthetics for ethics and the consequent 'ultimate emancipation'.

Thus, whereas modernists assumed that it is possible to create a *non-ambivalent, non-contradictory ethical code,* so that universal reason could replace universal religious belief in guiding individual and collective morality, post-modernists rejected every kind of liberatory project on the grounds that it is by necessity universalist. In fact, it is the postmodernist rejection of universalism in general and moral universalism in particular, which makes their problematique particularly objectionable from a liberatory viewpoint. This is because postmodernists did not simply criticise the questionable ideology of progress, but pro-ceeded to criticise the universalist projects of modernity and the very idea of the citizen and the *polis*.

Furthermore, it can be shown that the post-modern claim that present society is not characterised by a univer-sal morality is false. The universalisation of representative 'democracy' and the market economy has inevitably been

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[5] see T. Fotopoulos, "Towards a Democratic Liberatory Ethics", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (November 2002)
[6] By liberatory ethics we mean the approaches to ethics proposed by radical theorists of the 'antisystemic' Left which aim to assess––from a radical viewpoint explicitly challenging the present form of socio-economic organisation based on the market economy and representa-tive 'democracy'-–the ethics of various societies in the present/past and suggest the normative ethics of a future liberatory society.

followed by a corresponding universalisation of the culture and the dominant social paradigm, which are compatible with these institutions. In fact, the process of 'globalisation', which has characterised neoliberal modernity, has been instrumental in this universalisation process. In this context, the moral pluralism that postmodernists celebrate –taking for granted the present socio-economic system–is in fact a pseudo-pluralism, given that all societies which have adopted a market economy and representative 'democracy' show fundamental similarities as regards their core values: individualism, consumer culture, heteronomous morality (either based on religion or some other kind of spiritualism, etc).

Therefore, an autonomous liberatory society should be expected to create its own moral code, with hard-core values which will inevitably be consistent with its fundamental institutions and peripheral values that may vary from society to society. In this sense, it is argued that it is only a worldwide genuinely democratic society, based on universal core values expressing the uncompromising demand for individual and social autonomy and a variety of peripheral values celebrating difference, which could promise peaceful and liberatory coexistence. On the basis of this sort of analysis, the ID project argues that we cannot prescribe the moral code for a genuine democratic society, which is obviously a matter for the citizens' assemblies of the future to decide.

Still, we can (in fact we *should)* show the ethics that, in our view is compatible with the institutions of a democratic society. Thus, first, religious ethics, or any ethics based on any kind of irrational belief system, is utterly incompatible with a democratic society, since it is incompatible with the democratic principle of organisation itself. Second, similarly incompatible to democratic ethics is any idealist conception of perennial and universal values, as it is now

obvious that values differ in space and time among various communities and societies. This implies that any materialist conceptions of universal values ('objective' ethics), which are supposedly derived from some sort of (social or natural) evolutionary process, are also incompatible to democratic ethics.

However, the fact that the project for a democratic society is not objectively grounded does not mean that 'anything goes' and that it is therefore impossible to derive a definable body of principles to assess social and political changes, or a set of ethical values to assess human behaviour on the basis of the fundamental criterion of compatibility with the institutions of the democratic society. So, the issue here is: what are those values that express the compatibility of human behaviour to democratic institutions? Of course, we can only outline what might be the content of democratic ethics in the sense of the moral values expressing this compatibility, and it is up to supporters of democratic politics and, in the end, up to the citizens' assemblies of a democratic society to enrich this discourse. Assuming therefore, that a democratic society will be based on a confederal Inclusive Democracy which is founded on two fundamental principles of organisation, i.e. the principle of autonomy and the principle of community, one may derive a set of moral values that express this compatibility.

Thus, out of the fundamental principle of autonomy one may derive a set of moral values involving equity and democracy, respect for the personality of every citizen (irrespective of gender, race, ethnic identity, etc.) and of course respect for human life itself and, also, values involving the protection of the quality of life of each individual citizen– something that would imply a relationship of harmony with nature and the need to re-integrate society with nature.

Similarly, out of the fundamental principle of community

we may derive a set of values involving not only equity but also solidarity and mutual aid, altruism/self-sacrifice (beyond concern for kin and reciprocity), caring and sharing. But, as the ID project stresses, it is the combination of the two principles above, which form the organisational basis of a confederal Inclusive Democracy, that leads to the moral principles mentioned that have always been part of liberatory ethics. In other words, it is only this synthesis of autonomy and community, which could avoid both the Scylla of 'objectifying' ethics and/or negating politics and ethical concerns in favour of the coercive harmony of the organic community, and the Charybdis of unbounded moral relativism.

Paedeia[7] will of course play a crucial role in a future democratic society with respect to the internalisation of its values, which, as we saw, would necessarily be the ones derived by its basic principles of organisation: the principle of autonomy and the principle of community. However, the institutions alone are not sufficient to secure the non-emergence of informal elites. It is here that the crucial importance of education, which in a democratic society will take the form of Paedeia, arises. Education is a basic component of the formation of culture, as well as of the socialisation of the individual, i.e. the process through which an individual internalises the core values of the dominant social paradigm. Therefore, culture in general and education

[7] See T. Fotopoulos, "From (mis)education to Paideia", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (March 2003); John Sargis, "Liberatory Ethics, Education, Paedeia and Democracy:experiences of the US education system Ibid. For an updated version see *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol.2, No.1 (September 2005) http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol2/vol2_no1_sargis.htm.; David Gabbard & Karen Anijar Appleton "The Democratic Paideia Project: Beginnings of an Emancipatory Paideia for Today", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (September 2005).

in particular play a crucial role in the determination of in-dividual and collective values.

In a heteronomous society, in which the public space has been usurped by various elites who concentrate politi-cal and economic power in their hands, education has the double aim of helping the internalisation of the existing institutions and the values consistent with it (the domi-nant social paradigm) and of producing 'efficient' citizens in the sense of citizens, who have accumulated enough 'technical knowledge' so that they could function compe-tently in accordance with society's aims, as laid down by the elites which control it.

On the other hand, in an autonomous society, where politics is meant in its classical sense which is related to the institutional framework of a direct democracy in which people not only question laws, but are also able to make their own laws, we do not talk about education anymore but about the much broader concept of Paedeia in the sense of an all-round civic education that involves a life-long process of character development, absorption of knowledge and skills and –more significant– practicing a 'participatory' kind of active citizenship, that is a citizen-ship in which political activity is not seen as a means to an end but an end in itself. The double aim of Paedeia is, therefore, first, the development of citizens' self-activity by using their very self-activity as a means of internalis-ing the democratic institutions and the values consistent with them and, second, the creation of responsible indi-viduals who have internalized both the necessity of laws and the possibility of putting the laws into question, i.e. individuals capable of interrogation, reflectiveness, and deliberation.

Finally, we may talk about *emancipatory education* as the link between present education and Paedeia. Emancipatory education is intrinsically linked to transitional politics, i.e.

the politics that will lead us from the heteronomous politics and society of the present to the autonomous politics and society of the future.

As it is clear from the above, a basic tenet of the ID approach is that education is intrinsically linked to politics, as the very meaning of education is assumed to be defined by the prevailing meaning of politics. A democratic Paedeia, therefore, is impossible unless a set of institutional conditions are met which refer to the societal level as a whole, as described in TID, and the educational level in particular (creation of new public spaces in education, free generalised and integral education for life, individual and social autonomy, non-hierarchical relations, balance between science and the aesthetic sensibility), as well as a change in values, as a precondition and consequence of Paedeia.

3. Irrationalism, objective rationalism, systems theory and complexity

Irrationalism and Inclusive Democracy

Democratic Paedeia needs a new kind of rationalism, beyond both the 'objectivist' type of rationalism we inherited from the Enlightenment and the generalised relativism of postmodernism. We need a ***democratic rationalism***, i.e. a rationalism founded on democracy, as a structure and a process of social self-institution. Within the context of democratic rationalism, democracy is not justified by an appeal to objective tendencies with respect to natural or social evolution, but by an appeal to reason in terms of *logon didonai,* (rendering account and reason), which explic-

itly denies the idea of any 'directionality' as regards social change.

However, as it was shown elsewhere,[8] in the last forty years or so, a new irrationalism[9] has flourished both in the North and the South, which has taken various forms ranging from the revival in some cases of the old religions (Christianity, Islam, etc.) up to the expansion of various irrational trends (mysticism, spiritualism, astrology, esoterism, neopaganism, "New Age", etc.) which, especially in the West, threaten old religions. The distinguishing criterion between rational ideologies (e.g. Marxism) and irrational belief systems (e.g. religious systems) is the source of 'truth'. If the source of truth of the core ideas is reason/'facts', then, even if these ideas cannot be shown to be 'objective' (in the sense of general acceptability as in natural sciences), we are talking about a rational (and refutable) ideology. On the other hand, if the source of truth of the core ideas is an irrational method (revelation, intuition, etc.) then we are talking about an irrational (and irrefutable) belief system. Of course, what is considered as a rational process of thought varies in time and space. The practical implication of this distinction is that an irrational belief system, although perhaps useful for those that need

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[8] see T. Fotopoulos, "The rise of new irrationalism and its incompatibility with Inclusive Democracy", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 4, Nos. 2/3, (1998); see also the exchange with Thomas Martin on the incompatibility of myths with ID in *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (March 2002).

[9] We may generally define an irrational belief system as a system whose core beliefs are not derived by rational methods (i.e. reason and/or an appeal to 'facts') but by intuition, instinct, feeling, mystical experience, revelation, will, etc. As such, these beliefs are therefore outside any rational discourse. This is particularly true for all religions which have always been characterised by the existence of a set of irrational core truths (God, immortal soul, karma and so on) which are usually inscribed in a sacred text like the Gospel, Koran, Veda, etc.

it (for psychological or social reasons, or because they cannot just accept death as the end of existence, the burden of personal responsibility, etc.), it surely cannot be the basis for any rational interpretation of reality. For a rational interpretation of reality (always, of course, from the point of view of a particular world-view) a rational ideology is needed.

A series of factors could account for the recent rise of the 'new' irrationalism, the main ones being the following:

I. The universalisation of the market/growth economy. Thus, the combination of the uncertainty connected with the rise of unemployment and low paid employment (which marked the emergence of the internationalized neoliberal market economy) with the uncertainty created by the parallel crisis of science and the accelerating cultural homogenisation following the rise of consumer society could go a long way in explaining the rise of irrationalism in this period.

II. The ecological crisis that led to the development of various irrational ecological approaches, which, instead of blaming the system of the market economy and its by-product the growth economy that led to the ecological crisis, blamed the industrial revolution, Progress and reason itself! For the ID approach, on the other hand, the ultimate cause of the ecological crisis, as well as the crisis at the economic, the political and the broader social levels, is not, as it is usually asserted, the industrial revolution, or technology, overpopulation, productivism, consumerism, etc. From the Inclusive Democracy perspective, all these alleged causes are in fact the symptoms of a much more serious disease, which is, called 'inequality in the distribution of power'. It is, therefore, today's concentration of economic and political power, the

former as a result of the rise of the market economy and the subsequent growth economy, and the latter as a result of the parallel rise of the present 'liberal oligarchy' (to use the late Castoriadis' characterization of what passes as democracy today), which is the ultimate cause of the present crisis.

III.   The collapse of 'development' in the South. The present flourishing of Islamic fundamentalism in the Islamic world is not a unique phenomenon of the South. Similar fundamentalisms prosper, although for different reasons, in the North and, particularly the USA. Nor is this a special phenomenon of the Islamic world. A similar revival of religion, although not as extreme as Islamic fundamentalism, is noted in many parts of the South (e.g., in Latin America). One way to interpret this phenomenon is to refer to the combined effect of the failure of the development model, which was imported by the Third World in the post-WWII period, (i.e. the failure of the market economy models imported from the West, as well that of the planning models imported from the East) and the parallel cultural homogenisation that the universalised market/ growth economy imposes. The return to tradition-– and, particularly, to religion-–seemed very appealing to the impoverished people in the South, whose communities and economic self-reliance were being destroyed by the internationalized market/growth economy. Particularly so, when religion was seen as a moral code preaching equality of all men before God set against the injustices of the market/growth economy. Similarly, the return to spirituality looked as the only way to match an imported materialism, which was associated with a distorted consumer society, i.e. one that was not even capable of delivering the goods to the majority of the population, as in the North.

Inclusive Democracy and objective rationalism

However, Inclusive Democracy (which is premised on the constant questioning of any given truth) is not only fundamentally incompatible with irrationalism, i.e. irrational belief systems which take for granted certain 'truths' derived through irrational methods; it is also incompatible with objective rationalism in the form of closed systems of ideas, i.e. rational ideologies, which take for granted certain 'truths' derived through rational methods, within the framework of 'objective' rationalism. This is particularly the case of 'objective truths' about social evolution grounded on social or natural 'laws'.

This means that the democratic institution of society presupposes that the dominant social paradigm, not only cannot be founded on some form of irrationalism, but also on any form of 'objective' rationalism (e.g. 'dialectical materialism', 'dialectical naturalism', etc.).[10] This is because any system of religious or mystical beliefs, but also any closed system of ideas, by definition, excludes the questioning of some core beliefs or ideas and, therefore, is incompatible with citizens setting their own laws and making their own 'truths' about their society. However, the fact that democracy is incompatible with 'objective' rationalism does not mean that we have to resort to relativism. Democracy is equally incompatible with relativism (in the sense that all traditions, as in this case the autonomy and heteronomy ones, have equal truth-value).

Democracy therefore is compatible with only one form of rationalism, **democratic rationalism**, namely, rationalism founded in democracy as a structure and a process of social self-institution. This implies that a confederal

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[10] For a critique of objective rationalism, see the exchange on Marx vs. Proudhon in *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 6, No.1 (March 2000).

inclusive democracy is non-viable when some of the communities in the confederation believe in 'given truths' (i.e. truths or values not coming out of rational democratic discussion but out of 'sacred' laws given by God, or spiritual truths, or even 'laws' derived from a specific reading of social and/or natural evolution). In a democratic society, either the majority of citizens accept the principle that every decision affecting social life, *including values and ethical codes conditioning individual behaviour*, is democratically taken and everybody has to abide by the relevant decisions, irrespective of whether these decisions come in conflict with his/her belief in Christ, Mohammed, Buddha or voodoo, or it is not democratic at all.

Systems theory and complexity: a tool for radical analysis?

The above conclusion about the incompatibility of democracy with objective rationalism is particularly useful if we consider it in the light of the claims made by various quarters in the Left that systems theory and complexity, under certain conditions, could potentially be useful tools for radical analysis of social change.[11] The rationale behind this argument is that one could consider systems theory and complexity as an attempt to transcend the post-modern predicament and show that the end of metanarratives does not mean the end of theory –even a General Theory for that matter.

However, a systematic examination of these claims shows the intrinsic problems involved in any such attempt due to the very concepts used by these theories. For a start, the notion of complexity, simple or dialectical, is not

[11] See the special D&N issue on systems theory and complexity in *Democracy & Nature,* (Vol. 6, No. 3 (November 2000).

useful in either explaining the past or in predicting the future, as far as radical social change is concerned. Even if we accept that change in *dynamic physical systems* is subject to power laws, which are in principle discoverable, radical social change in a *dynamic social system*, like the one represented by society, can never be the subject of such 'discoverable' laws. Furthermore, Luhmann's[12] attempt to use the tools of natural sciences in order to 'scientify' social analysis could also be shown to be a failure –unless, of course, it is simply taken as an attempt to create a new epistemology for the 'classless' society that the internationalized market economy supposedly creates. But, in this case, systems theory obviously becomes another ideological weapon in the hands of the ruling elites to perpetuate their privileged position.

Having said this, one can easily notice that the class-undifferentiated conception of society used by Luhmann and other systems analysts make systems theory particularly useful as a new social paradigm for the present internationalised market economy. In such a class-undifferentiated 'society', presumably there are no ruling elites, or any 'overclasses' and 'underclasses' –to mention just some of the present class divisions. Furthermore, in such a problematique, there are no power structures and power relations among social groups, while the huge and growing concentration of power (economic, political, social), within and between market economies, seems not to be particularly important. Instead, what seems to matter most is that decision taking is mostly a myth, given the degree of uncertainty involved.

This is not surprising given that functionalism and

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[12] Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

evolutionism, of which social systems theory is a case, are not compatible, as I attempted to show elsewhere[13], with a liberatory project, like that of Inclusive Democracy. This is for three main reasons: First, because an evolutionist per-spective of History is incompatible with History itself, par-ticularly as far as systemic change is concerned. Second, because functionalism, of any kind, is incompatible with the imaginary or creative element in History. Third, be-cause functionalism replaces the subject with structures or values.

Furthermore, at the epistemological level as well, the problems are evident. Supporters of systems theory and complexity claim that this theory is capable of transcend-ing the division between the human and the natural scienc-es, ignoring the importance of social divisions that charac-terise the object of study of social sciences itself, as well as the role of the imaginary. The inevitable consequence of this 'monistic' world-view is that supporters of this theory believe that we may explain social reality on the basis of the insights of natural sciences, collapsing in the process the economy and society into nature. The use of a class-undifferentiated notion of society is particularly useful for this purpose since, obviously, such an assumption is in fact necessary in any attempt to unify natural and social sci-ences in a 'grand' scientific theory, given that a monistic view of science is only possible when the object of study can be assumed to be similarly socially undifferentiated.

So, the answer to the question whether systems theo-ry and complexity could potentially be useful tools for a radical analysis of social change cannot be positive, as this would neglect the intrinsic relationship that always exists

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[13] See T. Fotopoulos, "Systems theory and complexity: a potential tool for radical analysis or the emerging social paradigm for the internationalised market economy?", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 6, No. 3, (November 2000).

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between the tools of analysis used and the content of a radical theory. Instead, according to the ID project, systems theory and complexity are offered as the basis for a new social paradigm that could perfectly become the dominant social paradigm for the internationalised market economy to replace, once and for all, both the liberal and the Keynesian paradigms. In fact, such a new paradigm, unlike the previous paradigms, would be based in a new 'grand' synthesis, which could also claim to be 'scientific' (in the sense we use the term for natural sciences).

Therefore, although systems theory and complexity may be useful tools in the natural sciences, in which they may offer many useful insights, they are much less useful in the social sciences and indeed are utterly incompatible, both from the epistemological point of view and that of their content, with a radical analysis aiming to systemic change towards an inclusive democracy.

4. Inclusive Democracy, science and technology

The conclusion we have drawn above that what is needed today is not to jettison science, let alone rationalism altogether, in the interpretation of social phenomena, but to transcend 'objective' rationalism (i.e. the rationalism which is grounded on 'objective laws' of natural or social evolution) has very important implications on technoscience. According to the ID approach on the matter,[14] modern technoscience is neither 'neutral' in the sense that it is merely a 'means' which can be used for the attainment of whatever end, nor autonomous in the sense that it is the sole or the most important factor determining

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[14] See T. Fotopoulos, "Towards a democratic conception of science and technology", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1998).

social structures, relations and values. Instead, it is argued that technoscience is conditioned by the power relations implied by the specific set of social, political and economic institutions characterising the growth economy and the *dominant social paradigm*. Therefore, a democratic conception of technoscience has to avoid both types of determinism: *technological* determinism as well as *social* determinism.

In fact, technology has never been 'neutral' with respect to the logic and the dynamics of the market economy. Still, not only socialist statists but environmentalists as well, explicitly, or usually implicitly, assume that technology is socially neutral and that we only have to use it for the right purposes in order to solve not just the ecological problems, but the social problems as well. However, it is obvious that this approach ignores the social institution of science and technology and the fact that the design and particularly the implementation of new techniques is directly related to the social organisation in general and the organisation of production in particular. In a *market society*, as in any society, technology embodies concrete relations of production, its hierarchical organisation and, of course, its primary aim, which, in the case of a market economy, refers to the maximisation of economic growth and efficiency for profit purposes. So, technology is always designed (or at least those designs are adopted) in a way that best serves the objectives of the market/growth economy.

Similarly, the type of technoscience that has developed in the past two centuries is not an autonomous cultural phenomenon, but a by –product of the power relations and the dominant social paradigm which emerged in association with the rise of the market economy. In this sense, technoscience is not autonomous as Castoriadis, follow-

ing Jacques Ellul, argues,[15] on the basis of the thesis that present growth and development in effect contradicts the very aims of the market economy system, notably because of the on–going destruction of the environment –something that has led Castoriadis to conclude that technology is at present uncontrollable, directionless and aimless. According to the ID project, this may be true only if we take a long–term view of technology. But, in the short to medium–term, technology is very much controlled by the institutions funded by the system of the market/growth economy and guided by the values imbued in this system. If, therefore, in the longer term, technology appears to be directionless and even contradicting the very aims of the system, this is because it is outside the logic of the market economy for those controlling it to think about the long–term implications of their choices. So, although the technological choices seem irrational, they are very much compatible with the values and aims of those controlling the market economy and, as such, rational. Furthermore, to the extent that new 'green' technologies satisfy the long–term needs of the system in terms of their ecological implications, and, at the same time, are compatible with the objectives of maximising efficiency, growth and profits, such techniques are being adopted. It is exactly the partial adoption of such green technologies (e.g. 'green' fridges), which feeds the environmentalists' mythology that a 'green capitalism' is in the cards.

What is, therefore, needed is the reconstitution of both our science and technology in a way that puts at the centre of every stage in the process, in every single technique, human personality and its needs rather than, as at

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[15] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy,* (Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 271.

present, the values and needs of those controlling the market/growth economy. This presupposes a new form of socio–economic organisation in which citizens, both as producers and as consumers, do control effectively the types of technologies adopted, expressing the general rather than, as at present, the partial interest. In other words, it presupposes:

• a political democracy, so that effective citizen control on scientific research and technological innovation can be established;
• an economic democracy, so that the general economic interest of the confederated communities, rather than the partial interests of economic elites, could be effectively expressed in research and technological development;
• an ecological democracy, so that the environmental implications of science and technology are really taken into account in scientific research and technological development; and last, but not least;
• a democracy in the social realm, that is, equal sharing in the decision–taking process at the factory, the office, the household, the laboratory and so on, so that the abolition of hierarchical structures in production, research and technological development would secure not only the democratic content of science and technology, but also democratic procedures in scientific and technological development and collective control by scientists and technologists.

It should be clear, however, that the democratisation of science and technology should not be related to a utopian abolition of division of labour and specialisation as,

for instance, Thomas Simon[16] suggests, who argues that democratising technology means abolishing professionals and experts: "the extent to which a professional/expert is no longer needed is partially the extent to which a process has become democratised. It is the extent to which we are able to make the professional terrain a deliberative assembly." However, although it is true that the present extreme specialisation and division of labour has been necessitated by the needs of 'efficiency' that are imposed by the dynamics of the growth economy, still, there are certain definite limits on the degree of reduction in specialisation which is feasible and desirable, if we do not wish to see the re–emergence of problems that have been solved long ago (medical problems, problems of sanitation, etc.).

The nature of technology to be adopted by a democratic society does not just depend on who owns it, or even who controls it. Not only, as History has shown, it is perfectly possible that 'socialist' bureaucrats may adopt techniques which are as environmentally destructive and life–damaging (if not more) as those adopted by their capitalist counterparts, but also the possibility can not be ruled out that citizens' assemblies may adopt similar techniques. So, the abolition of oligarchic ownership and control over technology, which would come about in a *marketless*, *moneyless*, *stateless* economy based on an inclusive democracy, is only the *necessary* institutional condition for an alternative technology. The *sufficient* condition depends, as always, on the value system that a democratic society would develop and the level of consciousness of its citizens. One, therefore, can only hope that the change in the institutional framework together with a democratic *Paedeia* would play

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[16] Thomas W. Simon, "Beyond Technological Things," in *Renewing the Earth,* John Clark, ed. (London: Greenprint, 1990), p. 112.

a crucial role in the formation of this new system of values and the raising of the level of political consciousness.

Finally, an important implication of the democratisation of technoscience in the above sense is that such a process has nothing to do with the currently fashionable 'access to information' that the modern information technology sup-posedly secures which, for some authors stressing a view of technology and society in dialectic relationship with one another, may even imply that democratic tools and a demo-cratic society rely on one another for their emergence. As I attempted to show in a relevant exchange,[17] the real issue is not whether an interaction between a democratic soci-ety and a democratic science and technology exists (which is true), but whether a democratic science and technology can emerge within the present institutional framework (which is false). As it has been shown in this exchange, a democratic science and technology cannot emerge in an institutional framework of concentration of political and economic power, like the one created by the present insti-tutional framework of the market economy and representa-tive 'democracy'.

B. THE ID APROACH ON GLOBALISATION AND THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CRISIS

1. The ID approach on globalisation, "Empire" and the reformist Left

The main division in the theoretical analysis of the Left on globalisation –and also within the anti-globalisation

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[17] See the dialogue on science, technology and democracy with Matt Hern and Stu Chaulk, *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (March 2000).

movement– centres around the crucial issue whether the present neoliberal globalisation (which is considered to lead to a growing concentration of economic and political power and to an eco-catastrophic development) is reversible within the market economy system, as theorised by the reformist Left, or whether, instead, it can only be eliminated within the process of developing a new mass anti-systemic movement, which starts building 'from below' a new form of democratic globalisation, as the ID approach[18] on the matter suggests.

Systemic approaches

The staring point in the ID approach on globalisation is the delineation it makes between globalisation and internationalisation of the market economy. It is argued that the present process, strictly speaking, should better be described as *internationalisation*, given that it does not meet, as yet, the production requirements of proper globalisation. However, given that the latter term, albeit wrong, is now dominant we shall keep the commonly used term of globalisation.

According to the ID approach, the confusion about the nature of economic globalisation arises out of the conflicting answers given by the various theoretical approaches to globalisation on the crucial question whether neoliberal globalisation is a phenomenon of a 'systemic' nature or not. In the case in which we see it as a 'systemic' phenomenon, this implies that we see neoliberal globalisation as the result of an endogenous change in economic policy (i.e. a change reflecting existing trends that manifest the

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[18] See T. Fotopoulos, 'Globalisation, the reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation "Movement"', *Democracy & Nature*, (Vol. 7, No 2 (July 2001).

market economy's grow-or-die dynamic). In this case, neo-liberal globalisation is irreversible within the system of the market economy. We may therefore call 'systemic' all those approaches to globalisation which, in order to interpret it, refer to the structural characteristics of the existing so-cio-economic system, either implicitly or explicitly.

On the basis of this criterion, the neoliberal and social-liberal approaches to globalisation, supported by analysts like Anthony Giddens, Amartya Sen, Paul Krugman, et. al. should be seen as 'systemic' approaches, since they see it as a phenomenon mainly due to changes in technology and particularly information technology. But, technol-ogy, as we saw above, is neither 'neutral' nor autonomous. So, when neoliberals and social-liberals take the existing technology for granted and, therefore, irreversible within the market economy system, they implicitly assign neolib-eral globalisation to 'systemic' factors and, consequently, they also take it for granted and irreversible.

Similarly, the Inclusive Democracy (ID) approach, which explicitly assumes that it is the 'grow-or-die dynamics' of the market economy system that inevitably led to its present neoliberal globalised form, is also a systemic ap-proach. For the ID approach, globalisation is irreversible, as no effective controls over markets to protect labour and the environment are feasible within the system of the in-ternationalised market economy. However, although both the neo/social-liberal and ID approaches are systemic ap-proaches (implicitly in the former case and explicitly in the latter), there is a fundamental difference between the two types of approaches. The neo/social-liberal approaches take the existing system of the market economy for grant-ed, while the ID approach does not. As a result, whereas the former adopt globalisation with or without qualifica-tions, the latter looks for an alternative form of social or-ganisation, which involves a form of globalisation that is

not feasible within the system of the market economy and statist 'democracy'

The non-systemic approaches of the reformist Left

In the case in which we see neoliberal globalisation as a 'non-systemic' phenomenon, this implies that we see it as the result of an exogenous change in economic policy. In this case, globalisation is a reversible development, even within the system of the market economy. I will, therefore, call 'non-systemic' all those approaches to globalisation which, in order to interpret it, refer to various exogenous factors that are not directly related to the structural characteristics and the dynamics of the market economy system. In the same category we may also classify all those views for which globalisation is just a myth or an ideology.

Therefore, the approaches suggested by the reformist Left (i.e. that part of the Left which takes the present system of the market economy and representative 'democracy' for granted), supported by analysts like Pierre Bourdieu, Immanuel Wallerstein, Noam Chomsky, Samir Amin, John Gray, Leo Panitch, Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson), could be classified as 'non-systemic' approaches to globalisation. Thus, although these approaches usually assume that globalisation is an old phenomenon, which was set in motion by the emergence of capitalism –an assumption which *prima facie* gives the impression that they recognise the systemic character of the trends which have led to globalisation– still they assign an explicitly non-systemic character to it.

The argument, frequently used to overcome this blatant contradiction, is that the capitalist system was always globalised and what changed recently was only the *form* of globalisation (i.e. neoliberal globalisation). However, this change in the form of globalisation is assumed to be not the

outcome of the system's dynamics (as one would expect on the basis of their assumption that globalisation is an old phenomenon), but, instead, the outcome of such non-systemic or exogenous developments as the rise of the Right and/or of the neoliberal movement, the historical defeat of the Left after the collapse of 'actually existing socialism', the degradation of social democracy and so on. Thus, on the basis of hopelessly contradictory arguments of this sort, the reformist Left sees neoliberal globalisation as reversible and amenable to effective reform, even within the system of the market economy –provided enough pressure is exercised 'from below' so that the political and economic elites are forced to introduce effective measures to protect labour and the environment.

Negri & Hardt's Empire

Finally, between the systemic and non-systemic approaches stand a number of intermediate approaches that are characterised by a mix of systemic and non-systemic elements and a significant number of analytical differences with respect to the usual approaches of the reformist Left.

Hardt & Negri, for instance, claiming Marxist orthodoxy, adopt a more sophisticated version of the capitalist plot theory according to which capital, faced with a crisis of its ability 'to master its conflictual relationship with labour through a social and political dialectic', resorted to a double attack against labour: 'first, a direct campaign against corporatism and collective bargaining, and second, a reorganisation of the workplace through automation and computerisation, thereby actually excluding labour itself from the side of production'.

The hypothesis that Hardt and Negri make is that "the neoliberalism of the 1980s constituted 'a revolution from

above'". This 'revolution', as they stress in their best-seller[19] (which was massively promoted by the mass media controlled by the transnational elite) was motivated by the accumulation of the proletarian struggles that functioned as the 'motor for the crisis' of the 1970s, which in turn was part of the objective and inevitable cycles of capitalist accumulation. The conclusion that Hardt and Negri draw, which is also the main point of *Empire*, is that contemporary globalisation (which they term "Empire") establishes no territorial centre of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries and barriers. It is a *decentred* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. As such, it should be welcomed, because it is capital's latest concession to the force of insurgent subjectivity and it contains the seeds of an alternative (communist) globalisation. Our political task, they argue, is therefore not simply to resist these processes, but to reorganize them and redirect them toward new ends.

The interesting aspect of this analysis –that is mainly based on unfounded assertions about the nature of the welfare state (which they assume still exists in neoliberal modernity, ignoring the fact that it is being replaced everywhere by a 'safety net') and a confused, as well as contradictory, analysis of neoliberal globalisation– is that, as I mentioned above, it also ends up (like the reformist Left

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[19] Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001*)*; see also by the same authors, *Labor of Dionysus*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994). For a detailed critique of this book from the ID perspective see the review article entitled '[Hardt and Negri's Empire: A New Communist Manifesto or a Reformist Welcome to Neoliberal Globalisation?](#)', *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 2002).

approaches) with reformist demands and no clear vision for a future society.

This observation notwithstanding, even if we accept their claim that neoliberal globalisation is neither a plot nor irreversible within the market economy system, this does not of course mean that it should be welcome, as Hardt and Negri claim, because it supposedly provides an 'objective' basis on which an alternative globalisation could be built –reminding us of one of the usual 'objectivist' types of analysis about the 'necessary evils' supposedly created by the process of Progress. The same applies to neoliberal globalisation which has nothing 'necessary' about it, as it is simply the inevitable outcome of an initial choice imposed on society by economic and political elites: the choice for a market economy and representative 'democracy'. In other words, the class struggle within this system could only slow down this process (as it did during statist modernity) but not stop it–unless the outcome of this struggle was the overthrowing of the system itself. Consequently, neoliberal globalisation on no account can be the 'objective basis' for a non-capitalist society. The move towards such a society could only represent a break with the past and not an evolutionary process. In this sense, the present neoliberal globalisation is far from being the objective basis for such a society!

2. Political globalisation, the transnational elite and its "wars"

However, globalisation cannot be seen only in terms of trade, investment and communications, but it requires also a political and security dimension, which used to be the domain of national elites and today is that of the transnational elite. Clearly, a transnational economy needs its

own transnational elite. The emergence of such an elite has already been theorised both from the Marxist and the Inclusive Democracy viewpoints and the evidence on it has been increasingly substantiated.

The **transnational elite** may be defined as the elite, which draws its power (economic, political or generally social power) by operating at the transnational level. It consists of corporate directors, major shareholders, executives, globalising bureaucrats and professional politicians functioning either within major international organisations or in the state machines of the major market economies, as well as important academics and researchers in the various international foundations, members of think tanks and research departments of major international universities, transnational mass media executives, etc. The new transnational elite sees its interests in terms of international markets rather than national markets, and is not based on a single nation-state but is a decentred apparatus of rule with no territorial centre of power. Its members have a dominant position within society, as a result of their economic, political or broader social power and, unlike national elites, see that the best way to secure their privileged position in society is not by ensuring the reproduction of any real or imagined nation-state but, instead, by securing the worldwide reproduction of the institutional framework on which the New World Order (NWO) is founded. In other words, the NWO was established after the collapse of the Soviet block and the universalisation –through neoliberal globalisation– of the system of market economy and representative 'democracy'.

It is clear that this is an *informal* rather than an *institutionalised* elite. Thus, in the same way that economic globalisation expresses an informal concentration of economic power at the hands of the members of the economic elite, political globalisation expresses an informal

concentration of political power at the hands of the members of the political elite. In other words, the economic elite constitutes that part of the transnational elite, which controls the internationalised market economy, whereas the political elite constitutes that part of the transnational elite, which controls the distinctly political-military dimension of the NWO. The main institutions securing the concentration of economic and political power at the hands of the transnational elite are the market economy and representative 'democracy' respectively, whereas the main organisations through which the transnational elite exercises its informal control are the EU, NAFTA, the G8, Word Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, NATO and the UN.

The 'wars' launched by the transnational elite so far, (i.e. the Gulf War which culminated in the invasion and occupation of Iraq[20], the war in Kosovo[21] and the on-going 'war on terrorism'[22]), are cases substantiating the existence of an informal system of transnational governance, a political globalisation presided over by a transnational elite. The informal character of globalisation is needed, not only in order to keep the façade of a well functioning representative 'democracy' in which local elites are still supposed to take the important decisions, but also in order to preserve the nation-state's internal monopoly of violence. The latter is necessary so that local elites are capable of controlling their populations in general, and the movement of la-

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[20] See T. Fotopoulos, "Iraq: the New Criminal 'War' of the Transnational Elite", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 9, No. 2 (July 2003).
[21] See T.Fotopoulos, 'New World Order and NATO's war against Yugoslavia', *New Political Science*, Vol. 24, No.1, (March 2002).
[22] See T. Fotopoulos, 'The global "war" of the transnational elite', *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (July 2002).

bour in particular, enhancing the free flow of capital and commodities.

No wonder that all the wars launched by the transnational elite are characterised by certain important common features. Such characteristics are:

• first, the so-called 'wars' are decided by the highest echelons of the transnational elite –the leading role in this decision-taking process being played of course by the American members of this elite which possess the necessary military equipment and technology. Despite the fact that the regimes which take part in these 'wars' are called 'democracies' the peoples themselves are never involved directly in these decisions, and even the professional politicians in the respective parliaments are, usually, called to approve these 'wars' after they have already been launched;

• second, the wars are invariably carried out in blatant violation of international law, both when they are formally covered by a resolution of the capitalist-controlled UN Security Council, as in the case of the Gulf War, and when they are not, as in the cases of Yugoslavia, the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The doctrine of *limited sovereignty,* used to justify these wars (see ideological globalisation), is in blatant contradiction to the UN Charter;

• third, the pattern of military division of labour between the members of the transnational elite, as it emerged from all four 'wars', involves the almost exclusive use of the US military machine, particularly its unrivalled air power, in the first stages of the war, with the military machines of the other members mobilised (usually through NATO) mainly at later stages, for peacekeeping roles, etc.;

• fourth, any negotiated settlement is ruled out by the

transnational elite, which it either sets conditions that no sovereign country could accept, or simply blocks any offers for a negotiated settlement by the country under threat of an attack. The former was the case of Yugoslavia which, according to the Rambouillet proposals, it had to be voluntarily converted into a NATO protectorate to avoid the attack against it. The latter was the case of Iraq in the Gulf war, or of Afghanistan;

• fifth, the political-military aim of the 'wars' is the destruction of the infrastructure of the countries concerned and the terrorisation of their peoples (killing thousands of innocent civilians in the process as 'collateral damage'), so that they would be 'softened up' to accept alternative elites, friendly to the transnational elite. A parallel basic aim is the minimisation of the losses on the side of the transnational elite, so as to undermine the flourishing of any mass anti-war movement, like the one that effectively forced the US elite to stop its war against Vietnam.

The general aim of all these 'wars' is that of securing the stability of the New World Order in its economic and political dimensions, through the crushing of any perceived threats against it. The 'particular' aims pursued by these wars are:

• to discourage the flourishing of counter-violence brought about by the growing systemic violence, which is the inevitable by-product of capitalist neoliberal globalisation and its political implications;
• to secure 'stability' in Central Asia and the Middle East, so that the sources of energy (on which the growth of the market economy depends) could be guaranteed;
• to guarantee the reproduction of the war economy (which went through a 'raison-d'-etre' crisis after the

end of the cold war) that significantly contributes to the growth of the market economy.

The intermediate targets and means implied by the above aims are,

• first, the military crushing of any 'rogue' regime or 'popular terrorism' organisation around the world and the parallel installation of a vast global network of military bases with the aim to encircle any potentially dangerous regime or country which harbours forms of popular terrorism that threaten the elite's interests; and,

• second, the parallel suppression of the radical currents within the new antisystemic movements emerging today and, particularly, the anti-globalisation movement. This is achieved mainly through the introduction of draconian 'anti-terrorist' legislation in the North, supposedly to fight terrorism, but, in reality, as an effective means to suppress the collective counter violence against the present intensification of systemic violence. Thus, anti-terrorist legislation 'deepens' everywhere (Patriot Act in USA, successive anti-terror laws in UK, etc.).

Clearly, the ID approach on the "wars" of the transnational elite, including the "war on terrorism", is fundamentally different from the ideology of "clash of civilisations",[23] promoted by the system's ideologues, as well as from the "clash of fundamentalisms"[24] thesis, promoted by the reformist Left. According to the latter thesis in particular, what we face today is a conflict between the 'extremists' of the West and those of the East, namely, of the political

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[23] Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations, (London: Simon & Schuster, 1997).
[24] Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, (London: Verso 2003).

fundamentalism of the Washington neoconservatives ver-
sus the religious fundamentalism of extreme Islamists.
However, as I showed elsewhere[25], such views are not only
completely false and misleading, constituting part of the
'progressive' liberal ideology supported by both the cen-
tre-Left (in the framework of today's social-liberal consen-
sus), and the reformist Left, but, also, bear no relation to
an antisystemic problematique on this crucial issue. The
common denominator of such views is that today's social
resistance movements should turn against both these fun-
damentalisms, rather than against the system of the capi-
talist market economy itself and its political complement
representative 'democracy'! It is not, therefore, surprising
that analysts of the reformist Left like Tariq Ali and Noam
Chomsky ended up with the baseless conclusion that the
Left should support the Democratic presidential candidate
in the 2004 elections, 'forgetting' that when the 'progres-
sive' Clinton succeeded Bush senior he went on, as repre-
sentative of the transnational elite, to bombard Yugoslavia,
while preparing the ground for the invasion and occupation
of Iraq through a crushing and murderous embargo and re-
morseless bombardments! Similarly, the same Left went
out of its way to support the "progressive" Barack Obama
in the 2008 Presidential elections, who, immediately after
taking over, began bombing intensively Pakistan, as the
base of Taliban fighters, and sent another 17,000 US sol-
diers to Afghanistan in order to continue the "good work"
of the transnational elite there and, of course, he and
Hillary Clinton sided blatantly with the Zionists against
the Palestinian liberation struggle and never condemned
the recent Gaza massacre!

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[25] T. Fotopoulos, "The Myth of the Clash of Fundamentalisms", *The
International Journal of Inclusive Democracy,* Vol. 1, No. 4 (July 2005)

3. Ideological globalisation and the mass media

Economic and political globalisation is inevitably accompanied by a kind of ideological globalisation, a transnational ideology that legitimises them. In other words, an ideology to justify, on the one hand, the minimisation of the state's role in the economy –which, in a market economy system implies a corresponding maximisation of the role of the market and private capital– and, on the other, the decrease of national sovereignty, which complements the corresponding decrease of economic sovereignty implied by economic globalisation. The core, therefore, of ideological globalisation consists of two basic "dogmas": the dogma of *limited economic sovereignty* and the dogma of *limited national sovereignty*.

According to the former dogma, capitalist neoliberal globalisation imposed by the international economic organisations (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organisation) on all their members –by directly or indirectly forcing them to 'liberate' their commodity, capital and labour markets– is, supposedly, to the benefit of all, as it leads to more efficient growth, cheaper goods and services, etc. However, the 'liberation' of markets in conditions of economic inequality also implies an even greater concentration of economic power at the hands of a few and at the expense of most. It, therefore, implies an even greater concentration of income and wealth, endangering the economic survival, if not the very physical survival, of billions of people all over the world. Still, this is just considered the 'collateral damage' of globalisation!

Similarly, according to the latter dogma, there are certain universal values which should have priority over national sovereignty. Thus, when, in the transnational elite's perception, universal values like that of 'democracy' (as defined by the same elite –no relation to the classical

conception of it!) are violated, then, the international organisations (UN Security Council, NATO, etc.) which express the will of the 'international community' –read the transnational elite– or, if necessary the transnational elite itself headed by the US elite, should impose them with every available means, irrespective of national sovereignty considerations. The core of this new ideology is the doctrine of *'limited' sovereignty* which is used to 'justify' military interventions/attacks against any 'rogue' regimes or political organisations and movements. According to this doctrine, there are certain universal values that should take priority over other values, like that of national sovereignty. The five centuries-old concept of unlimited sovereignty is therefore completely abolished in the NWO. And yet, unlimited sovereignty was a principle which nations that participated in the drafting of the UN charter agreed to limit only as regards their right to wage war in case of an attack, in exchange for a promise that the Security Council provide collective security on their behalf (an arrangement blatantly violated by the US's 'war' against Afghanistan and Iraq).

As it was hinted above, the role of the centre-Left and the mainstream Greens as the main promoters of the new transnational ideology has played a vital part in justifying the 'wars' of the transnational elite through the doctrine of limited sovereignty. This is not difficult to explain in view of the fact that both the centre-Left and the mainstream Greens have already fully adopted the New World Order in its economic and political aspects. Thus, all major European centre-Left parties (Germany, Britain, France, Italy, etc.) have already adopted the capitalist neoliberal globalisation. Similarly, mainstream Greens have long ago abandoned any ideas about radical economic changes and have adopted instead a kind of 'eco-social-liberalism' that amounts to some version of 'Green capitalism'. It was

therefore, hardly surprising that the centre-Left endorsed enthusiastically all four 'wars' of the transnational elite, whereas the mainstream Greens, who, at the beginning of the 1990s, were concerned about the ecological implications of the Gulf War, by the end of the decade were dedicated supporters of the war against Yugoslavia, and today have fully endorsed the 'war against terrorism'!

