'A Bedouin, perhaps, a Citizen, never' (?)[1]: Overcoming the Red and Black divide

'What, then, is Bauer's solution to the Jewish question and what is the result? To formulate a question is already to solve it. The critique of the Jewish question is the answer to it. Here is a résumé: We must emancipate ourselves before we can emancipate others'.
- Karl Marx, 'On the Jewish Question'[2]

What relevance does a discussion of the divide between anarchism and Marxism can possibly have nowadays? Slavoj Žižek has expressed the problem pertinently: 'Things look bad for great Causes today, in a "postmodern" era when, although the ideological scene is fragmented into a panoply of positions which struggle for hegemony, there is an underlying consensus: the era of big explanations is over, we need "weak thought" attentive to the rhizomatic texture of reality; in politics too, we should not longer aim at all-explaining systems and global emancipatory projects; the violent imposition of grand solutions should leave room for forms of specific resistance and intervention'.[3] Insofar as we deal with two classical advocates of 'great Causes', it appears that the answer to our question can only be negative.

But if the specter of communism is haunting Europe no more, the global order that has been under construction in the last decades *is* haunted by specters, 'terrorism', of course, but also the specter of revolts and social unrest, phenomena which are tied to the blunt failure of 'globalization' to meet its (supposed) aims. Vast socio-economic inequalities, destitution, not least, the recent 'crisis' that promises to aggravate such phenomena or other related ones, like unemployment, have made once confident dreams of global prosperity, peace and democracy to seem hollow.

In such a landscape, as Latin America after all testifies (for all the reservations one may have), we shouldn't be too hasty closing the coffin of revolutionary socialism. But along with a possible resurgence of the latter's emancipatory vision what also becomes topical is the age-old tension between its two main ideological strands; Bismarck's statement used in the call for papers is suggestive. To set things straight, I am not planning to offer here a program of 'conflict resolution'. Rather, my paper has as its point of reference the call for a 'reinvention of politics', which in one way or another is voiced all the more frequently by scholars, notably, Žižek, Antonio Negri, Jacque Rancière, Alain Badiou, Giorgio Agamben and Takis Fotopoulos. How exactly the problem of the divide between Marxism and anarchism merges with this theme will become clearer soon enough. For now it suffices to pose the question on a hypothetical basis: if we assume that reconciliation between the 'red and black' must be a necessary part of such a project of politicization, what exactly should it amount to? To tackle with this problem, we shall start with a bit of history.

The First Split

The first signs of the bifurcation that would follow can be traced in the brief exchange of letters between Karl Marx and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon as well as in the polemic

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[1] The quoted phrase appeared in one of the various blogs that have been created during the insurrection that took place in Greece, last December.
[2] *Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.48
[3] S. Žižek, *In Defence of Lost Causes*, (London-New York: Verso, 2008), p.1

the former conducted after the publication of the latter's *The Philosophy of Poverty*.[4] The tension would come to its head though within the circles of this spontaneous association of workers that posterity knows as the First International, personified (again) in Marx and Mikhail Bakunin. Of course, Bakunin cannot be identified with anarchism in the same way that Marx may be said to be the founder of Marxism (even if allegedly he pronounced himself not to be a Marxist). In fact, it is dubious whether Bakunin can be called a political philosopher or theorist at all –he definitely did not consider himself to be one. Consequently, some scholars, following Marx, have regarded his writings as nothing more than a pastiche of borrowed ideas crowned by a passionate, nay feverish, desire for action.[5] But Bakunin's writings should not be so easily brushed away. If nothing else, it would be intellectual bias not to acknowledge the insightful elements that his critique of Marx contained. If it is too much to say that he foresaw 'totalitarianism', his premonitions concerning the development of a new class of bureaucrats and experts that would ruthlessly dominate the workers that in theory they represent, have (for us) an almost prophetic quality.[6]

   Depending on their loyalties, scholars tend to put the blame for the split in the First International either on Marx or on Bakunin. David McLellan and Michel Harrington, for instance, suggest that Marx stood for a democratic and open organization whereas Bakunin fostered sectarianism and conspiracy.[7] In contrast, anarchist thinkers like Rudolph Rocker have argued that Bakunin wanted to protect the decentralized and federalist organizational structure of the International against Marx's authoritarian program.[8] Such explanations far from being simply subsequent interpretations are grounded in the respective accounts given by Marx and Bakunin themselves and both are up to an extent correct;[9] Bakunin's penchant for conspiracy cannot be denied, but it is also hard to deny an authoritarian tendency in Marx. For my part though, I agree with those commentators who stress that the debate will remain incomprehensible unless attention is given to the theoretical differences that shaped in turn questions of strategy and tactics.[10] For sure, Alvin Gouldner observes that these differences were

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[4] Cf. L. Roemheld, 'Marx-Proudhon: Their Exchange of Letters in 1846 – On an Episode of World-historical Importance', J. Hilmer, 'Two Views about Socialism: Why Karl Marx Shunned an Academic Debate with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon', *Democracy & Nature*, 6:1, (2000), pp.73-84, 85-94

[5] e.g. E. H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1961); W. Bannour, 'Bakunin' in F. Châtelet (ed.), *Philosophy, vol. II: From Kant to Husserl – The 20th Century*, trans. K. Papagiorgis, (Athens: 'Gnosis', 2006), pp.175-86; there is also the well-known book by Aileen Kelly, *Mikhail Bakunin: A Study in the Psychology and Politics of Utopianism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) that reduces Bakunin's ideas to a psychological case-study; as for Marx's virulent critique of Bakunin's views see 'On Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*', *Selected Writings*, pp.606-9. Marx has in fact adopted the suspicion that Bakunin was a Russian spy. This is (most likely) incorrect, but James Ghastain has argued that for a period Bakunin was a paid agent of the French Republic; 'Bakunin as a French Secret Agent in 1848', *History Today*, August, 1981, pp.5-9

[6] See for instance, M. Bakunin, 'Critique of Economic Causality and of Historical Materialism', 'Critique of the Marxist Theory of the State', *The Paris Commune of 1871 and the idea of the State*, ed. J. Xylagras, trans. J. Loumala, (Athens: Eleftheros Typos, 1973), pp.76-90, 94-103, *Statism and Anarchy*, trans. B. Alexiou, (Athens: Eleftheros Typos, 1978)

[7] D. McLellan, *The Thought of Karl Marx*, (London: McMillan Press, 1984), p.102; M. Harrington, *Socialism*, (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972), p.62ff

[8] R. Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture* vol.2, trans. J. Karytsas, (Athens: Ardin, 2001), p.255ff

[9] See M. Bakunin, 'Letter to the Newspaper *Liberte*', 'The International and Karl Marx, *The Paris Commune of 1871*, pp.38-50, 51-75; K. Marx, 'Letter to Bolte', 23/11/1871, *Selected Writings*, 636-7

[10] e.g. D. C. Hodges, 'Bakunin's Controversy with Marx: An Analysis of the Tensions within Modern Socialism', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 19:3, (1960), pp.259-274; G. Rousis, *The State: From Machiavelli to Weber*, (Athens: Govostis Publications, 1994), pp.205-27; B. Morris, *Bakunin: The Philosophy of Freedom*, (Montreal/New York: Black Rose Books, 1993), p.58ff

stifled and acquired their rigid ideological character *through* this very debate, whose motivations exceeded the domain of theory.[11] For the time being though what matters is to draw the points of contention, as they took form mainly around three focal issues: the methods to be used for the abolition of the *status quo*, the revolutionary subject and the character of the social formation that would arise after the revolution had succeeded.

In summary form thus, Marx, although adamant himself about the necessity of a 'social' revolution, advocated also the need for 'political' struggle, something that led him accept the possibility that the abolition of capitalism can come, at least in certain countries, through peaceful means. Conversely, Bakunin rejected all efforts to take over 'political power' and instead insisted that the struggle must focus solely on the social-economic domain, foreclosing, thus, the potential of a peaceful transition. As far as the revolutionary subject is concerned, Marx conferred a privileged place on the proletariat, meaning essentially the industrial workers in urban centers, whereas Bakunin was critical of the exclusory character of the category of 'class', speaking instead for the revolutionary potential of the masses, especially the peasants and the *Lumpenproletariat*. Finally, while Marx held that after the revolution, since the 'old world' will have left its remnants, there will be a need for a transitional period, the notorious dictatorship of the proletariat, Bakunin argued that along with capitalism it is instrumental to send immediately to the dustbin of history any form of State as well. Although other minor or major themes could be pointed out, all in all, it was around these conflicting assumptions that the dividing line would be drawn between Marxism (statist socialism) and anarchism (libertarian socialism).