The Mass Media, particularly the electronic ones, play a crucial role in the manipulation of popular opinion, either by minimising the significance of the elites' crimes, or by distorting and cutting off the events from their historical context. This is of course not surprising given the crucial role of the Mass Media in the creation of the subjective conditions for neoliberal globalisation itself[26]. This has been achieved through the direct promotion of the neoliberal agenda:

- by the ideological degradation of the economic role of the state;
- by the ideological attack against the 'dependence' on the state, which the welfare state supposedly creates;
- by identifying freedom with the *freedom of choice*, which is supposedly achieved through the liberation of markets, etc.

At the same time, the creation of the neoliberal conditions at the institutional level had generated the objective conditions for the Mass Media to play the aforementioned role. This was, because the deregulation and liberalisation of markets and the privatisation of state TV in many European countries had created the conditions for homogenisation through internal and external competition.

[26] See T.Fotopoulos, 'Mass media, Culture and Democracy', *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 5, No. 1 (March 1999).

It is not accidental anyway that major media tycoons like Murdoch in the Anglo-Saxon world, Kirsch in Germany, or Berlusconi in Italy have also been among the main exponents of the neoliberal globalisation agenda.

4. Cultural globalisation

As is well known, the establishment of the market economy implied sweeping aside traditional cultures and values. This process was accelerated in the twentieth century with the spreading all over the world of the market economy and its offspring the growth economy. As a result, today, there is an intensive process of cultural homogenisation at work, which not only rules out any directionality towards more complexity, but in effect is making culture simpler, with cities becoming more and more alike, people all over the world listening to the same music, watching the same soap operas on TV, buying the same brands of consumer goods, etc.

The flourishing of neoliberal globalisation in the last twenty years or so, following the collapse of the social democratic consensus, has further enhanced this process of cultural homogenisation. This is the inevitable outcome of the liberalisation and de-regulation of markets and the consequent intensification of commercialisation of culture. As a result, traditional communities and their cultures are disappearing all over the world, and people are converted into consumers of a mass culture produced in the advanced capitalist countries and particularly the USA.

Thus, the recent emergence of a sort of *"cultural" nationalism,* in many parts of the world, expresses a desperate attempt to keep a cultural identity in the face of market homogenisation through neoliberal globalisation. But, cultural nationalism is devoid of any real meaning in

an electronic environment, where 75% of international communications flow is controlled by a small number of multinationals. In other words, cultural imperialism today does not need, as in the past, a gunboat diplomacy to integrate and absorb diverse cultures. The marketisation of the communications flow has already established the preconditions for the downgrading of cultural diversity into a kind of superficial differentiation akin to a folklorist type. Furthermore, it is indicative that today's 'identity movements', like those in Western Europe (from the Flemish to the Lombard and from the Scots to the Catalans), which demand autonomy as the best way to preserve their cultural identity, in fact, express their demand for individual and social autonomy in a distorted way. The distortion arises from the fact that the marketisation of society has undermined the community values of reciprocity, solidarity and co-operation in favour of the market values of competition and individualism. As a result, the demand for cultural autonomy is not founded today on community values which enhance co-operation with other cultural communities but, instead, on market values which encourage tensions and conflicts with them. In this connection, the current neo-racist explosion in Europe is directly relevant to the effectual undermining of community values by neoliberalism, as well as to the growing inequality and poverty following the rise of the neoliberal consensus.

Finally, one should not underestimate the political implications of the commercialisation and homogenisation of culture. The escapist role traditionally played by Hollywood films has now acquired a universal dimension, through the massive expansion of TV culture and its almost full monopolisation by the Hollywood subculture. Every single TV viewer in Nigeria, India, China or Russia now dreams of the American way of life, as seen on TV serials (which, being relatively inexpensive and glamorous, fill the

TV programmes of most TV channels all over the world) and thinks in terms of the competitive values imbued by them. The collapse of existing socialism has perhaps more to do with this cultural phenomenon, as anecdotal evidence indicates, than one could imagine. As various TV documentaries have shown, people in Eastern European countries, in particular, thought of themselves as some kind of 'abnormal' compared with what Western TV has established as the 'normal'. In fact, many of the people participating in the demonstrations to bring down those regimes frequently referred to this 'abnormality', as their main incentive for their political action.[27]

In this problematique, one may criticise the kind of cultural relativism supported by some in the Left, according to which almost all cultural preferences could be declared as rational (on the basis of some sort of rationality criteria), and therefore all cultural choices deserve respect, if not admiration, given the constraints under which they are made. But, obviously, the issue is not whether our cultural choices are rational or not. Nor is the issue to assess 'objectively' our cultural preferences as right or wrong. The real issue is how to make a *choice of values* which we think is compatible with the kind of society we wish to live in and then make the *cultural choices* which are compatible with these values. This is because the transition to a future society based on alternative values presupposes that the effort to create an alternative culture should start now, in parallel with the effort to establish the new institutions compatible with the new values.

On the basis of the criterion of consistency between

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[27] This psychological need to conform and be "normal" at the social level, in general, and the political level, in particular, was beautifully portrayed by playrights like Ionesco (*Rhinoceros*, 1959) and film directors like Bertolucci (*The Conformist,* 1970).

our cultural choices and the values of a truly democratic society, one could delineate a way beyond post-modern relativism and distinguish between 'preferable' and 'non-preferable' cultural choices. So, all those cultural choices involving films, videos, theatrical plays, etc. which promote the values of the market economy and particularly competition for money, individualism, consumerist greed, as well as violence, racism, sexism, etc. should be shown to be non-preferable, and people should be encouraged to avoid them. On the other hand, all those cultural choices, which involve the promotion of the community values of mutual aid, solidarity, sharing and equality for all (irrespective of race, sex, ethnicity) should be promoted as preferable.

5. Globalisation and the multidimensional crisis

Ten years after the publication of TID the multidimensional crisis has significantly worsened in almost all its main aspects. This becomes obvious by an examination of its main dimensions.

The economic dimension

As regards the economic dimension of the crisis, it can easily be shown that it is the concentration of economic power, as a result of commodity relations and the grow-or-die dynamic of the market economy, which has led to a chronic economic crisis –a crisis that today is expressed, mainly, by a huge concentration of economic power. This is shown by the enormous and constantly growing income/wealth gap that separates not only the North from the South, but also the economic elites and the privileged social groups from the rest of society in every single society, all over the world.

In fact, even the statistical tricks[28] used by the World Bank and other similar organisations to show the supposed significant reduction of poverty in the world, as a result of neoliberal globalisation, cannot hide the fact that the huge income gap between North and South, and within them, is constantly growing in the era of neoliberal globalisation.

The North, in particular, has yet to recover from the crisis that surfaced in the mid-1970s, as a result of the fundamental contradiction that was created by the internationalisation of the market economy and the parallel expansion of statism, in the sense of active state control aiming at determining the level of economic activity, as well as providing an expanding welfare state. The transnational elite, which began flourishing in the context of the internationalisation of the market economy process, embarked in an effort to shrink the state's economic role and to free and deregulate markets –a process, which has already had devastating consequences on the majority of the population in the North. This drastic reduction in statism turned the clock back to the period before the mixed economy and Keynesian policies were used to create 'capitalism with a human face'. The result was an initial huge upsurge of open unemployment, followed by today's period of massive low-paid employment, due to both the liberalisation of labour markets and a determined effort by the political elites to reduce open unemployment, which carried a high political cost and completely discredited the market/growth economy.

This is particularly evident in the USA, the 'new economy' par excellence, and the UK, which has been ruled by a succession of neoliberal and social liberal governments for the past 30 years or so. This experience has already been

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[28] See T. Fotopoulos, "The Elimination of poverty", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, vol.4, no.1, (January 2008).

reproduced all over the North, particularly after the collapse of the alternative 'Rhineland' model of 'social market' capitalism in Germany and the introduction of similar policies all over the EU through a series of Treaties. The fierce competition among the two main economic blocs, (EU and NAFTA), and between them and China/ Japan and, increasingly, India can safely be predicted to create everywhere conditions, not so much of massive *open* unemployment, but of low paid employment in the context of 'flexible' labour markets. In Britain, for instance, as Steve Fleetwood[29] of Lancaster University pointed out, 'what the UK's flexibility generates are poor jobs, maybe even a new kind of underemployment (...) The UK is not so much solving the problem of unemployment as transforming it into a different one: the problem of poor quality employment'. At the same time, in the South, an even greater concentration of economic power takes place at the hands of the privileged social groups that benefit from globalisation, (as a result of their position in the emerging new local division of labour, which is now an integral part of the international division of labour), at the expense of the rest of society. This is particularly obvious in the new growth 'miracles' of China and India, where inequality is now bigger than ever.

It is, therefore, obvious that the decisive element in the economic crisis of the neoliberal globalisation era consists of the fact that the system of the market economy is not *inherently* capable of creating an economically even world. In other words, it is the dynamics of the market economy

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[29] Steve Fleetwood, 'Less unemployment, but more bad employment', *The Guardian*, 13/9/1999.

itself,[30] in association with the role of the state[31] in supporting this dynamics, which has led, first, to the historical concentration of economic power within each country and, then, to the present internationalised market economy characterised by a gigantic concentration of economic power at the world level, mostly in the hands of the TNCs, and a corresponding concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the transnational elite.[32] Therefore, the outcome of the present universalisation of the market/growth economy in its present neoliberal form –necessitated by the opening of the markets due to the massive expansion of transnational corporations in the last quarter of a century or so– is the creation of a **_bipolar world_** consisting of:

- one world, which includes the privileged social groups created by globalisation, either in the North or the South; and,
- another world, which is left out of the supposedly

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[30] See T. Fotopoulos, "The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy", (Athens: Gordios, 2005), ch. 1.

[31] This is in contrast to ill-conceived modern 'anarchist' approaches, which blame for everything the state, ignoring the crucial role of the dynamics of the market economy itself in bringing about a particular form of social structure, which then led to the concrete form of modern state whose main role is to promote and reinforce this dynamics. According to one of these approaches (indirectly also adopted by Chomsky—see T. Fotopoulos, _Chomsky's capitalism, Albert's meta-capitalism and Inclusive Democracy,_ Athens, 2004) it is only 20th century corporate capitalism that has to be blamed for the present situation and not the free market ! For an economistic type of 'anarchist' analysis, blaming exclusively the state for the present situation and adopting a 'free market anticapitalism'(sic!), see, e.g. Kevin A. Carson, _Mutualist Political Economy_ (2006).

[32] See T. Fotopoulos, 'Globalisation, the reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation 'Movement'', _Democracy & Nature_, (Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 2001).

'universal' benefits of neoliberal globalisation, which includes the marginalised majority of the world population, either in the North or the South.

The inherent incapability of the market economy system and its political complement, representative 'democracy' (which is the State form, developed in modernity as the most compatible with the market economy system), to create an economically even world is the direct result of the fact that the concentration of economic power and the parallel growing inequality all over the world are not just consequences, but also *preconditions* for the reproduction of the market/growth economy. In other words, there is an absolute natural barrier that makes impossible the universalisation of the consumption standards which have been created in the North during the capitalist growth process.

Finally, as I tried to show elsewhere,[33] the ultimate cause of the present deep global recession–as a result of the financial crisis that began September 2008, which could well end up with a new "Great Depression"-–is again the huge concentration of income and wealth following the opening and deregulation of world markets. It was this huge concentration of economic power at the hands of the "new North", either in Wall Street and the City of London or in the sovereign funds of China, India etc., as a result of the opening and deregulation of capital and commodity markets and the creation of flexible labour markets, which led to the creation of a huge financial surplus. Next, the disposal of this financial surplus, through the use of dubious financial practices that were made possible by the deregulation of financial markets, created the huge financial

[33] see T. Fotopoulos, "The myths about the economic crisis, the reformist Left and economic democracy", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (October 2008).

bubbles that effectively undermined the capitalist banking and financial sectors, leading to an unprecedented financial crisis. Finally, it was this financial crisis, which, with the help of globalisation, has ended up with the present global economic crisis.

The political dimension

A similar process of concentration of political power at the hands of political elites has also been going on during the same period, as from the last quarter of the 18th century, when the 'Founding Fathers' of the US Constitution, literally invented representative 'democracy' –an idea without any historical precedent in the ancient world since, until that time, democracy had the classical Athenian meaning of the sovereignty of *demos*, in the sense of the direct exercise of power by all citizens. It was the dynamics of representative 'democracy' that had led to a corresponding concentration of political power.

Thus, the concentration of political power in the hands of parliamentarians in liberal modernity, has led to an even higher degree of concentration in the hands of governments and the leadership of 'mass' parties in statist modernity, at the expense of parliaments. In the present neoliberal modernity, the combined effect of the dynamics of the market economy and representative 'democracy' has led to the conversion of politics into statecraft, with think tanks designing policies and their implementation. Thus, a small clique around the prime minister (or the President) concentrates all effective political power in its hands, particularly in major market economies that are significant parts of the transnational elite and even more so in those governed by a two-party political system (US, UK, Germany, Australia, etc). Furthermore, the continuous decline of the State's economic sovereignty is being accompanied by the

parallel transformation of the public realm into pure administration. A typical example is the European Central Bank, which has taken control of the Euro and makes crucial decisions about the economic life of millions of citizens, independently of political control.

So, a 'crisis in politics' has developed in present neoliberal modernity that undermines the foundations of representative 'democracy' and is expressed by several symptoms which, frequently, take the form of an implicit or explicit questioning of fundamental political institutions (parties, electoral contests, etc.). Such symptoms are the significant and usually rising abstention rates in electoral contests, particularly in USA and UK, the explosion of discontent in the form of frequently violent riots, the diminishing numbers of party members, the fact that respect for professional politicians has never been at such a low level, with the recent financial scandals in countries like USA, UK, Italy, France, Spain, Greece and elsewhere simply reaffirming the belief that politics, for the vast majority of the politicians –liberals and social democrats alike– is just a job, i.e. a way to make money and enhance social status.

An important element of the crisis in politics, in the context of the present neoliberal consensus, is the fact that the old ideological differences between the Left and the Right have disappeared. Elections have become beauty contests between 'charismatic' leaders and the party machines backing them, which fight each other to attract the attention of the electorate, in order to implement policies constituting variations of the same theme: maximisation of the freedom of market forces at the expense of both the welfare state (which is phased out) and the state's commitment to full employment (which is irrevocably abandoned). The remaining 'pockets of resistance' to this process have been disappearing fast: from Germany and now to France which, after the election of Sarkozy, is set to follow the

same path. *The German Ifo Institute* put the problem bla-
tantly in a recent paper when it stressed that "Europe's
welfare system (…) will not survive globalisation. It may
take another decade or two for politicians to understand
this, but in the end they will. There is no way to turn back
the tide of history".[34]

Therefore, the growing apathy towards politics does not
mainly reflect a general indifference regarding social is-
sues, as a result, say, of consumerism, but a growing lack
of confidence, particularly among weaker social groups, in
traditional political parties and their ability to solve social
problems. It is not accidental anyway that the higher ab-
stention rates in electoral contests usually occur among
the lower income groups, which fail to see anymore any
significant difference between Right and Left, i.e. between
neoliberal and social-liberal parties respectively.

The decline of the socialist project, after the collapse
of both social democracy and 'actually existing socialism',
has contributed significantly to the withdrawal of many,
particularly young people, from traditional politics. Thus,
the collapse of 'socialist' statism in the East, instead of
functioning as a catalyst for the building of a new non-
authoritarian type of politics which would develop further
the ideas of May 1968, simply led to a general trend –par-
ticularly noticeable among students, young academics and
others– towards a post-modern conformism and the rejec-
tion of any 'universalist' antisystemic project. The rest, in-
cluding most of the underclass, who are the main victims
of the neoliberal internationalised economy, have fallen
into political apathy and an unconscious rejection of es-
tablished society –a rejection that has, usually, taken the

[34] Hamish Mcrae, 'Why there will be many more angry voters and
hung elections in Europe', *Independent*, 12/4/2006.

form of an explosion of crime and drug abuse, and sometimes violent riots.

Still, Seattle, Genoa, Paris, Athens, let alone the massive movements in various countries in Latin America, which sometimes have led to insurrections with clear antisystemic demands (e.g. Argentina), are clear indications of the fact that today's youth is not apathetic towards politics (conceived in the classical meaning of the word as self-management), but only with respect to what passes as politics today, i.e. the system which allows a social minority (professional politicians) to determine the quality of life of every citizen. In other words, what has transformed politics into statecraft, and turned many people away from this sort of 'politics', is the growing realisation of the concentration of political power in the hands of professional politicians and various 'experts' (as a result of the dynamic of representative 'democracy').

The social dimension

The 'growth economy' has already created a 'growth society', the main characteristics of which are consumerism, privacy, alienation and the subsequent disintegration of social ties. The growth society, in turn, inexorably leads toward a 'non-society', that is, the substitution of atomised families and individuals for society –a crucial step to barbarism. The social crisis has been aggravated by the expansion of the market economy into all sectors of social life, in the context of its present internationalised form. It is, of course, well known that the market is the greatest enemy of traditional values. It is not, therefore, surprising that the social crisis is more pronounced in precisely those countries where marketisation has been well advanced. This becomes evident by the fact that neither campaigns of the 'back to basics' type (Britain), nor the growth of religious,

mystic and other similar tendencies (United States) have had any restraining effect on the most obvious symptoms of the social crisis: the explosion of crime and drug abuse that has, already, led many states to effectively abandon their 'war against drugs'.[35]

In Britain, for instance, it took 30 years for the crime rate to double, from 1 million incidents in 1950 to 2.2 million in 1979. However, in the 1980s, the crime rate has more than doubled, and it reached the 5 million mark in the 1990s to approach the 6 million mark at present! The ruling elites respond to the explosion of crime by building new jails. Thus, the prison population in England and Wales increased from 64,000 at the beginning of the decade to 77,000 a couple of years ago and almost 82,000 at the end of 2007,[36] whilst recent Home Office projections forecasting a jail population of up to 90,000 by 2010 seem already outdated![37] Similarly, it took the United States 200 years to raise its prison population to a million, but only the last 10 years to raise it to over two million. Thus, according to the latest estimates, the number of prisoners in federal and local jails grew to 2.3 million, out of the country's adult population of 229.8 million, with China coming poor second with 1.5 million prisoners out of a population which is 5.5 times higher than that of the USA. This means that one in 99 adults is behind bars in the USA turning the "land of

[35] See T. Fotopoulos, 'Limiting the Damage: the Elites' New Approach to the Drug Problem', *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (July 2007) see also T. Fotopoulos, *Drugs: Beyond penalisation and liberalisation,* (in Greek) (Athens: Eleftheros Typos, 1999).
[36] Ian Loader, 'We lock people up with no thought and to little effect', *The Guardian,* 23/11/07.
[37] Sam Jones, 'More than half of jails in England are too full', *The Guardian,* 13/8/2005.

the free" rapidly into the land of more prisoners on Earth, with 750 out of 100,000 of its residents incarcerated![38]

So, the concentration of economic power, as a result of the marketisation of the economy, has not only increased the economic privileges of the privileged minority. It has also increased its insecurity. This is why the new over-class increasingly isolates itself in luxury ghettos. At the same time, marketisation and in particular the flexible labour market, has increased job insecurity –a phenom-enon that today affects everybody, apart from the very few in the overclass. No wonder the *International Labour Organisation Report 2000* has found that the stress levels in advanced market economies have reached record levels, because of the institutionalisation of flexible labour mar-kets that increased employers' pressures for greater labour productivity.

The ecological dimension

Last, but not least, is the ecological dimension of the crisis, which presently constitutes perhaps the clearest example of the worsening crisis. The upsetting of ecological sys-tems, the widespread pollution, the threat to renewable resources, as well as the running out of non-renewable re-sources and, in general, the rapid downgrading of the envi-ronment and the quality of life[39] have made the ecological

[38] Ed Pilkington, "US prison population hits new high: 1 in 100 adults jailed", *The Guardian*, 1/3/08.
[39] An important aspect of this deterioration in the quality of life is the 'biological crisis', aptly described by Dr. Coumentakis in this volume. Also, the catastrophic effects of the industrialisation of the food production chain on animal welfare have been brilliantly de-scribed by Steve Best and other supporters of the Animal Liberation Movement. See on the significance of this movement the dialogue on

implications of economic growth manifestly apparent in the past 30 years. But, it is the greenhouse effect –as well as the consequent climate change– which has now made abundantly clear to all the degree of deterioration of the environment. In fact, the recent publication of the report by the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) finally brought the ecological crisis to the status of universal front-page news. The catastrophic climatic change, threatening us all because of the greenhouse effect, becomes obvious once we take into account that, even if we take the best-case scenario of a 2.2C rise in temperature this century (while a 4.4C rise is much more likely!), this would mean –according to the European Commission– that an extra 11,000 people in Europe will die within a decade, and from 2071 onwards there will be 29,000 extra deaths a year in southern Europe alone, on top of 27,000 extra deaths in northern Europe. However, the Report in effect simply confirms –using indisputable evidence– the worst predictions of the anti-systemic Left and ecologists which, until now, have been dismissed by the elites and the reformists as 'scaremongering'!

And yet, the elites, unable to take effective measures within the neoliberal globalisation framework to even reduce the effects of the crisis, have resorted, through the mass media controlled by them, to an entire mythology on the causes of the deepening ecological crisis and the ways out of it. This mythology is being reproduced, not only by the political and economic elites, but also by reformists in the Left and the Green movement, who declare that 'the crisis belongs to all' (governments and

animal liberation in *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (June 2006).

civil societies alike).[40] Thus, according to the main myth reproduced by the system, it is 'human activity', or 'man' in general, that are responsible for the greenhouse effect. But, it is now indisputable that the ecological crisis has not been caused by human activity in general, but by the human activity of the last two hundred years or so since the Industrial Revolution. Others argue that it is the Industrial Revolution, as well as industrial civilisation and its values, i.e. what we may call the 'growth economy', which is to blame for the current crisis. But, it can be shown that the rise of the growth economy was not simply the result of changes in values, the imaginary, or ideology, but it was, instead, the result of the dynamics of a concrete economic system in interaction with the outcome of social struggle.

From such myths, which share the characteristic that they all take for granted the present socio-economic system of the capitalist market economy and its offspring, the growth economy, there arises a series of proposals, which supposedly will help us to transcend the deteriorating ecological crisis. The common element of such proposals is that the crisis can be overcome as long as, on the one hand, governments take various measures to restrict the greenhouse emissions, encourage renewable sources of energy and adopt various technological fixes and, on the other, global civil society changes its values and way of life.

In fact, however, the cause of the greenhouse effect is the very pattern of living, implied by the growth economy, which in turn has been determined by the dynamic of the market economy and, in particular, the concentration of income and wealth between and within countries, the consequent urban concentration, –the car culture and so on. But,

[40] See T. Fotopoulos, 'The Ecological Crisis as Part of the Present Multi-dimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy', *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (July 2007).

the pattern of living cannot change through exhortations by the elites and rock concerts, since it is very much conditioned by the very institutional framework that caused the ecological crisis: the system of the market economy and its political complement which led to the present power concentration at all levels.

This brings us to the third part of this survey of recent theoretical developments in the ID project, which examines the reasons for the failure of the old antisystemic movements, as well as for the decline of the "new" antisystemic movements which emerged in the 1960s and the 1970s.

C. ANTISYSTEMIC MOVEMENTS AND TRANSITIONAL STRATEGIES

1. The causes of the decline of antisystemic movements

The nature of traditional antisystemic movements

The starting point of the ID approach on the nature of antisystemic movements[41] is the clear distinction it makes between antisystemic and reformist movements on the basis of their *aims,* rather than (as usually) the *methods* they use. Thus, we define as antisystemic those movements which explicitly aim at the replacement of the main socio-economic institutions and corresponding values with new institutions and values, and, correspondingly, we define as reformist those movements which implicitly or explicitly aim at simply improving the existing institutions

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[41] See T. Fotopoulos, "The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements and the Need for A New Type of Antisystemic Movement Today", *Democracy & Nature*, (Vol. 7, No. 3 (November 2001).

('deepening democracy', better regulating the market economy, etc). It is, therefore, clear that the above differentiation differs from the usual distinction drawn between revolutionary and reformist movements in which the former aim at a rapid, precipitous change of institutions and values, whereas the latter aim at a slow, evolutionary change—a taxonomy based on the means used to achieve social change and not on the goal itself that may, still, be either systemic or reformist.

In the past, movements like the communist and the anarchist ones, were classified as revolutionary, in contrast to movements like the social-democratic one which was characterised as reformist as it was rejecting revolution as a way of imposing social change. But, although the classification of a movement as a revolutionary or, alternatively, a reformist one, during the 19th and most of the 20th century, would give the same results as our own distinction between antisystemic and reformist movements, this is no longer so in the neoliberal era of modernity. Today, as we shall see next, movements, that may still call themselves communist or anarchist, have converted into pure reformist movements with regards to their intermediate—and sometimes even their ultimate—aims, even though they may still keep the rhetoric of revolution. On the other hand, it is possible to envisage an antisystemic movement which, aiming at a radical rupture in the system and revolutionary changes in institutions and values, uses non-violent methods for this goal and resorts to violence only in case that it is attacked by the ruling elites, in the transition towards the new society. This is the case of the Inclusive Democracy (ID) project, which aims at a systemic change through the establishment of new institutions (and corresponding new values) that would reintegrate society with the economy, polity and Nature.

The main point stressed by the ID approach is that in

order to explain the rise of antisystemic movements in the 19th and 20th centuries and their subsequent decline in the era of neoliberal modernity, we have to refer not just to the change in the systemic parameters over time, but also to the very nature of these movements. The fact, in particular, that traditional antisystemic movements had adopted a one-dimensional conception about the 'system', which typically saw one form of power as the basis of all other forms of power, is crucial in understanding the nature of these movements as basically challenging a particular form of power rather than power itself. Thus, Marxists define the 'system' as "the world system of historical capitalism which has given rise to a set of antisystemic movements",[42] based on economic classes and status-groups aiming at the replacement of capitalism with socialism. In other words, for Marxists, the defining element of the system is the mode of production –an element which refers to the distribution of economic power[43] in society– which, in turn, determines, or at least conditions, the distribution of other forms of power. On the other hand, for anarchists, the defining element is a political one, the State, which expresses par excellence the unequal distribution of political power[44] and

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[42] Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins & Immanuel Wallerstein, *Antisystemic movements*, (London: Verso, 1989), p. 1.
[43] Economic power is identified not with concentration of income and wealth but with the capacity of a set of social groups to control the economic process and particularly the production and distribution processes.
[44] Political power is defined as the capacity of a set of social groups to control the political process, which is defined in a broad sense to include political institutions (government, parliament, etc.) as well as cultural/ideological institutions (education, church, mass media, art, publishing) and repressive institutions (army, police, prisons and so on).

determines, or decisively conditions, the distribution of other forms of power.

However, today, we face the end of this kind of 'traditional' antisystemic movement which used to challenge one form of power as the basis of all other forms of power. The question is not anymore to challenge one form of power or another, but to challenge the inequality in the distribution of every form of power, in other words, power relations and structures themselves. It is this collapse of the traditional antisystemic movements which raises the need for a new type of antisystemic movement, as the ID approach stresses.

The change in the systemic parameters

There is little doubt that the traditional antisystemic movements, both old (socialist and anarchist) and 'new' (Green, feminist, etc.) are in a stage of serious, if not terminal, decay. Although these movements are still around, they have predominantly lost their antisystemic character and continue to exist either as explicitly reformist movements (most communist parties, many anarchist currents and all the 'new movements') or as supposedly antisystemic moments, which however do not raise any explicit antisystemic demands, adopting instead the familiar 'popular front' practice of the Left around a program of reformist demands (Trotskyites and others). In fact, the only significant anti-systemic forces until recently, which directly challenged the 'system' (i.e. the market economy and representative 'democracy') used to be some currents within the anti-globalisation movement in the broad sense, which functioned outside the clearly reformist *World Social Forum*. The issue arising, therefore, is how we may explain this effective collapse of antisystemic movements today

and how we may assess the perspectives for a new type of antisystemic movement for the 21st century.

According to the ID approach, it is the change in the systemic parameters in the post Second World War modernity, which could explain the present decline of antisystemic movements. Such changes are, on the one hand, the changes in the class structure (and their political implications) as a result of the shift from statist to neoliberal modernity and, on the other, the parallel ideological crisis and the related rise of postmodernism and irrationalism.

a. *Changes in the class structure and their implications*
First, the shift from statist to neoliberal modernity had very important implications on the class structures, particularly of the North, but also of the South, although the peripheral character of the market economy in the South has led to the creation of some significant differentiations on their class structures with respect to those of the North. The neoliberal internationalisation of the market economy, in combination with the significant technological changes (information revolution), marking the transition of the market economy to a post-industrial phase, have led to the creation of new 'class divisions' both at the economic and the non-economic levels, as it was shown above. At the economic level, the combined effect of these developments was a drastic change in the employment structure which reduced massively the size of the manual working class. For instance, in the 'Group of 7' countries (minus Canada), the proportion of the active population employed in manufacturing fell by over a third between the mid-seventies and the mid-nineties – a fact which had significant implications on the strength and significance of trade unions and social-democratic parties. At the same time, new 'classes' have been created on either side of the class spectrum as a result of the marketisation process of neoliberal

modernity: at one end, a new **underclass** consisting mainly of the unemployed and those of the inactive and the under-employed (part-timers, casual workers, etc.) who fall under the poverty line and, at the other end, a new **overclass** consisting of the upper class and the upper middle class. Between these two poles are the *'middle groups', which*, in the North, constitute the majority of the population.

Inevitably, the effects of these changes in the systemic parameters were significant not only at the economic level, but also at the political level. Social divisions based on gender, race and other 'identity' categories, (e.g. the national identity), which throughout modernity did not take the form of class divisions in the Marxist sense, but were nevertheless simmering, became even more important in the era of neoliberal modernity, due to the changes I mentioned above. Thus, hierarchical structures, like patriarchal family structures, not only remained unaffected by the rise of classes, but, in effect, were interacting with class structures and became a basic means of reproducing them. Similarly, the rise of the nation-state in early modernity set the foundations for conflicts of nationalist character. Finally, a new development in late modernity, the ecological crisis –the inevitable outcome of the growth economy– added one more 'transclass' problem: the problem of the environment and quality of life. These developments at the non-economic level are crucial in explaining the rise of the 'new social movements' (ecological, feminist, 'identity' movements and so on) in neoliberal modernity.

However, the fact that dominance and conflict are being socially constructed today around such diverse focuses as racism, sexual preferences, gender discrimination, environmental degradation, citizen participation, ethnic self-determination and religious commitments, rather than economic class issues, does not mean of course the end of class divisions, as some have assumed. What it does

mean is that the class struggle (which may perhaps better be called '***the social struggle***' to take into account the conflict arising from all forms of unequal distribution of power), is not anymore –exclusively or even mainly– about ownership of the means of production, but about control of oneself at the economic but, also, at the political and the broader social level. This is a matter which, directly or indirectly, raises the issue of democracy, as it was clearly expressed first in May 1968 and today again with the emergence of various movements around the world (Commons movements, the antiglobalisation movement, etc.).

b.*The ideological crisis and the effects of the rise of irrationalism and postmodernism*
Second, the above changes in the structural parameters were accompanied by a parallel serious ideological crisis, which put into question not just the political ideologies, (what postmodernists pejoratively call 'emancipatory metanarratives'), or even 'objective' reason, but reason itself, as shown by the present flourishing of irrationalism in all its forms. Thus, not ignoring some positive aspects of postmodernism, one may argue that *postmodernism* and *irrationalism* (the rise of which is not irrelevant to the flourishing of postmodernism) have become the 'two curses' which constitute the most serious ideological enemies of any kind of antisystemic movement. In fact, as the ID approach stresses, the influence of postmodernism and irrationalism is crucial in explaining the loss of the antisystemic nature of both the old and the new social movements.

Having said this however, one should not ignore the fact that religious fundamentalist movements in the South, today, play a significant role against the New World Order. Yet, such movements could hardly be characterised as antisystemic (let alone democratic, given their espousal of religion–the very definition of heteronomy!) as they are

not against the system of the market economy itself, nor against hierarchical structures at the political and social levels. But, given that the necessary condition for any systemic change is the elementary freedom of a people to determine their own future, it is obvious that the liberation struggle against an occupying force (in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), even if this struggle is carried out by a religious fundamentalist movement, has to be supported by all genuine antisystemic movements all over the world. Despite this obvious conclusion, there are several supposedly antisystemic movements, as we shall see next, which implicitly or explicitly support the New World Order, under the pretext that they cannot support instead fundamentalist movements, or what the transnational elite calls "rogue" regimes–even if such regimes were fighting against their domination by this elite (e.g. the Milosevic or Saddam regimes)! Clearly, the main enemy of any genuine antisystemic movement is the New World Order (as expressed by neoliberal globalisation and representative "democracy"), which is administered by the transnational elite and the dependent on it local elites respectively. When the immense power of the transnational elite and the associated local elites to impose their will on peoples, ends, the struggle to create a real democratic world order beyond any kind of irrationalism, which would be based on the equal distribution of every form of power among all citizens of the world, will begin!

2. The decay of 'old' antisystemic movements

Antisystemic movements are very much a product of modernity. It was the separation of society from polity and the economy, heralded by the modern era, which created –for the first time in History– a 'system' controlled by political

and economic elites. The emergence of correspondingly or-
ganised social movements against the system, i.e. against
the control of political and economic power by elites, was
therefore inevitable.

The two main forms of the 'old' antisystemic movements
were born in the context of the split between statist and
libertarian socialism –a split which reached its climax in
the dispute between Marx and Bakunin within the First
International. Today, almost a century and a half since this
debate, the socialist project is in ruins after the collapse
of both versions of statist socialism (the form of socialism
which has been dominant within the socialist movement
since then), i.e. the 'actually existing socialism' of the East
and social democracy of the West. Furthermore, despite
the fact that libertarian socialism is still untried, (after
the most serious attempt to implement its principles, dur-
ing the Spanish Civil War, was stifled by the fascist hordes,
which were acting under the tolerant eye of Western 'de-
mocracies'), the collapse of the statist version of socialism
has not led to a revival of its libertarian version. Instead,
the institutional framework defined by modernity (i.e. the
market economy and liberal 'democracy') has become uni-
versal; consequently, the chronic multidimensional crisis
(political, economic, ecological, social and cultural) which
arose with the emergence of this institutional framework
has also been universalised and exacerbated.

The cataclysmic event, which led to the final collapse
of socialist statism as an antisystemic movement, was the
passing away of 'actually existing socialism'. Most support-
ers of antisystemic socialist statism, instead of learning
the lessons of the failure of socialist statism, either aban-
doned any antisystemic goals for good, or simply covered
up this choice under the well known 'popular front' strat-
egy around reformist demands. Eric Hobsbawm, the doyen
of Marxist historians, put it clearly when, as early as 1992,

declared the end of the marketless and moneyless 'utopia' of old socialists including Marx: "socialists of all varieties have ceased to believe in the possibility of an entirely non-market economy (…) the debate between liberals and socialists today (…) is about the limits of capitalism and the market uncontrolled by public action".[45]

Today, therefore, most Marxists have joined various forms of postmodernism, rejecting any idea of a 'universalist' antisystemic project. What, however, is ironic-–and, at the same time, disturbing for the future of the alternative libertarian tradition-–is the development of a similar 'pragmatism' among several currents in the libertarian Left. In fact, the decline of the anarchist movement began earlier than that of the socialist statist movement. The last historically significant appearance of this movement was in the Spanish Civil War, when it was subjugated by the fascist forces (often with the significant contribution –for their own reasons– of socialist statists), sealing its fate as a mass antisystemic movement. In the post-war period, if we exclude the events of May 1968, which were more influenced by libertarian democratic ideas rather than by the classical anarchist ideas, the anarchist movement has been fractionalised and marginalized, whereas, lately, significant parts of it are even becoming reformist! All this, at the very moment when, for the first time in History after the split in the First International, the anarchist movement had a real chance to 'take its revenge' and prevail over statist socialism.[46]

In fact, one may argue that perhaps the only anarchist

[45] Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Crisis of today's ideologies', *New Left Review,* No. 192, (March-April 1992, pp. 55-64.
[46] See for a detailed analysis of the decay of the present anarchist movement in T.Fotopoulos, "The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements and the Need for A New Type of Antisystemic Movement Today".

trend which has a clear antisystemic character, in the sense that it tries to build a programmatic antisystemic movement, is Murray Bookchin's *Social Ecology,* sometimes called *Confederal Municipalism*, *Libertarian Municipalism* and, lately, *Communalism* (see the next section for a critique of Communalism). However, these are not the dominant views among American, or generally Anglo-Saxon, anarchists, as Bookchin himself recognised when in his late years explicitly broke with anarchism and unequivocally condemned individualistic anarchism, postmodernism and irrationalism, the main trends in today's anarchism.[47] Another indication of the same bankruptcy is the present flourishing of individualistic anarchism with its offspring 'life-style' anarchism, pragmatic anarchism, etc. Finally, as regards the other major trend within present anarchism, *direct action*, whose major expression used to be in the anti-globalisation 'movement', although it is true that some of the anarchist trends within this movement did raise 'anti-systemic' demands, still, they never functioned as catalysts for the formation of a new democratic movement for systemic change. Instead, the reformist trends within the antiglobalisation movement in the form of the World Social Forum, as we shall see next, eventually prevailed and led to the effectual demise of the entire anti-globalisation movement!

In conclusion, the general picture emerging, as far as post-war anarchism is concerned, is one characterised by the inability or unwillingness of anarchists to build a programmatic movement, with its own antisystemic project, i.e. a *concrete analysis* of the situation and *long term goals and strategy*. This fact constitutes the fundamental cause

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[47] Janet Biehl, "Bookchin Breaks with Anarchism", *Communalism* (Issue 12 # 12, October 2007).

for the present withering away of the anarchist movement as a significant antisystemic movement. Therefore, unless the radical elements within the anarchist movement–which is presently torn between direct action, for its own sake, and life-style anarchism-–manage to overcome their present inability and unwillingness to function as catalysts for a new antisystemic democratic movement (missing in the process the historical chance, that the collapse of the project for statist socialism has created), they are bound to confirm the present trend towards the terminal demise of anarchism as an antisystemic movement.

3. The decline of 'new' antisystemic movements

Whereas the 'old' antisystemic movements were very much the product of 'liberal' and 'statist' modernity, the *'new' social movements* (student, black, feminist, Green), which emerged since the late 1960s, as well as the *antiglobalisation movement* in the 1990s, were correspondingly expressions of late ('neoliberal') modernity. As such, they clearly reflect the changes in the systemic parameters, which I considered above, and in particular the changes in the class structures brought about by the rise of neoliberal modernity, as well as the parallel ideological crisis which was accompanied by the flourishing of postmodernism and irrationalism. Thus, it was the rise of the middle classes in the 1960s and the 1970s, specifically the expansion of the salaried professionals and of women service sector employees, which provided the "objective" basis for the emergence of these movements, particularly the Green and the feminist movements. Also, the influence of the ideological crisis in general, and of postmodernism and irrationalism in particular, was manifested in several ways. Specifically, it was manifested in the rejection of universalist projects

that resulted in the fractionalized character of these move-
ments, in the frequent adoption of reformist demands, as
well as in the irrational elements that characterise the ide-
ology of several currents within these movements.

Yet, there were, also, several 'antisystemic' currents
within the new movements and particularly within the stu-
dent, feminist, black and green movements. However, the
'new' social movements, after reaching their peak in the
1970s up to the mid-1980s, they started to decline not in
the sense of disappearing, but rather in the sense of be-
coming part of established interest-group politics, follow-
ing a trajectory similar to that followed earlier in the last
century by the labour movement. Thus, by the 1990s, the
'new' social movements had been transformed into 'identity
politics,' i.e. the kind of postmodern politics which implies
a turn away from general social, political, and economic
issues towards concerns related to culture and identity. As
a form of postmodern politics, 'identity politics' express
a disdain to modern reductionism, universalism, and es-
sentialism. The decline of the 'new' social movements gave
rise to what some consider an offspring of them, i.e. the
various *Non-Government Organizations* (NGOs) which have
rapidly proliferated in the era of neoliberal modernity.
Yet, NGOs are **not antisystemic** social movements, both
because they are reformist and because they are financed
mostly by the political and economic elites.

The Green movement is a clear example of the above
trends concerning the 'new' social movements. The prom-
ise of the Green movement in the early seventies was of
a new and, predominantly, antisystemic movement that
saw the ecological crisis as the inevitable outcome of the
'growth economy'. In fact, the more radical currents within
the movement viewed the ecological crisis as the by-prod-
uct of the 'grow-or-die dynamic' of the market economy,
whilst others viewed it as the outcome of industrialism and

consumerism. This radical view was contested by the 'real-
ists' within the movement, who blamed the technologies
used, or the prevailing values and the corresponding gov-
ernment policies –as if they were all somehow independent
from the economic system!

However, once this division between *radicals* and *real-
ists*, (in the German Green party it was formalised as the di-
vision between 'fundis' and 'realos'), which roughly corre-
sponded to a division between antisystemic and reformist
currents, ended up with the outright victory of the latter
over the former, the transformation of Green organisations
into 'normal' parliamentary parties or generally reformist
organisations was inevitable. Thus, today, the dominant
trends within the Green movement do not challenge the
fundamental institutions of the market economy and rep-
resentative 'democracy' but, instead, they either adopt the
social-democratic ideology of enhancing the civil society,
embracing various forms of environmentalist reformism
(European Greens) or, alternatively, stress the importance
of changing cultural values, which they consider as being
amenable to change even within the existing institutional
framework (USA). The disgraceful role that the European
Green parties played in NATO's criminal bombing of the
Yugoslavian people,[48] and their involvement in the machi-
nations of the transnational elite to smash the antiglobali-
sation movement,[49] are clear indications of the end of the
Green movement as an antisystemic liberatory force.

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[48] See Takis Fotopoulos, '<u>The First War of the Internationalised Market Economy</u>',
Democracy & Nature, Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 1999), pp. 357-383.
[49] The proposal for the creation of a European riot police, in the
aftermath of Genoa, to smash the antiglobalisation protests, came
from the German government in which the Green party was playing a
crucial role. Furthermore, the European Green parties which shared
governmental power, after the 9/11 attacks, had fully participated

Likewise, the trajectory followed by the feminist movement was very similar to that of the Green movement. Thus, in the same way that the victory of 'realos' over the 'fundis' led to the end of the Green movement as a potentially antisystemic movement, the victory of 'insiders' (i.e. the liberal feminist groups oriented toward gaining position and power within the system) over the 'outsiders' (i.e. the autonomous womens' movements oriented to revolutionary change) led to the end of the feminist movement as a potentially antisystemic movement. Furthermore, in exactly the same way as the decline of the Left in general, which began in the early 1970s, had induced many anarchists to substitute lifestyle for politics and 'spirituality' for rational analysis, the decline of the feminist movement induced many feminists to substitute 'cultural feminism' for radical feminism and spiritualism for rationalism.[50]

In conclusion, there has been such a wide-ranging shift of the political spectre to the Right during the era of neoliberal modernity that, today, there is hardly any movement that could be characterised as antisystemic. Thus, the old social-democratic movements and their political expressions have adopted social-liberalism (i.e. joined the ideology of neoliberal modernity with some minor qualifications) whereas the old anti-systemic Left movements supporting state-socialism have moved to occupy the space left vacant by social-democracy and are now keen supporters of a mixed economy. At the same time, the antisystemic currents within the new social movements have

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in the campaign to curb civil liberties within Europe, as part of the anti-terrorist campaign.