Remember-Remember the 6th of December[12]

In the decades that followed Marx's and Bakunin's deaths, anarchism and Marxism, underwent several transmutations, developing along the way, especially Marxism, orthodoxies and, as a result, 'heretical' figures. Kautsky, Lenin, and Bukharin were Marxists but so were Luxembourg, Gramsci and Walter Benjamin. Sergei Nechaev and Emile Henry were anarchists but so were Gustav Landauer, Buenaventura Durruti and so claims to be Noam Chomsky. Marx has been read through psychoanalytic, existential, Heideggerian and structural lenses, while both Marxism and anarchism developed Christian strands, even though for both Marx and Bakunin the negation of religion was a *sine qua non* of human emancipation. Furthermore, after the 60s, the vocabulary of Marxism and anarchism has been enriched by categories -*imagination*, *desire*, *play*- that had, at best, only a minimal role in their classic schemata. To call oneself, thus, an anarchist or a Marxist, especially from the 20th century onwards, is far from being a straightforward statement. And yet, the rivalry between the 'red and black' continues to persist, even in countries where both these ideologies together are a feeble minority. So, should we conclude that the more things change the more remain the same? Has the divide ended up being a petrified remnant of the past?

In Greece last December, ignited by the death of a young kid shot down by a police officer, a considerable segment of the population, especially of the youth, went out in the streets. Many different interpretations have been offered for the riots that ensued; some treated them as nothing more than an outburst of rage, others consider them as

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[11] A. W. Gouldner, 'Marx's Last Battle: Bakunin and the First International', *Theory and Society*, 11:6, (1982), pp.853-884
[12] Graffito in the streets of Athens

manifestations of a genuine revolt. Not only I side with the latter view, but I also hold that these two weeks must be considered an *event*, conceived along the broad lines curved by Alain Badiou: a 'point of irruption' of the existing (ontological) order of things.[13] That is so insofar as not only violence itself was not 'blind', 'meaningless' or simply prompted by disillusionment, as the Mass Media insisted, but, also, because Greece during this period was filled with *heterotopias*, that is, spaces, and within them forms of association, that broke with and transcended the established order and the forms of relation and identity attached to it. Of course, all these, much to the relief of politicians and journalists, did not last long. But, as Badiou insists, the importance of events lies not in their temporal extension or durability as much as in that they open rifts for the production or in his own words 'subtraction' of new forms of truth and subjectivity. The catchword here is *fidelity*, i.e. a subjective gesture that affirms and verifies the importance of the event and is ready to carry forward its consequential power.

Now, both anarchist and Marxist groups were actively engaged in the revolt; especially the former played a prominent role. Moreover, there was definitely a tendency to assert ideological convictions; characteristically, a banner in one of the central occupations was declaring, 'Down with Democracy, Hail Anarchy'. However, at the same time, in the various heterotopias of those days (in gatherings, occupations etc), ideological affiliations and codes were to a considerable extent suspended under the evocative symbol of 'justice', which drew together people with or without prior ideological determinations. The 'eventness' of those days is not only a projected theoretical schema; that something out of the ordinary happened, something that calls for thought and that we have somehow to respond to, has largely become a shared experience among radical milieu. A graffito put the matter perceptively: 'December was not an answer, it was a question'.

The point driven at here therefore, is that the revolt of December *qua* event opened up the potential for an overcoming of the red-black divide. Indeed, in the subsequent months there were several instances that pointed towards this direction, like common actions and assemblies that lacked a clear ideological stigma. Nowadays however, although such trends have not eclipsed (far from it), the dynamic that was generated seems to wane and old dichotomies begin to assert their selves, as it was paradigmatically attested in last Mayday, where the radical left and anarchist groups went on organizing different demonstrations.

The case of Greece may be said to be representative in a twofold sense. First, it testifies to a characteristic difficulty in anarchism and Marxism, more than a century after the first split and after so many common defeats, to reconcile. At the same time, Greece reveals the sites where Marxists and anarchists meet: in events of revolt and in the constitution of political spaces that seek to disentangle from the grip of this huge web of administration that is official politics today. It can be arguably said, therefore, that the problem of reconciliation passes through the question, how comfortably does the red and black sit within such political spaces of self-regulation. And the core

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[13] A. Badiou, 'The Event as Trans-Being', *Theoretical Writings*, ed. & trans. R. Brassier – A. Toscano, (London-New York: Continuum, 2005), p.99; the main works that Badiou elaborates his theory of the event is *Being and Event* and *The Logic of the Worlds*. Whether Badiou himself would consider the revolt an event does not matter. My deployment of the term does not mean that I follow him in his analysis of the event in all the details or that I accept the ontology that stands at the background. The notion is understood in its broadest sense, as an eruption that (a) opens up a productive-creative potentiality and (b) cannot be comprehended solely in reference to the framework within which it occurred, the conditions that constituted the 'evental site'.

thesis animating this paper is that there is a fundamental tension between Marxism and anarchism *qua* ideologies and an *open political consciousness*. The latter term however is admittedly vague, hence, in order to move on it is necessary to offer some clarifications.