[50] See T. Fotopoulos, "The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements and the Need for A New Type of Antisystemic Movement Today" *Democracy & Nature*, (Vol. 7, No. 3 (November 2001) and a dialogue on this issue in *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (July 2003).

withered away, whereas some anarchist currents, which are still raising antisystemic demands, in no way consti-tute (nor they wish to!) a movement.

In fact, the only significant antisystemic currents which could be found until recently were those within the anti-globalisation 'movement'. However, the antiglobalisation 'movement', which was examined in detail elsewhere,[51] is neither a 'movement' nor an antisystemic one. Briefly:

- it is not a movement, because the heterogeneous nature of those participating in the antiglobalisation activities (who are mainly activists belonging to other movements and organisations –anarchists, communists, Greens, feminists, nationalists, etc.– united by their opposition to neoliberal globalisation), does not allow the formation of a common outlook on society and a common set of values; and,
- it is not an 'antisystemic' movement, because most of those involved do not even see neoliberal globalisation as a systemic phenomenon but, usually, see it as just a matter of policy, if not a capitalist plot and, as such, reversible within the market economy, provided appro-priate pressure is put on the elites.

One could, therefore, foresee (as I did in my 2003 article on antisystemic movements[52]) that the antiglobalisation 'movement' would either be phased out or be transformed into another kind of 'new' social movement, (like, for in-stance, the Green movement), later to be gradually inte-grated within the 'system'. This is particularly so given that

[51] See Takis Fotopoulos, 'Globalisation, the Reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation Movement', *Democracy & Nature* Vol.7, No.2 (July 2001).
[52] see "The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements and the Need for A New Type of Antisystemic Movement Today".

the antisystemic elements within the 'movement', which could potentially function as catalysts for the creation of a true antisystemic movement, did not have any *clear vision* for a future society and therefore a *long-term strategy* and a *short-term program*. In short, the problem was that the antisystemic currents within the antiglobalisation 'movement', either because they were strongly influenced by the postmodern hostility against 'universalist' projects, or, because they preferred direct action for its own sake, were not interested in building an antisystemic movement. Their implicit assumption was that, through direct action and the inevitable state repression, the situation would be revolutionised and then, 'spontaneously', the movement itself would, somehow, generate the analysis needed for the present situation, complete with a clear vision of the structure of future society, the transitional strategy, etc.

Obviously, this was a romantic and historically false view about how societies change, that puts us back to the period before people discovered, as I explained in the first section, that *organised* antisystemic movements are needed to replace a system, and that the majority of the population should have developed a clear antisystemic consciousness, through actually *living* within the institutions of a new society, *before* the actual transition to it takes place. History has taught us that this is the only way to avoid another totalitarian experiment. No wonder that the antisystemic trends within the antiglobalisation movement and the movement itself have now effectively disappeared, exactly at the very moment when the deteriorating global economic crisis has been creating the conditions for the development of a massive antisystemic movement against neoliberal globalisation!

This brings us to the last part of this survey of recent theoretical developments in the ID project which aims, on the one hand, to delineate the ID project from other recent

projects like the autonomy project, social ecology/com-munalism, Parecon, de-growth and ecovillages and, on the other, to make proposals for a new kind of antisystemic movement, whose transitional strategy is based on a par-allel change of institutions and the corresponding values and meanings, within an interacting process that breaks with the past.

D. DELIMITATION OF THE INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY PROJECT FROM RECENT RADICAL PROJECTS

2. The Autonomy project and Inclusive Democracy

Cornelius Castoriadis' project of Autonomy has some sig-nificant similarities with the ID project, but as I attempted to show elsewhere, the differences between them are fun-damental, despite the attempts of some supporters[53] of the Autonomy project to minimise these differences in order to derive a distorted view of the ID project as a kind of a by-product of Castoriadian thought! In fact, however, the ID project represents the **synthesis as well as the transcend-ence of existing traditions** (one of which is the tradition of autonomy) **and movements**. It expresses a synthesis of the classical democratic and socialist traditions, whilst also encompassing the antisystemic trends within contempo-rary movements for emancipation (Greens, feminists and others). As such, the ID project is not a 'model' to be copied, but simply defines the **institutional preconditions** for the

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[53] see my exchange with David Ames Curtis, the editor and English translator of most of Castoriadis' works,,"On a Distorted View of the Inclusive Democracy Project", *Democracy & Nature*, (Volume 5 Number 1, March 1999).

equal distribution of all forms of power, (i.e. for individual and collective autonomy) and at the same time describes how an economy, based on such an institutional frame-work, could function in a way covering the needs of all its citizens.

The Castoriadian vs. the ID economic proposals

Castoriadis never produced a new visualisation of his economic system, consistent with his late project of au-tonomy, leaving the impression that the same economic model, which he formulated in the 1950s for his early so-cialist project, still applied to his new project, despite the obvious differences between the two projects as regards the workers' role in the management of the economy! As I showed elsewhere,[54] in the 1970s, there was a significant shift in Castoriadis' problematique, which involved a move from his notion of socialist workers' self-management to that of an autonomous democratic society. Yet, although he adopted a new conception for a future society, he did not disown his early formulations for a socialist model of workers' management, despite the obvious contradictions created by the significant differences between the citizens' democratic self-management, implied by the Autonomy project of late Castoriadis, and the workers' (self) manage-ment implied by the socialist project of early Castoriadis. However, as I attempted to show in my aforementioned exchange with David Ames Curtis, people in a democracy should take the major decisions to run it not just as produc-ers (which is the idea behind workers' management) but as citizens, which is a much broader category than that of a

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[54] "Towards a Democratic Liberatory Ethics", *Democracy & Nature*, (Volume 8 Number 3, November 2002).

producer. In fact, the late Castoriadis himself seemed to be concerned with this, when he stressed that in services it may not always be possible to create workers' councils based on working unity and a shared life, but, instead, it may be necessary to rely on associations or co-ops based on occupation. However, if we take into account that in today's societies (unlike in the nineteen fifties) the vast majority of the active population is employed in services, the proposal of early Castoriadis for workers' self-management seems not only incompatible with the project of autonomy of late Castoriadis but, also, completely outdated.

Starting, therefore, first with the differences at the economic level between the Autonomy and the ID theoretical projects, if we contrast the early Castoriadis' visualisation of the future economy with that of Inclusive Democracy, there are two major areas of difference between the two types of proposals:

• First, Castoriadis' proposal presupposes a money and real market economy, whereas Inclusive Democracy, following the libertarian tradition, presupposes a marketless and moneyless economy and,

• Second, the allocation of scarce resources in Castoriadis' economy takes place through a socialist planning mechanism, controlled by the decisions of workers' councils, and through a real market based on impersonalised money; on the other hand, the allocation of resources in Inclusive Democracy takes place through a democratic planning mechanism, controlled by the decisions of citizens' assemblies (citizens are in a much better position to express the *general* interest rather than workers) and through an artificial market based on personalised vouchers (or special credit cards).

However, the real market cum money economy,

suggested by Castoriadis, leads to serious problems and contradictions, as it cannot avoid the problems that any real market creates, irrespective of whether it is capitalist or not. Thus, Castoriadis, ignoring the crucial differentiation introduced by Polanyi between the (pre-capitalist) "market" and the (capitalist) "system of market economy", assumes that in the present capitalist system there cannot be a 'genuine' market controlled by society ("where there is capitalism there is no genuine market and where there is a market there can be no capitalism").[55] This of course contradicts the experience of social-democratic statism (which, by the way, Castoriadis contrasts favourably to the present "planetary casino"), which showed that a form of social control of the capitalist market economy, under specific historical conditions, is feasible. So, Castoriadis is presumably unable to grasp that it was not just the private ownership of the means of production, which led to the present system of the internationalised market economy, but the dynamics of the market itself which, in conditions of private ownership of productive resources, will inevitably lead to such a system and that, therefore, the only genuine market, which can exist in an internationalised economy like the present one, is the present system of neoliberal globalisation.[56] In other words, competition develops in any real market—-and not just in a capitalist pseudo-market, as Castoriadis seems (erroneously) to assume-–and it is the combination of the market with the commodification of the means of production that has led

[55] see C. Castoriadis, "Done and To Be Done" in *The Castoriadis Reader* (ed. by David Ames Curtis) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 412.
[56] see T. Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, (London/New York: Cassell/Continuum, 1997), ch. 1.

to the present system of the capitalist market economy, and not just the latter alone[57].

Furthermore, the Castoriadian model, in order to avoid the huge inequalities that the dynamics of a real market will inevitably create, has to assume wage equality –an arrangement, which ignores the huge inequalities in satisfaction drawn from various types of work. Thus, in the Castoriadian system, the miner and the dustman, who can draw a very limited –if any–satisfaction from their work, are rewarded the same as the actor and the university professor, who can draw a much higher degree of satisfaction from their work. The consequence of such a complete disregard for citizens' desires, under the guise of the 'equality' established by equal wages, is that the proposed economic system ends up with no automatic mechanism at all for the allocation of work! This is because equal wages, in practice, would either imply the need for some kind of external force, or the compulsory rotation of tasks, so that some could be 'persuaded' to do the necessary work for society's survival, which inevitably involves also arduous or boring tasks. In contrast, the ID proposal aims at the full satisfaction of citizens' basic and non-basic needs and the parallel meeting of their real desires as regards the kind of work they wish to do, without any external compulsion and social waste. [58]

The significance of 'subjective' factors vs. 'objective' factors in the Castoriadian system and the ID

But, even more important differences between ID and Castoriadis' Autonomy project arise at the *philosophical*

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[57] ibid.
[58] ibid., ch. 6.

level. As I showed elsewhere,[59] although both projects agree on the proposition that it was the outcome of the social struggle that determined, in each historical period, the nature and main characteristics of modernity, the *controversial issue* is what was the conditioning influence of 'objective' versus 'subjective' factors, as regards the final outcome of this struggle. For Marxists, objective factors, like changes in technology, play a crucial role in this outcome, if they do not determine History itself ('in the last instance'). On the other hand, for supporters of the autonomy/democratic tradition like Castoriadis, subjective factors, such as the 'social imaginary', play an equally crucial role leading to an indeterminate outcome.

There is no doubt, of course, that 'objective' factors were at work during the entire history of the market economy system, although not in the rigid sense assumed by the Marxist 'science' of the economy ('laws/tendencies' of the falling rate of profit, 'phases of accumulation' and the like), but rather in the general sense of the 'grow-or die' dynamic of the market economy. But, although such objective factors could explain the motives and actions, particularly of the economic elites, the eventual economic and social outcome of the ensuing social struggle has always been both indeterminate and unpredictable, since this is not determined by objective factors alone, not even in the last resort. This is why the ID approach adopts the stand that ***it is the interaction between equally important 'objective' and 'subjective' factors which conditions historical development*** –an interaction which (unlike the Marxist 'dialectical' relationship) always leads to *indeterminate* outcomes.

Still, as it would be wrong to overemphasize the role

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[59] T. Fotopoulos, *The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy*, (IJID, Aug. 2005), ch. 2.

of 'objective' factors in the history of the market economy at the expense of the 'subjective' factors, so it would be equally wrong to do the opposite and overemphasize the role of the 'subjective' factors at the expense of the 'objective' ones, as it happened with the Castoriadian conception, which led him to clearly flawed, if not unacceptable, appreciations and positions, because of his overemphasis of the imaginary element in History (subjective factors) and the corresponding underestimation of the 'systemic' elements (objective factors).

The ID approach, therefore, is based on the assumption that, even though the eventual economic and social outcome of the social struggle is always undefined and unforeseen, the reason for this is not the fact, as the Castoriadian project maintains, that "society is the 'work' of the institutioning imaginary", which means that social action, in general, and social struggle, in particular, is determined by the social imaginary[60] – a position that essentially consists the antipode of the Marxist position that the "laws of the social development are always objective and function independently of the peoples' will"[61]. For the ID project, the reason that the outcome of the Social Struggle is unforeseen is the very fact that historical development is always the result of the interaction between equally important 'objective' and 'subjective' factors.

Thus, one could argue that some superficially inexplicable and far from radical, theoretical or political positions of Castoriadis could well be explained on the basis of his *overemphasis* of the imaginary element in History (subjective factors) and the corresponding underestimation of the

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[60] see C. Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), *p.145*.
[61] see Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (London: Routledge,1958) p.151.

'systemic' elements (objective factors). To mention just a few striking examples, we may refer to his positions on neoliberal globalisation and present capitalism, the causes of underdevelopment, USSR and the war in the Gulf.

The flawed Castoriadian stand on neoliberal globalisation and South's underdevelopment

As regards neoliberal globalisation, his thesis was basically that capitalism today has turned against its own 'logic' when, by opening and deregulating markets, it has turned the global economy into a "planetary casino".[62] Thus, starting from the assumption that nobody controls today's economy, he derived the conclusion that "nobody can say today that the functioning of the economy corresponds to clearly defined interests, if not of specific capitalists, of the capitalist class in general, since what is happening at this moment, with the chaos that exists in the world economy… is not in the interest of the capitalist class but it simply expresses its impotency in directing its own system"[63].

But, as I put it elsewhere, "one may counter-argue here that the present 'chaos' of the world economy is in fact the inevitable outcome of the liberalisation of markets and particularly of the capital markets, which, far from being undesired, meets perfectly the needs of the present internationalised market economy.[64] This is a fact, which was anyway abundantly confirmed by the boost in capitalist

[62] see "The rationality of capitalism" in *Figures of the Thinkable* ed. by Werner Hamacher, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007).
[63] Castoriadis interviewed by channel 3 of Greek State TV (ERT 3) in 1993; see also C. Castoriadis, '"The Rationality' of Capitalism" in *Figures of the Thinkable*.
[64] T. Fotopoulos, "Castoriadis and the democratic tradition", *Democracy & Nature* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Issue 10), 1997, pp. 157-163.

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profitability before the present bursting of the financial bubbles.[65] It is obvious here that Castoriadis emphasises again the imaginary element (i.e. that the capitalist crises are short-term phenomena that usually affect only sections of the capitalist class, which have an obvious aversion against the "casino-capitalism") at the expense of the 'systemic' fact (i.e. the fact that the marketization of the economy is a long-term trend favoured by the capitalist class as a whole, as this is a precondition of further concentration of economic power at the hands of economic elites).

Then, as regards the case of underdevelopment, for Castoriadis, the basic obstacle to the spreading of the growth economy to the South, (and, by implication, to its non-"development", which led to the present widening gulf between the North and the South), has been the fact that "this extraordinary spreading of the West had to face societies with completely different imaginary institutions which, as a result, have created anthropological types of a very different type than the type of the Western citizen, as described by the Declaration of Human Rights, or the type of the industrial worker and entrepreneur".[66]

It is obvious that such an approach ignores the catastrophic impact of the spreading of the market economy and the subsequent growth economy on the self-reliant communities of the South and, as a result, exonerates the system of the market economy itself, in order to blame the "imaginary institutions" that developed in the South compared to those in the North! No wonder that, in this problematique, the way out of the present global crisis can

[65] see about the bursting of the financial bubbles T. Fotopoulos, "The myths about the economic crisis, the reformist Left and economic democracy".
[66] C. Castoriadis "The West and the Third World" in the Greek edition of *World in Fragments*, (Athens: Upsilon, 1992), p. 91.

only emerge in the West: "I think that only a new develop-
ment of the liberation movement in the West could change
the parameters of the problem, i.e. could in some way ease
the penetration-at least up to the point required–of the
traditional institutions and traditional religious imaginary
significations that today are dominant in most of the coun-
tries of the Third World".[67]

The unacceptable political stand of Castoriadis on USSR and the Gulf War

Castoriadis' controversial stand (to say the least) on USSR
was widely criticised even by Marxist critics of the Soviet
system. Thus, at the very moment a huge campaign had
been launched by the US elite to initiate the collapse of
USSR through an arms race, designed (and proved eventu-
ally highly successful) to bring USSR on its knees from the
economic point of view, Castoriadis was arguing that "of the
two super-powers facing each other only Russia has the ca-
pability to carry out at this moment an aggressive policy"[68],
and further on that "at all levels before a total nuclear
war there is no ...balance of power but a massive imbal-
ance in favour of Russia".[69] Obviously, this position–which
had hardly any relevance to reality, as it was also proved
by the dilapidated state of USSR's army which was forced
out of Afghanistan by the Mujahideen-–was massively ex-
ploited by Western establishments in their Cold War rheto-
ric (and, as a by–product, ended the relative obscurity

[67] Ibid., p. 96. See, also, C. Castoriadis "Reflections on 'Rationality'
and 'Development"' *in Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy* (ed. by David
Ames Curtis, (Oxord: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 199-218.
[68] C. Castoriadis, *Facing the War* (Athens: Ypsilon, 1986) translation
of Castoriadis' text under the same title (1980), p. 19.
[69] ibid., p. 37.

of Castoriadis, who, up to that time, was unknown to the wider public –beyond certain Left circles–and made him a widely known intellectual).[70] Furthermore, although his critique of the totalitarian bureaucracy in the countries of 'existing socialism' was basically correct, any serious member of the antisystemic Left could only express disbelief at the fact that Castoriadis completely ignored the fact that the USSR, as the product of a socialist revolution had, after all, succeeded in meeting (even at a very low level) the basic needs of all its citizens (employment, health, education, housing, food), as it was tragically illustrated by the catastrophic regression, as far as the universal covering of these needs, which followed the integration of the country to the internationalised market economy.[71]

Finally, one should mention his stand on the Gulf War, which was completely unacceptable for a self-declared member of the antisystemic Left, when, in contrast even to reformist analysts of the Left like Noam Chomsky (also, an enthusiastic admirer of the collapse of USSR!) did not take an unequivocal stand against this criminal war, which paved the way for the eventual destruction of Iraq but, instead, he adopted an indirect 'equal distances' approach towards the victim (Iraqi people) and the victimizer (transnational elite). Thus, after dismissing oil as the basic cause of the war in the Gulf (and later, by implication, of the invasion of Iraq–something that nowadays has been acknowledged

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[70] see e.g. World Revolution, "Death of Cornelius Castoriadis: Bourgeoisie pays homage to one of its servants", December 12, 2004. Also, Castoriadis became widely known among British intellectuals and the public, after he was presented to the British viewers, in a main TV intellectual program of the BBC, by Michael Ignatieff, the well known stooge of the transnational elite and supporter of all its recent wars, who is about to be rewarded with the Canadian Prime Minister title shortly!
[71] see Takis Fotopoulos, "The Catastrophe of Marketization", *Democracy & Nature*, Volume 5 Number 2, July 1999.

even by the then head of the US Federal Reserve System![72]), went on to suggest a sort of Castoriadian version of the 'clash of civilisations' approach, later to be developed fully by Samuel Huntington! This was, in effect, a disguised 'equal distances approach' towards the victim and its victimizer (i.e. the usual approach adopted by the reformist Left on all the recent wars of the transnational elite):

> "The conflict already goes well beyond the case of Iraq and Saddam Hussein. It is in the process of transforming itself into a confrontation between, on the one hand, societies held in the grip of a tenacious religious imaginary, now reactively reinforced, and, on the other, Western societies which, somehow or other, have been delivered from this imaginary but have revealed themselves incapable of transmitting to the rest of the world anything other than the techniques of war and the manipulation of opinion."[73]

No wonder that in the 1990s Castoriadis, as far as I am aware, had never uttered a single word against the catastrophic Western embargo of that country which led, according to UN estimates, to the death of half a million Iraqi children, or against the murderous bombings of the country ordered by the Clinton administration). Needless to add that an 'equal distances' approach, similar to the one adopted by Castoriadis and the reformist Left[74], in effect

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[72] Richard Adams, "Invasion of Iraq was driven by oil, says Greenspan", *The Guardian*, 17/9/07.
[73] C. Castoriadis, "The Gulf War Laid Bare" (first published in French in *Libération* (Paris), February 5, 1991: 14).
[74] For a critique of Tariq Ali's similar myth of 'clash of fundamentalisms', which also ends up with an 'equal distances' approach, see "The Myth of the Clash of Fundamentalisms", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 1–No. 4, (July 2005).

implies an indirect support of the ruling elites and their 'wars'!

The unacceptable theses emanate from the philosophical core of the Castoriadian thought

The above Castoriadian theses, in effect, do not simply reflect errors in political judgement, as a superficial reading of his work might imply, but directly emanate from the philosophical core of his thought and, in particular, the stand he adopts on the relationship between radical imaginary, social imaginary and institutions. According to this stand, "it is the work of the radical imaginary as instituting, which brings itself into being as instituted society and as a given, and each time specified, social imaginary".[75] In my view, the reduction of institutions to the radical imaginary is, both epistemologically and ontologically, faulty–although, as I have stressed elsewhere,[76] there is no impenetrable barrier separating epistemology from ontology.

Epistemologically, because such an approach attempts to interpret the social dynamics using tools of psychoanalytical theory, i.e. an essentially closed theoretical system, something that I consider incompatible with the project of autonomy. In fact, as Castoriadis himself put it: "Democracy is the project of breaking the closure at the collective level. Philosophy, creating self-reflective subjectivity, is the project of breaking the closure at the level of thought...both are expressions, and central embodiments, of the project of autonomy."[77] However, the Castoriadian

[75] see C. Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, (Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 145.
[76] see the Greek ID journal *Periektiki Dimokratia*, (no. 8, September 2004).
[77] C. Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, p. 21.

adoption of an essentially psychoanalytic interpretation of the socialisation process implies also an adoption of the Freudian psyche theory, which, even after its amend-ment by Castoriadis, still is a closed theoretical system (Castoriadis himself also stressed Freud's determinism and positivism![78]). This conclusion is further confirmed by the fact that, according to many scientists on the field, recent developments in neuroscience make psychoanalytic theo-ry obsolete and irrelevant–although of course the psycho-analytic camp (which, according to Foucault, has become a centre of power) with vested interests on psychoanalysis, will never accept this fact! As Paul Broks, a senior clini-cal lecturer and honorary consultant neuropsychologist, based at the University of Plymouth, stresses[79]:

> "We know a great deal more than Freud ever could about how different neural systems construct the perceptual world from the raw materials of sensation, and we are mapping the mechanisms that control language, memory, and voluntary action. Brain circuits underlying emotion-al and motivational states are also under close scrutiny. The study of emotion, in particular, has been reinvigor-ated over the past decade, so much so that there is talk now of an "affective revolution", echoing the "cognitive revolution" of the late 1950s and 1960s. Evolutionary theory and experimental neuroscience have combined to produce a framework for understanding the emotions at every level, from the chemical to the cultural".

To my mind, the adoption of a closed system for the inter-pretation of social phenomena, like socialisation, is clearly incompatible with both the Autonomy project, and that of

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[78] see e.g. "Psychoanalysis and Philosophy" (1996) in *The Castoriadis Reader,* p. 355.
[79] "The ego trip", Essay by Paul Broks, *Guardian,* 6/5/2006.

Inclusive Democracy. In other words, the Castoriadian use of social imaginary significations, instead of the broader concept 'dominant social paradigm'[80] that I adopted, does not allow him to make clear the role of the elites in the socialisation process, (through the conditioning role they play in the formation of the dominant social paradigm)–a fact which frequently leads the late Castoriadis (in contrast to the early Castoriadis of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*) to talk about a class undifferentiated 'society' and 'its' imaginary. On the other hand, the ID project interpretation of the same social dynamics through the introduction of the concept of the 'dominant social paradigm' in the socialisation process brings back the crucial class divisions into the analysis of social dynamics.

Ontologically, the attempt to reduce social institutions to the radical and social imaginary is also faulty, because the Castoriadian thesis reduces the institutions to the imaginary of a class-undifferentiated society, which, in effect, exists only in the ideology of today's elites! Thus, according to this thesis, "the institution of society is in each case the institution of a magma of social imaginary significations, which we can and must call a *world* of significations".[81] This thesis could, also, account for the above mentioned 'flawed' or unacceptable political stands of Castoriadis, which, in effect, emanate from his position that the institutions in each case express 'society' and 'its' imaginary.

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[80] The dominant social paradigm is defined as the system of beliefs, ideas and the corresponding values, which are dominant in a particular society at a particular moment of its history, as consistent with the existing institutional framework; see T. Fotopoulos, "Mass media, Culture and Democracy", *Democracy & Nature, (*Volume 5 Number 1, March 1999).

[81] see C. Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 359.

This thesis is based on the assumption that there are no 'objective' class divisions in today's society. As he put it: "Quite evidently there are, from several standpoints, size-able differentiations among wage earners, but they do not furnish us with a division into classes". [82] Furthermore, re-treating from the dividing line, he had stressed in his early works, between directors and executants, and admitting that this dividing line is tending to become less and less relevant because the categories of pure directors and pure executants are, numerically speaking, less and less size-able, he concludes that:[83]

> "The sole criterion of differentiation within the mass of wage earners that remains relevant for us is their atti-tude towards the established system. That boils down to saying that ***one must abandon 'objective criteria' of whatever kind they may be*** (my emphasis)**.** With the ex-ception of the tiny minority at the summit, the whole of the population is just open-or closed-to a revolutionary outlook. It is possible that, conjuncturally speaking, this or that strata or category plays a larger role; but one can no longer maintain the idea that the proletariat is 'the' depository of the revolutionary project."

On the other hand, according to the ID approach, al-though class divisions, today, are much less economic (in the Marxist sense) than they were at the beginning of modernity, they still exist and extend to almost every so-cial level, apart from the economic one.[84] This implies that there are more than *one* social imaginaries, reflecting in

[82] C. Castoriadis' introductory interview in *The Castoriadis Reader*, edited by David Ames Curtis, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp.26-27.
[83] C. Castoriadis' introductory interview in *The Castoriadis Reader*, p. 27.
[84] see T. Fotopoulos, "Class Divisions Today – The Inclusive Democracy approach", *Democracy & Nature*, (Volume 6 Number 2, July 2000).

each case the various social classes and generally the division between ruling and ruled classes and groups –rather than a single class-undifferentiated social imaginary, as Castoriadis assumes. In the ID problematique, which 'imaginary' prevails in each case and determines the social institutions depends on the outcome of the social struggle between the ruling and the ruled social classes or groups. In much of modernity, this struggle was expressed by the Marxist class struggle, mainly in the economic level–-but not anymore. Therefore, the thesis about the existence of a 'social' imaginary which is the product of a class-undifferentiated 'society' is totally incompatible not only with the ID project but, to my mind, with the Castoriadian project of Autonomy itself.

So, according to the ID approach, the institutions simply represent, in each case, the ruling classes and groups, as well as their own imaginary. The same classes and groups in a heteronomous society 'legitimise' these institutions, through a process of socialisation and the exercise of various forms of violence (physical, economic, etc.). For instance, today's prevalence of neoliberal institutions and neoliberal globalisation in general is not the result of the mysterious ascendancy of a neoliberal imaginary, but simply the outcome of the prevalence of the economic elites' neoliberal ideology, as a result of historical changes in the last three decades or so, which led to the defeat of the dominated classes and groups in the ensuing social struggle. Such changes were the huge and growing concentration of economic power at the hands of economic elites through the expansion of transnational corporations, technological changes, which have led to the decimation of the working class, and the consequent emasculation of its syndicalist organs, the collapse of 'actual existing socialism',

etc.[85] Similarly, the present rise of Islamic fundamentalism cannot be explained in terms of a sudden change of the Arab world's social imaginary, but it can be adequately explained in terms of the failure of Arab socialism and Arab nationalism, the successive crushing defeats of the Arab nation at the hands of Zionists and the transnational elite and so on.

In conclusion, in every society characterised by class divisions, and at every historical 'moment', various 'social imaginaries' co-exist side-by side, expressing the main class divisions, and particularly the division between ruling and ruled classes and groups, with dominant in each case the imaginary of the ruling classes and groups, which is then formulated accordingly in the 'dominant social paradigm' and is legitimised through the socialisation process (education, mass media, economic and physical violence, etc.). On the other hand, during revolutionary periods, it is the 'imaginary' of the dominated classes and groups which eventually prevails and becomes the dominant social paradigm and then 'legitimises' the corresponding institutions, as it happened during the various attempts for an autonomous society (Athenian democracy, Soviet Revolution of 1917, Spanish civil War).

A moral relativism?

Finally, Castoriadis' reluctance even to attempt to consider the sort of ethical values that he thinks are consistent with an autonomous society, as when, seemingly raising his hands, he declares, "we will always still have to make our lives under the tragic conditions that characterize those lives, for we do not always know where good and evil lie,

[85] see *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, chs. 1-2.

either on the individual level or on the collective level,"[86] justifiably raised Murray Bookchin's strong criticism that "in the absence of rational objective standards of behaviour, imagination may be as demonic as it may be liberatory when such standards exist; hence the need for *informed* spontaneity –and an *informed* imagination".[87]

On the other hand, the ID approach, recognising the problem with the Castoriadian stand that it can easily lead to a post-modern type of moral relativism-–i.e. to a 'moral arbitrariness', as Bookchin calls it, covered by democratic procedures–although it also rejects any kind of 'objective' ethics, at the same time it does explore the sort of moral values that are consistent with the institutional framework of a genuinely democratic society and proposes some specific *guidelines* for the development of a democratic ethics[88].

From the 'rising tide of insignificancy' to reformism

According to Castoriadis, there is no "crisis in the proper sense of the word, that is, a moment of decision", because "in a crisis there are opposite elements which fight against each other–while, what precisely characterises modern society is the absence of social and political conflicts",[89] but just a "rising tide of insignificancy" and what is required is,

[86] C. Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, (Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), p. 122.
[87] M. Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology,* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1995), p. 178.
[88] see T. Fotopoulos, "Towards a Democratic Liberatory Ethics".
[89] Cornelius Castoriadis, *La Montée de l'insignifiance,* (Paris : Seuil, 1996) –for an unauthorised translation see THE RISING TIDE OF INSIGNIFICANCY (December 2003) "translated from the French and edited anonymously as a public service".

"a new imaginary creation… that would put at the centre of human life other significations than the expansion of production and consumption": [90]

> "If one considers the present-day situation, a situation not of crisis but of decomposition, or dilapidation of the Western societies, one finds oneself faced with an antinomy of the first magnitude. Here it is: What is required is immense, it goes very far–and human beings, such as they are and such as they are constantly being reproduced by Western societies, but also by the other societies, are immensely far removed from that. What is required? Taking into account the ecological crisis, the extreme inequality of the division of wealth between rich countries and poor countries, the near-impossibility of the system to continue on its present course, what is required is a new imaginary creation of a size unparalleled in the past, a creation that would put at the centre of human life other significations than the expansion of production and consumption, that would lay down different objectives for life, ones that might be recognized by human beings as worth pursuing. That would evidently require a reorganization of social institutions, work relations, economic, political, cultural relations. Now, this orientation is extremely far removed from what humans today are thinking, and perhaps far from what they desire."

On the other hand, on the basis of the ID analysis, the present crisis of values and meanings reflects, in fact, the deteriorating crisis of the social, economic and political institutions in neoliberal modernity, as a result of the universalisation of the multidimensional crisis, following the corresponding universalisation of the modern economic and political institutions: the internationalisation of the market economy and the institution of representative

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[90] ibid.

'democracy'. So, according to the ID approach, the present deepening crisis of Western societies is not just due to a crisis of 'imaginary significations' and a crisis of values and meanings, (i.e. what Castoriadis calls "the rising tide of insignificancy"), but it is, primarily, due to the systemic changes marked in neoliberal modernity. Even the ecological crisis cannot just be attributed to the crisis of growth ideology and the meaning of Progress but to the universalisation of the growth economy and, consequently, the consumerist pattern of living, through the internationalization of the market economy. No wonder that the present crisis of the growth ideology, due to the widespread acknowledgement of the ecological implications of the growth economy, has simply led to various attempts to replace the old growth ideology based on 'progress' with a new one based on the conception of some sort of 'sustainable development' that will accommodate the continuation of economic growth and consumerism–a pure contradiction in terms!

All this has very important theoretical and practical implications regarding the struggle for a new society and the transitional strategy towards it.

At the theoretical level, the late Castoriadis' elimination of class divisions from his analysis has, inevitably, led to his identification of the imaginary of society as a whole with that of the ruling classes and groups (which was then imposed, through the socialisation process, to the ruled classes and groups) and the elimination from the picture of any alternative social imaginaries expressing other classes and groups! This is how he 'managed' to omit from his analysis the change in objective and subjective conditions that led to the rise of neoliberal globalisation, or to the corresponding emergence of Islamic fundamentalism, ending up with a monstrous interpretation of the criminal Gulf War in terms of a 'clash of imaginaries', and an 'equal distances'

approach towards it, which, in fact, amounted to an indirect justification of the war, as we saw above. Furthermore, by reducing every aspect of the present multidimensional crisis to the 'rising tide of insignificancy', as it is expressed by the disappearance of meanings, of significations and the almost absolute wearing down of values, he also managed to avoid any reference to the systemic factors which have led to this crisis and particularly the dynamics of the system of market economy and of representative 'democracy', which is the ultimate cause for the present huge and growing concentration of power at every social level!

No wonder, therefore, that the late Castoriadis does not talk about a revolutionary change of institutions which, in interaction with the corresponding change of values and ideas, would lead to a new revolutionary society (as the ID approach suggests) but, instead, he adopts the reformist stand for the need to somehow change values and imaginary significations first-—in the form of a sort of cultural revolution-—which would then lead to a change in institutions! This stand is of course identical to the approaches suggested by the reformists in the Green movement and the Left, who attempt to radically change values in a way that would effectively lead to a new society, taking the existing system of market economy and representative 'democracy' for granted. It is not, therefore, surprising that the late Castoriadis, unlike the early one–and despite the pathetic efforts of his disciples like David Ames Curtis to deny the obvious early/late Castoriadis dichotomy-—was fully embraced by the international (and Greek) status quo and their mass media, in a (negative) 'honour' that was rarely, if ever, assigned by the elites to any truly revolutionary figures in the past!

2. Social Ecology/Communalism/ Libertarian Municipalism (LM)

Despite the influence that parts of Castoriadis' autono-my project and Bookchin's Social Ecology/Communalism/ Libertarian Municipalism (LM) have had on the ID project, (or, similarly, the strong influence of Kropotkin's or Arendt's work –among others– on Bookchin and Castoriadis respec-tively), the ID project's analysis of modernity and its pe-riodisation, globalisation, classes and the present multi-dimensional crisis completely differentiates it from both the Castoriadian and Bookchinist conceptions. Thus, apart from the fundamental philosophical, political and eco-nomic differences between the ID project and the autono-my project that I considered above, there are similar funda-mental differences between the ID and LM projects, which I am going to briefly consider here. No wonder, therefore, that the proposed way out of the present crisis in terms of an Inclusive Democracy, in general, and an Economic Democracy, in particular, differs fundamentally from both *a workers' councils economy based on a real market* (early Castoriadis) or *a 'moral economy' based on post-scarcity* (Bookchin).

The differences, as in the case of the autonomy project, arise at both the *philosophical* and the *economic* levels.

Philosophical differences between ID and Communalism/ Social Ecology

At the philosophical level, as I attempted to show in *Towards an Inclusive Democracy (TID)* (ch. 8), the project for a democratic society can neither be grounded on an *evolu-tionary process of social change*, nor a *teleological* one (such as Marx's dialectical materialism). However, although

Bookchin's dialectical naturalism[91] is explicitly described as a non-teleological view of natural and social evolution, still, it does assume a 'directionality' towards a democratic ecological society –a society that may never be actualised because of 'fortuitous' events. Thus, Bookchin, after explicitly acknowledging that social evolution is profoundly different from organic evolution, characterises social change as a process of Progress, defined as "the self-directive activity of History and Civilisation towards increasing rationality, freedom".[92] In the same theoretical framework, society is seen as developing both in continuity with nature and as its antithesis 'until the two are sublated into 'free nature', or 'Nature' rendered self-conscious, in a rational and ecological society'[93]

Yet, although the hypothesis about a rational process of natural evolution may not be groundless, the hypothesis about the existence of a rational process of social evolution, i.e. the view which sees History as a process of Progress, the unfolding of Reason – a view which assumes that there is an evolution going on towards autonomous, or democratic, forms of political, economic and social organisation-–is, to my mind, both untenable and undesirable.[94]

• It is untenable, because Social Ecology's view of History is hardly supported by History itself! History does not justify the view of an evolutionary process of Progress towards a free society, in the sense of a form of social organization which secures the highest degree of individual and social autonomy at the political, the economic and the social levels: what we may define as

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[91] See, M. Bookchin *The Philosophy of Social Ecology,* Introduction.
[92] Ibid. p. xii.
[93] ibid. p. xi.
[94] See T. Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, pp 328-340

an inclusive democracy. Although the historical at-
tempts to establish autonomous forms of political, so-
cial and economic democracy did not, of course, appear
ab novo, they cannot, nevertheless, be fitted into any
grand evolutionary process. This is clearly indicated by
the fact that such attempts took place in specific times
and places and as a break with past development, rather
than in several societies at the same stage of develop-
ment and as a continuation of it. Therefore, although
the ideals of freedom may have expanded over time,
(the last 25 years or so notwithstanding!), this expan-
sion has not been matched by a corresponding evolu-
tion towards an autonomous society, in the sense of
greater participation of citizens in decision taking. In
fact, the undermining of communities, which intensi-
fied by the emergence of the market economy 200 years
ago and accelerated by the development of the present
internationalized market economy, as well as the grow-
ing privacy and self-interest of individuals encouraged
by the consumer society, are clear indications of a trend
towards more heteronomous forms of society rather
than the other way round.

• It is undesirable, not only because it creates unin-
tentional links with heteronomy (since it, implicitly or
explicitly, rejects the fundamental fact that History is
creation) but, also, because it may easily lead to inad-
vertent affinities with intrinsically anti-democratic
eco-philosophies. Thus, the attempt to establish a di-
rectionality in society could easily create–and it did
create!-–undesirable affinities with deep ecology.
Although such affinities are utterly repugnant to social
ecologists, they are, nevertheless, implicit in the fact
that both deep ecologists and social ecologists adopt
a process of evolutionary unfolding and self-realisation
and ground their ethics on scientific observations about

the natural world, on natural 'tendencies' or direction-alities. This fact, as I pointed out elsewhere[95] could go a long way in explaining the various hybridized approach-es of social/deep ecology developed by, among others, John Clark[96] and Peter Marshall.[97]

It is the very philosophical grounding of democracy on dialectical naturalism, so cherished by both Bookchin and Clark, which creates a gap between social ecology and the democratic tradition. This is because democracy, as a process of social self-institution, implies a society which is open ideologically–namely, one which is not grounded on any closed system of beliefs, dogmas or ideas. In fact, one may add here that committing oneself to a closed system of ideas, like dialectical materialism (or dialectical natural-ism for that matter) is not that different from committing oneself to a closed set of religious or irrational beliefs and dogmas. This fact alone could go a long way in explaining the present convergence of the thought of some Marxists with religion, or of several anarchists with various forms of irrationalism (Taoism, New Age etc).[98]

It is for these reasons that the ID approach on History adopts neither grand evolutionary schemes, which de-pend on specific (supposedly "objective") interpreta-tions of natural or social change (as Marx, Kropotkin and

[95] T. Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, p. 330.
[96] See e.g. John Clark, 'The Politics of Social Ecology: Beyond the Limits of the City', *Democracy & Nature*, Volume 5 Number 3, (November 1999).
[97] Peter Marshall, *Nature's Web* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 426.
[98] See T. Fotopoulos, 'The Rise of New Irrationalism and its Incompatibility with Inclusive Democracy' *Democracy & Nature*, vol 4 no 2/3 (1999).

Bookchin attempted to do), or of human nature,[99] nor approaches which, going to the other end, overemphasise the imaginary ('subjective') element in History and under-value the 'systemic' (or 'objective') elements (as Castoriadis attempted to do) ending up, as we saw above, with serious misinterpretations of History. Instead, the ID approach, attempting to strike the *right balance* between 'subjective' and 'objective' factors, views History as *the continuous interaction between creative human action and the existing institutional framework*, i.e. as the interaction between the 'imaginary' and the 'systemic' elements, the outcome of which is always unpredictable. It is in this sense that the democratic society is seen as a rupture, a **break** in the historical continuity that the heteronomous society has historically established.

Economic Democracy vs. Communalism's "moral" economy

The differences between the project of Inclusive Democracy and that of Social Ecology, concerning the philosophical grounding of democracy, have important repercussions on the respective conceptions of democracy itself. This is because Bookchin's evolutionary perspective has important implications, first, on the issue of the existence of material preconditions of freedom and, second, on the concept of democracy itself, making the concept of economic democracy redundant.

   a. *Material preconditions of freedom*
Thus, Bookchin, assuming that progress has already led to

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[99] see e.g. *Towards a New Political Humanism* by Barry F. Seidman and Neil J. Murphy (Prometheus Books, 2005).

the "threshold of a post-scarcity society" in the sense of developing "a technology of abundance that is capable of providing, for the first time in history, the material basis for liberation,"[100] in effect, sees no need for an economic democracy in a liberated society. In other words, Bookchin adopts the communistic fiction of a post-scarcity society in which no economic-decision taking about the allocation of resources is, in fact, required. All that is required in this vision is, basically, a set of moral principles guiding sharing.[101] This is why the Social Ecology project, in contrast to the autonomy project, Parecon, and the Inclusive Democracy project,[102] does not propose any mechanism for the allocation of resources and Bookchin himself insists, instead, that in a communistic post-scarcity society "the very idea of an economy has been replaced by ethical (instead of productive) relationships; labour units, Proudhonian contracts, Rawlsian justice, and the like would not even be relevant".[103]

However, there is a crucial negative implication to be drawn from this conception of a democratic society: *it presupposes the existence of material preconditions for freedom*. The entrance to the realm of freedom depends on 'objective' factors, like the arrival of the mythical state of affairs of material abundance. But, the level of development of productive forces, that is required so that material abundance

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[100] M. Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, (London: Wildwood House, 1974), p.12.
[101] Janet Biehl, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism*, (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1998), chs 10 & 12
[102] See for a proposed mechanism of allocating resources in an economic democracy, Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, ch 6.
[103] Murray Bookchin,"Comments on the International Social Ecology Network Gathering and the 'Deep Social Ecology' of John Clark*", Democracy and Nature,vol 3 no 3,*, p. 185.

for the entire population on Earth can be achieved, makes it at least doubtful that such a stage could ever be achieved without serious repercussions on the environment–unless, of course, 'material abundance' is defined democratically (and not 'objectively') in a way which is consistent with ecological balance.

Therefore, the communist stage of post-scarcity is, in fact, a mythical state of affairs, as it presupposes an *'objective' definition of needs and scarcity*, and reference to it could simply be used (and has been used) to justify the indefinite maintenance of state power and power relations and structures. Even if it was possible to define basic needs objectively, it is certainly impossible to define objectively satisfiers, i.e. the means to satisfy them, let alone non-basic needs, which have become increasingly important in today's advanced societies. So, the fulfilment of a post-scarcity society is not just a matter of redistribution of wealth, as it is naively assumed by many libertarians and social ecologists, who argue that "the promise of post-scarcity...has not been fulfilled, not because the technology is base, but because the social arrangements that use it are base".[104]

Clearly, within the problematique of the Inclusive Democracy project, the link between post-scarcity and freedom is broken. The abolition of scarcity, and consequently of the division of labour, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for democracy. Therefore, the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom should be de-linked from the economic process. Yet, from Aristotle, through Locke and Marx, to Arendt and Bookchin, the distinction between the 'realm of necessity'

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[104] Janet Biehl, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism,* p. 98.

(where nature belongs) and the 'realm of freedom' has, always, been considered to be fundamental. However, although this distinction may be useful as a *conceptual tool* in classifying human activities, there is no reason why the two realms must be seen as mutually exclusive in social reality. Historically, anyway, there have been several occasions when various degrees of freedom survived under conditions that could be characterised as belonging to the 'realm of necessity'. Furthermore, once we cease treating the two realms as mutually exclusive, there is no justification for any attempt to dominate Nature–an important element of Marxist growth ideology–in order to enter the realm of freedom.

Furthermore, in the ID conception, not only there are no material preconditions for freedom, but also nor does the entrance to the realm of freedom depend on a massive change of consciousness through the adoption of some form of spiritualistic dogma, as proposed by some deep ecologists and other spiritualistic movements. Therefore, neither capitalism and socialism, on the 'objective' side, nor the adoption of some kind of spiritualistic dogma, on the 'subjective' side, constitute historical preconditions to enter the realm of freedom. In other words, the *democratic principle* is not grounded on any divine, natural or social 'laws' or tendencies, but on our own conscious and self-reflective choice between the two main historical traditions: the tradition of heteronomy which has been historically dominant, and the tradition of autonomy.

Inclusive Democracy is, therefore, a much broader conception than the usual libertarian conception of a future society (proposed by Bookchin and other writers) expressed in terms of direct democracy plus a municipalised *'moral economy'* based on a **post-scarcity society**. This is so, not only because Inclusive democracy incorporates political and economic decisions taken by confederated community

assemblies, as well as decisions taken by assemblies at the place of work, education etc. An even more crucial reason is that economic decisions, taken in an inclusive democracy, involve critical decisions about the allocation of **scarce** resources and not just, basically, administrative decisions in a society where machines do most of the work, as social ecologists maintain, assuming that technologically we have already reached a post-scarcity potential[105].

All this implies that for any liberatory project to look realistic and not just a utopia it has to include a visualisation of the institutions, which would allow a democratic decision-taking in the context of a **scarcity society.** It is, therefore, utterly inadequate for a realistic liberatory project just to be involved in wishful thinking about how a moral economy will solve, more or less automatically, all economic problems (if the term is appropriate) of a mythical post-scarcity society.[106] It is now obvious that, if an alternative to the presently universalised market economy form of social organisation is to inspire today's demoralised peoples, the feasibility of such an alternative society has to be clearly shown.

This means that the crucial issues related to the allocation of scarce resources in a new society, which will meet the basic and non-basic needs of all citizens, have to be dealt with, first in theory, and then in everyday practice, in an economic democracy which has to start being built here and now by a new massive antisystemic movement.[107] As regards theory, an economic democracy based on a scarcity society is perfectly feasible and, as I have attempted to

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[105] Janet Biehl, *The Politics of Social Ecology, Libertarian Municipalism*, (Montreal: Black Rose, 1998), p. 132-37.
[106] Ibid. See, also, pp. 111-120.
[107] See Takis Fotopoulos, '[Transitional strategies and the Inclusive Democracy project]', *Democracy & Nature,* Volume 8 Number 1, March 2002.

show elsewhere,[108] it is indeed possible to develop a model of economic democracy which shows the feasibility of democratic decision taking, not in the framework of a mythical post scarcity economy but in that of a real scarcity society. As regards practice, the need for building such a new massive antisystemic movement is now imperative if we wish to stop the present catastrophic descent of humanity into a new barbarity.

b. *Concept of democracy*

Given what was said above, it is not surprising that Bookchin's scheme involves a narrow conception of the public realm, which could and should be expanded, if our aim is to transcend the limited conception of democracy, which first flourished in classical Athens. Thus, to develop a new conception of inclusive democracy we may start by distinguishing between the two main societal realms, the public and the private, to which we may add an 'ecological realm', defined as the sphere of the relations between the natural and the social worlds. The public realm, contrary to the practice of many supporters of the republican or democratic project (Arendt, Castoriadis, Bookchin et al) includes in this conception not just the political realm, but also the economic realm, as well as a 'social' realm, in other words, any area of human activity where decisions can be taken collectively and democratically.

The political realm is defined as the sphere of political decision-taking, the area where political power is exercised. The economic realm is defined as the sphere of economic decision-taking, the area where economic power is exercised with respect to the broad economic choices that any scarcity society has to make. Finally, the social realm is defined as the sphere of decision-taking in the workplace,

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[108] See T. Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, ch 6.

the education place and any other economic or cultural institution which is a constituent element of a democratic society.

I think that the extension of the traditional public realm to include the economic, ecological and 'social' realms is an indispensable element of the inclusive democracy conception, and offers significant assistance in defining its constituent elements: political, economic, ecological and 'democracy in the social realm'. Thus, political, economic and democracy in the social realm may be defined, briefly, as the institutional framework that aims at the equal distribution of political, economic and social power respectively, in other words, as the system which aims at the effective elimination of the domination of human being over human being. Correspondingly, we may define ecological democracy as the institutional framework that aims at the elimination of any human attempt to dominate the natural world, in other words, as the system which aims to reintegrate humans and nature.[109]

In an Inclusive Democracy, therefore, any type of decision (political, economic, social, relating to the environment) which can be taken collectively, should be part of the democratic decision-taking process. This is not obvious in the case of social ecology, which centres its conception of democracy on the political realm, at the exclusion of the other realms. No wonder that economic democracy is not part of the socio-ecological conception of democracy.

3. Participatory Economics (Parecon)

Following the collapse of 'actually existing socialism' and the huge doubts that this historic event cast over the very

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[109] See T. Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, ch 5.

possibility to organise a post-capitalist society, it has be-
come more urgent than ever before to consider the concrete
forms that a post-capitalist society could take. Michael
Albert's and Robert Hahnel's "vision" of Parecon[110] and the
complementary ideas developed by themselves and oth-
ers on the corresponding political institutions are steps in
this direction but, as I tried to show elsewhere,[111] although
this model may represent the best effort so far in social-
ist planning and in assimilating the lessons taught by the
latter's historical failure, still, in no way could secure the
institutional preconditions required for the creation of a
new form of social organization, which re-integrates soci-
ety with economy, polity and Nature.

At the outset, Parecon, in contrast, for example, to the
Marxist proposals for a socialist society, Castoriadis' au-
tonomy project, Bookchin's communalist project or that of
Inclusive Democracy, is not a fully-fledged political project
with its own historical analysis of present reality, but sim-
ply, *a narrow economic model for an alternative economy*,
which recently and belatedly has been supplemented, (per-
haps also in response to the ID critique about the complete
silence of Parecon on political institutions, and similar
criticisms from other sources), with some half baked ideas
about the political institutions which are compatible with
Parecon –a sort of so-called "participatory democracy".

Thus, Parecon is not backed by any political, historical
or philosophical analysis which would attempt to justify
it, but simply relies on the author's rejection of certain
elements of the present system, as well as on the values
he drew from "the aspirations and the insights of a huge

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[110] see Michael Albert, *Parecon Life After Capitalism* (London: Verso,
2003).
[111] T. Fotopoulos, "Inclusive Democracy and Participatory Economics",
Democracy & Nature, (Volume 9, no. 3, November 2003).

range of activist efforts"[112]. In other words, Parecon does not justify the need for a post-capitalist society on the basis of, for instance, a dialectics of History (as dialectical materialism does), or a dialectics of Nature (as Social Ecology's dialectical naturalism does), or, perhaps, an axiomatic choice between the autonomy and heteronomy traditions (as the autonomy project and –with some important deviations– the Inclusive Democracy project do).

However, a serious proposal on the form of a future post-capitalist society cannot just be the object of some intellectual's vision and the moral values he draws from social struggles. Such a proposal, if it is to be credible, must constitute a *fully-fledged political project*, which, integrated into one of the historical traditions of the Left, draws the organisational principles of the future society from a systematic analysis of present society and the trends within it. From this point of view, the antisystemic Left does not need to adopt supposedly pluralistic visions which could only serve as significant contributors to the present postmodernist ideological soup, or perhaps as ideological models of the "alternative world which is possible" that the World Social Forum (WSF) preaches.

Yet, Albert does not hesitate to state that his model comprises socialist or direct democratic values and to characterise it as an "anarchistic economic vision". However, despite the fact that Parecon talks about workers' councils, it cannot be classified in the socialist tradition, since these councils do not constitute the exclusive source of power, as in socialist models, but they simply share power with consumers' councils, albeit the respective powers of each type of council are not even clearly delineated.

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[112] see M. Albert, *Parecon*, *Life After Capitalism*, (London: Verso, 2003), p. 13.

Similarly, the communist principle "from each according to his/her ability to each according to his/her need" is bypassed (Parecon characterises the problem as a matter of compassion to be sorted out through the free provision of some social services like health and a minimum income) in favour of the supposedly more "advanced" principle of remuneration for effort and sacrifice! Likewise, the critical issues of the transition strategy and revolution are also bypassed, while WSF's reformist anti-globalisation strategy is adopted. And, of course, Parecon does not belong to the Marxist tradition, since it talks about a "vision" and, as mentioned above, does not possess any historical analysis of the present society. Parecon does not share the Marxist definition of classes and does not even specify the form that social ownership of the means of production will take in an obvious effort to appeal to as many parts of the broad Left as possible.

At the same time, Parecon cannot be classified as belonging to the libertarian or the autonomous-democratic tradition, since the main collective decision-making bodies in it are clearly defined within the economic sphere. Thus, the concept of citizen was totally absent in the original Parecon scheme and was replaced by the concepts of the worker and the consumer –thereby introducing into the proposed post-capitalist society the economic dualism of modern man that capitalist society established and, at the same time, adopting the present division of society into economic and political spheres! No wonder that Parecon ends up with a distortion of the concept of direct democracy, as I have attempted to show elsewhere,[113] which, however, it invokes.

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[113] see T. Fotopoulos, *Chomsky's capitalism, Albert's post-capitalism and Inclusive Democracy*, (in Greek) Athens, Gordios 2004.

Nonetheless, in a belated attempt to describe the political institutions, which are compatible with the Parecon economic institutions,[114] the concept of citizen was introduced, albeit as a supplementary concept to that of workers and consumers who take the important economic decisions. In this scheme, the consumer councils, under the name now of "popular councils" or just "councils", are responsible for political decision-taking, so that consumers, as citizens this time, take political decisions, as opposed to the purely economic decisions on allocation of resources they take as members of consumer councils.

There would be primary-level councils that would include every adult in the society. The number of members in these primary-level councils would be somewhere between 25-50. Each primary-level council would choose a delegate to a second-level council. Each second-level council would also be composed of 20-50 delegates (probably the same size as the primary councils, but not necessarily so.) Likewise, each second-level council would choose delegates to third-level councils, and so on, until there was one single top-level council for the entire society.

But, the proposed legislative system would not only institutionalise a kind of "bureaucratic democracy" (no wonder Parecon was aptly characterised by John Crump, a libertarian academic of *Anarchist Studies*, as "participatory bureaucracy"!),[115] but also a highly hierarchical one, given that the "delegates" to the councils "would be charged with trying to reflect the actual views of the council they came from and they would not be "mandated", i.e. councils at every level would be deliberative bodies. It is not difficult

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[114] See Stephen R. Shalom "ParPolity: Political Vision for a Good Society" *Z Magazine /ZNet* (November 2005).

[115] John Crump, "Markets, Money and Social Change", *Anarchist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 72-73.

therefore to imagine that the members of each higher level council will concentrate a higher degree of power than those at lower level councils, culminating in the highest level of council, which to all intents and purposes would play the role of a kind of Central Committee on legislation! The ultimate cause of all this high degree of concentration of power has of course to do with the fact that Parecon is based on a *centralised* economy and society, in contrast to the radically decentralised economy and society envisaged by the ID project.

On the other hand, in a real democracy like the one proposed by the ID project, all important political, economic and social decisions are taken directly by citizens in demotic assemblies, which are the ultimate policy-making decision bodies. Wherever decisions have to be taken at a higher level (regional, confederal), it is assemblies of recallable delegates with specific mandates, who coordinate the decisions taken locally, and administer and implement them at the regional or confederal level. This means that the regional and confederal assemblies are simply administrative councils, rather than policymaking bodies –as all representative bodies are.

It is therefore clear that Albert (as well as Habermas, Bobio and other supporters of the 'civil society' approach), sees direct democracy not as a *regime,* but simply as a *procedure*, which in fact is readily replaced by its opposite, i.e. representation, whenever direct democracy is not compatible with Parecon's prescriptions! This is particularly the case if one takes into account that Parecon adopts an "instrumentalist" conception of politics, according to which people have a say in decisions only in proportion to the degree to which the outcomes affect them, in other words, they take part in the decision-taking process not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. This is of course similar to the present society's conception of politics in which one

engages in political action simply to promote one's welfare, and not in accordance with the principles intrinsic to political life, such as freedom, equality, justice, solidarity, courage and excellence.

Another important difference between Parecon and ID is that the latter, following the distinction it adopts between basic and non-basic needs, proposes the principle of remuneration 'according to need' for basic needs and 'according to effort' for non-basic needs. This way, it is explicitly recognised that meeting basic needs is a fundamental human right that cannot be denied to anybody, as long as one offers the minimal amount of work required for this –unlike Parecon where the satisfaction of such needs is left to a few goods declared public, as well as to compassion.

Another crucial element of Parecon is the organisation of work according to "work complexes", which is offered as a kind of panacea securing equal empowerment and equal job desirability. However, as I showed elsewhere,[116] not only job complexes would inevitably have a limited applicability in a modern economy where technological changes have led to a high job differentiation on the basis of training, skill, dexterity, talent, etc., but also their effects on empowerment and job desirability are highly questionable. As regards empowerment, for instance, given the differences in training, experience, natural skills and so on, it is almost impossible to create "comparably empowering work lives" simply by introducing job complexes, as Albert and Hahnel assume who seem to think that the division between manual and conceptual work is the only cause of hierarchical divisions, whereas, of course, the ultimate cause of hierarchical divisions is the unequal distribution of institutionalized power among citizens.

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[116] T. Fotopoulos, "Inclusive Democracy and Participatory Economics".

So, although it is true that the division between manual and conceptual work is significant in creating *hierarchical divisions*, it would be highly simplistic to assume that this is the only cause of them, given that the ultimate cause of hierarchical divisions is the unequal distribution of institutionalized power among citizens. Therefore, the equal distribution of political and economic power, which the institutions of an inclusive democracy secure, is a crucial step in the abolition of hierarchical divisions. These institutions however should include not just assembly decision-taking but also the abolition of any *de jure* hierarchical divisions at the workplace, the educational place and so on –what the ID project calls democracy at the social realm.

Finally, given that Parecon, like socialist planning and the market economy systems, share the same overall objective of economic growth, as well as the implied meaning of efficiency, it is not surprising that it treats ecological problems as a problem of externalities, (exactly as orthodox economists and environmentalists do!) which can supposedly be solved by involving more consumer councils rather than just the ones where proposals for collective consumption originate. This way, ecological problems are in effect reduced to secondary ones like those caused by pollution, which can indeed be taken into account through the procedure suggested. However, the main ecological problems, like that of the greenhouse effect, whose solution requires a change in the very lifestyle of citizens, necessitate abandoning economic growth as the main objective of production. Furthermore, the complete silence of Parecon on the need for radical decentralization (a decision that obviously cannot be taken by workers councils or consumers councils alone) makes clear that the concentration characterising both the market and the centrally planned economies –a basic cause of the present ecological crisis– is not even viewed as a problem by Parecon!

Last, but not least, Parecon, unlike ID, relies exclusively on planning for the allocation of resources. This, on top of the fact that it does not make any distinction between basic needs and non-basic needs, implies that Parecon cannot secure self management for either workers or consumers. In fact, no kind of economic organisation based on planning alone, however democratic and decentralised it is, can secure real self management and freedom of choice.

4. De-growth and ecovillages

As it was pointed out elsewhere in an assessment of the de-growth project from the ID's point of view,[117] the emergence of the De-growth project developed by Serge Latouche, at a time when the greenhouse effect and climate change have become front page news –following the IPCC's (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Fourth Assessment Report, which definitely linked the clear signs of global climate change with increases in man-made emissions of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases-–was a significant development in relation to Green politics and thought. This is because it showed that the Green movement, after its rise as an antisystemic movement in Germany in the 1970s and its subsequent integration into mainstream politics as a kind of reformist Left party or lobby, could still play a role at the boundaries between a reformist and an antisystemic movement.

At the same time, the De-growth project shows significant similarities, both at the theoretical and the strategic

[117] T. Fotopoulos, "Is de-growth compatible with a market economy?", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY,* Vol. 3–No. 1 (January 2007); see also the debate on de-growth in the same issue with articles by Serge Latouche and others.

levels, with the "Simpler Way" approach suggested by Ted Trainer, which, like the De-growth approach, involves "mostly small, highly self-sufficient local economies; economic systems under social control and not driven by market forces or the profit motive and highly cooperative and participatory systems", as well as the associated "eco-village movement."[118] However, the De-growth project stresses that the transition process involves not just the creation of "eco-villages", mainly outside the main society, but, instead, the creation of "urban villages,"[119] which involve the development of a high degree of decentralisation within the main society itself. In other words, unlike the supporters of eco-villages who, even when their aim is the creation of a new social movement and not just a life style change, aspire mainly to a movement based on communities outside the main society, supporters of the De-growth project explicitly aim to create a new social movement within the main society –as the traditional Green parties have always attempted to do.

The rationale of the De-growth project is the familiar radical Green one. Growth for growth's sake is unsustainable as it pushes the limits of the biosphere. Although there have been some improvements in ecological efficiency they have been offset by growth. As a result, the ecological crisis, particularly as far as the greenhouse effect is concerned, which threatens with a catastrophic climatic change, has been worsening all the time. It is now

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[118] See Ted Trainer, "Renewable Energy: No Solution for Consumer Society", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY* Vol. 3–No. 1 (January 2007) and also the dialogue on ecovillages, *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY* Vol. 2–No. 3 (June 2006).
[119] Clement Homs "Localism and the city: the example of 'urban villages'" in *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY* Vol. 3–No. 1 (January 2007).

well established that continuous expansion has been at the expense of the quality of life –in terms of clean water, air and the environment in general– if not of life itself, first of animals, and then increasingly of human beings themselves. Therefore, De-growth, in terms of downscaling our economy, seems necessary and desirable. The aim should therefore be a non-growth society to replace the present growth society.

However, although, the project of De-growth is seen by its supporters as "a political project, in the strongest sense of the term, that of the construction, in the North as well as in the South, of convivial, autonomous and economical societies (and) does not come within the area of professional politicians' politicking"[120], it is clear that it mainly aims at only one aspect of the present multi-dimensional crisis: the ecological aspect. Yet, even though this is a very important aspect of the crisis, equally important are the other aspects of this crisis. In other words, the De-growth project, unlike the ID project, is not a universalist project for human liberation, but a one-issue project. This is not surprising given Latouche's distrust for universalist projects, which may be motivated by the postmodernist aversion to any kind of universalist project –the same aversion which has led to the abandonment, by most of the Left, of any problematique for a systemic change, and to what Castoriadis rightly called 'generalized conformism'. Apart, however, from this basic difference as regards the nature of the De-growth and ID projects, there are significant *theoretical* and *strategic* differences between them, which of course do not diminish their *important similarities* as regards the aim they share, as far as the main objective of

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[120] Serge Latouche, "Degrowth: an electoral stake?", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY,* Vol. 3–No. 1 (January 2007).

economic activity in general and production in particular is concerned through a move away from the present growth economy and society and, also, concerning their common means of achieving this aim through radical decentralisation and localism.

The market/growth economy and the concentration of economic power are opposite sides of the same coin. This means that neither the concentration of economic power nor the ecological implications of the growth economy are avoidable within the present institutional framework of the internationalized market economy. However, the De-growth project does not seem to reject either the system of market economy or its political complement, representative 'democracy', something which clearly implies that the cultural revolution imagined by it does not imply a systemic change, but merely the "decolonization of the imaginary", i.e. a change in values and ideas. In fact, even when talk is made about changes in the institutions, in the form of changes in the legal system and the relations of production, it is clear that these do *not* involve changes in the ownership of means of production and the market allocation of resources.

Still, Latouche is right, when he argues that "the creation of democratic local initiatives is more realistic than that of a democratic world government", particularly if it takes the form of a confederation of *Demoi*, as proposed by the ID project, which Latouche discusses in some detail.[121] However, localism, either takes the form of urban villages and participatory democracy (Homs), or even of a confederation of Demoi within a reformed market economy and representative 'democracy' (Latouche), clearly could

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[121] Serge Latouche, "Will the West actually be happier with less? The world downscaled", Le Monde diplomatique, December 2003.

not lead to a de-growth society on the basis of the above analysis. This is because this sort of 'ecological democracy' in no way solves the problem of concentration of economic and political power –the root cause of the present multidimensional crisis.

Similar considerations apply to Ted Trainer's *Simpler Way,* which involves the development of "non-affluent (but quite sufficient) material living standards, mostly small, highly self-sufficient local economies", through a profound change in values and world view, away from some of the most fundamental elements in Western culture, especially those related to competitive, acquisitive individualism. Trainer argues that "our best chance will be through an attempt to work here and now on the transformation of existing towns and suburbs towards being 'eco-villages' of a kind" –a process which, he suggests, could begin as of now, through small local groups beginning to take more control over their local economies. This, he concludes, could be achieved with no fight against capitalism: "The Simpler Way is death for capitalism, but the way we will defeat it is by ignoring it to death, by turning away from it and building those many bits of the alternative that we could easily build right now".[122]

However, as I have pointed out in reply to this argument[123], only if present antisystemic activities prefiguring the system become an integral part of an antisystemic movement, could they be part of a solution to the critical problem we face today rather than part of the problem itself. This process involves not just the creation of eco-villages

[122] Ted Trainer, "On eco-villages and the transition", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY,* Vol. 2–No. 3 (June 2006).
[123] Takis Fotopoulos, "Is the eco-village movement a solution or part of the problem?", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY,* Vol. 2–No. 3 (June 2006).

(mainly outside the main society) but, instead, the creation of local 'inclusive democracies in action' which would gradually move resources out of the capitalist market economy and create new political, economic and ecological institutions to replace the present ones. In other words, the core of the *transitional* process should involve a change of institutions at the local level which, through an interplay with a consequent change in values, would lead to a new culture rather than, as Trainer seems to argue, the whole process could simply be effected through a radical change in culture that is not necessarily connected with any parallel institutional change.

According to the ID approach therefore, it is only through a transitional strategy, which would aim to create new democratic political and economic institutions and, through Paideia, which would aim to make hegemonic the corresponding values, that we could realistically hope to create the conditions for the emergence of an economy and society not based on economic growth: a real ecological democracy, as an integral part of an Inclusive Democracy. And this brings us to the crucial issue of transitional strategies.

5. The need for a new transitional strategy

As it was stressed above, the fact that we face today the end of antisystemic movements, as well as the end of class politics, does not mean that there is no 'system' anymore as such, or 'class divisions' for that matter. What it does mean is that today we face new 'class divisions', a fact which clearly implies the need for an antisystemic movement of a new type.

In the ID problematique, the phasing out of economic classes in the Marxist sense simply signifies the death of

traditional class divisions and the birth of *new 'holistic' class divisions*, i.e. divisions which are located into the power structures of the socio-economic system itself and not just to some aspects of it, like economic relations alone, or alternatively gender relations, identity politics, values and so on. Therefore, although it is not meaningful to talk anymore about monolithic class divisions, this does not rule out the possibility that, when the subordinate social groups develop a shared consciousness about the values and institutions which create and reproduce structures of unequal distribution of power, they may unite, primarily, not against the dominant social groups as such, but against the hierarchical institutional framework and those defending it. The unifying element which may unite members of the subordinate social groups around a liberatory project like the ID project is their exclusion from various forms of power –an exclusion which is founded on the unequal distribution of power that characterises today's institutions and their corresponding values.

The comprehensive character of the Inclusive Democracy conception and its analysis of today's 'class' divisions indicates that the antisystemic movement envisaged by the ID project differs radically from the traditional antisystemic movements and offers a conception for a new type antisystemic movement. Thus, the movement envisaged by the ID project differs fundamentally from the old reformist movements, like the social democratic movement, as well as the revolutionary movements, like the communist or anarchist movements, both with respect to the *goals* pursued and also the *means* used to achieve these aims.

As far as the *goals* are concerned, although the ID movement is, like the communist and anarchist movements, antisystemic, still, there is a crucial difference: the communist visions (Marxist or anarcho-communist), unlike the ID project, presuppose a post-scarcity society and, therefore,

rule out the idea of economic democracy, whereas the anarcho-syndicalist versions are based on workers' councils rather than, as the ID project, on citizens' assemblies, i.e. a collective unit of decision-taking of a far broader scope.

As far as the *means* are concerned, the revolutionary strategy adopted by both communist and anarchist movements is rejected by the ID movement because, as I pointed out elsewhere[124], the major problem of any revolutionary strategy, either 'from above' (as envisaged by Marxist movements) or 'from below' (anarchist movements), is *the uneven development of consciousness* among the population. In other words, a revolution, which assumes a rupture with the past both at the subjective level of consciousness and at the institutional level, takes place in an environment where only a minority of the population has broken with the dominant social paradigm. Then,

- if it is a revolution *from above*, it has a good chance to achieve its first aim, to abolish state power and establish its own power. But, exactly because it is a revolution from above with its own hierarchical structures, etc. it has no chance to change the dominant social paradigm, but only formally, i.e. at the level of the official ideology.
- If, on the other hand is a revolution *from below*, although this is the correct approach to convert people democratically to the new social paradigm, it suffers from the fact that the uneven development of consciousness among the population may not allow revolutionaries to achieve even their very first aim of abolishing state power and, even if they manage to do so, the very rapid and precipitous character of revolutionary change

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[124] T. Fotopoulos, "Transitional strategies and the Inclusive Democracy project", *Democracy & Nature,* (Volume 8 Number 1, March 2002).

guarantees that the uneven levels of consciousness will mark the first crucial stages after the revolution.

The *rationale* behind the ID transitional strategy is that, as systemic change requires a rupture with the past which extends to both the institutional and the cultural level, such a rupture is only possible through the development of a new political organisation and a new comprehensive political program for systemic change that will create a clear anti-systemic consciousness at a massive scale. This is in contrast to the statist socialist strategy which ends up with the creation of a clear anti-systemic consciousness only with respect to an avant-garde, or to the life-style activities which, if they create any antisystemic consciousness at all, it is restricted to the few members of various libertarian 'groupuscules'.

However, the creation of a new culture, which has to become *hegemonic before* the transition to an inclusive democracy could be effected, is only possible through the parallel building of new political and economic institutions at a significant social scale. In other words, it is only through action to build such institutions that a mass political movement with a democratic consciousness can be built. Such a strategy creates the conditions for the transition, both the 'subjective' ones, in terms of helping the development of a new democratic consciousness and the 'objective' ones, in terms of creating the new institutions which will form the basis of an inclusive democracy. At the same time, the establishment of these new institutions would crucially assist here and now the victims of the concentration of power which is associated with the present institutional framework and, particularly, the victims of neoliberal globalisation to deal with the problems created by it.

The *objective* therefore of an ID strategy is the creation,

from below, of 'popular bases of political and economic power', that is, the establishment of local inclusive democracies, which, at a later stage, will confederate in order to create the conditions for the establishment of a new confederal inclusive democracy. Therefore, a crucial element of the ID strategy is that the political and economic institutions of inclusive democracy begin to be established immediately after a significant number of people in a particular area have formed a base for 'democracy in action' –preferably, but not exclusively, at the massive social scale that is secured by winning in local elections under an ID program. Clearly, such a strategy implies a redefinition of the emancipatory subject[125] to take into account the systemic changes that lead to a new map of class divisions today. It also implies the need for a new kind of politics, (instead of what passes as "politics" today) and political organisation, similar to the ones proposed by the ID project.[126]

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[125] ibid.
[126] ibid.

PART III

EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

THE DEMOCRATIC PAIDEIA PROJECT: BEGINNINGS OF AN EMANCIPATORY PAIDEIA FOR TODAY

DAVID GABBARD AND KAREN ANIJAR APPLETON

> In a time in which Communist re-
> gimes have been rightly discredit-
> ed and yet alternatives to neoliber-
> al capitalist societies are unwisely
> dismissed, I defend the fundamen-
> tal claim of Marxist theory: There
> must be countervailing forces that
> defend people's needs against the
> brutality of profit-driven capital-
> ism. Unfortunately, Marxists have
> not envisioned how those counter-
> vailing forces could be democratic
> ones.
>
> **Cornel West,**
> **The Cornel West Reader[1]**

*A*s members of the Marxian Analysis of Schools, Society, and Education Special Interest Group (MASSES) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), we recognize the powerful yet discom-forting truth in Dr. West's remarks. We have, indeed, failed to envision democratic countervailing forces to defend people's needs and advance their interests against the

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[1] C. West, *The Cornel West Reader*, (New York: Basic *Civitas* Books, 1999), p. 211.

contemporary forces of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. In fact, as Gabbard has argued elsewhere, we frequently berate ourselves for this failure but never move to rectify it. Over and over again, we listen to each other call for a "language of possibility," yet none of us seems brave enough to put one forward. The Inclusive Democracy Project, as outlined by Fotopoulos in *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*[2] and discussed extensively by scholars and activists associated with *Democracy & Nature* and *The International Journal for Inclusive Democracy,* might provide us with that language.

The Inclusive Democracy Project

Before we begin our considerations of the Inclusive Democracy Project, we return to Cornel West and his astute observation in *Democracy Matters* that "the deep democratic tradition did not begin in America and we have no monopoly on its promise... The first grand democratic experiment [began] in Athens."[3]

West's observation serves us well here, because it is precisely within those ancient Greek traditions that Fotopoulos locates the conceptual foundations for constructing the Inclusive Democracy Project. "Few words," he argues, "apart perhaps from socialism, have been so widely abused...as the word 'democracy.' Much of this abuse stems from what he identifies as the "current practice of adding several qualifying adjectives to the term democracy, which serves only to confuse "the meaning of it and [create]

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[2] T. Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy: The Crisis of the Growth Economy and the Need for a New Liberatory Project* (London: Cassell, 1997).
[3] C. West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

the impression that several forms of democracy exist."[4] Literally translated from the Greek, democracy means the rule of the *demos* (the people). Hence, Fotopoulos asserts "there is only one form of democracy at the political level, that is, the direct exercise of sovereignty by the people themselves, a form of societal institution which rejects any form of 'ruling' and institutionalizes the equal sharing of political power among all citizens."[5] In the Athenian experiment, of course, the hierarchical social structure excluded women, immigrants, and slaves from political participation in the ecclesia. Nevertheless, Athenian democracy provides us with "the first historical example of the identification of the sovereign with those exercising sovereignty."[6] Furthermore, as Fotopoulos convincingly argues, we should attribute the collapse of Athenian democracy not to any "innate weakness of direct democracy, but to its failure to become an inclusive democracy and in particular to the fact that the political equality which the Athenian democracy had established for its citizens was, in the last instance, founded on economic inequality."[7]

An inclusive democracy demands more than political democracy. Democracy must extend across the entire public realm; that is, "any area of human activity where decisions can be taken collectively and democratically."[8] This includes, in addition to political democracy[9]: economic democracy[10], social democracy,[11] and ecological

[4] T. Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 175.
[5] Ibid, pp. 175-176.
[6] Ibid, p. 185.
[7] Ibid, p. 186.
[8] Ibid, p. 206.
[9] See Ibid, pp. 207-209.
[10] See Ibid, pp. 209-211.
[11] See Ibid, pp. 211-213.

democracy[12]. Here we locate the inclusive nature of the Inclusive Democracy Project, the aim of which is to establish democracy as our *dominant social paradigm*. By dominant social paradigm, Fotopoulos means "the system of beliefs, ideas and the corresponding values which are dominant (or tend to become dominant) in a particular society at a particular moment of its history, as most consistent with the existing political, economic and social institutions"[13] This consistency serves as a "fundamental precondition" for reproducing any social order, and it demands that individuals internalize the beliefs, ideas, and values corresponding to the institutional arrangements. In the case of an inclusive democracy, individuals would be required to develop a democratic consciousness by internalizing the beliefs, ideas, and values appropriate for political citizenship, economic citizenship, social citizenship, and cultural citizenship. In all four cases, Fotopoulos explains, the demands of inclusive democracy dictate a 'participatory' conception of active citizenship, like the one implied by the work of Hannah Arendt. In this conception, 'Political activity is not a means to an end, but an end in itself; one does not engage in political activity simply to promote one's welfare but to realize the principles intrinsic to political life, such as freedom, equality, justice, solidarity, courage, and excellence.'"[14]

The responsibility of cultivating the democratic consciousness requisite to this conception of citizenship falls

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[12] See Ibid, pp. 213-216.
[13] T. Fotopoulos, "From (mis)education to *Paideia*", Democracy & Nature, *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* Vol. 9, No.1 (March 2003).
[14] Ibid, pp. 217-218, citing M.P. d'Entreves, 'Hannah Arendt and the idea of citizenship' in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, Chantal Mouffe (ed.) (London: Verson, 1992, 1995), p. 154.

to *paideia*. As Fotopoulos points out, "*paideia* is not just education but character development and a well-rounded education in knowledge and skills, i.e. the education of the individual as citizen, which can 'only give valuable, substantive content to the 'public space'".[15] Quoting Hansen on "the crucial role of *paideia*," Fotopoulos adds

> "[T]o the Greek way of thinking, it was the political institutions that shaped the 'democratic man' and the 'democratic life', not vice versa: the institutions of the *polis* educated and moulded the lives of citizens, and to have the best life you must have the best institutions and a system of education conforming with the institutions (emphasis in the original)."[16]

Introducing The Democratic Paideia Project

We find ourselves prone to agreeing with Fotopoulos that *paideia* can only be authentically realized within the context of a genuinely inclusive democracy. A *democratic paideia* would seek to advance the same values upon which it is grounded: *autonomy and community*. These values, however, are radically incommensurable with the dominant social paradigm of our present era and utterly incompatible with the institutional framework of the market economy and representative 'democracy'– aptly characterized by Castoriadis as 'liberal oligarchy'. Any effort to establish *paideia* within today's schools would generate a radical inconsistency within the present institutional framework, threatening the elites' power to reproduce themselves and

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[15] Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, p. 209.
[16] Ibid, citing M. H. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, p. 63.

the heteronomous social relations upon which they are based.

This brings us to crux of our problem. What must we do to shift from one dominant social paradigm (the market) to another (inclusive democracy)? In response to this question, Fotopoulos puts forward a *strategy of confederal inclusive democracy* as a transitional politics that would engage "increasing numbers of people in a new kind of politics and the parallel shifting of economic resources (labour, capital, land) away from the market economy" with the aim of creating "changes in the institutional framework and value systems that, after a period of tension between the new institutions and the state, would, at some stage, replace the market economy, statist democracy, as well as the social paradigm 'justifying' them, with an inclusive democracy and a new democratic paradigm respectively."[17]

In keeping with the value of community inherent within the *Inclusive Democracy Project*, implementing this strategy begins with creating a popular base of political power at the local level. Individuals committed to the principles of inclusive democracy must enter the political arena as candidates in local elections. In our view, this first step in transitional politics opens the door for an emancipatory education guided by the principles of paideia. As Mortimer Adler pointed out repeatedly in his writings, *paideia* defines education as a lifelong process. "Schooling," as he explained, represents merely the "preparatory stage; it forms the habit of learning and provides the means for continuing to learn after all schooling is completed."[18] The

[17] Ibid, p. 282. see also T. Fotopoulos, 'Transitional strategies and the Inclusive Democracy project', *Democracy & Nature*, Volume 8, Number 1, (March 2002), http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol8/takis_transitional.htm

[18] M. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal* (New York: MacMillan, 1982). p.10.

campaigns of Inclusive Democracy candidates would create opportunities for emancipatory education, aimed at disrupting the socialization process through which people have internalized the ideas, beliefs, and values of the market. That would include, of course, candidates running for election to local school boards as part of a *Democratic Paideia Project* to educate local community members on the principles and practices of *paideia* with the aim of creating popular support for implementing those same principles and practices in local schools.

Toward that end, we propose establishing the *Democratic Paideia Project* as part of the larger *Inclusive Democracy Project* advanced through this journal. Insofar as *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* functions to develop the theoretical ends and strategic means for establishing the inclusive democracy project as a new dominant social paradigm, we believe it should include a section that would allow theorists such as ourselves to build upon the theoretical and practical foundations of *paideia*. The popular base of support for the *Inclusive Democracy Project* could draw upon these resources to inform their work in and around schools, including their work on school boards and in local curriculum development initiatives.

While we embrace Cornel West's earlier cited acknowledgement that "the deep democratic tradition did not begin in America and we have no monopoly on its promise," much of our work would focus on addressing the peculiarities of the American context. This would not mean, of course, that our theoretical development of *paideia* would carry no relevance for non-Americans. Concurrently, however, we propose working with the editors of the journal to solicit contributions from democratic educational theorists around the world interested in addressing *paideia* from the perspective of their own national context and democratic traditions.

Rethinking Adler

West claims that [d]emocracy is always a movement of an energized public to make elites responsible–it is at its core and most basic foundation the taking back of one's power in face of the misuse of elite power. In this sense, democracy is more a verb than a noun–it is more a dynamic striving and collective movement than a static order or stationary status quo. Democracy is not just a system of governance, as we tend to think of it, but a cultural way of being. This is where the voices of our great democratic truth tellers come in.[19]

While we would agree that democracy is "more a verb than a noun," and that it does indeed signifiy both a "cultural way of being" and a "system of governance," we challenge West's view that the 'dynamic striving and collective movement" of democracy be conceptualized as merely making "elites responsible." The realization of democracy demands nothing short of the elimination of oligarchy. Although it is true that democracy is a dynamic striving (which however crucially depends on an alternative genuinely democratic institutional framework– something that West, like Mouffe and supporters of 'radical democracy' tend to ignore taking for granted liberal 'democracy') we would not agree with his description of a democratic movement since it takes for granted the existence of elites and gives the impression that the aim of such a movement is to challenge the misuse of elite power rather than the overthrow of elites and their power–as is the ID project's aim.

Though it will surprise the ears of our colleagues in MASSES, we must recognize Mortimer Adler as one of the greatest "democratic truth tellers" of the 20th century.

[19] C. West, *Democracy Matters*, p. 68.

Writing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and moved by the hard fought victories claimed by the feminist and civil rights movements, he declared "we are on the verge of a new era in our national life." As the result of these victories, he believed, "democracy has come into its own for the first time in this century... Not until this century have we conferred the high office of enfranchised citizenship on all our people, regardless of sex, race, or ethnic origin." Fuelled by this optimism and inspired by John Dewey's *Education and Democracy*, Adler believed "[t]he long-needed educational reform for which this country is last ready will be a turning point toward that era." The educational reform he advanced, of course, was *paideia*.

   With Adler, we recognize the significant gains made by the civil rights and feminist movements in terms of breaking down the racist and sexist elements of the American market system and representative democracy. However, those reforms did not transform the dominant social paradigm. They also left intact the market-imposed, class-based oligarchy that continues to prohibit the equal distribution of political and economic power among all citizens. Moreover, Adler assumed a limited – rights-based – conception of democracy that further limited his conception of *paideia*. Hence, although we find many truths in his writings that have gone neglected over the past twenty-years, we view them as only partial truths that demand a more critical view of the flaws within the American, or any, system of representative democracy and the role of the market in undermining genuine democracy as defined under the *Inclusive Democracy Project*

   In 1979, Adler, then Chairman of the Board of Editors for Encyclopaedia Britannica, worked with other educators to form the Paideia Group. Largely through the publication of three books, (*Paideia Proposal* [1982], *Paideia Problems and Possibilities* [1983], and *The Paideia Program* [1984]), this

group generated tremendous public interest in *paideia*. This interest led Adler, in 1985, to form Paideia Associates to provide training to people wanting to establish *paideia* programs in their local schools. Though Adler died in 2001, that work continues today at the National Paideia Center at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. To date, that Center helps support 30 *paideia* schools in 10 states throughout the US.

Again, inspired by John Dewey's *Education and Democracy*, Adler wrote *The Paideia Proposal* as an educational manifesto. "[U]niversal suffrage and universal schooling," he believed, "are inextricably bound together." The one without the other is a perilous delusion."[20] For all of his optimism, Adler was also a realist in the sense that he recognized the "disastrous consequences" of our "continued failure to fulfill the educational obligations of a democracy. We are all victims," he wrote, "of a school system that has gone only half way along the road to realize the promise of democracy."[21]

Though many overlook this, there are two dimensions to Adler's criticism that our school system "has gone only half way along the road to realize the promise of democracy." We believe there is a tendency to associate this criticism solely with his egalitarian commitments expressed in his frequently cited claim that "a democratic society must provide equal educational opportunity not only by giving to all its children the same quantity of public education –the same number of years in school – but also by making sure to give them all, with no exceptions, the same quality of education." The second dimension of this criticism, which

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[20] M. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal*, p. 3.
[21] Ibid, p. 4.

is frequently overlooked, addresses the lack of quality found in contemporary schooling.

First, Adler rejected the specialization and narrow vocationalism that he saw in schools. On one hand, he rejected this on the grounds that it created a multi-track educational system premised on the undemocratic prejudice that "many of the nation's children are not fully educable. Trainable for one or another job, perhaps, but not educable for the duties of self-governing citizenship and for the enjoyment of things of the mind and spirit that are essential to a good human life."[22] On the other hand, he rejected it on the deeper grounds that humanity's lack of specialized instinctual patterns of behavior do not suit us for specialized schooling.

Second, Adler criticized schooling's over-reliance on tests. "Examinations," in his view, "are passed by regurgitation of what is remembered from lectures and textbooks. Most of the remembered information is subsequently forgotten; and the student's mind is no better than it was at the beginning."[23] In what could be viewed as a most stinging indictment of today's schools' focus on high stakes testing and accountability schemes, Adler's further condemnation of tests is worth quoting at length:

> "[T]hey [students] may be memorizing machines, able to pass quizzes or examinations. But probe their minds and you will find that what they know by memory, they do not understand. They have spent hours in classrooms where they were talked at, where they recited and took notes, plus hours of homework poring over textbooks, extracting facts to commit to memory. But when have their minds been addressed, in what connection have they

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[22] Ibid, p. 7.
[23] M. Adler, *Paideia Problems and Possibilities*, (New York: MacMillan, 1983), p. 24.

been called upon to think for themselves, to respond to important questions and to raise them themselves, to pursue an argument, to defend a point of view, to understand its opposite, to weigh alternatives? There is little joy in most of the learning they are now compelled to do. Too much of it is make believe, in which neither teacher nor pupil can take a lively interest. Without some joy in learning—a joy that arises from hard work well done and from the participation of one's mind in a common task – basic schooling cannot initiate the young into the life of learning, let alone give them the skill and the incentive to engage in it further."[24]

We should not mistake Adler for some educational romantic, however. In fact, one of the strengths of Adler's work as a useful starting point from which to begin theorizing a radically democratic *paideia* lies in his outline of three mutually reinforcing modes of teaching and learning. For Adler, schooling must begin with *knowledge acquisition* from three areas of subject matter:

1. Language, Literature, & Fine Arts
2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences
3. History, Geography, and Social Sciences

The mode of teaching appropriate to the acquisition of knowledge he identified as *didactic instruction*. Some part of the time spent in school, particularly in the early years, must be dedicated to knowledge acquisition. In order to meet what he describes as the three objectives of three main objectives of schooling 1) personal (mental, moral, and spiritual) growth/self-improvement, 2) the individual's role as an enfranchised citizen of this republic, and 3) the adult's need to earn a living, there are simply things that

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[24] M. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal* (1982). pp. 31-32.

one must know. In keeping with the premium that *inclusive democracy* places on the value of *community*, Adler argued that "[f]or mutual understanding and responsible debate among the citizens of a democratic community, and for differences to be aired and resolved, citizens must be able to communicate with one another in a common language. 'Language' in this context involves a common vocabulary of ideas."[25]

None of the three objectives of schooling can be achieved, however, solely through knowledge acquisition. Adler's model also demands *skill development* in three primary areas:

1. Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening
2. Calculating, Problem-Solving, Observing, Measuring, and Estimating
3. Exercising Critical Judgment

Skills, he contends, are best taught by means of *intellectual coaching*, exercises, and supervised practiced.