'The multitude has gathered'[14]

If by 'the political' is meant the ambience of practices, institutions and procedures that organize, regulate and administrate a social field of order, then, there has never been a community that is not political, tribal units included. Likewise, if 'political power' designates simply the 'existence of instances capable of formulating explicitly sanctionable injunctions',[15] then such power is again present in every communal field, embedded in and generated by the aforementioned institutions etc. However, against this 'vague and rarefied sense that would encompass any possible way of organizing the collectivity',[16] there is also another more precise sense of the political, or rather of 'politics', namely, the one developed in ancient Greece. Hannah Arendt is surely right; 'The Greek *polis* will continue to leave at the bottom of our political existence …for as long as we use the word "politics"'.[17]

Lest I am accused of Eurocentrism or worse of concealed patriotism, it would be well to note that certain constitutive elements of politics or 'political government', as these terms were understood in Greece, (e.g. deliberation and popular assemblies), can be traced in numerous other civilizational units. In fact, Pierre Clastres has shown that horizontal forms of political organization (although not conceptualized to pertain to a differentiated political domain) existed already from the tribal level.[18] But if such features were not invented in Greece, they were actualized there in unprecedented degrees, something necessarily accompanied by the articulation of a discursive and conceptual matrix that, along with the fabrication of the term, rendered the *logos* of politics transparent to itself. This, to be sure, does not make Greece an eternal model, something that would be true even if one could disregard the several limitations of the Greek political experience, which are too well-known to be recounted. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in this place we can witness the development of a type of communal organization (a certain 'rationality' and a certain 'practice') signified as 'political' or 'politics', that had as its corner-stones notions like freedom, equality and active participation. And as will be argued again soon, what is all-significant is that the latter have also been orienting principles of the revolutionary tradition and of the two main ideologies affiliated with it, Marxism and anarchism. Of course one can use words like politics or democracy as he or she wishes. But if we want to have a clear picture in our heads of what we are talking about; if, equally importantly, we do not consider freedom and equality merely abstract or regulative ideals but *embodied realities*, then a reconstruction of the experiences implicated in the first concise and explicit articulation of a practice (politics) that sought to materialize freedom and

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[14] Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, 20.3, trans. I. Zervos, (Athens: Papyros, 1976)

[15] C. Castoriadis, 'Power, Politics, Autonomy', *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy: Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. D. A. Curtis, (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.156

[16] J-L Nancy, 'Church, State, Resistance' in H. de Vries – L. E. Sullivan (eds.), *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), p.103

[17] 'Introduction' to W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt, trans. H. Zohn, (London: Fontana Press, 1992), p.53

[18] P. Clastres, *Society against the State*, trans. K. Kapsabeli, (Athens: Alexandreia, 1992)

equality in a concrete sociopolitical formation, is surely something more than an academic exercise.[19]

Broadly speaking, thus, what took place in Greece, with Athens being the most characteristic, if not typical, case, is a 'politicization of the civic order', by which are denoted primarily two phenomena: (a) the order of the community became subject to decisions that the body politic promulgated through deliberation in the public space; (b) civic relations among the various classes were constructed as transactions between citizens (*polites*) sharing a common identity and an equal status. The latter point suggests that politicization can't be reduced to the problem of governance, for it also implicated the constitution of a specific 'ethical subject', the citizen, which was realized in and through a specific way of life, the *bios politicos*.[20] As a proper analysis of these events would have to entail a reconstruction of the Greek world in its various dimensions, including the 'theological' and the 'cosmological', here I will restrict myself in outlining only these features that pertain to our theme.