Together, knowledge acquisition and skill development lay the foundation for the lifelong learning that is crucial for meeting the three objectives of schooling. Fotopoulos emphasizes these foundations when describing *paideia* not only *as civic schooling* but also as *personal training* playing a vital role in developing students' capacity to learn. However, both these two aims of paideia i.e. *paideia as civic schooling*, cultivating students' capacity for "self-reflective activity and deliberation" on the path to *autonomy*, and paideia as personal training presuppose an *enlargement of understanding through Socratic questioning*.

Socratic questioning, for Adler, occurs in seminars that are not restricted to secondary schools, but should begin

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[25] Ibid, pp. 30-31.

during the earliest stages of schooling. It is significant to note that the relationship between teachers and students shifts across each of three modes of teaching and learning. In knowledge acquisition activities, where teachers engage in didactic teaching, their relationship to students differs from the relationship during skills development. Likewise, the relationship changes again with the introduction of Socratic questioning in seminars. In the first two modes of teaching and learning, the authority of teachers stems from their superior knowledge (their knowledge of *what* and *how*). In the seminar setting, however, they derive their authority from superiority as learners. For, in this role, teachers play the role of co-learners, modelling the practices of Socratic questioning. This does not abdicate teachers of their authority derived from the superiority of their knowledge of the materials; it only adds another layer of responsibility for teachers to exercise that authority wisely, so as not to undermine students' growth as self-reflective, deliberative and autonomous thinkers. Adler also refers to this mode of teaching as *maieutic*, "because it helps the student bring ideas to birth," stimulating "the imagination and intellect by awakening the creative and inquisitive powers."

The most contentious issue in Adler's work concerns the materials chosen for discussion in his Socratic seminars. Most broadly stated, these materials should include books (not textbooks) as well as other products of human artistry: music, art, plays, and productions in dance, film, or television. Through studying and discussing these works, focusing particularly on the ideas and values they contain or express, students sharpen their ability to "think clearly, critically, and reflectively." It also introduces them to the fundamental ideas and values "underlying our form of government and the institutions of our society." Again, the

focus for Adler remains on preparing individuals for active and intelligent citizenship.

The contentiousness of the issue arrives when Adler describes these works as the "Great Books" or "Great Works of Human Artistry" and then submits that what makes these books great is the fact that they contain the "Great Ideas" that have perplexed human beings throughout history but which remain central to the discussion of civic matters. In our view, the selection of materials for Socratic dialogue appropriate to a democratic *paideia*, particularly during the stages of *emancipatory education* prior to the successful transition to an authentically inclusive democracy demands more discerning criteria to be determined by individuals in their lived cultural and historical contexts.

In the American cultural and historical context, we believe that the materials selected for discussion and Socratic questioning must enable our citizens to wrestle with what Cornel West identifies as making the "American democratic experiment ... unique in human history." What makes us unique, West claims, is not the widely held and arrogant assumption that somehow "we are God's chosen people to lead the world." Rather, the American democratic experiment is unique in human history "because of our refusal to acknowledge the deeply racist and imperial roots of our democratic project" and "because of our denial of the anti-democratic foundationstones of American democracy. No other democratic nation," West adds, revels so blatantly in such self-deceptive innocence, such self-paralyzing reluctance to confront the night-side of its own history. This sentimental flight from history–or adolescent escape from painful truths about ourselves–means that even as we grow old, grow big, and grow powerful, we have yet to grow up."[26]

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[26] C. West, *Democracy Matters*, p. 41.

Ultimately, in our view, for Americans to "grow up," they must confront the painful truth that their nation is not and never has been a democratic society. Emancipation starts from this realization and none other. And it is from this realization that a Democratic Paideia Project must begin its rethinking of Adler without rejecting him outright.

EDUCATION, PAIDEIA AND DEMOCRACY: EXPERIENCES OF THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

JOHN SARGIS

ABSTRACT: The aim of my contribution is to examine the interrelationship and inner dynamic of education, democracy, and paideia. Paideia is the expression of autonomous community. The aim of education in the transition to an inclusive democracy is to create the conditions which, when internalized by the individuals, will enhance their capacity for becoming autonomous. Without an educated public there can be no democracy. Involved is an inquiry into how autonomous individuals and communities challenge their own institutions and values in order to remain indefinitely open and recognize no ultimate dogma.

Today there are few thinking people who would deny that the public school system in the United States of America is broken and cannot be reformed.[1] The failures of public schooling are variously attributed to the shortcomings of its teachers, its students (and their parents), or its administrators. Rarely is the system of educating our youth seriously questioned by those who educate, and never critiqued by others. We contend that the system of public education is fundamentally flawed; that its purpose is not, as common belief has it, to educate, to enlighten, and thereby to produce citizens who act in

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[1] Whole School Reform models are the effects of neoliberal public school restructuring that began in the early 1990s. All they offer is new names for previously failed programs promising student, parent, and teacher empowerment. WSR has not changed anything and is an abject failure. Furthermore, public education is in the midst of being annihilated by the neoliberal (NO Child Left Behind Act).

both their own and in their society's best interests, that is, citizens for a true democracy. In fact, viewed historically and conceptually, the purpose of public schooling is to produce a mass work force which does not think for itself, but should accept without question the rhetoric and orders of the ruling economic, political, and social elites, who have amassed a concentration of economic and political power. What is needed is to reappropriate a term used in the ancient Greek world, *paideia*.

Paideia is a vision of educating which is an integral part of a genuine democratic society, i.e. a free society aiming at individual and social autonomy. The direct exercise of sovereignty of the people putting into question society's institutions and participating in decisions that affect their lives refers to the "freedom to" self-determination and autonomy. Autonomous people have the freedom to directly participate in governing society at the individual and societal level, since individual autonomy presupposes social autonomy where the freedom of the individual is grounded in the democratic form of life of the community. Therefore, a democratic society is autonomous and free. In a democratic society the domination and manipulation of human over human and human over Nature is not an issue. This has little to do with liberal or social democratic definitions of freedom maintained by liberals such as John S. Mill, as 'freedom from' the constraints of the state so that the individual may do as s/he pleases, but involving also the state as separate from society and granting fairness or political rights fought for and petitioned within the present institutional framework of the market economy and its political complement representative democracy. Also, a democratic society for us is incompatible with another contemporary meaning of freedom as rugged individualism where that individual is a step above and separate from other individuals thereby justifying the domination of human over human.

An autonomous society can never be achieved within the system of the market economy and representative democracy with its inherent concentration of economic, social, and political power. The System must be overthrown and replaced by inclusive democracy, because democracy demands the equal sharing of power and it is incompatible with any dogma and concentration of power.

The essential interconnection of education, paideia, and democracy

Paideia, democracy, and emancipatory education (i.e. education that aims at securing the transition from the present miseducation to paideia –which presupposes institutions of an inclusive democracy) form an inseparable whole. This whole is forged upon an essential relationship–an internal dynamic–in which emancipatory education, paideia, and democracy rely upon each other for their full development. It is through this essential interconnection that a society becomes emancipated, democratic, and autonomous. Apprehending the interconnectedness of these elements is an act of liberation and opens the way for the development of democratic consciousness.

Education, paideia, and democracy aim at and choose social and individual autonomy in the sense of enabling people to govern themselves at the social and individual levels. A genuine aim proceeds from a factor that determines itself a choice of acting and, as such, is different from a choice that is imposed upon from the outside. An authentic aim derives from autonomous individuals. An autonomous society (comprised of autonomous individuals) is a genuine free society. Education leads to continual education through its interconnection with democracy and paideia–which also secures them. This interconnection

arises in a society of equitably distributed interests, where institutions and social intercourse are mutual. In such a society education, paideia, and democracy form an insepa- rable whole. This whole is organized as an essential rela- tionship, because a society which claims to be democratic must secure the equal distribution of economic and politi- cal power, otherwise it is ridiculous to talk about education as aiming at social and individual autonomy. It is through this essential interconnection that a democratic society develops. Apprehending the internal dynamic of education, paideia, and democracy alludes to the free growth of each one's own experience, and therefore, the community.

However, teachers, politicians, priests, parents, judges, police, cultural heroes and entertainers, students, bosses, workers, mass media, etc. adopt the rhetoric of the ruling elites and accept the current dominant social paradigm[2] and enforce, personally and institutionally, these ruling values, beliefs, and ideas. As it happens in neoliberal mo- dernity, society is driven by two main components of the dominant social paradigm: the market economy and repre- sentative democracy as the only possible economic and po- litical forms respectively societies can take. The structural foundations of the market economy and representative democracy are hierarchical and heteronomous. Therefore, schools, as one of many societal institutions, are hierarchi- cal institutions where teachers can only teach a curriculum based on the dominant social paradigm, where the act of each student is commanded by the teacher. The creative capacities of the student are not taken into account, so it is nonsense to talk of educating in the sense of developing

[2] The system of beliefs, ideas and the corresponding values which are dominant in a particular society at a particular moment of its history. See Takis Fotopoulos: http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol5/ fotopoulos_media.htm

the individuals' capability to be autonomous, i.e. –as the word implies–to give onself laws, to self-govern. These ruling ideas and values of society as Marx and Engels have shown subject those to it who have no voice.[3]

Unlike commodities serially replaced in a market-based society, autonomy cannot be derived from consumption. In fact the opposite happens as consumerism is an integral element of a heteronomous society. To believe that autonomy can be derived from consumption, as the system of the market economy and representative democracy presuppose, is the result of erroneous thinking borne by the economic and political elites that the ends justify the means, which lack an intrinsic continuity. The rulers of such a lopsided society benefit from the unequal concentration of economic, political and social power, of which educational power is an important part. This exploitation is also the primary function and aim of contemporary public education or miseducation, since the ends of education are externally imposed. Teachers, administrators, and boards of education manipulate the curriculum in maintaining personal, class interests, and consequently the status quo.[4]

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[3] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology,* ed. C.J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1999), p. 64.

[4] For example, in science, sickle cell anemia is taught as a particular disease of people of African descent. What is left out however, is that other groups of dark skinned people living in tropical areas have sickle cell anemia as well. The 'disease' is a defense mechanism against malaria so those people will not get the full blown disease. Also, many science teachers do not teach the theory of evolution, because of their personal beliefs or they think it not important. Another example, in history, the New Jersey Legislature in August 2002 passed the Amistad Act calling on schools to incorporate African-American history into their social studies curriculum in order that people know and remember the human carnage and atrocities committed during the period of the African slave trade, slavery in America, and of the vestiges of slavery. To date, Paterson, NJ which has a forty-five per

Clearly, those 'educators' who choose to accommodate themselves to such nihilistic tendencies of the institutionalized concentration of power have vested interests in fighting against the development of an inclusive democracy and the possession by citizens of the knowledge and skills required for the task of preserving democracy.

Paideia is a political and a moral act in the sense of imbuing children with the democratic values implied by the fundamental principles of democratic organization, i.e. the principle of autonomy and the principle of community.[5] It is the way a society educates for individual and social autonomy and the responsibilities of each citizen acting both individually and in concert with others in establishing the democratic framework for the equal distribution of political and economic power. Education frees individual capacities for the social aim of widening of shared interests by breaking down class, ethnic, and gender barriers. It is only through education leading to action that a democratic society overthrows hierarchy and exogenous dependencies. Knowledge and therefore education play a key role in the struggle for autonomy. Democracy is more than a procedural form of government as in a representative democracy. Democracy is a way of life that provides the public space for the equal development of both the individual and community by calling everything (traditions, religions and any exogenously given values) into question. The struggle to create democratic institutions and paideia is the precondition

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cent African-American population has not complied. Thus, an accurate, complete, and inclusive curriculum does not exist. Black history is taught only as the history of the enslavement of Black people and their contributions (most times stolen) to American society, and not their history before enslavement.

[5] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Towards a Democratic Liberatory Ethics", Democracy & Nature, Vol.8, No. 3 (November 2002).

for democratic forms that provide for direct participation of everyone in self-government. These democratic values derived autonomously without the necessity of a spiritual, dogmatic or objective connections give shape to a unique social paradigm; for, the transitive qualities of education, paideia, and democracy allows for and makes use of the broadest, most inclusive and critical intersubjective experiences in decision-making. Such a democratic paideia is essential for political and economic equality.

If the current United States system of public schooling claims to enhance social, political, and economic equity in closing the gap in educational access, expectations and results for the most advantaged and disadvantaged people of society then consider these brutal realities found in the 2004 Annual Report of Teachers College, Columbia University:

> • Thirteen percent of African-American children are born with low birth weight–double the rate for whites. The infant mortality rate for African-Americans is double that of the white population.
> • Median black family income is 64% of median white family income–and median black family net worth is only 12% of the white family worth.
> • Twenty percent of low-income children are without consistent health insurance, versus 12% of all U.S. children. Thirteen percent of black children are without health insurance, versus 8% of white children. Approximately 42 million people are without healthcare coverage. Black pre-schoolers are one-third less likely than whites to get standard vaccinations. Low income children have dangerously high blood levels of lead at five times the rate of middle-class children. Some 8 million schoolchildren are taking psychotrophic

drugs to control their alleged emotional and intellectual disorders.

• African-American students are three times more likely than whites to be placed in special education programs, and only half as likely to be in gifted programs.

• By age three, children of professionals have vocabularies nearly 50% greater than those of working-class children, and twice as large as those of children on welfare.

• By the end of fourth grade, African-American and Latino students, and poor students of all races, are two years behind their wealthier, predominately white peers in reading and math. By eighth grade, they have slipped three years behind and by twelfth grade four years behind.

• One in three African-American males will be incarcerated in state or federal prison at some point in their lives. The rate is higher for those black males who do not finish high school. For Hispanic males, the rate is one in six, for white males, one in seventeen.

More can be added to this list, but the point is that these criminal policies of the ruling oligarchy cannot continue. Until these crimes are openly discussed, debated and acted upon by democratic decision-making, society will experience further decay. Those victims of the market economy and representative democracy are effectively taken out of the decision-making process–even if this is the pseudo decision-making process that representative 'democracy' secures for the people. On the way into jail or prison, in most states inmates are told they lost the right to vote, but on the way out, after they have paid their "debt" to society, they are not told they can re-register to vote.

This multidimensional crisis precipitated by anti-democratic, authoritarian, and hierarchical forces decide the

political, cultural and economic arrangements that are re-producing the unequal concentration of power. Clearly, the two main institutions of the present system– the market economy and representative democracy– and the ideologies and culture backing them which form the dominant social paradigm are opposed to paideia, education and democracy.

Curriculum of the Ruling Elite

In the struggle to determine the economic, political, ecological and social management of society the ruling elites promote their views with the linking of representative democracy and the market economy as the best and only way to establish prosperity. In fact, the goal of the ruling elites –in maintaining their hegemony– is the miseducation and the deskilling of a vast segment of the population. In the USA, for example, due to the infusion of state and national mandated testing, teachers teach to the test. That is, they teach their students what will be on the test. Consequently, the curriculum suffers by leaving out up to one-third of the material that used to be taught. Because more time has to be used to ensure students pass the tests –especially in language arts, science, history, and math– subjects such as art, music, home economics, shop (metal, wood, Computer Aided Design CAD) have been eliminated. Because the operational skills that these subjects offer are not taught, students' development is hindered. Without these skills (measuring, approximating, developing hypotheses, classifying, ordering, and spatial and temporal operations) learning and experience is constricted, the students fall behind and never attain their potential.

The authoritarian culture of the ruling elites requires obedience, conformity, and acquiescence of the general

populace. To achieve this end, the ruling elites promul-
gate a class based curriculum that not only adapts and ad-
justs students into "good little boys and girls" using the
so-called "dumbing-down" curriculum with its recycling
of knowledge, but also indoctrinates pupils into repre-
sentative politics by determining whom in society will be-
come the next generation of benefactors, watchdogs, and
guardians of the continually growing unequal distribution
of power and scarce resources. The repressions generated
from this project are the motor that reproduces narcissis-
tic gratification and one-sided concentration of power in
maintaining the planetary market economy. The neoliberal
curriculum produces efficient students who can function
competently and competitively (read: successfully) who
will legitimize the consistency between the dominant so-
cial paradigm and the existing hierarchical institutional
framework.

The values of neoliberal ideology of the past thirty years
do not only express a structural refitting by the market
economy into the New World Order, but also necessitate
a structural reorientation of education from ware-hous-
ing students to instituting a minimum security appara-
tus. Under this new program, public education maintains
its repressive orientation ("Someone has to keep an eye
on them"). Schools now have metal detectors students
have to pass through and cameras that record their every
move. Hierarchical surveillance of students infected the
beginnings of public education. It is no accident that the
inflexible and severe Lancastrian monitoring system of
educating caught on in New York where one teacher with
a panoptic gaze could control and teach five-hundred, or a
thousand pupils at a time, and it was efficient and cheap.
Groups of children were designated as monitors to teach,
command, test, drill, or punish in the pursuit of discipline.
Assembly line production ruled. Bells rang and students

responded with silence and attention. Discipline was enforced with corporal punishment in order to impose good habits in the spirit of expediency and good economic practice. Discipline and crowd control were inscribed into consciousness with a rattan in the hands of sadistic, morose, and ignorant teachers. This penchant for disciplinary power has its justification in, as M. Foucault has discovered, the exam which ensures the smooth functioning of power.

It is no accident Margaret Spellings is now the U.S. Secretary of Education, following her fellow Texan, Rod Paige, at the position, who accused the National Education Association as a "terrorist organization." Spellings career ran through Texas state government serving as an education reformer with the intent to "improve" Texas schools. When George W. Bush was selected President (Sandra Day O'Connor was the swing vote giving the U.S. Supreme Court authority to stop the vote recount in Florida in 2000 handing Bush the Presidency), she became his assistant for Domestic Policy. Her major accomplishment was as an architect in the crafting of the regressive No Child Left Behind Act.

When Congress passed and President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 it spelled the doom of public education. The war at home continues unabated as NCLB has written into it sanctions to be placed on failing schools which guarantees their continual failure. A failing public education is a neoliberal goldmine which opens the door to privatization. NCLB establishes absurd standards that cannot be attained. One of its discriminatory standards requires "children with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders no matter how profound... to perform at grade level by holding teachers accountable for doing what medical science never accomplished;

namely, curing mental retardation."[6] NCLB requires impossible test standard requirements for students and idiotic professional standards for teachers and administrators. If the whole school population does not meet the standard, the school will lose its annual federal funding, which can be millions of dollars. NCLB is a dictatorial imposition from the federal government down to the student. With such an ultimate imposition public education remains under attack.

Harvard University released a study on 9 February 2006 demolishing Bush's educational policies set forth in NCLB. Students at risk are falling behind even further, and they are taking the brunt of the sanctions embedded in the act. The educational gap widens. Among the Harvard [7] findings are:

- The law concentrates the costs and burdens of implementing its public school choice requirement on high-poverty urban districts.
- The tiny minority of students who used the public school transfer option went from one school with low-achieving levels to yet another school with similarly low-achieving levels.
- Federal accountability rules have no common meaning across state lines so it is impossible to compare progress from one state to another.
- NCLB asks for more progress from the poor urban schools than from affluent suburban schools.

Another trap in NCLB is a military recruitment policy. Section 9528 requires high schools to give to the Pentagon Type I student information which is: name, address and

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[6] See David Gabbard, et al, http://www.publicresistance.org/journals/1.1-1SavingPublicEd.htm

[7] http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/esea/NCLB_Unravel.pdf

telephone number. The Pentagon then sends this information to local military recruiters. If a high school refuses to hand over this information the school will lose its federal funding. Through the federal government student privacy is in jeopardy. This act of black mail already expands upon measures already in place that allow military recruiters access students in their schools. However, schools, by law, must inform parents and guardians of this recruitment policy and how to opt out. Very rarely does this occur. Military recruiters are high pressure salespeople with unlimited access to minors and will go to no end in recruiting them with false promises of job training and money for college. Poor rural districts and hopeless inner cities with working class communities and communities of color are the impoverished places where recruiters like to prowl and prey with their ghetto Humvees and slick ad campaigns. War criminal George Bush uses this economic draft in these depressed areas luring our youth to fight his perpetual war. Giving military recruiters access to student information has no educational value. How will giving this information help improve students' test scores or grades in various subject areas?

Education and Miseducation

At present public education is a management problem. Public school principals acting like plant managers, CEOs or monarchs who regard human nature as an object to be controlled, disciplined, and directed in order to maintain the plant, corporation or fiefdom safe and clean for the production and reproduction of educational inequality. Although the rhetoric confirms otherwise (in the name of education, democracy, and the children), this type of objectification seeks the exclusion and absence of the Other,

hence no opposition in the forming of educational policies. Reason, as critical thinking, is lost, and thoughtless concession to authority becomes the norm. Since paideia is a political and moral act in the sense defined above, this thoughtless miseducation may be clearly seen as undemocratic and therefore immoral.

The public school student readily internalizes the cultural values this program of miseducation teaches without critically examining the meaning and values of the market economy, where neoliberal values have *a priori* been affixed and affirmed by what is purported to be a "good" and "reasonable" logic and consensus. Socialization in capitalist society begins with the homogenization and standardization of tastes in newborns fed with Simulac and prefabricated uniform nipples. People are prepared to accept any pabulum or false needs capitalists deem marketable. Learning to put out of play cultural market values imbibed from infancy is the first wrenching step toward education, away from the interests of mystification, totalitarianism, social control, and concentration of power to which our current pedagogy subscribes.

Whatever knowledge the public gains from education changes nothing. Acting upon what one knows and understands is the challenge one must accept in bringing about economic, social, and political autonomy. An education that does not strive for the fullest and most thorough understanding of the world will be the handmaiden of elites who will always make pedagogical decisions. Authoritarian principles in education will never be removed if teachers continue to teach what are in the words of John Dewey:

> "certain collections of fixed, immutable subject matter that they were taught which they in turn transmit to students under them. The educational regimen thus consists of authorities at the upper end handing down to the receivers at the lower end what they must accept. This is not

education but indoctrination, propaganda. It is a type of 'education' fit for the foundations of a totalitarian society and, for the same reasons, fit to subvert, pervert and destroy the foundations of a democratic society." [8]

Education is immoral if it is merely connected with gaining manual or technical skills for getting a job or being employable. Achieving a deepening of intelligence –based on knowledge, self-reflection, and deliberation– is the curriculum students need to become autonomous. This curriculum emphasizes the need for an institutional framework based on the equal distribution of political and economic power and shared common interests, and interaction between varied groups. Education for autonomy breaks with the present socialization process in order to free the student to place societal laws, values, beliefs, and ideas into question.

Critical thinking skills need to be developed: thinking, analyzing, questioning, discovering, comparing, discussing, challenging –books, speeches, advertisements, common opinion, myths, political propaganda, decision-making, power structures (mass media, Hollywood, corporate lobbyists, long war, economic elites), regressive values such as racism, sexism, homophobia, class hierarchy, militarism, patriarchy, etc.–in a way that goes beyond surface meanings and veneer to understand the social context and direction of any discourse. By learning such skills students can understand the causes of events of any subject-matter and how it affects daily life. Where there is no questioning there is no educating, only reaffirmations of beliefs–habitual conveniences that adhere to the rhetoric of the fear of the unknown and ignorance of what can be known.

[8] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* (Chicago: The Swallow Press Inc., 1954).

Education is an interrogating that re-opens foundations and perspectives that have been hidden by affirmations of belief. The question re-gathers or discovers the individual's genuine thinking by pulling the questioner out of the mud of taken-for-granted thinking, thereby re-valuing dogmatic beliefs:

> "If a question is posed existentially, as a detachment of everyday meanings, its reference to what 'matters' to the questioner is not to 'what he is' as a substance but 'how he is' or where he 'finds himself,' and this reference is also brought into question. Thus the questioner as such is involved in the question and thereby dislocated from his previous place." [9]

In such an emancipating pedagogy, egocentrism, narcissist certainties, and accumulation of experiences are put into question. Democracy is founded on a self-reflective choice and on institutional arrangements which secure the equal sharing of political and economic power. Public institutions called schools must provide the fundamental principles and aims of how society is organized as a democratic institution, on the basis of autonomy and community and complementary values.

Egocentrism and Education

American youths are formally educated within an acculturative industry that grafts students to interests and tasks entirely determined by the market economy and representative democracy. This encoding is cleverly disguised as choice and participation. Beginning in primary school,

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[9] Robert D. Cumming, *Starting Point,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p.173

students are led into consumer society by accepting the linking of the market economy with representative democracy. Egocentrism is built into the system upon the accumulation of desires that are never satisfied in obtaining its objects of desire, and, as a result, seeks more and more gratification in more and more consumer objects. Rather than attempting to discover the grounds of those values, the public cultigen enthusiastically awaits the next generation of (distractive) novelties. The consumer becomes an avid buyer, observer, tool, guinea pig, and resource for further manipulation. Socialized into the world by mass consumer society and carried into adult life by a variety of cultural industries inflating ego-centrism, students are a captured audience for economic exploitation. Indeed, they become so captivated that their own lives become enmeshed in the pursuit of false dreams of monetary success. This miseducation leads students away from democracy and equality and into a society of economic exploitation, totalitarianism, hierarchy, and inequality. A student's fund of knowledge is displaced by a fund of fashionade consumerism, as the students themselves are initiated into an inner subjective standard wholly inscribed as a consumer. These coerced, privatized selves mistakenly assume their behavior as fulfilling the American Dream, whereas the neoliberal ideology of the market economy and representative democracy simply drives them into the poorhouse.

Description of Application of Definitions

The struggles for freedom within human history illustrate that the ruling elites understand how human nature can be used against itself as a wedge for increasing human exploitation. Conventional morality using mass psychology and propaganda techniques makes it easier to manage the

masses against themselves and their interests. The oligar-
chy never takes upon themselves the blame for the multi-
dimensional crisis we face, whereas, on the other side, the
masses deliver their herd conformity into their guardians'
hands. Students are given false standards of freedom of
expression and assemblage, because if they actually ex-
ercised those freedoms they would learn they are quickly
compromised.

Ruling Elites and Homogenization

Ruling elites' interests and heteronomous values can be
overcome by replacing the unequal distribution of eco-
nomic, political, and social power with a confederation of
local forms of direct democracy where everyone, regard-
less of ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation participates
directly in decisions affecting the community. The goal of
society must be the replacement of ethics comprised of
values situated outside (exogenous) the individual or com-
munity–and therefore lost to any sense of paideia–with
the ethics of inclusive democracy[10]. Society has settled
into a hierarchy of power under the sway of a faulty reason-
ing that establishes pseudo problems, which conveniently
confuse effects as causes of the multidimensional crisis
by blaming the victims. For example, the "solution" to the
gang problem is to institute curfews for youth, crackdowns
on gangs, and adding more police on the streets. However,
real solutions to such problems can only be found through
communities becoming self-reliant, changing the condi-
tions that create the problems and not dependent on out-

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[10] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Towards a Democratic Liberatory Ethics".

side sources like NGOs and faith based charities for their organization.

Self-reliance is meant, as Fotopoulos states, "…in terms of autonomy, rather than in terms of self-sufficiency."[11] Without autonomy, the individual becomes homogenized into conformity obtaining a "consistency" best appropriated as an object of the system reproducing social, economic, ecological, and political inequalities (one size fits all). Homogenization gives a false sense of community in an increasingly pervasive surveillance/police system. No longer being the subject of their own experiences and denied a reflexive democratic consciousness, people appropriate images, values, perceptions, and symbols derived from above and outside themselves. Today, the workplace (among others) has the great panoptic machines, cameras, (to watch workers and customers) with workers wearing headsets, and managers from their home computers can monitor and increase employee productive power by giving commands directly to any employee at any time. Community and public life are over, and the private individual is fabricated in a new panoply of market forces. This homogenized, heteronomous, and predictable consistency as Emerson stressed, "…is the hobgoblin of small minds."[12]

Linking Democracy and the Market Economy

The economic elites are linked to government through representative democracy. Since the interests of the U.S.

[11] Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, (London: Cassell, 1997).
[12] Ralph W. Emerson, "Self-Reliance" in Brooks Atkinson, ed., *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* (New York: The Modern Library, 1940), p. 152.

Congress coincide with those of the market economy in maintaining private control of politics and the economy, the U.S. has been forged into a fascist oligarchy whose dictatorship and interests do not coincide with the interests of democracy, education and paideia.

The idea of freedom that the oligarchy attests is the negative freedom of doing whatever one wants to do, free from as much State interference as possible. However, the perversion of this kind of freedom ('freedom from'), meshed with the market economy, has led to the chronic and worsening multidimensional crisis we face– a direct result of the kind of 'freedom' we enjoy. The liberal oligarchic idea of freedom that treats everyone as a private individual is based on the separation of society from the economy and polity, and *ipso facto* the separation of individuals themselves. How can everyone be equally free in a hierarchy or liberal oligarchy? They are free in the sense that they are on an equal footing to manipulate, dominate, and exploit others, who are considered rivals with conflicting egocentric interests. People are brought together in competition rather than in cooperation in finding a living. Marx, commenting on the individual's private interest and limited freedom in *On the Jewish Question* writes, "The only bond between men is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic persons."[13] The illusion of freedom granted by the neoliberal ideology has nothing to do with democratic values; furthermore it secures the strategy of keeping people individualized, privatized, and separated. The ruling ideas are also given a spiritual connection that provides for the further justification for the current system of domination.

[13] Karl Marx, "On The Jewish Question", in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader,* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978), p. 43.

On the U.S. one dollar bill is found the Latin phrases *Annuit Coeptis*, ("He has blessed our undertaking") and *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, ("a New Order of the Ages)." In this undertaking political freedom presupposes private enterprise and the market economy where the private individual treats others as means with the approval of god. God and religion are used to control people and the economy. Those in power use god and service to god as an excuse to justify god's blessing in accumulating wealth as the fruit of one's labor, whether this involves killing indigenous peoples for their land and resources or exploiting the labor of others.

The U.S. ruling elites retain their position and control through the ideology of consistency between representative democracy and the market economy while their rhetoric engages in hiding alienation, miseducation and totalitarianism.

In public schooling, where students are subordinated to following rules and regulations, learning becomes meaningless. Learning manipulated by external reinforcement is indoctrination, as we already have seen. Students are indoctrinated into the hierarchy of values and inequalities represented by the market economy and representative democracy. This hierarchical theory of education views students as those who must be told what to do and how to do it in their mindless quest to become good consumers.

Authoritarian and Non-Authoritarian Education

Authoritarian orders of education (i.e. the present system of miseducation) demand students open books, do homework, follow directions and do not ask intelligent questions. This pernicious pedagogy considers the students' will as an

object or does not exist as all, thus lending itself to the project of molding the student into an obedient citizen.

On the other hand, in non-authoritarian education, the pedagogical order takes the student as already willing; that is, willing to open a book, willing to study, and willing to ask questions. This educating is a critical dialogue with current values with the aim of providing the conditions that provoke students to pose questions. Through questioning students generate new perspectives and situations on their cultural values and experience. A curriculum for critical education examines the hierarchy of power in human relations and how society and history are made (and can be remade) by human interaction. Learning is apprehending the interconnections among things and not merely knowing facts in isolation. By peeling off surface meanings and images, a curriculum can be oriented to gaining insight into commercial media, economic propaganda, and political disinformation, leading students to see the impact of them on their lives, as well as the hierarchical structures that limit democracy such as sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, patriarchy, racism, corporate lobbying, and hierarchical control of institutions.

Education refers to refraining from vagaries and generalizations and to come to decisions based upon the common interest of all community members. On the other hand, miseducation refers to the mere acceptance and conviction of misleading explanations for the way things are. The miseducated rely on sentiment and intuition rather than reason in forming decisions. The miseducated prefer to be entertained rather than engaging in a critical consideration of information. To be emancipated is to know that nothing is ready-made or pre-given. Learning is a gradual clarification of concepts that are confusing or unclear or do not make sense. One must choose, investigate and gather as much knowledge as possible in making informed

political, social, and economic decisions. The *sine qua non* of a democracy is that its citizens seek relevant information in questioning their institutions and the values backing them, something that goes far beyond miseducation by authority, habits and repressions reproducing the status quo. Citizens must participate as well-informed members of the community. In this sense democracy is a way of life. However, public opinion, manufactured by the mass media, culled from polls, interviews and questionnaires is skewed. Those who own the media create the illusion that the public supports the legitimacy of the dominant social paradigm. Choosing to place into question existing values and interests can create a space for real alternatives to the current multidimensional crisis. In deliberation, as John Dewey masterfully writes:

> "each conflicting habit and impulse takes its turn in projecting itself upon the screen of imagination. It unrolls a picture of its future history, of the career it would have if it were given a head…In thought as well as in overt action, the objects experienced in following out a course of action attract, repel, satisfy, annoy, promote and retard. Thus deliberation proceeds. To say that at last it ceases is to say that choice, decisions takes place. What then is choice? Simply hitting in imagination upon an object that furnishes an adequate stimulus to the recovery of overt action…Choice is not the emergence of preference out of indifference. It is the emergence of a unified preference out of competing preferences."[14]

The battle for the emancipation of the student begins in the classroom within a wide range of management and pedagogical styles. Rarely is there a classroom or school

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[14] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1957), pp.179-181.

that has as its curriculum the posing of demystifying ques-
tions. Questions and suggestions from students confront-
ing authority are rare or are put down as unrealistic, radical
and out of the mainstream. However, teachers will never
admit that they do not allow questions that confront exist-
ing structures. The students get the message as Postman
and Weingartner observe:

> "communicated quietly, insidiously, relentlessly, and
> effectively through the structures of the classroom:
> through the role of the teacher, the role of the student,
> the rules of their verbal games, the rights that are as-
> signed, the arrangements made for communication, the
> 'doings' that are praised or censored. In other words the
> medium is the message." [15]

The whole community– teachers, administrators, par-
ents, clergy, politicians, and on and on, have come to ap-
prove and accept the curriculum that forces children to
resist learning. This does not have to be a perennial state
of affairs, despite the fact that those who confuse causes
as effects make it into a moral pseudoproblem. According
to this illogic the recalcitrant student is the cause of their
miseducation, whereas, in fact, the recalcitrant student is
the effect of miseducation.

The power elites do not want egalitarianism. We fre-
quently hear the claim that public schools were estab-
lished to reproduce democratic values. Yet the reality is
that the values of the market economy had a major hand
in the planning of schools to be a place where the masses
received enough skills to move them in into the growing
work force needed to run American industry. Class warfare
was embedded into the public school system, although

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[15] Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive
Activity,* (New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1969), p.22.

the rhetoric claimed the opposite and public education was known as the "great equalizer." But, equalizing what?: Opportunity while reproducing economic, political, social, ecological inequality so that students to learn nothing together? Horace Mann, viewed education as a mastery of laws to be learned that conform to existing hierarchies. Since manufacturing was becoming the major factor of life in Massachusetts, where he was Secretary of the State Board of Education from 1837-1848, Horace Mann talked the good talk about the school as having the same goals and interests of society:

> '"When he (Mann) talked of 'good habits' then, he was not merely conforming to what he believed was moral law. He was describing behavior required of compliant workers in factories-offering the poor and jobless what they needed to get in, assuring the owners the literate, disciplined employees they were seeking for the new production lines."[16] Public schools were established to keep order among undisciplined and rowdy immigrant children, who were starting to populate overcrowded cities. The principles of assembly-line production and monitoring devices held sway. Students were, "deputized as monitors, each assigned a different task in the activity of instruction, drill, or disciplines...learning lessons or administering tests...other monitors policed the room, carried out punishments, reported wrongdoings, carried messages and instruction for the teacher."'[17]

These methods devised by schools were plainly good business practices of the requirements of capital.

Yesterday's educational practice needed to train a semi-skilled politically docile workforce. Today, the difference is,

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[16] Maxine Greene, *The Public School and the Private Vision,* (New York: Random House Inc., 1965), p.23.
[17] Ibid., p.92.

educational practice needs to train a technically sophisticated politically docile workforce. The current role of public education is to channel and stratify students into subservient economic and political power centers. Neither developing democratic consciousness nor the free and equal participation of all members of society, nor the understanding of the complex connections between ideas and actions is the goal of public education. Public education is set up not to challenge elitism and hierarchy in the prevailing bigotry and repressive moralisms of the dominant social paradigm. The political dimension of education becomes for the elite, propounding their conservative political agendas, a battleground to keep students, parents, community members and therefore the schools depoliticized.

If innovations in art or in a curriculum of multiple perspectives deviate from the classical canons of western humanism, they are denounced as a surrender of standards. The campaign against political correctness claiming to defend freedom of thought against the tyranny of the Left, actually seeks to limit debate by silencing criticism of racism, sexism, homophobia, and cultural homogenization. Every member of society in whose hands political, economic or social power is concentrated through the present institutional framework has a hatred and fear of genuine democracy. To accept and appreciate the variety and diversity of human experience is truly democratic. Inclusion is a rejection of a false universalism that seeks to impose a simulacrum of unity obliterating genuine political difference.

The project of education, paideia and democracy has as its goal the breaking of existing political, economic, cultural and ecological power arrangements. These authoritarian forms of domination are difficult to break because they represent the hierarchy of values elitists and their minions have used to justify their privileged positions

within a fetid power structure. Through the current dominant social paradigm people are led to believe in the superiority of the values of power and privilege. Economic elites and their team of professional politicians and intellectual guardians maintain their control of public and private institutions in order to further power and privilege. Is the system of the market economy and representative democracy an autonomous system? No. There is no paideia in this system, nor a flourishing of culture, which simultaneously seeks democracy and autonomy. Remember, the oligarchy rules through representative democracy. By definition there is no democracy, no autonomy and therefore no education in an oligarchic system.

Mass public education or "jail education" molds a consumer, who is frivolous, obedient, superficial, mediocre, and invariably prejudiced. The consumer's major interests coincide with those of the ruling class, and thus can only dream of being an elitist. The public literally does not have to think. Mass propaganda is placed in front it and inscribed into its herd consciousness. Public values are heteronomous and hide from the naïve public the oligarchy, the members of which are neither the best nor the wisest in deciding not only affairs of state, but also day-to-day affairs. Hierarchical and heteronomous values are not consistent with political, social, and economic democracy. It is only through open and equal discussion and decision making that an inclusive democracy can uncover and clarify needs that are not soothed by unlimited growth, progress and a litany of markets. The oligarchy is far removed from the interests of democracy, education and paideia and it is hostile to open public accountability, dialogue or persuasion. The secrecy, misrepresentation and propaganda of the market economy and representative democracy have to be replaced by an inclusive democracy and inquiry into

social, economic, political, and environmental policy.[18] Mass public opinion is diverted from inclusive democracy by novelty and various other distractions; kept diffused and scattered, the public cannot cohere into a democratic voice. Liberal or conservative makes no difference—they both defend an unjust system. An awareness of democratic consciousness is also an argument for persuasion in democratic decision-making, in *logon didonai* (rendering account and reason), rather than using violence. Public opinion is worked over by the ruling elite into malleable consent. [19]

The lack of connection between the student's classroom activities and life outside the school is exacerbated by the inequality they suffer, thus providing for a ghetto education. However, since the classroom is not valued as a place of learning, students have brought street values into the classroom. This problem is compounded by teachers of inner city children who, can get away without teaching anything knowing full well their students' parents will not protest. The fact that a high percentage of students work thirty to thirty-nine hours a week at minimum pay service sector jobs belies the other illusive facts of equal access, opportunity, and the decentralisation of economic power. The student's existential situation is entwined with the so-

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[18] Vice-President Dick Cheney and the Bush administration fought the public release of minutes of meetings Cheney had with energy officials in March 2001 involved in energy policy making. On May 9, 2005 a federal appeals court ruled with the Bush administration that it did not have to divulge the oil executive names or minutes, since they were not actual voting members of Cheney's panel, the National Energy Policy Development Group. On June 15, 2005 Greg Palast and Harper's reports revealed that at that meeting Cheney reviewed oil maps of Iraq with oil executives. www.gregpalast.com

[19] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Transitional Strategies and the Inclusive Democracy Project".

cial reality in which they are born and bred. Increasingly bored and uninterested students are even more susceptible to the mystifications of the market economy that promise difference and status, but deliver conformity: "If it's right for you", "be an individual buy Pond's."

So what is the continuity between the child's received curriculum and the reality outside school? Outside the school the reality is high incarceration, police brutality, gang competition, early death, lack of health care, decent housing and recreation. The education they receive in the school is equal to their surroundings: decayed schools, corrupt and incompetent teachers, pollution, low pay and high crime. In their education there is no application of intelligence to solve problems. The lesson plans of monarchical teachers are filled with tedium and drudgery.

The relations of capitalist production are reproduced and exert their power through the media, schools, family, and community. Struggling against and overcoming the unequal concentration of power can transcend class structures. We cannot adhere to values that are heteronomous, but only to those we each have chosen collectively and democratically out of the principles of autonomy and community.

In an Inclusive Democracy, the level of a person's democratic consciousness is presumed by their paideia, because paideia is according to the education of the individual as citizen within conditions of freedom and self-determination. Given that democracy is collaboration and conjoining such paideia can only come from the autonomy of the community. Schools, as institutions of inclusive democracy, must be free to question the fetters of the dominant social dogma. It is only when students stop, look, scrutinize, and suspend from judgment their taken-for-granted values, that they can place into question the presuppositions of their life-worlds in order to clarify ambiguities,

inconsistencies, and contradictions. The general stand-point of paideia is the sum total of all the cultural objects, laws, values, customs, art, science, education and the poise and character of the people or state. The highest goal of paideia is to create the democratic consciousness of explicit self-determination at the social and individual level –and this presupposes the equal distribution of power among citizens.

A radical break with the present is needed to make room for new social domain. Disconnecting or putting out of play any presupposition is a goal of education. Husserl describes the judgment put out of action, "It still remains there like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connexional system."[20] A gestalt-switch takes place as a presupposition is disregarded and a new standpoint be-comes possible. By barring usage of any judgment as truth regarding the reality of the world, the student can break with the forms of the dominant social paradigm. Education is an inquiry demystifying phenomena and creating the conditions for paideia. Reversing the role inscribed by in-stitutional structures in order to better understand their workings expands one's experience against the backdrop of the cultural milieu. But understanding is not enough. To know is to act, change, modify, and transform experience.

Plato's Contribution

Plato is no friend to democracy and winds up providing us with the rationale for his authoritarian republic.[21] However,

[20] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas,* trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson, (New York: First Collier Books, 1975), p. 98.
[21] See Y.Oikonomou's article: "Plato and Castoriadis: the conceal-ment and the unravelling of democracy, The Int*ernational Journal of*

he does present us with significant insights on the essence of education in his "Allegory of the Cave." In the opening line he states, "meta tauta de, eipon, apeikason toioutoi pathei ten hemeteran phusin paideias te peri kai apaideu-sias." Cornford's translation reads, "Next, said I, here is a parable to illustrate the degrees in which our nature may be enlightened or unenlightened."[22] The word Plato uses for enlightenment, culture, knowledge, and education is paideia. He says that the movement from ignorance (apaid-eusias) to knowledge traverses a course of transformations in the nature of the student. Education for Plato is the gradual and painstaking inquiry that demands, "the soul… be turned around in relation to everything in front of it."[23] Remember, the cave-dwellers are chained by the neck and legs, so that they cannot turn their heads and are unable to move. The cave-dwellers can perceive only what is in front of them as they behold the shadows as reality and echoes as truth. Plato's paideia establishes an archetype or plastic model in which the constant turning of human nature fol-lows on its arduous and circuitous path to enlightenment. Paideia is an overcoming of what was formerly known to be knowledge (apaideia) by a constant inversion, uproot-ing, and transplanting of the whole person. This inversion is possible if everything that is commonly known, taken for granted, and the way in which it was known become different. Why? Because the demand ordinary pre-given experience makes is an overpowering force of naïve un-derstanding. This common everydayness is considered by the cave-dwellers to be the realm, which alone gives meas-ure to all things and relationships and provides the moral

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[22] Plato, *The Republic of Plato,* trans. Francis Cornford, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.227.
[23] Plato, *The Republic of Plato,* p.232.

groundwork for directing and organizing the cave-dwellers' reality. "They may have had the practice of honoring and commending one another with prizes for the man who had the keenest eye for the passing shadows and the memory for the order in which they followed or accompanied one another."[24] The silhouettes projected upon the cave wall keep the dwellers' reality in its power. Consequently, the dwellers think this commonplace region of shadows as the free exploration of experience and judgment. Only a sudden force can free Plato's cave dwellers. The freed prisoner would be dazzled and pained by seeing things differently in the enlightened sphere and would naturally turn back to the shadows for the comfort offered by their familiarity. Yet, the cave dweller is less confused with what he previously knew, but is more "perplexed."[25]

Of course, Plato saw education as a kind of individualistic affair in which enlightenment was feasible, irrespective of the institutional framework within which it happens—a reactionary conclusion in itself. It is obvious that neither paideia is feasible outside a genuine democracy nor an attempt for education is possible when it is cut off from a democratic movement for an inclusive democracy. Nonetheless, the allegory of cave dwellers is important because it shows that paideia cannot be a haphazard affair that fills and crams an empty mind with all sorts of shadows passed off as realities. Care must be taken not to alienate the student, but to nurture those attributes that contribute to the student's interests and inner poise. Plato's allegory sets the stage for that process of thought, which supersedes apaideia (shadows and injustice) on the way to paideia.

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[24] Plato, *The Republic of Plato,* p.230.
[25] Plato, *The Republic of Plato,* p.229n. The first effect of Socratic questioning is perplexity experienced by the student.

The educational act provides the conditions, experiences, and situations that provoke the learner to filter the presuppositions of cultural silhouettes. Education demands students think deeply about the illusory world of notions that hem, jostle, whirl, and oppress them. To perceive the students' situation as given according to popular consensus and authority requires students pose a reversal of their standpoint. Inquiry of this type intends to decipher the foundation and driving forces of students' thought and milieu, which from birth generalize and standardize the cultural life-world. In other words education is the task of moving out from apaideia/ignorance, injustice, totalitarianism to paideia/enlightenment, autonomy, democracy. This movement reveals how the categorical shadows determine the what and the how of an individual's perceptions and cultural identity. This propaganda gathers and surrounds public and private life experiences, and is very explicit about their content: "this is the way things are run around here!"

Education inquires at the same time into the sources and meanings of the cultural milieu and the questioner. The aim of this inquiry is to bring the questioner into genuine contact with these world contents as they reveal themselves in unbiased disclosure. But this process involves the questioner's dis-location from cultural forces and from the where and the how of their daily lives so that the presuppositions that obscure the validity of these forms and person can be decoded. These cultural forces are ideologies that rationalize and legitimize the status quo. Intentional reflection upon the primacy and false priority of how and what the student knows and takes judgment upon constitute education. Interrogation of this kind leads to something other than education for money-job transactions by adhering to instrumental rationality, social psychologism, and mechanistic models that fix self, society, and

knowledge into a specter of uniform formulas upholding the market economy and representative democracy.

Education therefore brings to the fore, by placing in abeyance the presuppositions underlying and governing understanding and comportment, students' valuations. The more students place out of play their valuing presumptions about the world the more obvious they view their obdurate effects on the world. This making-conscious isolates presuppositions, values, and judgments by requiring the suspension of their validity. As long as thinking is continually influenced by the unquestioned prescriptions of teachers, bosses, clergy, parents, and other community members, as part of the consensus-making apparatus for the way things are, students will remain shackled. Presuppositions are constantly functioning unnoticed. It is only when they are jarred from their habitual everydayness do students glimpse how the dominant social paradigm orders reality. Paideia puts into question the validity of our presuppositions– all which give weight to our world–to show how our social lives are connected.

Autonomous individuals direct their own education. Education becomes purposeful by fostering continuity between the activity and ideas and the student's interest. By giving shape to a new social paradigm, inclusive democracy seeks the equal distribution of social, economic, and political power. In other words, inclusive democracy is that form of social organization in which maximum intersubjective experiences are possible. These experiences conjoin in making democratic decisions a reality by questioning the various modes of the unequal distribution of power. There is no political democracy, no social democracy, no economic democracy, and no ecological democracy without reintegrating society with economy, polity and nature, and therefore abolishing the concentration of power. Inclusive democracy gets us out of the predicament that

the market economy and representative democracy have gotten us into.

Results

The quality taken from the product of the market economy cannot offer any genuine resonance. The capitalists' goal is to use the commodity as a means to turn the planet into a single global market. The world, since the establishment of the market economy about 200 years ago, has been transformed from autonomous communities into heteronomous world markets. Capital's increasing domination of the world pushes ever-faster alienation at all levels of work. Labor is alienated from its product. However, as workers cannot recognize this alienation as such, alienation is rejected as a condition of their lives, since everyone believes they are connected and fulfilled by virtue of the commodity. What is needed is a critique, which will not be compromised by the concentration of political and economic power. Organization of leisure time, as a critical awareness of the commodity as consumption, is needed to pry us out of the commodities' illusory grip, until the very distinction between work and leisure is abolished in a free society. It is leisure time that offers a place for the self-examination of society to regain the public space taken over by the System. Fetishized commodities over and over again dominate our needs into submission, while commodities themselves are subjugated to the demands of the system of the market economy and representative democracy. Sartre's factory worker uses her own body as a tool for using the machine and creates private, intimate fantasies and daydreams as a reflexive dimension to maintain her integrity; yet machine technology is the non-human which ruptures not only human relations, but also marks a fissure between

the woman and herself. In such a way the reflexive relation is destroyed. The machine has taken her over by adjusting her rhythms to its rhythm. In her fantasies the woman has become the object of the machine. This ensuing contradiction in which the woman is no longer the subject of her own experiences forces her into a false identity. [26]

The internationalised market economy and representative democracy are the institutional causes of the multidimensional crisis, since their dynamic has led to the present concentration of economic, social, ecological, and political power. The history of the last two hundred years is the attempt to universalize the market economy and its complement representative democracy. Paterson, New Jersey where I live is the first planned industrial city in the U.S. It was incorporated in 1792 by the capitalist Alexander Hamilton as the "Society of Useful Manufactures." The city was built around the mills (market economy) rather than the traditional green (democracy). Thus Paterson was founded as a profit center for capitalist needs rather than the needs of the people. For the "Founding Fathers" who introduced representative democracy, and particularly for Alexander Hamilton, "there was no incompatibility between democracy and the domination of the economically powerful but in fact was the rule...the fundamental element of modernity: the formal separation of society from the economy and the state. Not only people, as direct producers, were not able to control the product of their work but also, as citizens, were incapable of directly exercising their political power."[27] Profits over people and representative democracy over direct democracy have a debilitating effect. Today Paterson is an overcrowded, decayed, polluted,

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[26] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason Vol.1,* (London: NLB, 1976), pp.233-234.
[27] See Takis Fotopoulos on the emergence of representative 'democracy'.

corrupt, crime ridden city of minimum wage factory and service sector jobs. Even with a board of education budget of $510 million serving 25,000 students, the students cannot read proficiently, barely write a coherent paragraph, and lack reasoning skills

Just as their predecessors, Condoleeza Rice and others in the Bush cabal absolutely link the market economy and representative democracy as the only alternative to a chaotic (terror) world. For them the market economy and representative democracy are the only way to progress, prosperity, and the good life. But, the market economy is incompatible with paideia. The former is competitive, individualized, privatized, hierarchical and heteronomous. The latter is cooperative, latitudinarian, democratic, and autonomous. Likewise representative democracy is incompatible with democracy. The former is the result of people handing over to others their decision-making power, and the latter refers to *demos* as the subject of democracy as the free and equal participation that everyone has in determining and obeying laws. However, since the massive corporatization of America during the 1920's, as John Dewey points out, the discrepancy between economic elites, who, through their concentration of economic power attained in "manufacture, transportation, distribution… make decisions which determine and affect opportunities, desires and the choices individuals can choose from"[28] and the public became fog. This "eclipse of the public"[29] was disconcerting for Dewey, who saw capitalism being linked to democracy. This influence of big money on Congress was a fascist path Dewey thought should not be followed. It's not difficult to grease the palm of politicians. The corporate

[28] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New,* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962), ch.III.
[29] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems,* ch.IV.

agenda determines the values it prefers for society– one
that guarantees its place that is likewise fit for societal
consumption. This process ensures its perpetuation by
linking it to representative democracy and other societal
institutions, and thereby massively influencing Congress,
the Supreme Court, and the Presidency.

The American public is taught to believe that represent-
ative democracy is the essence of democracy itself, and
that it helps to reproduce the values of the market econ-
omy as "our way of life." Thus representative democracy
and the market economy are linked as the natural outcome,
purpose and goal of any society. In fact, the main com-
mon element of representative 'democracy' and the market
economy is that they secure the concentration of political
and economic power respectively.

Conclusion

Inclusive democracy is the site for the broadest and most
equal and free development of the individual and com-
munity. However, in the struggle for autonomy there are
counter forces that seek the concentration of political,
economic and social power. Those authoritarian, hierar-
chical, anti-democratic, heteronomous, and miseducative
forces are promulgated through the market economy and
its political complement representative democracy. Those
controlling these forces are the ruling economic (transna-
tional capitalists) and political (professional politicians)
elites. The only way out of the present multidimentional
crisis is the building of a mass movement in order to fight
for the overthrowing of the institutionalization of the un-
equal distribution of political, economic, and social power
and for the establishment of an inclusive democracy of
equal distribution of power among all people regardless

of gender, ethnicity, etc. The inclusive democracy project seeks to replace all the existing structures of power rather than attempting to gain changes or reforms of some institutions from within. Reform and restructuring remain under the spell of the structures of neoliberal modernity, namely, competition, extreme individualism, privatization, the free movement of capital and labor, hierarchy, and consumerism. It is necessary that these structures be overthrown and replaced by new democratic structures and a new democratic consciousness and conception of citizenship, as well as a paideia that educates for individual and social autonomy, cooperation, and social, economic, and political equality.

DIALOGUE-EPILOGUE

IS INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE?[1]

TAKIS FOTOPOULOS

I would like first to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the contributors for their valuable contribution to the important dialogue hosted in this volume. It is indeed through the development of a comprehensive dialogue on the crucial issues that the Inclusive Democracy (ID) project raises that we could meaningfully assess its merits and possible weaknesses. In the lines that will follow the intention is not to engage in any kind of polemic against any of the distinguished contributors but simply to give alternative explanations, from the ID perspective, to the reservations, or even criticisms, raised against it. I hope that the *bona fide* spirit within which this debate takes place will be recognized by everybody and the fruitful dialogue developed here will function as a catalyst for its further expansion in the future.

On the basis of the above aim it is self-evident that I will not refer to contributions which did not express reservations or objections against the Inclusive Democracy project, like the significant article by Dr Koumentakis on the biological crisis as part of the multidimensional crisis, or, correspondingly, to the equally significant contributions on Paedeia by David Gabbard, Karen Anijar Appleton and John Sargis which show why education is the sufficient condition for the establishment of an Inclusive Democracy,

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[1] This essay is based on an article first published in *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (November 2003).

the necessary condition being meeting the institutional preconditions for it . These contributions have anyway been brialliantly presented by Steve Best, the editor of this volume, who in fact used this opportunity to offer a very significant contribution on the present Crisis Culture which accompanies and feeds back the multidimensional crisis itself.

I hope that most in the radical Left would agree today on the need for the expansion of such a dialogue on the contours of a future society at a moment when many – particularly within the anti-globalization movement– assert that 'another world is possible' but without even taking the trouble to define this world. But, if this movement is not capable of giving at least the contours of such an alternative world (and this is the objective of the ID project) then it is bound to register in popular memory as simply a protest movement and not as a liberatory movement –the kind of movement we need today to move forward towards a new society. Brave words about 'the multitude' and unity of movements are empty and meaningless unless the objectives uniting the multitude are specified, not in terms of what we are against but, mainly, of what we are for – provided of course that we do not restrict ourselves to the usual generalities expressed for instance by the World Social Forum and the local forums and attempt to define the kind of society we wish to live in and the way to move towards it. To my mind, this is the crucial issue facing any antisystemic movement today and the following dialogue, in which almost all main currents of the Left are expressed, will hopefully offer a significant help in this direction.

I have classified below the comments on the ID project and my response to them thematically, so that a meaningful dialogue could develop. This will take into account the first six editions of "Inclusive Democracy": i.e. the original English edition of *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*

(Cassell, 1997), the Greek edition *Periektiki Dimokratia* (Kastaniotis, 1999), the Italian edition *Per una democrazia globale* (eleuthera, 1999), the French edition *Vers une democratie generale* (Seuil, 2002), the Latin American edition *Hacia Una Democracia Inclusiva* (Nordan 2002), and the German edition *Umfassende Demokratie (* Trotzdem, 2003)– Unfortunately, the seventh (Chinese) edition has just been published (Shandong University Press, 2008) and therefore no comments on it are yet available.

1. The concept of democracy

I will start with three significant essays on the English edition of *Towards An Inclusive Democracy* (TID), which represent almost the full range of the Left political spectrum in the Anglo-Saxon world: from the libertarian up to the (genuine) social-democratic viewpoints. Coming first to Michael Levin's contribution, I would like at the outset to express my strong reservation on his assertion that "social Democracy has to its credit a significant democratic achievement for through its impetus the class disqualification to political participation was overcome and, in its best phase, it sought to obtain both full employment and adequate welfare provision". In fact, social democracy, even at its height when it had indeed secured conditions of high levels of employment and social welfare, never secured an effective political participation, irrespective of class. Since social democracy was based on representative 'democracy', the political participation of lower classes was in fact mainly formal, as they were restricted to taking part in electing their leaders (who mostly belonged to the middle classes anyway) rather than in taking part in the decision-taking process themselves. This is the inevitable outcome of the fact that, unlike in a genuine democracy in

which this process is shared among all citizens, in a representative 'democracy' decisions are taken by economic and political elites –the latter expanded to include also some ex-working class professional politicians of the Labour and social-democratic parties in Europe and elsewhere. Furthermore, one could create the wrong impression from reading that the ID project :

> "In one sense it belongs to the genre of pre-Thatcherite critiques of Social Democracy in that it seeks to analyse its failings and find a way of overcoming them. It is, then, an updating of that debate for it commences with a thorough analysis of the significantly changed current situation. Its point of continuity with earlier debate is that it takes the bold and currently unpopular view that the socialist project is still a plausible one".

In fact, not only the ID project has nothing to do with social democracy, but also in no way seeks to analyse its failings and find a way of overcoming them. Social democracy belongs to the reformist tradition and aims at improving the present system –which secures the unequal distribution of power– through reforms, whereas the ID project belongs to the antisystemic tradition and aims at replacing the present system with one securing equal distribution of power in all its forms. The former is a project of socialist statism whereas the latter is a synthesis of the libertarian wing of the socialist tradition with the autonomy-democratic tradition and the currents expressed by the new social movements.

I would also have to express my reservation on his claim that "where Gray looks for global regulation, Fotopoulos proposes the local community as the prime agency of a renewed and deepened democracy", since this claim gives the impression that the ID project proposes an anachronistic return to isolated local communities. However, as

TID made clear and my article on globalisation[2], hope-fully, even clearer, the ID project assumes that in today's globalised world the aim could only be an alternative democratic globalisation, or a New democratic World Order, based on really democratic structures, i.e. on confederal inclusive democracies, whose prime agencies would be the local *demoi* –the communities' inclusive democracies.

A basic source of disagreement with Levin's analysis is the conception of democracy itself which, far from con-cerning the philosophy of language, as he asserts, is, ac-cording to the ID project, at the very centre of analysis of current politics and society. For Levin, TID "does not suf-ficiently integrate his awareness that the Greeks left out of their democracy those not qualifying for citizenship, 'women, slaves, immigrants'". This, despite the fact that in my reply to a similar assertion in an earlier exchange with Levin,[3] I quoted extracts from TID to show that the classi-cal conception of democracy was seen as inadequate and therefore not as a model for today's conditions, but simply as a sperm for the development of a new conception of de-mocracy and that in fact, one of the basic aims of the book was to show that the classical democracy was not inclusive in two basic senses: first, because it did not include all resi-dents and, second, because it did not include all realms of public life.

Levin, then, proceeds to repeat the orthodox academic view (which he states that he shares) that '"democracy' is regarded as 'an essentially contested concept', whose meaning has altered over time, often according to the

[2] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Globalisation, the Reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation 'Movement'", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 2001), pp. 233-280.
[3] See "A response to Michael Levin's review article "*Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 1999), pp. 383-394.

wider political purposes being proposed". However, this explanation is in fact economical with the truth, since it is only in the last two hundred years or so, i.e. since the establishment by the ruling elites of the system of the market economy and its political complement, representative 'democracy' that orthodox social scientists (i.e. all those that take the existing system for granted) began disputing the very meaning of democracy. On the contrary, the notion of 'representation' was unknown in classical political philosophy. This is why, as Castoriadis points out, "direct democracy has been rediscovered or reinvented in modern history every time a political collectivity has entered a process of radical self-constitution and self-activity: town meetings during the American Revolution, sections during the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the Workers' Councils, or the Soviets in their original form". [4]

Neither is it true another assertion of Levin that "Greek democracy was a form of rule by the largest class of citizens in a society based on slavery". As I attempted to show in TID, there is only one form of democracy at the political level, and that is the direct exercise of sovereignty by the people themselves –a form of societal institution which rejects any form of 'ruling' and institutionalises the equal sharing of political power among all citizens. On this, as well as on the fact that the Athenian democracy was not 'a kind of rule', every libertarian thinker (apart from those close to the individualistic trend inspired by the liberal tradition) agrees: from April Carter to Murray Bookchin and from Hannah Arendt to Cornelius Castoriadis.

Furthermore, I think that one should not confuse the scope of citizenship with the institutional framework itself.

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[4] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 107.

The fact that those qualifying as citizens were exercising a kind of rule over those not qualifying as such is well known. However, this fact does not negate the democratic character of the institutions themselves, but only of the concept of citizenship used. A comparison of Athenian democracy with two examples of democracy in modernity illustrates the fact that the former was much superior than the latter. Thus, whereas in classical Athens those qualifying as citizens enjoyed full political democracy, in the sense of equal distribution of political power, the same could not be said even about the minority of American citizens (white males) in 19th century U.S. 'democracy', who enjoyed 'full' rights, in contrast to the majority (women and slaves) who did not enjoy even the same rights as white men. Similarly, the kind of 'democracy' enjoyed by Israeli Jews today (forgetting the Israeli Arabs, a fifth of the population, who, in practice, do not share even the same rights as Jews[5]), cannot be compared with the full democracy enjoyed by Athenian citizens. This is why in TID I characterised Athens as a mix of non-statist and statist democracy: non-statist, (i.e. full political democracy) as regards the citizen body, which was 'ruled' by nobody and whose members shared power equally among themselves, and statist, as regards those not qualifying as full citizens (women, slaves, immigrants), over whom the demos wielded power.

Likewise, it is historically inaccurate to argue that "direct democracy of the citizens has, after a very long interval (since classical Athens) in which democracy in all its possible forms was totally denigrated, given way to modern representative 'democracy', with distinct variations between Western liberal democracy, third world democracy

[5] See e.g. Jonathan Cook, "A Jew among 25,000 Muslims", *The Guardian,* 27/8/03.

and even the claims once made by Soviet 'democracy'". In fact, forms of direct democracy reappeared again in the twelfth century AD, in the medieval free cities of Europe, but soon came into conflict with the new statist forms of heteronomy which, at the end, destroyed the attempts for local self-government and federalism.[6] Therefore, the modernity concepts of democracy, i.e. liberal democracy (which Castoriadis aptly called "liberal oligarchy"), third world democracy, or Soviet democracy are not forms of democracy, not because they hardly have any relation to the classical Greek conception, but because they have no relation at all to any conception of democracy as self-government of the people and, as such, constitute an abuse of the word.

Levin's reply to this argument is that :

"the English language is full of words whose current meaning departed from their etymology. Anyone now using current concepts in accord with their supposed original meaning would be incomprehensible to almost everyone else. Consequently, in order to communicate effectively, it is advisable to use words in accord with current usage. Words have their own histories, which are, like all histories, chronologies of change".

However, although it is true that the abuse of political concepts by the ideologues of political systems has always been a standard practice, and then, through their control over the propaganda mechanisms, the abused terms become the 'norm', there is no reason why radical thinkers should participate in such a practice, particularly if the aim is to develop a liberatory theory. Concepts like socialism and

[6] For a classic description of the medieval free cities, *see* Pyotr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (London, 1902) and new edition prefaced by Thomas H. Huxley (Boston, Mass: Extending Horizons Books, 1955).

democracy have been widely abused by those supporting oligarchic regimes (Stalinists, social-democrats and liberals respectively) and reclaiming the true, original meaning of such concepts has always been a basic aim of liberatory theory. Particularly so if, as I attempted to show in TID, there can never be an 'objective' social science, given the very object of its study. Most political terms are bound to be 'contestable', with at least two possible interpretations for each of them, one from the orthodox 'scientists' taking for granted the status quo and the other from the radical ones who challenge it. For instance, the meaning assigned to socialism by the hegemonic Soviet social 'science' in the USSR was the one consistent with the dominant 'socialist' social paradigm (as interpreted by the Soviet elite). Similarly, it is not accidental that the meaning assigned to the concept of 'democracy' by the hegemonic liberal social 'science' in the West has always been one that is consistent with the dominant liberal social paradigm and its interpretation of this concept.

So, Levin's conclusion that "one cannot say precisely which (democracy) definition is right and which is wrong" implicitly accepts the 'objectivity' of orthodox social 'science' which, unable to delete from historical memory the classical meaning of democracy in terms of self-determination alleges that the meaning of democracy is 'contestable'. But, the meaning radical thinkers assign to democracy is neither a matter concerning the philosophy of language nor a contestable matter. It is simply a matter reflecting the axiomatic choice they have to make between the two historical traditions of heteronomy and autonomy. For those that adopt the autonomy tradition, democracy has only one meaning, the original meaning of self-determination. On the other hand, for those who adopt, consciously or unconsciously, the heteronomy tradition, the concept of democracy as self-determination is disputed, and alternative

definitions of democracy compatible with the present oligarchic regimes are given. No wonder that, for them, the concept of democracy itself inevitably becomes contestable, or a linguistic matter. If therefore Levin agrees that "the real issue is which is our primary choice of social paradigm" then, to my mind, he should also take the next step and agree that for those who adopt the autonomy tradition democracy is not a contestable term.

Finally, Levin is right that the concept of inclusive democracy is not fully identical with the ancient Greek one but this is inevitable once the ancient meaning of democracy is taken to be only a sperm rather than a model, given the partial character of Greek democracy.[7] However, I could not agree with his conclusion that "as against its predecessors, feudalism and absolute monarchy, liberal democracy represented a major step in a liberatory direction". As I stressed in TID, I would have no hesitation to recognise that constitutional monarchy did express a more sophisticated form of heteronomy than absolute monarchy and, by the same token, parliamentary 'democracy' does represent the most sophisticated form of oligarchy in History. Still, the differences between the political regimes mentioned refer to the gradual change in the size and the composition of the ruling elites, not to the fundamental distinction itself between ruling elites and the rest of the population – a distinction, characterising all heteronomy-based regimes, which excludes the vast majority of the population from any effective political decision taking. In this sense, I cannot see liberal democracy as a major step in a liberatory

[7] It should be noted here that my recognition that Pericles had an understanding of "the merely formal character of political rights when they are not accompanied by social and economic rights" could hardly be taken as implying that a demand for an inclusive democracy had already been made by Pericles, as Levin asserts.

direction, but only as a significant step in the historical evolution *within* the heteronomy tradition.

2. The feasibility of Inclusive Democracy

Is Inclusive Democracy feasible?

Levin comes next to his reservations about the feasibility of the ID project. Thus, he first points out that "Fotopoulos rejects what he calls the 'myth of the 'experts' and imagines that a modern industrial state can operate without them and that even economic decisions can be 'taken by the citizen body collectively and without representation'".

In fact, however, as I stressed in the TID, in an inclusive democracy, in which efficiency will be defined very differently than at present, so that all needs (not just the survival needs) of all citizens are satisfied, the role of the 'experts' will be very different from present. This does not mean that specialised knowledge will not be needed anymore. But, such knowledge, given the institutional framework of inclusive democracy which precludes any institutional inequality in the distribution of power, cannot be the basis for a new hierarchical structure. As April Carter has pointed out[8], we should always distinguish between authority based on special knowledge and authority based on special status in a social hierarchy. The former is inevitable and desirable, while the latter is avoidable and non-desirable. Also, as regards the relationship between 'experts' and citizens' assemblies, the ID proposals for economic democracy describe in considerable detail how assemblies would only have to select, from a range of draft plans which specify

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[8] April Carter, *Authority and Democracy*, (London: Routledge, 1979) p. 13.

alternative ways of allocating resources, the one most consistent with the collectively decided objectives. In other words, all that is required from the 'experts' would be to spell out clearly the implications of each plan and citizens would not need to be experts in economics to understand these implications and decide accordingly!

Next, Levin refers to historical experiences on the feasibility of alternative social models. Thus, strangely enough– in view of the fact there is no historical precedent for ID– he does not attempt to express his reservations on the feasibility of the ID model with reference to the concrete proposals for economic democracy made in TID, but he prefers to rely, instead, on what I will attempt to show are completely irrelevant experiences. Furthermore, when he was challenged to show the relevance of the ID project to the experiences of three twentieth-century thinkers he mentions– "all of whom claimed to wish democracy well"– his reply was that "present and past experience is relevant and important because it is all we have to go on" and that his historical examples were intended as reminders of the fact that egalitarian projects have been attempted before and that there is much to learn from them. It would, therefore, be important to see in detail how relevant are the experiences, mentioned by Levin, to the ID project.

Levin's first thinker is Robert Michels who, in 1911, produced "what has become a classic of Political Sociology, *Political Parties*, revealingly sub-titled *'A Sociological Examination of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy'*", in which he concluded that organisation produces oligarchy. His argument was that "any organisation pursuing particular ends would elevate administrators who gain or claim expertise in their particular niche and so become indispensable to the organisation. In that way they become separated from the mass they were originally meant to serve and so develop an interest apart and

different from them". However, had Levin referred to the concrete proposals for the ID organisation, he would have inevitably noticed that they involve a complete restructuring of society where 'experts', who are in charge of drafting the economic plans, will have no more political, economic or social power than an 'expert' in, say, farming, ship building, carpentry or shoe making. How this particular sort of social organisation will produce oligarchy is a mystery left unexplained by Levin.

Next, Levin turns to Lenin who, a few months after writing *State and Revolution,* (in which he was still talking about the combination of proletarian rule with modern scientific developments to facilitate the gradual withering away of the state through the performance of necessary administrative tasks devolving to the community as a whole) abandoned it "for the tasks of actual revolution". The reason for this about-turn, according to Levin, was that "he soon found that economic understanding and administrative ability were less widespread than he had assumed" –something that necessitated the use of large sections of the Czarist bureaucracy. However, this is again a completely irrelevant experience to the ID proposals. Lenin wanted to rebuild a centralist state in which the Tsarist elite would have been replaced by the Bolshevik elite. This implied the need for all the paraphernalia of bureaucracy which, of course, are completely alien to the ID project. No wonder that Lenin had to turn to the Tsarist bureaucracy so that the new state could function at all. Still, Lenin's stand was hardly surprising. It was in fact, as I pointed out in TID, fully consistent with the Marxist-Leninist worldview, in the context of which a non-statist conception of democracy is inconceivable, both at the transitional stage leading to communism and at the higher phase of communist society (pp. 196-99). So, if the Russian revolution has taught us a lesson, it is that if a revolution is organised, and then its

program is carried out, through a minority using the state machine, it is bound to end up with new hierarchical structures. But, this is in complete contrast to an ID-based society, in which the institutional preconditions of concentration of power will have been abolished, as soon as the confederal inclusive democracy, with the explicit approval of the majority of the population, has been established.

Finally, Levin turns to Theodor Roszak, one of the spokesmen of the US counter-culture in the 1960s and 1970s, who stressed that, in today's world, experts are a necessity and that our democracy has become a spectator sport in which the general public chooses up sides among contending groups of experts. It is obvious, however, that Roszak bases his argument on a society in which division of labour and specialisation, in the pursuit of the highest degree of economic efficiency (defined along narrow technico-economic criteria), have reached absurd dimensions. Again, this has nothing to do with the radical decentralisation of an ID-based society in which efficiency is defined on the basis of the 'needs-satisfaction' criterion, decisions are taken by citizens' assemblies who choose between alternative plans whose implications are explained by the experts, and a democratic techno-science[9] has already been developed. The latter is particularly important, if one takes into consideration the well known fact that today's extreme specialisation and the huge gap that has been created between experts and the rest of society are mainly due to the nature of the present techno-science, which is geared to a continuous concentration of economic power.

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[9] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Towards a democratic conception of science and technology", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1998), pp. 54-86.

The nature of the present crisis

Next, Levin moves to the present crisis, as 'an opportunity for transformation'. As he stresses, "for Fotopoulos the opportunity of transformation occurs because the system is in crisis. However we must note that a crisis does not always lead to a desirable solution". To reinforce this point the reviewer refers to the Russian crisis before 1917, as well as to the recent crisis in the 1990s, noting that, in both cases, the outcome was not favourable from the liberatory viewpoint.

Still, although he is right about the outcome, again, he does not compare similar situations. The pre-Soviet, as well as the post-Soviet, crises in Russia were not of the same nature as the crisis I mentioned in TID. The former refer to the specific crisis of a country at a low level of capitalist development, whereas the latter refer to the chronic systemic crisis of capitalism itself. In fact, the reason I devoted the entire first part of TID to the analysis of the present multidimensional crisis was not at all to show the existence of an 'opportunity of transformation'. In fact, the crisis, far from being seen as just an opportunity of transformation, provides, in effect, the rationale for the inclusive democracy project. Indeed, my aim was to show the systemic nature of this crisis, and, in particular, the fact that the ultimate cause of it is the huge concentration of power created by the present political and economic structures.

The present crisis, as I stressed in TID, is differentiated from past crises both in terms of its scale and its nature, given in particular the addition of the ecological aspect of it. As I noted there, "the present crisis calls into question not just the political, economic, social and ecological structures that came into being with the rise of the market economy, but, also, the actual values that have sustained these structures and particularly the post-Enlightenment

meaning of Progress and its partial identification with growth" (values shared, also, by the Bolsheviks). It is, therefore, obvious that the crisis which began about two centuries ago, when the system of the market economy and representative democracy were established, has, in the past twenty years or so, intensified, as it has led to the present huge concentration of economic power and the related ecological dimension, as well the biological dimension, so insightfully dealt with by Dr. P. Koumentakis. However, as Steve Best, the editor of this volume, brilliantly put it in his excellent introduction :

> "As the globe spirals ever deeper into disaster, with all things becoming ever more tightly knit into the tentacles of global capitalism, and as oppositional voices propose programs of reform and moderation at best, there is an urgent need for new conceptual and political maps and compasses to help steer humanity into a viable mode of existence".

In this problematique, therefore, the Inclusive Democracy project, which proposes the equal distribution of power, is suggested as the only long term solution to this chronic and constantly worsening crisis. However, the fact that the present multidimensional crisis is an unprecedented one does not mean that its outcome should necessarily be a favourable one. History is full of examples where serious crises led not just to unfavourable outcomes but to tragedies, like the rise of fascism and national socialism in the interwar period. Therefore, if the chronic and systemic nature of the present crisis does not lead to a mass movement for a genuine democracy, it could simply lead, instead, to a chronic and systemic authoritarianism,

as illustrated by the present global and permanent 'war' against terrorism.[10]

3. The transitional strategy

The problem of transition

It is, however, with respect to the transitional strategy that Levin raises most of his reservations on the ID project. One of his main reservations is that, whereas, in TID I stressed that what is needed is the development of a mass consciousness about the failure of "actually existing capitalism" similar to the one that led to the collapse of "actually existing socialism", "the problem is", as Levin puts it, that "the collapse of socialism occurred in the context of a real alternative", and that "nothing so visible now exists as an alternative to prevailing capitalism".

But, this reservation ignores the fact that the transition strategy proposed by the ID project does indeed involve the creation of a real alternative visible to all citizens. Therefore, although Levin's criticism is right for the cases when the transition to the new society takes place through a revolution ('from above' or 'from below'), it is not valid as regards the ID project. This is because, whereas the former case assumes a sudden insurrection or outburst followed by a transitional period within which the institutions leading to the new society are built (usually by avant-gardes), the latter assumes a long process, which may extend over an entire historical period but could begin immediately, through the building of the alternative institutions leading to the new society. The fundamental implication which

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[10] See T. Fotopoulos, "The Global 'war' of the transnational elite", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 201-240.

crucially differentiates the two kinds of approaches is that the latter, unlike the former, could potentially solve the fatal problem faced by all attempts for systemic change in the past: the problem of the unevenness of consciousness. This is the problem that any revolution (which presuppos-es a rupture with the past, both at the subjective level of consciousness and at the institutional level) faces, when it takes place in an environment in which only a minority of the population has broken with the dominant social para-digm – something inevitable at the initial stage. This is the problem, for instance, that the communists faced in Russia or in China in the last century, when the party avant-garde (supposedly the proletariat's *avant-garde*) had to impose 'from above' the new institutions and values to the majori-ty of the population –a process which ended up with totali-tarianism. Or, to come to the historical example mentioned by Levin, this is the problem faced by the few antisystemic activists in Eastern Europe during the shift to free mar-ket capitalism, at the end of 1980s/early 1990s. Most of the people who turned against the 'communist' system in Eastern Europe, in fact, had never abandoned the values of the old regime, despite the brainwashing from the party elite –as is shown, for instance, by the important role the church has played during this shift in Poland and, to a cer-tain extent, even in Russia itself. So, the reforms that had been introduced by the party elites in the last decade or so before they were swept away, as well as the opening to the West in general, simply reinforced the *(de facto)* hegemon-ic paradigm (that of individualism), as against the domi-nant (from above) social paradigm of collectivism. This is why the antisystemic currents have, never, had, in effect, any chance to turn the majority of the population towards a new social project, transcending both 'actually existing socialism' and 'actually existing capitalism'.

On the other hand, the ID strategy assumes that the

very building of the alternative institutions, which it pro-
poses, within the existing society will create the demo-
cratic majority for a genuine political and economic de-
mocracy. Thus, as I attempted to show in my article on
transitional strategies,[11] a real democratic process could
only be a long process of gradual establishment of the al-
ternative antisystemic institutions, which would transcend
the problem of the highly uneven –at the beginning of the
transition– level of consciousness among the population
that had fatal consequences in past revolutions. For the ID
project, although the social change will indeed be revolu-
tionary, it will neither be achieved 'from above', following,
for instance, an insurrection organized (or exploited) by
an *avant–garde*, nor of course through reformist changes.
As History has taught us, in the former case, the change is
bound to end up with the creation of new elites and oligar-
chic structures, whereas, in the latter case, there is bound
to be no systemic change at all.

Having said that, it should not be taken as an assertion
that the transition will be a peaceful one. As I stressed in
TID, as soon as the new ID institutions begin to be installed,
the ruling elites will react, initially, by legal or economic
means, but, as the movement gains strength, by increas-
ing physical force. So, the transition towards an ID will
set in motion a race against time, the outcome of which
will determine the fate of the attempted social change.
If the socialization process is effectively broken and the
alternative social paradigm becomes hegemonic, before
any attempt by the ruling elites to break the movement us-
ing massive force, then, any use of violence will boomer-
ang against the ruling elites themselves, as people will be

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[11] Takis Fotopoulos, "Transitional strategies and the Inclusive Democracy project ",
Democracy & Nature, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 17-62.

prepared, by then, to use counter-violence to defend their new institutions. If, on the other hand, the winner in this race against time is the ruling elites then a new period of totalitarianism may be unleashed.

Then, Levin comes to the opposition that radical proposals, like that of the ID project, are bound to produce. What, for example, he asks, would be the reaction to the attempt to "expropriate" such "privately owned big enterprises" as McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Shell ? And how would the state react to the gradual taking over of its fiscal powers by community assemblies? And what about the consequences of breaching our international obligations? Would, for example, ecologically inclined communities still be prepared to allow 40 ton lorries along their streets? If not, we would have broken European Union regulations. Furthermore, even if the Inclusive Democracy movement is able to "eventually capture the imagination of the majority of the population" and achieve sanity in one country, how would the insane world react? Wouldn't they react as once did against Allende's's Chile?

However, as he himself recognizes, I am the first to admit the difficulties involved in the transitional process. But, one should not also exaggerate them and be condemned to inactivity, which is the present system's main source of strength. Thus, first, one should not confuse the various stages of the transitional period. For example expropriations, as I stressed in TID, would only come about at the end of a long process which marks the transition to an inclusive democracy: "At the end of this process, the demotic enterprises would control the community's economy and would be integrated into the confederation of communities, which could then buy or expropriate privately-owned big enterprises" (TID, p.298). The same applies to his question about the state's reaction to the gradual taking over of its fiscal powers. As I pointed out in TID: "This way,

community assemblies would start taking over the fiscal powers of the state, as far as their communities are concerned, although in the transitional period, until the confederation of communities replaces the state, they would also be subject to the state fiscal powers. (TID, p.299) In other words, what is envisaged for the transitional period is a dual taxing power–an arrangement which already exists in many countries with local authorities having the power to tax residents.

Finally, as regards the issues arising from the international ramifications of the attempt to begin building ID institutions, it is true that I did not deal with such issues in the book, although in the article on globalisation, I mentioned above, I did refer to the need to develop an international antisystemic movement aiming at the creation of a new democratic Europe of the peoples (in place of the present EU of capital) as part of a new democratic world order. This implies that the demand for cutting the links with the EU would be one of the primary demands of such a movement, which, together with other movements that already support the dismantling of EU, could well lead, during the transitional period, to a secession from it. Needless to add that, up to that moment, the ID movement will have to use any available means to fight the EU legislation which is in conflict with its basic aims: direct action, massive demonstrations, civil/social disobedience, etc. No doubt that a Chile-type of reaction (or even worse, nowadays, involving the dispatch of mercenary armies as in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. to smash any radical antisystemic movement), is very real. However, no army in the world could succeed in the long term in smashing a movement that enjoys wide popular support. Only if the ruling elites control the majority of the population will they be able – through internal coups or external aggression – to impose their will. In case, however, the majority has

already adopted an alternative social paradigm that has become hegemonic, then, neither a coup nor external aggression could succeed. If, even in cases like those of Iraq or Afghanistan (despite the very uneven and qualitatively disparate level of consciousness of the peoples involved), the transnational elite has dismally failed to legitimise and even physically fully impose its order, one could imagine how ineffective such moves would be in case the same elite faced a people with a high level of consciousness to defend its new institutions – something that obviously did not happen in Chile in the 1970s, when the reformist policies of Allende simply enhanced the confusion and the unevenness of consciousness among the population.

The emancipatory subject

A crucial issue arising with any antisystemic movement, and was, also, raised by Levin, is the identity of the emancipatory subject that will bring about the new society. All antisystemic strategies in the past were based on the assumption that the revolutionary subject is identified with the proletariat. However, the 'systemic changes' that marked the transition from statist modernity to neoliberal modernity and the associated changes in the class structure, as well as the parallel ideological crisis,[12] meant the end of traditional class divisions –although not the end of class divisions as such, as many suggest today.[13] Others

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[12] See Fotopoulos, "The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 7, No. 3 (November 2001), pp. 415-466.
[13] See Fotopoulos, "Class divisions today-the ID approach", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 2000), pp. 211-251.

in the libertarian Left, like Bookchin[14] and Castoriadis[15], moved to a position according to which, in defining the emancipatory subject, we have to abandon any 'objective criteria' and assume that the whole of the population ('the people') is just open-or-closed-to a revolutionary outlook. The ID problematique, while recognising the different identities of the social groups which constitute various sub-totalities (women, ethnic, etc.), at the same time sees the ultimate cause of the present multidimensional crisis, and of various forms of oppression, in the present institutions, which secure the concentration of power at all levels, as well as in the corresponding value systems. In other words, it acknowledges the existence of an overall socio-economic system that secures the concentration of power at the hands of various elites and dominant social groups within society as a whole. In this problematique, given the broad perspective of the project for an Inclusive Democracy, a new movement, aiming at an inclusive democracy, should appeal to almost all sections of society –apart of course from the dominant social groups, i.e. the ruling elites and the overclass.

Thus, the economic democracy component of the ID project should primarily appeal to the main victims of the internationalised market economy, i.e. the underclass and the marginalized (the unemployed, blue collar workers, low-waged white collar workers, part-timers, occasional workers, farmers who are phased out because of the expansion of agribusiness), as well as students, the prospective members of the professional middle classes, who see their dreams for job security disappearing fast in the

[14] Murray Bookchin, *Post-scarcity anarchism,* (London: Wildwood House, 1974), p. 191.
[15] C. Castoriadis' introductory interview in *The Castoriadis Reader*, edited by David Ames Curtis, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp.26-27.

'flexible' labour markets being built. It should, also, appeal to a significant part of the new middle class which, unable to join the 'overclass', lives under conditions of constant insecurity, particularly in countries of the South, as the Argentinian crisis showed .

The political democracy component of the ID project should appeal to all those who are presently involved in local, single-issue movements for the lack of anything better. The present decay of parliamentary politics is not the same thing as depoliticisation, as it becomes obvious by the parallel growth of new social movements, NGOs, citizens' initiatives, etc. Although the celebrated expansion of the 'civil society' is concentrated in the new middle class, still, this is an indication of thirst for a genuine democracy, in which everybody counts in the decision–taking process. Furthermore, given that the scope for citizen participation is presently restricted to single issues, it is not surprising that it is single issue movements and organisations which flourish. Finally, the ecological component of the ID project, as well as the one related to 'democracy at the social realm', should appeal to all those concerned about the effects of concentration of power on the environment and to those oppressed by the patriarchal and other hierarchical structures in today's society.