We may begin by enumerating (unavoidably in a somewhat dogmatic manner) what politics was *not*. They were not a necessary evil related to the fallen nature of humanity. They were not 'the hand-maiden of economy', the latter being conceived as the main locus of human activity in need of 'political' regulation- whether minimal or maximal. Generally, politics were not identified with (expertise) administration of private and group interests or of fields and forces, e.g. production, which supposedly constitute the 'real' motor of social-historical becoming. Accordingly, politics or the political was not equated with the State, that is, with an apparatus that is materially, and discursively figured to be, 'above' civil society, whether as its watchdog, as a 'universal estate' that transcends its parochialisms, or as a 'superstructure'. Finally, politics were not biopolitics, that is, the government of life as *a biological condition*, what the Greeks called *zoē*. For sure, according to Agamben the 'inclusion of bare life in the political sphere' or else the 'production of a biopolitical body' is as old as sovereign power.[21] But if that is so, it remains that for better or worse, in Greece the elevation of life's productivity, health, enhancement etc into a primal political

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[19] The analysis that follows is based on research conducted for my PhD thesis, which has a chapter devoted on Greece. For further study out of a rich literature the following works are highly recommended: K. A. Raaflaub – J. Ober – R. W. Wallace, *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 2007); J. Ober, *The Athenian Revolution: Essays on Ancient Greek Democracy and Political Theory*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); C. Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, trans. D. McLintock, (London: Harvard University Press, 1990); Z. Antonopoulou –Trehli, *The Political Philosophy of Ancient Greek Art*: *Politics as art – art as politics*, (Athens: Livani Publications, 2001); K. Papaioannou, *Art and Culture in Ancient Greece*, ed. & trans. Ch. Stamatopoulou, (Athens: Enallaktikes Ekdoseis, 1998); C. Castoriadis, 'The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy', *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, pp.81-123; J. P. Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982); P. Flensted-Jensen – T. H. Nielsen – L. Rubinstein (eds.), *Polis & Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History*, (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press/University of Copenhagen, 2000); E. Meiksins Wood, *Citizens to Lords: a Social History of Western Political Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, (London-New York: Verso, 2008)

[20] The notion of the 'ethical subject' is of course taken over from Michel Foucault; *The History of Sexuality* vol. II: *The Use of Pleasures*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp.25-32, 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress', *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow, (London: Penguin, 1991), pp.340-72

[21] G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. J. Stavrakakis, (Athens: Scripta, 2005), p.25

concern, whether on the level of the individual specimen or on that of population, (the basic meaning of 'biopolitics' as drafted by Foucault)[22] did not take place.

Through these 'negatives' it is easier to appreciate the positive content that politics assumed. For, the fact that politics was not reduced to administration or regulation of something more fundamental means that the political organization and trans- or re-formation of the community could be bestowed with an intrinsic worth, that is, it could be experienced as something that is valuable in itself. I am not arguing here that political government and the *bios politicos* arise directly by the fact that politics were not perceived to be this or that. Obviously, any negative conditions had to be coupled with other more positive ones, for instance, a heightened consciousness of human ability or a peculiar type of 'cosmic' religiosity that enabled and propelled men to act. The end-result though was clear: active engagement in the common affairs of the *polis* became an indispensable part of the *just order*, and, thus, of the *good life*. This is not to say that politics were a means to an end; here, Arendt's reminder of the difference between 'in order to' and 'for the sake of' is suggestive.[23] The *good society*, ('what-ought-to-be'), was not projected in an eschatological future, but it belonged to the *Now*, that is, to the domain of the present, which is the temporal domain that politics belong as well. Simply put, political activity wasn't a bridge for the future utopia but the *enactment of* utopia.

The fundamental moment was when the responsibility and capacity to govern and form the *polis* was configured as a collective process. For sure, we cannot really speak of a single moment, but of a historical trend with certain focal points of irruption and crystallization. In all events, the crux of the matter is that politics were conceived to be an activity and a process that involves all those who were entitled citizenship. This may sound trivial; in reality though it was deeply radical and revolutionary, for it very much signaled a disruption of the *status quo*, realized specifically in the assertion of the civic presence of the lower classes (the *demos* in a narrow sense) and the parallel insertion of equality and freedom at the heart of justice. And upon these events eventually arose what, following Aristotle, has been coined 'political government', i.e. a distribution of political power in horizontal, participatory and egalitarian forms of association. To quote Euripides

> Freedom is shown clearly in these words: "Who has an opinion that benefits the *polis* and wants in everybody to reveal?" Thus everybody speaks or remains silent. Which better equality do you know?[24]

We are brought back to the point made earlier; citizenship was not a mere formality, guarantying certain rights or an abstract equality in front of the law; much less can it be reduced to its etymological basis, 'someone who resides or was born in the *polis*'. Rather, as Aristotle informs, 'the citizen is defined above all else by the ability to participate in judgment and power'.[25] To redeploy Foucault's terminology, citizenship was a form of ethical subjectivity, which had participation as one of its formative