There is no doubt that several of these social groups may see, at the moment, that their goals are in conflict with those of other groups (the middle classes vis-à-vis the lower social groups on neoliberal globalisation, the upper classes vis-à-vis the rest of society on the ecological crisis and so on). However, the ID project does offer a common 'paradigm' consisting of an analysis of the causes of the present multidimensional crisis, in terms of the present structures, which secure the unequal distribution of power, and the corresponding values, as well as of the ends and means that would lead us to an alternative society. Therefore, the

fight to build a movement inspired by this paradigm—which to be successful has to become an international movement—is urgent, as well as imperative, so that the various social groups, which form the new liberatory subject, could function as the catalyst for a new society that would reintegrate polity and economy, humans and Nature.

Levin's reply to all this is that "we have been here before. At the demise of communism in East Germany, some of the category of people that Fotopoulos favours were at the forefront of opposition: radical democrats, democratic socialists, and environmentalists. Their moment came... and went. They were swept aside by those with more economic power." However, as I mentioned in the last section, this assertion neglects the fact that the social paradigm that has, in effect, become hegemonic within the countries of former 'actually existing socialism' was that of liberal democracy and its economic complement –a 'free' market– and not a new comprehensive type of democracy that would replace what passes as political and economic democracy in the West. In other words, very few in these countries have realised that the problem with the 'socialist' system was the concentration of economic and political power at the hands of the party elites and the technocrats. This is why it was probably a nasty surprise what they discovered after joining the world capitalist system: i.e. that they still are powerless, since the concentration of power at the hands of elites (though different from those in 'socialist' countries-–at least as regards their ideology) is also a fundamental characteristic of the new system they joined.

In fact, this feeling of powerlessness is spreading at the moment in both the West and East, as the rise of the antiglobalisation movement shows, which marks, as Levin aptly points out, "a significant shift in sensibilities...a shift consonant, in broad terms, with the mentality of the Inclusive Democracy project". I would only add that

the antiglobalisation movement could indeed potentially represent the first step in the direction of creating a new massive antisystemic movement (despite the rigorous effort made by the World Social Forum, Attac, *Le Monde Diplomatique,* etc. to disorient it towards reformist demands and practices). As I stressed elsewhere,[16] at the time this 'movement' was flourishing, "although the activities of the present anti-globalisation 'movement', in its current form, have no chance to function as transitional strategies for systemic change, potentially, this movement could lead parts of it to dissociate themselves from the reformist World Social Forum and create a new programmatic mass political movement for systemic change". This is the basic precondition for the development of the anti-systemic consciousness required for systemic change. Such a development, one could expect, would become inevitable once activists within this movement realise that even their mild reformist demands could not be met in the present system, and that what is needed, instead, so that humanity could move out of the present multidimensional crisis, is a clear, concrete vision about the form of a future society and a clear strategy and a short-term program to bring it about.

4. ID and social democracy

Autonomy, social democracy and the ID project

Arran Gare, in a powerful and thought-provoking article, attempts to show that autonomy and social democracy are not antagonistic traditions, as assumed by the ID project, as well as by most libertarian writers on the

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[16] Fotopoulos, "Globalisation, the Reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation 'Movement'", *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 2001).

matter –Bookchin and Castoriadis included. His clear aim is to show that the ID and the social-democratic projects could potentially be complementary to each other. To my mind, this is an impossible task, mainly, because the social-democratic tradition has never challenged the two fundamental institutions on which the present system of concentration of power is based, i.e. the market economy and representative 'democracy'. It is no accident, anyway, that the motto of mainstream social democracy has always been social justice rather than autonomy. But, the 'social justice' conception takes for granted the unequal distribution of political and economic power and implies the need for the gradual decrease of this inequality, through the improvement of existing institutions, whereas the 'autonomy' conception explicitly rejects the existing institutions, which are considered to be the ultimate cause of concentration of power, and implies the need for their replacement with new institutions securing the equal distribution of political and economic power. It is, also, worth noting that even when some radical trends in early social democracy, e.g. the guild socialists within the British Labour party or the Swedish social democrats, pursued the objective of autonomy, still, this aim was supposed to be achieved within the existing institutions of the market economy and representative 'democracy'–through the socialisation of the means of production and the imposition of social controls on the market system, as well as through the 'deepening' of democracy, effected by the insertion of procedures of direct democracy within an essentially representative system, respectively. In other words, a fundamental tenet of social democracy, in all its variants, has always been that these two fundamental institutions could be reformed rather than replaced by new institutions.

However, this problematique of reforms ignores the fact that the founding institutions of a social system form

an integral whole, with its own logic and dynamic, which would not make possible any institutional reforms that fundamentally contravene this logic and dynamic. This implies that the present collapse of social democracy should not be simply seen as the outcome of the corruption and degeneracy of social-democratic parties (as Gare assumes), but rather as the outcome of a fundamental change in the present system, which has taken place in the present era of neoliberal globalisation of late modernity – a change that, as I tried to show in TID, has even made the social-democratic achievements of the statist phase of modernity (mid 1940s-mid 1970s) incompatible with the present system. In my view, this is the only way one could meaningfully explain the crucial fact that not a single governing social-democratic party today has resisted its conversion to social-liberalism.

Gare attempts, first, to show that Castoriadis uses a somehow broader conception of autonomy than I do, despite the fact that I have, explicitly, stated in TID that on the issue of defining autonomy I follow Castoriadis.[17] As Gare puts it, "without going into the complex arguments surrounding these issues, it is important to note that, firstly, Castoriadis' position is more complex and perhaps more contradictory than Fotopoulos acknowledges". He, then, goes on to argue that "as Castoriadis developed the notion, autonomy was portrayed as something aimed at and achieved by degrees" and he quotes Castoriadis for confirmation, when he explains why he sees autonomy (defined as "the unlimited self-questioning about the law and its foundations, as well as the capacity, in light of this

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[17] Castoriadis' definition of autonomy in *Philosophy, Politics Autonomy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 164, as autosnomos: (to give to) oneself one's laws, is identical with my definition of it, see TID p. 179.

interrogation, *to make, to do* and *to institute*") 'as a germ', and therefore as a *project*. In a crucial passage, Gare, then, points out that Castoriadis uses two conceptions of autonomy, a narrow one, identified with direct democracy and a broader conception, which could exist even in the absence of direct democracy. Thus, after quoting Castoriadis, when in 1974 restated autonomy from "collective management" to "the *permanent and explicit self-institution of society*", he concludes that autonomy, in the sense of unlimited self-questioning:

"began in Ancient Greece and revived with modernity, reaching a new intensity with the Enlightenment. The emancipation of philosophy and art from religion in the eighteenth century, which generated enormous creativity in these fields, was an aspect of autonomy. This would suggest that, while direct democracy might be something to be aimed at by a tradition of autonomy, autonomy is a broader project and cannot be identified with direct democracy".

So, can we really separate autonomy from democracy and should we assume that autonomy, as a project, implies an evolutionary change over time, "something aimed at and achieved by degrees", exactly as social-democrats have always asserted with respect to socialism? If our answer to these questions is positive, then we should agree with Gare that there is no clear dividing line between the autonomy and heteronomy traditions and that social democracy could belong to either, given the presence of autonomistic trends in early social democracy, and the interpretation of the present predominance of heteronomistic trends as just the inevitable corruption brought about by the social-democratic conquest of power.

At the outset, I would point out that, in fact, the Castoriadian conception of autonomy is almost identical

to mine and that the fundamental differences between the project of autonomy and the ID project, which were examined elsewhere in this volume[18], have nothing to do with those assumed by Gare.[19] Next, although it is true that Castoriadis used a broad and a narrow sense to the concept of autonomy, this does not imply that only one of those senses is identical with direct democracy, as Gare assumes. Thus, for Castoriadis, autonomy is the project that aims:[20]

- in the broad sense, at bringing to light society's instituting power and at rendering it explicit in reflection[21] (both of which can only be partial) and,
- in the narrow sense, at resorbing the political as explicit power, into politics, as the lucid and deliberate activity, whose object is the explicit institution of society.

It is, therefore, obvious that this distinction was introduced, as it is clear from the extract mentioned by Gare, simply to extend the meaning of autonomy, from mere "collective management" ("self-management") to "*permanent and explicit self-institution of society;* that is to say, a state

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[18] See T. Fotopoulos, "Recent Theoretical Developments in the ID Project", Part II (in this volume), where I attempted to show why I reject the Castoriadian attempt to found the conception of autonomy on the radical imaginary and other controversial hypotheses of psychoanalytic theory, as expressed by Freudians in general, and Castoriadis in particular

[19] See, also, my exchange with Castoriadis' translator, David Ames Curtis, on the differences between the Castoriadian project of autonomy and the ID project, "On a distorted view of the Inclusive Democracy project " *Democracy &, Nature,* Vol. 5, No 1. (March 1999), pp. 163-188.

[20] Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics Autonomy*, p. 174.

[21] In the sense that society is conscious of the fact that it is the only source of its institutions, rather than God, or the "laws" of History, or of Nature.

in which the collectivity knows that its institutions are its own creation and has become capable of regarding them as such, of taking them up again and transforming them".[22] In other words, autonomy in the broad sense, far from being associated with forms of non-direct democracy –let alone with gradualism and evolutionism, as Gare assumes– implies that direct democracy is only the necessary condition for autonomy, the sufficient condition being that society is conscious of the fact that the democratic institutions are its own creation. "Democracy," as Castoriadis puts it, "is the project of breaking the closure at the collective level,"[23] in other words, democracy is a process of social self-institution that implies a society which is open ideologically. This means a society, which is not grounded on any closed system of beliefs, dogmas or ideas, otherwise, even New Age or monastic communities implementing direct democratic procedures should be classified as autonomous, despite the fact that they are bound by closed theoretical systems and/or dogmas.

The fact that Castoriadis never associated autonomy, in both its senses, with non direct-democratic forms of organisation or with evolutionism is obvious by the following:

First, he repeatedly stresses, making no distinction between broad and narrow senses of autonomy, that autonomy is identified with democracy: "If I accept the idea of autonomy as such…then the existence of an indefinite plurality of individuals, belonging to society, entails immediately the idea of democracy, defined as the effective possibility of equal participation of all in instituting activities as well as in explicit power"[24]. And, again, even

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[22] David Ames Curtis, (ed.), *The Castoriadis Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 30.
[23] ibd. p. 21.
[24] ibid. p. 168.

more explicitly, "the first condition for the existence of an autonomous society – of a democratic society – is that the public/public sphere become effectively public, become an ecclesia".[25] No wonder therefore that he called present representative democracies as "liberal oligarchies." [26]

Second, I think that the attempt to assign an evolutionist dimension to the concept of a project ('autonomy is something aimed at and achieved by degrees') is a serious misreading of the meaning of this concept in Castoriadis' work, which is completely alien to his thought. For Castoriadis, autonomy (and inclusive democracy for me) is a project in the sense that it is an aim rather than a 'programme', a set of concrete measures,[27] and, as such, it expresses subjectivity which is also "a social-historical *project*".[28] The emergence of autonomy for him is:

> "a moment of creation, and it ushers in a new type of society and a new type of individuals. I am speaking intentionally of germ, for autonomy, social as well as individual, is a project. The rise of unlimited interrogation creates a new social-historical eidos". [29]

This non-evolutionary understanding of the concept of project could also explain his statement (irrespective of whether one accepts his highly controversial theory on the social and radical imaginary)[30]: "that there is an essential plurality, synchronic and diachronic, of societies means just that: there is an instituting imaginary."[31] It is

[25] ibid. p.407.
[26] ibid. p.406.
[27] ibid. p. 29.
[28] Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics Autonomy*, p, 144.
[29] ibid. p. 163.
[30] See my critique of the Castoriadian project in "Recent Theoretical Developmernts in the ID project" (Part II).
[31] Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics Autonomy,* p.153.

in the same non-evolutionist sense of a project that he talks about the "vanishing" of the project of autonomy for a long period[32] and then its *rediscovery* and *reinvention* (in the form of direct democracy). [33] All these statements become meaningless if we do not see the emergence/vanishing/re-emergence of autonomy and direct democracy as something that represents a *rupture* with the past rather than as something 'achieved by degrees'. This is made even more explicit when he states that "democracy and philosophy are the twin expressions of a social-historical rupture, creating the project of (social and individual) autonomy"[34] and, similarly," Democracy and philosophy... are themselves creations, and they entail a radical break with the previously instituted state of affairs. Both are aspects of the project of autonomy".[35] Not accidentally, the view of Castoriadis as some kind of evolutionist is also rejected by the translator and editor of his works, David Ames Curtis who, in an exchange with me, stated that 'Castoriadis is constantly challenging those reformists who believe that socialism or an "autonomous society" can be achieved... by means of incremental changes and without a thorough revolutionizing of existing social, political, economic, and psychical conditions'[36]

However, if one assumes that autonomy is a rupture with the past, as Castoriadis does, the clear implication is that, despite the possibility of development *within* the autonomy and heteronomy traditions, and of an interaction between them, still, no development *between* them may be

[32] ibid. p. 25.
[33] ibid. p. 107.
[34] ibid. p. 31.
[35] ibid, p. 36.
[36] See his exchange with me, *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 5, No. 1 (March 1999), pp. 163-188.

established. Therefore, although it is true that the emancipation of philosophy and art from religion (and I would add of science itself) in the eighteenth century was an aspect of autonomy, this in no way implies that a kind of evolutionist development between the two traditions occurred in the modern period (1750-1950), as Gare implies. In fact, as Castoriadis stresses, this period "is best defined by the conflict, but also the mutual contamination and entanglement, of two imaginary significations: autonomy, on the one hand, unlimited expansion of 'rational mastery' (i.e. the capitalist embodiment of the heteronomy tradition), on the other". [37] It is, also, significant that, although he recognises the significance of the contaminations between the two traditions, he emphasises that "despite these mutual contaminations, the essential character of this epoch is the opposition and the tension between these two core significations". [38]

Finally, there is no doubt in my mind that both liberalism and statist socialism (to which Marxism-Leninism as well as socialist statism belong) are parts of the heteronomy tradition, despite the fact that one could find in them some aspects close to the autonomy tradition. Thus, although liberalism adopts a negative conception of freedom, which implies a close relationship to individual autonomy, the fact that this movement explicitly takes for granted the state and the market economy – the two institutions on which heteronomy is founded– firmly classifies it in the heteronomy tradition. Similarly, although statist socialism adopts a positive conception of freedom, which implies collective autonomy, still, its social-democratic wing also takes for granted the institutions on which heteronomy is

[37] Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments,* trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p.37.
[38] ibid. p. 39.

founded, whereas for the Marxist-Leninist wing, as I attempted to show in TID (pp. 197-8), a non-statist conception of democracy is inconceivable both at the transitional stage leading to communism and at the higher stage of communist society. It is for these reasons that I adopted a definition of freedom in terms of the Castoriadian conception of individual and collective autonomy, which, to my mind, transcends both liberalism and socialist statism, individualism and collectivism (TID pp. 177-180). The above clearly imply that Castoriadis, for similar reasons, would have, also, classified liberalism and statist socialism in the heteronomy tradition, although explicitly he only referred to the "radical inadequacy, to say the least" of both liberalism and Marxist-Leninist 'socialism', as embodiments of the project of autonomy, on the grounds that both these two movements shared the imaginary of Progress i.e. the heteronomy ideology of unlimited expansion of "rational mastery". [39]

Therefore, although it is true, as Gare argues, that I characterise all activity associated with the institutions of the state as part of the tradition of heteronomy, this is only the necessary by-product of adopting the same definition of autonomy as Castoriadis does, who, in turn, adopts the classical meaning of the word, according to which autonomy means to give to oneself one's laws[40] – a definition which implies that only direct democracy could secure both individual and social autonomy. In this sense, statist socialism, in both its forms as Marxism-Leninism and social democracy, does not belong to the autonomy tradition. This is because statist socialism– unlike the libertarian wing of socialism– sees the move to an autonomous society

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[39] Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics Autonomy,* pp. 37-39.
[40] ibid. p.164.

not through the abolition of the division of state from soci-
ety but, instead, through the *use* of the state by an elite for
the emancipation of society, either through representa-
tive 'democracy' and gradual reforms (social democrats),
or through a soviet system (Marxists-Leninists).

The working class movement, autonomy and the ID project

Next, Gare, after shrewdly pointing out that the ID project's
analysis of history of the market economy uses a very dif-
ferent problematique than the usual radical analyses–as it
becomes clear by the fact that it focuses on the struggles
of people against the market and its elites rather than on
an "objectivist" analysis–he notes that some ambiguity is
created by the fact that:

> "...on the one hand, the development of the social-dem-
> ocratic consensus appears simultaneously as a major
> achievement in the struggle of society against the mar-
> ket and as the strategy the market elites had to adopt in
> their struggle for profits. The latter position (denying the
> importance of the struggle by society against the market,
> the different strategies used in different countries and
> the different degrees of success) appears to derive from
> an overestimation of the effects of objective circum-
> stances and of the power and role of the market elites.
> Thus, Fotopoulos portrays German social democracy as
> merely 'a remnant of the statist phase of marketisation'
> and argues that 'in the competition between the USA/
> UK model of liberalization and the Rhineland social mar-
> ket model, it is the former that is the clear winner' (TID
> p.97). This leads to an acceptance of the triumph of neo-
> liberalism over social democracy as inevitable, given the
> logic of the market and the power of its elites, absolving

socialists from blame for their increasing managerialism and corruption".

In fact, however, my acceptance of the triumph of neo-liberalism over social democracy as inevitable does not simply derive from an overestimation of the effects of objective circumstances and of the power and role of the market elites. As I stressed in the French edition of TID, it is always the interaction between equally important 'objective' and 'subjective' factors which condition historical development. The crucial issue is always what is possible to be achieved by the 'subjective' factors (social praxis) within the existing 'objective' conditions. Thus, within the framework established by the objective conditions prevailing in statist modernity, pressure from within (mainly the labour movement) and from without (the very existence of the soviet bloc) could force, and did force, the ruling elites in the West to introduce, through the social-democratic consensus, various reforms involving the development of the welfare state, the drastic expansion of the role of the state in controlling the level of economic activity and employment, taking steps to secure better distribution of income, etc. Vice versa, the objective conditions created by neoliberal modernity and particularly the opening of markets (mainly from below, through the growing internationalisation of the market economy), but also the shrinking of the working class (because of technological changes) have allowed the ruling elites, within the neoliberal consensus framework, to reverse by and large those reforms. In other words, it was again the interplay of the changes in the objective and subjective conditions, rather than the increasing managerialism and corruption of social-democrats, which established the neoliberal consensus.

Therefore, far from overestimating the power of the market elites, my thesis is based on the reasons for which

the working class movement has decayed in the era of ne-
oliberal modernity, as a result not just of the corruption
of its leadership but mainly because of technological and
economic changes which led to the present 'service econo-
my' and the consequent dramatic decline of the size of the
working class –if we define it, following Marx, both 'subjec-
tively' and 'objectively'.[41] So, it is this decay of the working
class rather than any 'overestimation' of the power of the
market elites that can explain my stand.

   Today, it is more than ever true what I tried to show in
TID, i.e. that there is no chance at all for a return of statist
socialism in general, and social democracy in particular,[42]
or that, as I predicted there, 'in the competition between
the USA/UK model of liberalization and the Rhineland so-
cial market model, it is the former that is the clear winner'.
In fact, the confirmation of my prediction on Germany be-
came even more clear in the last few years before the rise
of Merkel's administration. The German social-democratic
government, struggling with stagnation and mounting un-
employment (which according to the TID analysis was due
to the fact that statist socialism was merely lingering on
in Germany, creating in the process negative implications
on its ranking in the competitive league) had adopted
in August 2003 a set of reforms, described by Chancellor
Gerhard Schröder as the most significant social reforms
ever in Germany. These reforms, following other similar
reforms taken earlier, in effect, led to the dismantlement

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[41] See also my article on classes "Class Divisions Today – The Inclusive
Democracy approach" in *Democracy & Nature,* Vol. 6, No 2.
[42] Even Meghnad Desai, a life-long social-democrat with Marxist in-
clination (and a Labour member of the House of Lords!) has recently
recognised the end of statist socialism in a book under the meaning-
ful title *Marx's revenge, The resurgence of capitalism and the death of
statist socialism* (London: Verso, 2004).

of the Rhineland social model. On this, the German social-democrats simply followed the advice of Wolfgang Wiegard, (a member of the ruling German Social Democratic Party for over 30 years and of the public employees union, as well as a '60s radical') who was nominated by the Social Democratic/ Green government to the Expert Council – a group of 5 economists that commissions reports on the economy for the government. In his yearly report in November 2002, Wiegard stated "we need more social inequality in order to get more employment." The report recommended wage/ salary cuts, limits to unemployment benefits, cuts in social security, and a growth in the low-wage sector. [43] Most of these recommendations have, already, been adopted by the German government, such as limits to unemployment benefits, cuts in taxes that mostly benefit the rich, cuts in the welfare state (e.g. health), encouragement of the low-wage sector (temporary employment, part-time jobs, etc.). Clearly, the social-democratic about-face in Germany, following similar reversals of social-democratic policies all over the world, is not the outcome of some corruption taking epidemic proportions, but, simply, of the fact that growth and employment are hardly compatible with social-ist statism in an environment of open markets. This is the reason for which the ID project, as Gare notes, denies that any other path to the future is conceivable, apart from a continuation of neoliberal globalisation or the development of a new democratic globalisation based on confederal inclusive democracies.

Next, Gare argues that my 'ambiguous' attitude towards the achievements of the social-democratic consensus, and the role of the workers' movements in this process, appears

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[43] Ulrich Rippert, "Top German official demands 'more inequality'", *World Socialist Web Site*, 22 November 2002.

to be influenced by my characterization of all activity as-
sociated with the institutions of the state as part of the
tradition of heteronomy, which, as such, has nothing to do
with the tradition aspiring to autonomy. For Gare, the prob-
lematic nature of this characterization of the social-demo-
cratic consensus becomes clearer in the light of Castoriadis'
broader notion of autonomy, specifically in relation to the
working class. Thus, according to Gare, Castoriadis suppos-
edly included far more in the autonomous tradition than
I do, as it becomes evident by his characterization of the
working class and its historical role. However, I have no
reason to disagree with Castoriadis that the self-organizing
activity of English workers, which preceded Marx, was "the
logical continuation of a democratic movement."[44] Even
less so I would disagree with Castoriadis' conclusion that it
was the same movement that was primarily responsible for
the "social-democratic consensus", and that it was, when
this autonomous movement was captured by the capitalist
imaginary through Marxism (or I would say through statist
socialism to differentiate it from libertarian socialism and
the independent working class movement) that workers
ceased being autonomous agents and became militant ac-
tivists indoctrinated into the teachings of a gospel.

Yet, I would disagree with the conclusion Gare draws
from all this, that what had emerged from the quest for
autonomy was a new form of heteronomy in the guise of
the quest for autonomy, which (as he rightly points out)
is something different from being part of the tradition of
heteronomy. Likewise, I would disagree with the related
conclusion he draws that:

> "Castoriadis' broader notion of autonomy could not justi-
> fy Fotopoulos' division of the modern political world into

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[44] World in Fragments, p.61.

> two, totally separate traditions. Drawing a sharp line be-
> tween those in the labour movement who founded the so-
> cialist and labour parties and attempted to gain control
> of and to transform the institutions of the nation state
> and those people who have sought to develop direct de-
> mocracies obscures the complex relations between these
> two traditions. Among all those striving for emancipa-
> tion as construed by Castoriadis there have been strug-
> gles, never entirely successful, with successes prone to
> corruption or attack and reversal, to overcome elites and
> for people to aspire to autonomy and to take control of
> their own destinies."

To my mind, the above statement is in direct contradic-
tion to Castoriadis' reading of the history of the working
class movement. When Castoriadis mentioned the strug-
gle of this movement to make capitalism more tolerable,
he referred to the independent workers' movement and
he explicitly excluded the struggles of workers controlled
by socialist and labour parties, as well as by trade union
bureaucracies. This is why he mentioned this movement
only with reference to the era before socialist statism,
describing their struggle as a continuation of the demo-
cratic movement that culminated in the French Revolution,
the Paris sections of 1790s, etc. On the other hand, when
Castoriadis refers to the workers' struggles, during the so-
cial-democratic consensus, he draws a clear line between
independent workers' struggles and those under the guid-
ance of socialist statists. Thus, in his major essay "Modern
Capitalism and Revolution", workers during the social-
democratic era could only be thought as struggling –very
indirectly even then – for some kind of self-management,
only when they were struggling independently of political
parties and trade unions (usually controlled by Marxists
and/or social-democrats). This is why he adopts only the
'unofficial' activity of workers' which has been organised

from below (wildcat strikes, etc.) rather than the activity initiated by bureaucratic parties and unions. As the extract below makes clear, the worker's struggle around reformist demands is completely incompatible with the tradition aspiring to autonomy and emancipation:

> "There is nothing fundamentally unacceptable to capitalism in the Labour program or in the power held by Scandinavian socialist parties. Contemporary reformism is just another way of managing capitalism and, in the end, of preserving it. When one considers this state of affairs, the meaning of the political attitude of workers in modern countries appears in a clear light. The proletariat no longer expresses itself as a class on the political plane; it no longer expresses to transform or even to orient society in its own direction. On the terrain of politics, it acts, at the very most, as just another 'pressure group'".[45]

Furthermore, given that unofficial workers' activity on working conditions was a phenomenon which only lasted for less than a decade or so (end of 1960s-mid 1970s) and was not widely spread geographically, but mainly appeared in countries like Britain and Italy and, much less so, in countries like the USA and Japan, it is obvious that the workers' activity, which qualifies according to Castoriadis as aspiring to autonomy, was very small in proportion to the activity which was definitely ruled out by him (i.e. the activity for higher wages organized by bureaucratic unions, Marxist and social-democratic parties, etc.) –all this even before the rise of neoliberal globalization.

So, neither Castoriadis, nor myself, have ever dismissed

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[45] "Modern Capitalism & Revolution" in Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), Vol 2, p. 293.

the achievements of past struggles, either those strug-
gles where motivated by movements for autonomy, or by
Marxist and social-democratic movements. The point is,
however, that all these achievements (to the extent that
they still characterise today's societies and have not been,
already, reversed, as is the case with most of the social-
democratic achievements) have only effected develop-
ments *within* the heteronomous tradition. As long as the
fundamental separation of society from the state and the
economy remains, we still talk about heteronomous socie-
ties and, therefore, the changes that have been effected
by those struggles, and the consequent achievements, in
no sense imply that we have gradually moved closer to an
autonomous society. Even if these achievements were not
reversible (and the present neoliberal globalisation has
clearly shown how much they were!), the adoption of the
view that gradually, over time, we move towards an auton-
omous society, would bring us back to the idea of Progress,
which few people accept today, and which factually cannot
stand anymore, as I attempted to show in ch. 8 of TID.

Therefore, on the basis of the above problematique, I
would not agree with Gare's argument that what Castoriadis
had in mind by autonomy could not justify my own division
of the modern political world into two, totally separate tra-
ditions, nor would I agree with his complementary argu-
ment that there is no justification for drawing a sharp line
between those in the labour movement, who founded the
socialist and labour parties and attempted to gain control
of and transform the institutions of the nation state, and
those people who have sought to develop direct democra-
cies. The division of the modern political world into two,
totally separate traditions is, also, a characteristic element
of Castoriadis thought, as for instance, when he states
that "the very history of the Greco-Western world can be
viewed as the history of the struggle between autonomy

and heteronomy', [46] or when he describes the historical dominance of heteronomy: "in heteronomous societies, that is to say, in the overwhelming majority of societies that have existed up to the present time – almost all of them."[47] For him, most of the people, for most of the time, adopt significations of heteronomy. It is only on some rare historical moments that large parts of society adopt – as a kind of rupture with the past – significations of autonomy. The working class movement initially had indeed adopted autonomous significations and, at that point, constituted part of the autonomy tradition. However, once the majority within it (not forgetting, of course, the minority in the form of the libertarian tradition, e.g. anarcho-syndicalism) adopted the significations of Marxism or of social democracy (which embodied crucial significations of heteronomy) it clearly ceased to play this role.

Therefore, the move of the majority of the working class from the original significations of autonomy to Marxism-Leninism and social democracy clearly represents a gestalt-switch in the Kuhnian sense, a shift from one paradigm (that of autonomy) to another one (that of heteronomy) –and not a development *within* the same tradition (the autonomous one), as Gare's analysis implies. Furthermore, although Castoriadis recognises that both the liberal republic and Marxism-Leninism have been seen by large sections of the working class movement, and other social groups, as embodying the autonomy project, he is clear in rejecting this view. This is evident when he characterises, for instance, Marxism-Leninism's claims to emancipation, i.e. autonomy, as an "unprecedented historical fraud"[48], and concludes that "the monstrous history of

[46] *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, p. 88.
[47] ibid. p. 133.
[48] *World in Fragments*, p. 59.

Marxism-Leninism shows what an emancipatory movement cannot and should not be". [49]

Is inclusive democracy compatible with social democracy?

Next, Gare raises the issue of compatibility of social democracy with the ID project. His starting point is that:

> "The quest for autonomy in the broader sense is a project that can never be fully realized. Measures of autonomy can emerge from and then be corrupted or subverted by new forms of heteronomy. As Fotopoulos himself acknowledges, even in the direct democracies of the past there were serious imperfections. Autonomy, broadly conceived, has never been completely achieved with representative democracy, but neither has it ever been completely achieved with forms of direct democracy. And just as Fotopoulos is proposing a new model to overcome the limitations of earlier forms of direct democracy, it is possible that social democrats, recognizing the failure of earlier or existing forms of social democracy, could propose a new, more democratic model to aspire to".

However, the fact that autonomy and inclusive democracy constitute projects (in the sense defined above), whereas social democracy is seen as a gradualist process, signifies fundamental differences between them. This is because the former presuppose a rupture or break with the past (not necessarily achieved through a violent revolution), aiming at the building of *alternative* institutions to the market economy and representative 'democracy', whereas the latter is supposed to be an evolutionist process, aiming at the improvement of the *existing* institutions.

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[49] ibid. p. 68.

No wonder that post modernists like Mouffe[50], Laclau and others, moving a step further than Gare, propose a 'radical democracy' defined in terms of 'extending and deepening' the present 'liberal oligarchy' (which is christened democracy) rather than in terms of institutional preconditions for a genuine democracy, and, unlike Gare, even rule out such a genuine democracy because of a supposed "unresolvable tension between the principles of equality and liberty." In other words, Laclau and Mouffe, ignoring the fundamental fact that this tension is the inevitable outcome of the unequal distribution of political, economic and social power and that, consequently, the issue is how to create the necessary (but not the sufficient) institutional conditions for eliminating the tension between equality and liberty, take this tension for granted, as a kind of God-given curse on humanity! To sum up, it is one thing to talk about an improvement of autonomy institutions of the past, whenever social praxis allows for it, and quite another to talk about gradualist improvements in heteronomy institutions, with the hope of transforming them eventually into autonomy institutions (Gare) or, more realistically, with no hope at all for such a transformation (Laclau, Mouffe).

Next, Gare raises the issue whether the aspirations of those fighting for emancipation and autonomy within nation states (like himself) are likely to be frustrated by the size of these societies. On that, he invokes, like Levin, Robert Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy' which dominates all large-scale organizations, including those of radical political parties.[51] This 'law' –according to which, even

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[50] See C.Mouffe, 'Democratic Politics Today' in C. Mouffe, (ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy,* (London: Verso, 1995 & 1992).
[51] Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy,* trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, (New York: the Free Press, 1962)

when people aspire to greater autonomy in large terri-tories, they must aim to inferior forms of democracy (i.e. representative democracy) compared to those who aspire to democracy in smaller communities– is blamed for hav-ing reoriented the organizations developed by the working class away from the quest for autonomy to developing the means of production. However, as I tried to show in TID, the quest for developing the means of production is a by-product of the dynamic of the market economy and its ide-ology, as the latter developed after the Enlightenment's identification of Progress with the development of produc-tive forces – an ideology adopted later on by the statist socialist movement (both Marxist and social-democratic). Given that statist socialism in its two forms was dominant all over the world in the era of social-democratic moder-nity, it is no wonder that the growth ideology was adopted universally, since both liberals (fervent supporters of the market economy) and socialists (who identified Progress with the development of productive forces) embraced it. It is not, therefore, population and territory size that could explain oligarchy (although an inclusive democracy does require –for different reasons – a radical decentralisation, which, however, may be, initially, administrative), but the form of social organisation and the ideology used to legiti-mise it.

This brings Gare to what he considers another problem in my work. He argues that a confederal ID is plausible, so long as each community is conceived in isolation from its relation with other communities and societies and that the confederal proposals, according to which such communi-ties could relate to each other in confederations, share necessary resources and organize to confront and defeat existing states, is far less convincing because, as he puts it:

"this is a major problem when one thinks of small-scale communities in the past, including those in ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy. These were perpetually in conflict with each other, and as a consequence, were able to be subjugated by larger, more powerful societies. This problem is accentuated in the present by the power of existing states... The whole movement for direct democracy is dissolving under pressure from these institutions. Given the incredible power and brutality of the new liberal fascist regimes led by USA, and considering realistically the prospects of reining in such rogue states, this defect in Fotopoulos' thinking could lead to the dismissal of all his proposals. To avoid this it is necessary to re-examine efforts by social democrats to transform the institutions of the nation-state to bring the economy under democratic control. Castoriadis' broader notion of autonomy facilitates this".

However, the reference to the inter-conflict of classical *poleis* is contradictory because one of the basic reasons for which a **confederal** inclusive democracy is proposed, instead of a community-based one, is exactly to avoid this sort of competition among direct democracies. Also, as regards the argument about today's tremendous power of the transnational elite, it is clear that this argument equally applies to social-democratic efforts that could threaten its power. Allende's's case is indicative and one could plausibly assume that in case Chavez in Venezuela or Morales in Bolivia become real obstacles to the economic and geopolitical strategy of the transnational and local elites they will be faced correspondingly[52]. Therefore, the counterforce to this power could only be built from below, in the form of

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[52] For a critical analysis of these Leftist regimes in Latin America see Takis Fotopoulos, "Latin America: Axis of Hope vs. Axis of Evil", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY*, vol.3, no.1, (January 2007).

an international movement for a genuine democracy that would undermine the power base of the transnational elite. So, although a confederal inclusive democracy could initially be established in a single country, it is clear that such an experiment will be doomed unless it is followed soon by the establishment of confederal inclusive democracies at the regional, continental and, eventually, global level.

Having said that, Gare proceeds next to support his case for complementarity between the ID project and social democracy. Thus, he points out that, instead of seeing the struggle to reform social democracy and the development of inclusive democracy as rival programs, they could be seen as complementary projects, separated more by the corrupt state of social democratic movements that has led them to a massive concentration of power than by the social democratic project as such.

However, corruption and decay of social-democratic and trade union movements can explain neither their bureaucratization, denounced by Castoriadis, nor their adoption of the growth ideology– let alone the concentration of power. Corruption and bureaucratization are not independent variables, but could well be explained by structural factors (e.g. their hierarchical organization), as well as by historical factors, on which I cannot expand here. Furthermore, no political party, which does not challenge the market economy itself, is effectively able to challenge the growth ideology, since it is growth which is the motor of the market economy, and any effective measures to challenge the power of multinationals will directly affect the dynamic of the market economy, leading to more unemployment and a worsening of the economic crisis, and, consequently, to a further eroding of the electoral base of social-democrats. Finally, it is not decadence that prevents social-democrats from abandoning the capitalist imaginary –to use the Castoriadian terminology which is invoked by Gare– and

upholding autonomy as their main goal and then mobiliz-
ing against global markets. What prevents them from doing
so is that, in the era of neoliberal globalisation, economic
growth depends crucially on world markets, and the main
agent of this growth is transnational corporations. Only,
therefore, the return to the semi-closed economies of the
social-democratic era would make possible the re-regula-
tion of markets – something that is not feasible anymore
within the institutional framework of the market economy.

It is not accidental, anyway, that even those in the re-
formist Left who criticize social-democrats (e.g. those
participating in the World Social Forum), in their propos-
als for an 'alternative globalisation', take for granted the
present open markets and restrict themselves to proposals
that would curb the power of transnational corporations at
the global level and would allow the effective protection
of labour and the environment. However, such proposals
are much more utopian than the proposal for an inclusive
democracy, not only because the built-in power structures
of the internationalized market economy would never al-
low any drastic measures in this direction to be taken and
effectively implemented, but also because, even if this was
possible, the effect of such measures would have been a
further worsening of the economic crisis, given that open
markets require also de-regulated markets, for competi-
tiveness to be maximized.

No wonder that not only the social democrats in Germany,
as we saw above, but also those in the Swedish bastion of
social democracy had to adopt measures which, far from
indicating any kind of rethinking their attitudes towards
economic growth, as Gare asserts, in fact seriously under-
mine the past achievements of social democracy (privati-
sations of social services like the postal service, private-

public mix in health care, etc.)[53]. This was not due to the decadence of Swedish social democrats, but simply to the inevitable choice they, as well as German social-democrats, had to make, given that foreign and local capitalists, both in Germany and Sweden, could easily move – some actually began moving– to places with fewer restrictions to their activities, further deteriorating the precarious state of the corresponding economies. Needless to add that Swedish social-liberalism would have not been aborted if, as Gare argues, a proposal of some trade unions had prevailed, against timid social democrats in government, for using union controlled pension funds to buy and take control of all major Swedish private companies and introducing industrial democracy, totally subordinating the market to society. It is clear that such naïve proposals do not take into account that, in an open economy of free and deregulated markets, the issue is not who is the owner of local private enterprises, but that national control over markets is impossible. This is because, as long as firms will have to be competitive in order to survive the competition of transnational corporations, they will have to adopt similar policies, irrespective of whether they are under private or state control. Likewise governments will have to adopt similar policies if they pursue export-led growth policies, irrespective of whether local firms are private or state-owned. For the same reasons, the trends of capitalist centres to be increasingly integrated into the neoliberal globalisation will not be restricted by the usual capitalist crises, even if they are as serious as the present one, which has already developed into a deep recession. In other words, unless the political elites are prepared to come in conflict with the eco-

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[53] See e.g., Audrey Gillan,"Public backing for Sweden's private success", *The Guardian*, 29/5/01, and Denis MacShane, "Europe's left only wins when it rejects the state", *The Guardian,* 17/9/02.

nomic elites that represent the interests of transnational corporations, which, in turn, control world production and trade –a contradiction in terms, given the organic inter-connections of political and economic elites–markets will remain free and deregulated, perhaps with some (mainly cosmetic) changes to create the impression of a 'capitalism with a human face'. But, as long as markets remain free and deregulated the essence of neoliberal globalisation will in-evitably remain intact.

Finally, although I very much appreciate Gare's inten-tion to make the ID proposals "more relevant to the present and more likely to be taken up in the immediate future" I am afraid I will not be able to agree with his main con-clusion that, perhaps, the only possible solution to the present problems is to attempt synthesizing radical social democracy with inclusive democracy. This implies that so-cial democrats should work towards creating the kind of in-clusive democracies proposed by the ID project, "with the aim not to overthrow the state but to transform it into an institution for producing and sustaining the environment within which inclusive democracies could flourish, while at the same time serving to mediate their relations to each other, to the rest of society and, collectively, to other so-cieties while, in parallel, to radically re-regulate markets, particularly of trade and finance, towards the long-term goal of replacing the market economy completely by inclu-sive democracies".

However, apart from the fact that, as I attempted to show above, the goal of radically re-regulating markets today is not feasible, the state, by definition, could not be transformed to the kind of institution proposed by Gare, since its very existence– as an institution separate from so-ciety– means that the political and economic elites, which control it, will do everything in their power to undermine inclusive democracies. This is why, as I put it in TID, the

aim of a democratic movement could only be "to transform and democratize city governments (demotic councils), to root them in popular assemblies, to knit them along confederal lines, and to appropriate a regional economy along confederal and municipal lines". In other words, the goal is to develop 'a public sphere–and in the Athenian meaning of the term, a *politics*–that grows in tension and ultimately in a decisive conflict with the state'. Having said that, it is now clear that any kind of alliance between mainstream social-democrats and supporters of the ID project would not only be utterly utopian, but also extremely undesirable, given the active or passive support of the former for the criminal wars of the transnational elite in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq—let alone their latest indirect support of the Gaza massacre.[54]

Determinism, creativity and voluntarism

Finally, Gare raises the all important issue of the role of determinism versus creativity and voluntarism in History. At the outset, he attempts to draw a line, yet again, between TID and Castoriadis on the issue of my 'dualistic' thinking as regards autonomy and heteronomy and also on the issue of creativity and its relationship to the past. In fact, however, such a dividing line is non-existent since Castoriadis, as I attempted to show above, was absolutely clear on the matter, as he also saw History as creation, and the entire Western history as a conflict between the autonomy and heteronomy traditions. In this context, I will argue that Gare inadvertently simplifies my position on the matter,

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[54] T. Fotopoulos, "The Crime of the Zionists and the Transnational Elite and the Stand of the Left", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY.*

when he presents it as a voluntaristic one and he points
out that:

> "creation in this sense cannot be equated with deliber-
> ate action or a choice, since before the emergence of
> autonomy people were bound by their roles and, except
> in rare instances, were virtually incapable of thinking be-
> yond these... That is, instituting democracy is not simply
> a matter of people choosing to create a new form of au-
> tonomous society from what had been a heteronomous
> tradition. It is only in a society within which the tradition
> of autonomy survives to some extent, despite the preva-
> lence of heteronomy, that people can actually choose to
> fight for democracy".

However, as I stressed in TID (p. 181), it is a historical
fact that individuals are not absolutely free to create their
own world, nor does the world just create the individual.
As long as individuals live in a society, they are not mere-
ly individuals but *social* individuals, subject to a process
which socialises them into internalising the existing in-
stitutional framework and the dominant social paradigm.
In this sense, they are not just free to create their world,
but are conditioned by History, tradition and culture. Still,
this socialisation process is broken, at almost all times – as
far as a minority of the population is concerned – and in
exceptional historical circumstances even with respect to
the majority itself. In the latter case, a process is set in
motion that usually ends with a change of the institutional
structure of society and of the corresponding social para-
digm. In other words, since freedom itself is defined in TID
in terms of autonomy, I take it for granted that there have
always been and will always be individuals in every society
which will not take for granted the institutions of heter-
onomy and the dominant social paradigm to which they are
socialized.

At the same time, Gare notes that my voluntarism –in so far as the possibility of creating direct democracies is concerned– is accompanied by what appears to be 'an excessively deterministic understanding of the evolution of the market and the actions of its elites in recent history' and construing the advance of the market as inexorable. However, in my analysis, the economic crisis of the market economy is endemic within the system, and this is why I devoted an entire chapter to the generalised systemic crisis (ch. 4). In other words, in my problematique, the crisis does not refer only to the neoliberal 'model', as Gare presents it, since a similar crisis led to the end of the social-democratic consensus in the early 70s, for the reasons explained in the book. For me, the crisis is a systemic one, caused by the inherent contradictions of the market system itself, which is the worst system of allocating resources when purchasing power is unequally distributed (see my criticism of the market system in TID pp. 248-250). It is this fundamental structural defect that is causing the growing concentration of power, which is the ultimate cause of the present multidimensional crisis. In this context, the advance of the market has, indeed, been relentless since its emergence, two hundred years or so ago, whereas the advent of socialist statism was only a temporary aberration that lasted less than fifty years –except in USSR where it survived another twenty years or so.

Still, this does not mean that the position adopted by the ID project is either a deterministic or a voluntaristic one. The following extract from the French edition of TID (Seuil, 2002) hopefully makes clear the ID stand, as regards the relation between 'determinism' and 'voluntarism' and the essentially indeterminate nature of the outcome of the social struggle on the crucial issue of autonomy versus heteronomy:

DIALOGUE-EPILOGUE

"It was the outcome of the social struggle that determined in each historical period the nature and main characteristics of modernity. The controversial issue, however, is what was the conditioning influence of 'objective' versus 'subjective' factors, as regards the final outcome of this struggle. For Marxists, objective factors, like changes in technology, play a crucial role in this outcome, if they do not determine (even 'in the last instance') History itself. On the other hand, for supporters of the autonomy/democratic tradition, like Castoriadis, subjective factors, like the 'social imaginary', play an equally crucial role leading to an indeterminate outcome. There is no doubt, of course, that 'objective' factors were at work during the entire history of the market economy system, although not in the rigid sense assumed by the Marxist 'science' of the economy...but, although such objective factors could explain the motives and actions, particularly of the economic elites, still, the eventual economic and social outcome of the ensuing social struggle has, always, been both indeterminate and unpredictable, as Castoriadis rightly points out. However, in this book's problematique, it is equally a mistake to attempt to overemphasize the role of 'objective' factors in the history of the market economy, at the expense of the 'subjective' factors, or, to do the opposite and overemphasize the role of the 'subjective' factors at the expense of the objective ones. Instead, this book is based on the hypothesis that it is the interaction between equally important 'objective' and 'subjective' factors which condition historical development – an interaction which (unlike the Marxist 'dialectical' relationship) always leads to indeterminate outcomes."

Finally, it is clear that Gare gives a much narrower meaning to the outcome of the social struggle, which includes even changes *within* the heteronomy tradition, as changes supposedly leading to a potential rupture with it. Thus, Gare argues that "an alternative to Fotopoulos' opposition

between creativity and a deterministic account of the evolution of the market is to recognize that evolutionary processes, including the evolution of social forms, are not deterministic and can allow for different directions to be taken and, also, that there can be 'radical emergence', with creative imagination playing a central role in this" –something that he thinks provides a better grasp of the place of creativity and agency in history. He continues that "from this perspective, however, it is only when there are major crises that radically new forms, natural or social, are likely to emerge, and it is only when there are pre-existing projects that choice becomes a major influence on outcomes". His point of reference here is the Great Depression, which precipitated a crisis the outcome of which was "the triumph of a weak form of the welfare state in USA, Nazism in Germany and social democracy in Sweden", followed by a far less severe crisis in the 1970s, that led to the rise and dominance of neo-liberalism, whereas a new major crisis is looming today which, according to Gare, could open a whole new set of possibilities, ranging from a further development of the liberal fascism being pursued by USA and Australia and to some extent in Britain, to efforts to create radically new forms of democracy.

However, the kind of crises he mentions –as the very historical examples, he brings up, make clear– has never led to a systemic change. This is not accidental. In the ID problematique a crisis – however severe – will never lead to a systemic change by itself, unless the subjective conditions for such a change have been created. These conditions involve, as I, briefly, explained above, the development of antisystemic consciousness, not simply through the struggle against the system, (i.e. the usual strategy of the traditional antisystemic Left), but, also, the struggle to begin building 'from below' alternative democratic institutions, well before the actual transition to an Inclusive

Democracy takes place. If these conditions have not been created at the moment the crisis erupts, then the inevitable outcome will be either some kind of totalitarian regime of the Right or the Left, or an easily reversible reform like the welfare state mentioned by Gare.

Today, however, the objective conditions do not create even the conditions for a significant 'endo-systemic' change– like the one assumed by Gare– let alone a systemic change. This can be seen if we compare today's conditions with the conditions which led to the rise of the welfare state. To my mind, the main reason which could explain the rise of the welfare state refers to the existence of such subjective conditions, as the strong socialist movement, which had, already, cut off Russia from the capitalist market economy, as well as the aspirations of most people in the West, who had fought World War II for a better post-war society with no unemployment and poverty – as promised by their elites. Today, however, not only similar subjective conditions are not seen in the horizon, but also the objective conditions that allowed for the rise of the welfare state (semi-closed economies whose growth depends on the internal market) are absent. It is on account of this problematique that I concluded in TID that only the building of a mass movement for a new form of society, based on inclusive democracy, could provide a permanent way out of the present multidimensional crisis, through the double struggle against the system and for the parallel building of alternative democratic institutions. This is because, in the ID problematique, even a significant change *within* the heteronomy tradition, let alone a change *between* the heteronomy and autonomy traditions, is impossible in neoliberal modernity, unless it is accompanied by a change in the objective conditions themselves (i.e. a systemic change). Alternatively, we have to enter a dream world in which capitalists and the states controlled by them abandon

economic growth, transnational corporations and open markets and come back to the social-democratic paradise of the 1950s-1970s or some variant of it!

Postscript: The present huge capitalist crisis[55] has already confirmed my conclusions above. The lack of a massive antisystemic movement makes certain that the capitalist elites and the associated political elites would come out essentially unscathed from what (according to Ed Balls, economist and member of the present Brown government in the UK) is developing as the greatest capitalist crisis of the last 100 years. This is not of course the case for the millions of extra unemployed and underemployed all over the world that the crisis creates, who essentially will pay the price of the crisis, and for no fault whatsoever of their own. All they could expect is a 'capitalism with a human face' like the one to be suggested by the G20 meeting of the elites in London in April 2009!

5. The desirability of Inclusive Democracy

Is ID desirable?

David Freeman, in a brilliant analysis of TID, asks a series of crucial questions, which he cleverly stages as a kind of an exchange between the author and three different constituencies expressing the main trends in the political spectrum: antisystemic, pro-systemic and reformist. Although sometimes his predicted answers are off the mark – either because they represent wild guesses of the author's possible response, who, in the meantime since publication of TID,

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[55] T. Fotopoulos, "The myths about the economic crisis, the reformist Left and economic democracy", *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (October 2008).

has, already, provided his own answers to these questions, or because of errors in guessing the author's attitude on certain matters – Freeman, generally, manages to create a very insightful imaginary exchange on the issues involved. Particularly so, since he shrewdly perceives that the main contribution of TID (and this constitutes the main theme of his review) is that it attempts to fill what he considers as the major gap in most of contemporary antisystemic critique: to propose an alternative type of social organisation rather than exhaust itself in the usual critique of the present system. This is a particularly crucial issue, not only for anarchism–which never managed to go beyond some moral generalities about the future society– but for every kind of radical movement, as we saw above with respect to the World Social Forum. Still, to my mind, after the collapse, in the last decade, of the only "actually existing" alternative to the present system, i.e. socialist statism in the form of soviet socialism and social democracy, this is the main question which critics of the existing system have to answer, if they wish their critique to have any credibility.

I will not deal here with the questions asked by Freeman, which have, already, received a reply in other parts of this rejoinder. This applies, particularly, to his questions about the transition to an ID and comments like the following one: "If asking a polity to embark on a new road, one will be required to demonstrate well before-the-fact that this road cannot possibly be the harbinger of disaster. Otherwise, the public response will surely be 'better the devil you know'". But, I hope it is clear from the above, that this sort of problem does not arise with respect to the ID project, in which the transition to an inclusive democracy involves the majority of the population in building the alternative institutions, proposed by this project, and acquiring, in the process, the experience of living with them. The democratic consciousness, that this experience will

create, is, anyway, the only guarantee that people will be willing and able to defend their new institutions from the inevitable attack of the elites, from within, or without.

Therefore, setting aside questions concerning the feasibility of ID and the transition to it, which I considered above, I will now focus, instead, on a set of significant questions, raised by Freeman, concerning the desirability of ID in general, and I will continue next with questions concerning the desirability of direct democracy in particular. Freeman points out, first, that many may regard the state as a buffer against the 'problem of evil' and that the absence of state could generate a vacuum, providing to malevolence/ human nature especial opportunity, without accountability or state-administered recourse. Similarly, he argues, Pareto's suggestion that élites are likely to emerge in any form of social organisation, even in those committed to the absence of elites, has to be rebuffed, for the ID project to look credible. "Fotopoulos" he stresses, "needs to respond to intimations, notably from Freud, totalitarianism, pogroms and popular wars, that collectivities and not only élites can support murderousness; this goes directly to why people might seek the rule of law with state-as-enforcer". He, then, goes on to ask questions about safeguards against the possibility that a cabal might undertake the equivalent, in a stateless society, of a military coup, seizing the voucher repository, distributing vouchers to enjoin any with weapons or substantial musculature to their cause, and banishing all democratic practice. "Fotopoulos needs to satisfy as to how internal and external aggression is prevented or resolved". Finally, he raises the well rehearsed argument about private property "as a buffer for the individual and not simply a mechanism of domination" –something that requires to show that demotic ownership could not also prove demonic. So, let us consider briefly the issues raised by these questions.

First, as regards the state as a 'buffer' against the problem of evil, the real issue is, of course, whether the state's role is in fact exhausted in this function, or whether, instead, an even more important function of it is to maintain and reproduce the system of concentration of political and economic power at the hands of the elites, which control the state mechanism. Radical theory and History itself unquestionably confirm the latter. Furthermore, the absence of state does not mean the absence of social organisation and law, as some primitive views of anarchism suggest. An ID simply implies a different sort of social organisation and laws approved by the demotic assemblies and implemented by delegates chosen by them, i.e. by the people themselves rather than by minorities 'representing' the people and 'acting on its behalf'.

Second, as regards Pareto's suggestion that elites are likely to emerge in any form of social organisation, the real issue is whether the institutional framework creates the necessary conditions for the emergence of elites, and there is no doubt that the market economy and representative 'democracy' do create, almost by definition, such conditions. On the other hand, the institutional framework of an ID does, in fact, create the necessary conditions for the non-emergence of elites. This is not, of course, a guarantee that elites will never emerge, even in such a system, but, whereas in the present system this is the effect of the normal functioning of the system itself, in an ID this could only be the outcome of its abuse and would only be possible in the absence of the sufficient conditions for a genuine democracy, i.e. in the absence of a level of democratic consciousness that people are expected to acquire through *paideia* and the living experience of genuine democracy itself–the topic brilliantly dealt with by the articles on paideia and democracy by John Sargis, David Gabbard and Karen Anijar Appleton.

Third, as regards the safeguards against internal and external aggression –safeguards that, of course, have never been provided by the present system, which excels, at the moment, in organising aggressions all over the world and in undermining even basic human rights at home–again, the ultimate safeguard could only be the level of democratic consciousness, achieved by the people themselves, through living democracy and *paideia*. On top of this, however, although demotic assemblies may indeed make errors of judgement –as many 'mistakes' have been made, at all times, by the elites–an error by the elites is worse than a thousand errors made by the people, given that the elites' decisions, by definition, express particular interests.

Finally, as regards private property, one may imagine various ways to reproduce its benefits, in terms of offering a buffer for the individual, without forcing society to suffer its serious drawbacks, in terms of creating an unequal distribution of income and wealth. Thus, there is little doubt that ownership and control of the means of production and distribution have to be collective, given that production and distribution are social processes affecting every member of society. However, as regards housing, demotic assemblies could maintain, for instance, the ownership of the entire housing stock and then distribute to citizens long-term leases for residential properties, on the basis of objective criteria expressing the citizens' needs (number of rooms per person, etc.) set by the assemblies themselves.

Next, Freeman questions whether the ID model will be culturally attractive to people who do not share its values, like the middle classes in the North and elsewhere, who have adopted the values of the present consumer society. However, the feeling of emptiness in life, that the consumer society creates for many people, was one of the main reasons for the massive movement that developed all over

the West in the late sixties. It is the same feeling that has pushed many people today to the various forms of irrationalism (official religions as well as the various sects that are rampant particularly in the USA –the citadel of consumer society–New Age, Zen, Tao, etc.).[56] A massive movement for an Inclusive Democracy could, therefore, function as a catalyst for the development of new values based on democratic ethics,[57] expressing the need to organise individual and collective life on a rational basis.

Also, it should not be forgotten that the freedom of choice, which is an integral element of the ID economic proposals, is a sufficient guarantee against any trend towards the kind of "dour monasticism" that Freeman is worried about. Furthermore, this will be a freedom of choice that, being socially controlled, could not lead to the kind of growth economy prevailing today, which has led us to the edge of an ecological catastrophe. Finally, as regards the argument that capitalism, in its very search for more expansion and profits, could be "greened", is only partially true and is mainly valid with respect to the secondary ecological problems (e.g. pollution) rather than as far as the primary ecological problems is concerned, like the greenhouse effect. In the latter case, it is clear that the benefits from the continuation of the status quo, which are being gained by some of the most powerful multinationals (TNCs), like those in the oil industry, far outweigh the disadvantages to others (e.g. insurance industry)–something that could well explain the reason why even the adoption

[56] See T. Fotopoulos, 'The rise of new irrationalism and its incompatibility with Inclusive Democracy' *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 4, Nos. 2/3 (1998), pp. 1-49, and also, *Religion, Autonomy, Democracy: the rise of new irrationalism*, (in Greek), (Athens: Eleytheros Typos, 2000).
[57] See T. Fotopoulos, "Towards a democratic liberatory ethics", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, no. 3 (November 2002), pp. 361-396.

of the mild Kyoto proposals (which in no way could stop the present catastrophic climatic change) finally proved impossible![58] It should, also, be noted that, despite the present development of a 'green consumerism' (or ethical shopping)[59] and the corresponding 'greening of capitalism' in terms of TNC's being involved in the production of renewable sources of energy and whilst even oil TNCs are now claiming their 'green' credentials, the climate change as a result of the worsening greenhouse effect is rapidly deteriorating lately and there is no chance that even a full utilisation of renewable sources of energy will match the accelerating needs created by the present world growth economy.[60]

Freeman, then, argues that only two of the crises, which TID identifies as part of the present multi-dimensional crisis, are indisputable: ecological and North-South crisis. Still, I think few would dispute the existence of a crisis in what passes as 'politics' today, indications of which are the huge abstention rates in the electoral process and the lack of participation in general, the eclipse of mass political parties, etc. Even fewer would dispute the extent of the present social crisis, as shown by mounting crime, massive drug abuse and the like, which have resulted in the growing development of luxury ghettos for the affluent middle classes. Finally, the fact that the Great Depression, or any other of the crises capitalism went through, did not lead

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[58] See Takis Fotopoulos, "Globalisation, the reformist Left and the anti-globalisation 'movement'".
[59] G. Monbiot, "Ethical shopping is just another way of showing how rich you are",
Guardian, 24/7/2007.
[60] Ted Trainer, "Renewable Energy: No Solution for Consumer Society", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 2007).

to the end of it is not, as the ideologues of the system suggest, so much a result of the system's capacity to reinvent itself, as the lack of a credible alternative. In other words, in the ID problematique, no crisis, however grave, will lead to the end of the present system, unless a credible alternative, adopted by a significant part of the population, has already emerged.

Next, Freeman raises the question whether most people really desire extensive participation, as direct democracy assumes. I think, however, that this question presupposes the kind of mentality that has inevitably been created in the present pseudo-public space. Most people have never come in contact with a real public space and have, therefore, justifiably withdrawn from what passes as 'politics' today– as the above mentioned political crisis illustrates. The very fact that many people have been brainwashed by the system to believe that participation in politics is a kind of vocation to be assigned to the specialists is the clearest illustration of the profound indifference to what passes as 'politics' today. Politics, in the sense of direct participation of people in public affairs (as it was the classical conception of the term) is an expression of autonomy, i.e. of freedom itself, and I cannot imagine that in a free society, in which everybody will be able to take part in the decision-process, some will consciously select heteronomy, namely, to assign to others the right to decide for them. Particularly so since the decision-taking process does not have to be unnecessarily time-consuming and interfering with the citizens' private lives. Thus, a degree of flexibility may easily be introduced in the decision-taking process, so that citizens are required to attend only the discussion of issues judged as important by a committee of delegates chosen by lot to prepare the agenda for the next assembly, whereas attendance to less important meetings could be optional, and so on. The fact, anyway, that the minimum

amount of work requested from each citizen, so that basic needs are met, will be much smaller than the present average workload, will ensure that attending assemblies' meetings will not be a significant burden on citizens' free time.

'Radical' democracy or direct democracy?

Serge Latouche offers a wide-ranging analysis of the ID project, which helps the reader enormously to form a complete image of its problematique, its aims and the means to achieve them. As before, instead of describing the aspects of Latouche's insightful analysis that finds me in broad agreement, I will attempt in the following pages to discuss the main issues/reservations raised by the reviewer, which, to my mind, express a viewpoint favouring the 'deepening' of representative 'democracy'–an approach close to the one adopted by supporters of the 'radical democracy' approach (Laclau, Mouffe et. al.) which I considered above.

At the outset, Latouche doubts the desirability of direct democracy and invokes Aristotle who noted that "as for the poor, they are ready to keep quiet, even when excluded from office, provided they are not subjected to violence or to confiscation of their property"[61], on the assumption that "they take no great offence of being excluded from office, (on the contrary, they may even be glad of this opportunity to look after their private affairs)". [62] However, even the extracts that Latouche refers to make clear that the reason, for which participation by the masses to the democratic proceedings was not perfect, had little to do with their lack of interest and was much more related to the very fact that, for many citizens, the loss of income resulting from

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[61] Aristotle, *Politics*, IV, 13, 1297 b 5.
[62] ibid. V, 8, 1308 b 30.

participation was significant. This is made clear by another passage from *Politics,* in which Aristotle stresses that "in time of war, for example, the poor generally begrudge their services, if they are not granted a subsistence allowance to save them from destitution". [63] As I pointed out in TID, the distribution of free time –on which the objective ability to exercise civic rights depends–was very unequal in classical Athens, following the unequal distribution of income and wealth. This is why, as I have stressed, given that 'slave-ownership depended on the distribution of income and wealth, the rich, who owned many more slaves than the poor, had much more time at their disposal to exercise their civic rights' (p. 192). In other words, the reason why the rate of participation in the democratic procedures was not equally distributed among classes was the very existence of classes, namely, the fact that, as I noted in TID, classical Athenian democracy was only a *partial* democracy. This was so, not only because Athenian democracy was not a full political democracy, in the sense that not all residents could take part in the proceedings, but also because it was not complemented by an economic democracy as well. Despite the fact that the significance of income distribution as regards participation was recognised and compensation for the exercise of civic rights was introduced by Pericles (judicial salary for jury duty, assembly salary for participation in the *ecclesia*, salary for deputies, soldiers, etc.), still, the amount of compensation was just enough to induce the very poor to take part, but surely not adequate to cover fully the income loss that participation in the proceedings implied for many Athenians.

The conclusion is that there is no historical example on the basis of which we may assess the desirability, or not,

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[63] ibid. IV, 13, 1297 b 10.

of an inclusive democracy, simply because there has never been in History a full democracy of a similar kind. But, if this is so, the implication is that out of partial forms of democracy one can only make partial assessments on the desirability of a full democracy.

Next, Latouche argues that the proceedings of direct democracy were not particularly desirable to the masses, as shown by the 'fact' that "in Athens, 9 citizens out of 10 were more often than not absent from the debates, and, in spite of the fees paid for being there, public officers had a lot of trouble dragging the crowd from agora to ecclesia", as a result of which, in the Athenian democracy, decisions were finally taken "by less than 400 out of 200,000 inhabitants of classical Attica." I do not know Latouche's source of information, but Mogens Herman Hansen – who has published a relatively recent classic text on Athenian democracy – using the research results of several other writers on the matter, draws very different conclusions. As regards the number of citizens involved, he states that 'the size of the population is unknown, but it can be deduced from the evidence that there were some 60,000 male citizens when Pericles was the leader of Athens in the fifth century, and about 30,000 when Demosthenes was its leader."[64] Finally, as regards the rate of participation, Hansen gives a very different picture from that of Latouche:

> "(O)ut of the 30,000 full citizens not more than 6,000, as a rule, turned up for the Assembly and the People's Courts. The astonishing fact (is) that it was possible to collect, on more than one day in two, as many as several thousand

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[64] Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the age of Demosthenes*, (Oxford: Blackwell,1991), p. 55

citizens for the courts, and, several times a month, more than 6,000 for the Assembly."[65]

It seems, therefore, that, despite the fact that the Athenian democracy was a *partial* democracy, as mentioned above, and many people could simply not afford the loss of income (which was not compensated fully by the city allowance) that resulted from attending the democratic proceedings, still, as Hansen stresses, "political activity was regarded as a worthy expenditure of time in its own right and not just as a dreary duty". [66]

Latouche next stresses that "we probably have to agree with Tocqueville when he sees 'the principle of popular sovereignty at the bottom of all governments and hidden under the less freedom-prone institutions'".[67] However, general representation (as opposed to specific delegation) inevitably is, as Castoriadis put it, so much 'in the concept', as in actual fact, alienation (in the legal sense of the term: transfer of ownership) of sovereignty, from the 'represented' toward the 'representatives'.[68] Similarly, one could hardly agree with the argument that :

> "in this context, radical rejection of representative 'democracy' is somewhat excessive. It is now part of our tradition, whether we like it or not. And it isn't necessarily the embodiment of evil".

However, this 'tradition' is only two centuries old or so, since the 'Founding Fathers' of the US Constitution introduced representative 'democracy' in the last quarter of the

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[65] ibid. p. 60.
[66] ibid.
[67] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Souvenirs*, (1942 edition), p. 220.
[68] David Ames Curtis, (ed), *The Castoriadis Reader,* (Oxford:Blackwell, 1997), p. 408.

18th century, as the political complement of the *system* of the market economy that was introduced at about the same time. Furthermore, when Latouche asks "all in all, is representation by elected officers less democratic than lazily or carelessly giving up the city's affairs to notabilities and demagogues?" he does not in fact compare likes with likes. This is because he compares, as I mentioned in a previous section, the *abuse* of the democratic system by notabilities and demagogues with the *normal* functioning of representative 'democracy'.

Direct democracy presupposes a high level of democratic consciousness and could indeed lead to demagogue-cracy, in the absence of such consciousness. But, representative 'democracy'––by its own nature rather than because of a deficit in democratic consciousness or any other external factor––deprives the vast majority of the population from exercising their political will, something that can only be done directly, by the people themselves. Therefore, when Latouche argues that "improved representation, with recallable officers and direct participation in some cases (e.g. the participative budget in Porto Alegre), may constitute a satisfactory compromise" he seems not to realise that a representative 'democracy' is a completely different system from a full democracy. A representation may, indeed, be 'improved', but surely this does not constitute democracy, which clearly is not a system that can be exercised *a-la carte* (as is the Porto Allegre case, in which some decisions, like investment budgeting, are delegated to assemblies of representatives –not even to citizens' assemblies!– while others, which happen to condition the former, are left to the elites to take).[69] Democracy, as Castoriadis[70] stressed,

[69] Hilary Wainwright, **"**Lessons of Porto Allegre", *Guardian,* 9/7/2007.
[70] See Cornelius Castoriadis, "La démocratie comme procédure et comme régime' in *La montée de l' insignifiance*, (Seuil, Paris, 1996),

is not a set of procedures but a regime, which either exists or not.

Finally, Latouche admits that the issue of the unequal distribution of economic power is a key issue and will indeed remain unsolved in the present system, noting that "it is somewhat illusory to envision solving it at a stroke with the magic wand of direct democracy". However, in the ID problematique, it is not simply direct democracy that will solve the problem of the unequal distribution of economic power, but economic democracy, as a basic component of the inclusive democracy. Furthermore, economic democracy, as was made clear in TID, does not only mean the institutionalisation of economic *processes* of a democratic nature (assemblies to decide how basic needs will be met), but also the institutionalisation of economic *structures* embodying equal economic power relations, which implies that the means of production and distribution are collectively owned and controlled by the *demos,* the citizens' body, directly.

The need for a universalist project

To my mind, all of Latouche's reservations have a common source which is revealed in his final comment:

"Lastly, I distrust any universalist project, even a radical or subversive one: I am prone to detect in it some residual smell of Western ethnocentrism. I already disagreed with Castoriadis about this. Reading Takis Fotopoulos strengthens my doubts. As Louis Dumont perfectly showed, the holistic imaginary of most human societies, if not unacquainted with some requirement of due con-

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pp. 221-241.

sideration for dignity of individuals and attention to their
will, is largely irrelevant to our egalitarian imaginary".

I think the above statement makes clear that Latouche
is motivated by the postmodernist aversion to any kind
of universalist project – the same aversion which has led
to the abandonment, by most of the Left, of any prob-
lematique for a radical social change–which has led to
what Castoriadis rightly called 'generalized conformism.[71]
Similarly, as I put it in my critique of postmodernism, "the
postmodern emphasis on 'plurality' and 'difference', in
combination with the simultaneous rejection of every
idea to develop a universal project for human emancipa-
tion, serves, in effect, as an alibi for abandoning liberatory
analysis and politics and conforming to the status quo."[72]

As I tried to show in the same article, this is the type
of 'oppositional' postmodern politics, which is advanced
by Laclau and Mouffe, among others, and which, inevita-
bly, ends up with a reformist politics (which does not chal-
lenge, in any way, the system of the market economy and
representative 'democracy') defined as 'radical democracy'.
Furthermore, I think it is an exercise in double standards
to talk about the 'smell of Western ethnocentrism' only
with reference to liberatory projects based on democracy
and autonomy and not seeing this 'smell' in the parody of
democracy that is being exported all over the world today,
which has also originated in the West! The same applies to
the expressed 'distrust of any universalist project', conven-
iently 'forgetting' that the market economy system and its

[71] See Cornelius Castoriadis, 'The retreat from Autonomy:
Postmodernism as generalised conformism' in *World in Fragments*,
(Stanford:Stanford University Press, 1997) pp. 32-45.
[72] Takis Fotopoulos, 'The Myth of postmodernity', *Democracy & Nature*,
Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 27-76.

political complement in the form of representative 'democracy' does also represent the materialisation of a universalist project – something that implies that the overthrow of this system, obviously, would also require an alternative universalist project. Finally, to insinuate that a universalist project, like ID, or the autonomy project, may "not be acquainted with some requirement of due consideration for dignity of individuals and attention to their will, is largely irrelevant to our egalitarian imaginary", in fact, implies that to be consistent with our egalitarian imaginary we should assume that people do not wish autonomy i.e. freedom, but rather prefer the heteronomy of a representative 'democracy'!

Yet, if Latouche has strong reservations on the feasibility and desirability of an Inclusive Democracy this is not the case for those outside the traditional French Left like Jean-Claude Richard who, reviewing TID for the libertarian journal *Le Monde Libertaire*, classifies the ID project "firmly within the libertarian ideal". As the author rightly concludes in his insightful review,

> "the theoretical and militant contribution of Takis Fotopoulos' discourse is, most of all, to break with the Marxist project (via Attac and the parties of the left, including the Trotskyites) which sees the current state of the world as a conspiracy of the malicious neoliberals and social democrats, whereas, in fact, it is nothing more than the outcome of the dynamics that was created by the market economy and its corollary, the representative democracy".

Finally, I would particularly like to thank Jean-Claude Richard on this occasion, for his comment that in the book "the deliberately scientific or difficult jargon has been banished" and, as a result, the book "is absolutely accessible to everybody. The demonstrations there are clear, logical

and coherent. A will to be understood by as many as possible is felt in each page". Given that the aspiration to express abstract ideas in an accessible way was, in fact, one of the basic aims of the French edition, the fact that people like Jean-Claude Richard recognise this is a significant encouragement indeed.

Civil society and the ID project

Takis Nikolopoulos's perceptive review of the Greek edition of TID raises an important question with respect to the ID's critique of the 'civil society' approach in effecting systemic change. He asks,

"should there not be a starting point? Is it not the civil society, i.e. citizens themselves, who will form the basis of local communities first, and confederal communities eventually? Are not these special citizens' movements, which will form the organic 'systemic' parts of a wider movement for a radical change, aiming at the inclusive and genuine democracy? This being so, would they not have to fight against the existing market?"

This question, obviously, arises from the basic thesis supported by TID that the civil society approach is both a-historical and utopian, in the negative sense of the word, in bringing about radical social change. Clearly, this conclusion does not deny the possibility that a relatively strong 'civil society' could bring about significant reforms for the 'deepening' and 'widening' of present representative 'democracy', as supporters of this approach suggest. However, such reforms, which, anyway, become even less likely the greater the degree of globalisation of the market economy, in the ID problematique, could never bring about a systemic change, i.e. the overthrow of the market economy and representative democracy, which are the ultimate

causes of the present multi-dimensional crisis. At most, they could result in some easily reversible improvements in both and, perhaps, in ameliorating the most extreme effects of the crisis.

Furthermore, the present civil society associations could hardly be the organic parts of a wider movement for an inclusive democracy. Although, 'objectively', this might be so, because it is indeed possible that some of the citizens taking part in these organisations might form part of the popular base for such a movement, 'subjectively', the radical democratic consciousness, required for the creation of an antisystemic movement, could hardly be created within reformist movements, like those constituting the civil societarian associations. As I attempted to show elsewhere,[73] the evidence of reformist struggles in the last century has clearly shown that reformist movements fighting for reformist demands could only lead to the creation of a reformist mentality. This is why the vast majority of those who supported social democracy in the past, in the belief that radical social change could better be achieved through reforms rather than through antisystemic action, did not move to the antisystemic Left when the reforms adopted by social-democrats in the post-war period were reversed in today's era of neoliberal globalisation. Instead, they either followed the old social-democrats in their present conversion into social-liberals, or they even switched to more conservative movements! As far as I am concerned at least, I am not aware of any cases of reformist movements which, frustrated by the present reversal of social democratic achievements, moved on to the antisystemic Left. Instead, even parts of the Marxist Left, which have

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[73] See T. Fotopoulos, 'Transitional Strategies and the Inclusive Democracy Project', *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 17-62.

switched to postmodernism after the collapse of 'actually existing socialism', have currently embraced the present system. Therefore, on the basis of the existing evidence, it seems more likely than not that, even if civil society organisations fail in their effort to reform the present system, they will not begin, as Nikolopoulos assumes, to fight the market system itself but, instead, they will probably attempt to find ways to accommodate themselves within it.

The ID project and Latin America

The reviewers of the Latin American edition are almost by definition, given their position at the very front of the neoliberal attack, in the best position to see the need for a new liberatory project, after the collapse of statist socialism in its soviet and social democratic forms. This is, also, the view expressed in various ways by Jorge Camil and particularly Rafael Spósito in his bright analysis of the rationale for a new liberatory project. The practical realisation of this theoretical insight was recently given by the Argentinian insurrection, brilliantly assessed by Guido Galafassi. Argentina, as the author shows, in the last twenty years or so, faithfully followed the path prescribed by the US 'big brother' neighbour for the entire Latin America area: replacing the military elites with the elites of professional politicians for the implementation of the free market principles required by neoliberal globalisation. The illusion of 'democracy' was judged by the transnational elite as the perfect means to control the Latin American populations (as against the bankrupt military regimes of the past) and avoid the social explosions which loomed in the horizon, as a result of the huge acceleration of concentration of power, to which neoliberal globalisation inevitably led. This game, however, was particularly risky

for the elites, since any social explosion could eventually challenge not just one elite versus the other, but the very system of concentrating political and economic power at the hands of the political and economic elites. And this is exactly what has happened in Argentina, since the insurrection of December 2001.

Although the watchword *"que se vayan todos"* (leave you all) used in the popular protest of December 2001, originally, might have expressed the naïve demand for a change in the political personnel, it soon led, as in many similar insurrectionary situations in the past, to the creation of popular assemblies: first, neighbourhood assemblies, as a practical implementation of the need for the equal distribution of political power; second, workers' assemblies– following the taking over of factories abandoned by their previous capitalist owners and their re-organisation on the basis of workers' control– as a practical implementation of the need for the equal distribution of economic power. In this sense, the sperms of three of the main components of an inclusive democracy were already attempted, in practice, in Argentina: direct political democracy (which both Galafassi and Camil, wrongly identify with participatory democracy, given that the latter has been defined very differently in the literature, as a mix of direct and representative 'democracy'), economic democracy, and democracy in the social realm. Furthermore, as Galafassi reports, it seems that issues relating to an ecological democracy have, also, been raised. It is for this reason that Galafassi rightly concludes that these movements represent the emergence of embryonic mechanisms of direct democracy which 'even extend their demands towards a new integral vision of society, very close to the project of Inclusive Democracy'. This is particularly so, he continues, when the confederal element is not missing either, since as he put it, 'a new form of confederal democracy is emerging,

based on nearby communities organised into a territorial network at a local and regional scale.'

Of course, all this does not mean that an explicit attempt for an inclusive democracy has already been made in Argentina or that people were even aware of the ID project, or, for that matter, of any other alternative project out of those that have been proposed in the last 10-15 years (Parecon[74], communalism, etc). What is significant, however, is the kind of alternative institutions that people attempt to set up– whenever the opportunity arises– as the only way out of the present multidimensional crisis. To my mind, the resemblance of the attempted institutions in Argentina to those that are required for an inclusive democracy is striking. This is, of course, not surprising, because the Argentinian people simply followed the same old tradition that manifested itself in almost every insurrectionary period: from the Parisian Sections of the early 1790s to May '68. Everywhere, citizens' assemblies (complemented sometimes with workers' assemblies) emerged as the nuclei of the attempted alternative society.

However, it is not surprising either that the attempt in Argentina failed and traditional "politics" and the professional politicians have returned. As I attempted to show

[74] It was entertaining, indeed, to see an interview being staged in the Znet empire in which an applauder of Parecon was interviewed by Michael Albert, in an obvious effort to demonstrate that the Argentinian assemblies supposedly represent 'early forms of workers and consumers councils'-–the cornerstone of the Parecon model, (see Michael Albert and Ezequiel Adamovsky, '<u>Argentina and Parecon. Michael Albert Interviews Ezequiel Adamovsky</u>' August 04, 2003). Thus, the neighbourhood assemblies, which in fact discussed general problems affecting citizens–the clearest example of ID's demotic assemblies–were found by Adamosvsky to have elements of Albert's 'consumers councils' (!) whereas the factory assemblies were resembled to 'workers' councils', so that they could fit the Procrustean bed of the Parecon model!

elsewhere[75], the transition to an ID could only be a long process motivated by a mass movement with a clear program and transitional strategy, which should start being implemented not just during a social explosion but long before, or after it. In other words, as I mentioned in section 3, an Inclusive Democracy can only be established after a long transition process of establishing institutions of political and economic democracy and in tension with the present institutions, (i.e. after the majority of the population have tasted what a genuine democracy is and are prepared to fight for it) rather than during a popular eruption in an insurrection. The reason is that, only after such a long transitional period, could the subjective conditions (i.e. the massive democratic consciousness) for such a democracy be created at a massive scale. Otherwise, the traditional mainstream parties would redirect popular anger towards insignificant and easily reversible reforms, whereas the traditional Left organisations would redirect it towards old Left politics which, as History has, amply, shown, will either end up– in case of success– in new authoritarian regimes, or—in case of failure—in marginalised movements.

Still, the signs are encouraging. Not only in Argentina but in Brazil, Venezuela and elsewhere forms of direct democracy are emerging on a massive social scale lately. Although in the cases of Brazil and Venezuela, unlike Argentina, the original initiative came 'from above', sometimes the original initiative was transcended by action 'from below'. This is, for instance, the case of Venezuela, where Hugo Chávez's government encouraged limited forms of local democracy, with the obvious aim to enhance

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[75] See T. Fotopoulos, 'Transitional Strategies and the Inclusive Democracy Project', *Democracy & Nature*, Vol 8, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 17-62.

the governments' electoral base so that it could face a concerted attack (including an attempted coup!) by the American elite and its local support. However, the movement soon spread beyond the original government plans. Thus, on top of the government-sponsored neighbourhood groups responsible for fixing deficient water supply systems, organising volunteer efforts at local schools, launching recycling campaigns and the like, many self-convoked 'citizen assemblies' have emerged in the poor barrios of Venezuela "to talk about everything from neighbourhood problems to national politics and to create local planning councils where municipal authorities will be required to share decision-making with community representatives".[76] The popular aims with respect to these assemblies were made clear by Carlos Carles, co-founder of Radio Perola, a community station that has become an axis of local activism in the barrio of Caricuao: ''We don't want a government, we want to govern. We want to decide what is done, when it's done and how it's done in our communities.''[77]

This is perhaps the best justification of the demand for systemic change-–like the one proposed by the ID project!

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[76] Reed Lindsay, 'Venezuela's slum army takes over', *The Observer*, August 10, 2003.
[77] Ibid.

APPENDICES

DEMOCRACIA INCLUYENTE[1]

JORGE CAMIL

$\mathcal{N}$owadays very few people believe in the benefits of democracy as it is: the right to vote on a stated date with certainty that the civic vote will be counted and respected, that is to say, the American democratic style, designed to choose 'the most natural' candidate–a 'naturalness' similar to Hollywood make-up and a result of millions of dollars paid to Madison Avenue agencies. The same 'most natural' candidate who is advised by public relations managers and who repeats what the voters want to hear and who appears wearing casual clothes to make us believe that s/he is as much an ordinary citizen as the rest of us, at least during the period of the campaign.

Greek philosophers are to blame for our limited concept of democracy: self-absorbed as they were in admiring the democracy of their city-states and their agoras, they conveyed to us the concept without worrying themselves to analyse deeply all the possible questions associated with the subject. However, with the passage of time, we have discovered the relationship that this universal political form has with the topics of poverty, the environment, economic opportunities, access to education and the equal dissemination of new technologies. Today, in the mid of the collapse of socialism and the enthronement of neoliberalism, we have to turn more frequently to the democratic principle to use it as a bridge between the cynicism of the

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[1] This review of *Hacia Una Democracia Inclusiva* (Montevideo: Nordan, 2002) was first published in *La Jornada,* Friday 8 June 2001.

market and social justice. This has resulted in the 'Third Way' proposals, in 'capitalism with a human face' or, more recently, the inclusive democracy, to somehow compensate for the damage caused by the deregulation of the markets, the concentration of wealth caused by privatisation and the effects of fiscal reforms that inevitably favour the wealthier groups.

In the third Summit of the Americas, Hugo Chavez noted that he accepted, under protest, a democratic clause to be included by member-countries in the final declaration, provided that the democratic level of American countries was to be measured according to the 'participative' democracy approach rather than the 'representative' democracy' approach. This distinction (criticised by some people mainly because it was coming from an indicative example of a ruler who wanted to perpetuate himself in power), is consistent with the concept of the inclusive democracy proposed, among others,[2] by Takis Fotopoulos. According to Fotopoulos, neoliberal doctrine supported by representative democracy has resulted in a polarised society–an extremely poor class and an extremely privileged one: the former subsisting in favelas, bidonvilles, slums and cardboard houses, and the latter in luxurious guetos with electrified fences, private police, security alarms and attack dogs. The poor, a majority, despairingly live to the margin of the democratic process, while the privileged are not interested at all in national politics, as their true economic interests are 'protected' in the vaults of international banking. The middle class, the silent majority, the

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[2] [Here the author obviously confuses the Inclusive Democracy approach with the approaches for participatory democracy which have hardly any relation to the former, as Fotopoulos had shown in ch. 5 of *Towards An Inclusive Democracy* and elsewhere]

so-called 'civil society' are the only ones who are left at the mercy of the electoral cynicism.

Those in favour of the inclusive democracy affirm that it is necessary to invent a new politics since the globalisation has discredited the traditional politics when it knocked down the national frontiers and has nullified the capacity of the state to solve the fundamental problems of poverty, unemployment, the growing concentration of the economic power and the destruction of the environment. Anthony Giddens, one of the main precursors of the Third Way in his recent work 'The third way and their critics', first stresses the urgent necessity to distinguish between citizens and consumers, as the markets neither create nor sustain ethical values, 'which can only be legitimized through the democratic dialogue', but then, the director of the London School of Economics falls in the original sin of the Third Way (the inevitability of the market) when affirming that no well-known alternative exists to the market economy: 'markets don't create the citizenship, but they can contribute to create it and even to reduce inequality'. On the other hand, those in favour of the inclusive democracy insist that the solution to the problem of the concentration of political and economic power will never be found in the system that created this problem: the market economy obsessed with growth. Hence, the necessity of a new democratic pact.

VERS UNE DÉMOCRATIE GÉNÉRALE?[1]

JEAN–CLAUDE RICHARD

*A*fter some acid comments on the book of Antoine Bevort, *For a Participatory Democracy*[2] let us come to Takis Fotopoulos[3]. Here is a remarkably unknown author to the hexagonal militants but who however **expresses libertarian approaches of man, society and of the** social and economic becoming of the world.

In fact, Takis Fotopoulos proposes to us the installation of an inclusive **democracy whose principles are firmly within the libertarian ideal.** This is not surprising since constant references turn up in the book to Peter Kropotkin, Murray Bookchin, John Clark and, especially, Cornelius Castoriadis, an 'ancient' of the red journal Socialisme ou Barbarie.

As from the introduction to the French edition, we are in familiar ground:

"This book has one aim, to show that there is no way out of

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[1] This article was first published in the French journal *Le Monde Libertaire*, (no. 1311, 13–19 March 2003) and refers to the French edition of Inclusive Democracy, *Vers une démocratie générale* (Paris: Seuil, 2002).
[2] see *Le Monde Libertaire*, No. 1310
[3] Takis Fotopoulos, economist and political scientist, is editor of the journal *Democracy and Nature*, *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* (see the Internet for a multitude of texts on Takis Fotopoulos).

the crisis within the present institutional framework but only from without."

Starting with this essential postulate, Takis Fotopoulos develops–on an egalitarian economic basis–the concept of inclusive democracy: a concept that implies the abolition of the forms of unequal distribution of political power.

The current situation of the World is the outcome of a dynamics . . .

The theoretical and militant contribution of Takis Fotopoulos' discourse is, most of all, to break with the Marxist project (via Attac and the parties of the left, **in**cluding the Trotskyites) which sees the current state of the world as a conspiracy **of the malicious neoliberals and so**cial democrats, whereas, in fact, it is nothing more than the outcome of the dynamics that was created by the market economy and its corollary, the representative democracy.

It is quite obvious that according to this approach the action to be **taken will not be found from within the in**stitutional framework of the **representative system (elec**tions, Parliament, etc.) but from without. Why fight to change the governments when governments are only the accessories of the system?

A transition strategy

Transforming society raises obviously the question of the means. Here again, Takis Fotopoulos' thought is founded on the libertarian discourse: 'A general guiding principle is guiding us in selecting an appropriate transitional strategy: consistency between means and ends'. Contrary to the statist approaches which propose to change society

from above, and those known as 'civil society' approaches which do not aim at changing the system, Takis Fotopoulos does not propose a new type of political organisation, but a confederation of communities functioning according to the principles of inclusive democracy (economic equality–collective ownership, political equality–direct democracy).

This book, in which the deliberately scientific or difficult jargon has been banished, is absolutely accessible to everybody. The demonstrations there are clear, logical and coherent. A will to be understood by as many as possible is felt in each page and thus places Takis Fotopoulos in the line of a Kropotkin or a Reclus.