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[22] See, for instance, M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality vol.1: The Will to Knowledge*, trans. G. Rozake, (Athens: Kedros, 2005), p.163ff, 'Security, Territory and Population', 'The Birth of Biopolitics', 'On the Government of the Living', *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-84, vol.1*, ed. P. Rabinow, trans. R. Hurley et al, (Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 1997), pp.67-71, 73-79, 81-85

[23] H. Arendt, 'The Concept of History, Ancient and Modern', *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. P. Baehr, (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), p.302

[24] *Suppliants*, 437-46; trans. T. Roussos, (Athens: Kaktos, 1992)

[25] *Politics*, III, 1275a 24-25, trans. N. Paritsi, (Athens, Papyros, 1975)

moments; the individual through joined praxis and his constitution as a citizen was transformed from a passive being that is the *subjectus* of history, subjected, that is, to forms of historical production, to an active *subjectum* endowed with historical agency. But all forms of subjectivity or identity are relational, something that is evidently true for citizenship, which is constituted through common praxis and within a public space. To be a citizen meant nothing less than to recognize in the face of the other an equal and, thus, to enter with him (not her though) into forms of relation sealed by reciprocity and openness. Likewise, political friendship, the spiritual bond under-scoring citizenship, testified to the experience that one's freedom is established and maintained *through* the freedom of the other. It follows that the constitution of persons as citizens marked at the same time the constitution of the *polis* as a societal mode that manifested the free association of equals. To be sure, equality was restricted on the political domain, since prevailing social differentiations were not abolished.[26] But this does not make it a façade, for, the political was wrested from such differentiations; thus, whereas in the previous state of affairs the civic order translated social inequality into a hierarchical distribution of political power, in the new polis-order, especially when politicization culminated to a democratic regime, wealth didn't mean command and poverty did not mean obedience. As Herodotus made Otanes put it, 'for I neither want to rule nor to be ruled'.[27]

It could be countered that citizenship in Greece was embedded in a communitarian-identitarian logic grafted upon a 'blood and soil' mythologem. This is true; it is also true that the constitution of the *polis* as a community of spirit was accompanied by an externalization of hostility, or as Karl Schmitt would have it, by a re-articulation of the 'friend-foe' distinction.[28] Yet, without ignoring these problems (on the contrary, they deserve a detailed study), I still think that they were not endemic to the *bios politicos*. What made the people to identify themselves as peers and equals and what brought them together in solidarity in action was not so much a sanctioned particularism as their common participation in a world where fate was *common* and where justice disclosed itself as a *common* ideal and a *common* burden. In this sense, we must distinguish citizenship in its substantial content, which is to say, *that which can be repeated and addressed beyond the polis*, from the historical limitations and contingencies within which it was configured. To be a citizen not as a formal-legal category attached to a State or social field, but as a form of subjectivity revolving around participation in that which is common is *universalizable* in the sense given to the notion by Badiou:[29] citizenship is a form of ethical subjectivity that every person can show fidelity to, since, in principle *everyone can be a citizen*, even if the order to which he/she partakes is a 'global' one.

In effect this brings us to the issue of 'truth'. Of course, one hardly has to read Heidegger to recognize the polysemic nature of this term. Yet, simplifying as it may be, it is fair to say that for the most part in Greece truth, whether as correspondence or un-concealment whether as a cognitive process or an existential condition of the good life, was figured as a *dialogical and participatory event*, so, in principle *everyone had*

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[26] Yet, especially in *poleis* like Athens where politicization culminated to a democratic-isonomous regime, exploitation of the poor classes by the wealthy was disabled and the elites had to constantly contribute to the well-being of the *polis*. The differences with today are telling

[27] *Histories*, III.83; trans. G. Rawlinson, (Kent: Wordsworth Classics, 1996)- *translation modified*

[28] C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. A. Lavranou, (Athens: Kritiki, 1988)

[29] See, for instance, A. Badiou, 'Eight Theses on the Universal', 'Politics as Truth Procedure' *Theoretical Writings*, pp.143-52, 153-60, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. R. Brassier, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

an access to it. For the domain of politics specifically, this denoted that there was no Truth that could be used to measure and judge political (that is, temporal) affairs and which someone could claim to hold for himself, acquiring as such power over the community. Rather, all the decisions about the destiny of the *polis* were to be attained through participatory procedures and determined by dialogue and persuasion. But here is the crucial point; for this experience at the same time presupposed that truth was not identifiable with the human activities pursuing it but retained its transcendent texture not in the sense of being other-worldly but in the sense that truth is an *instance* of and *belongs to* reality –or a given situation- and, thus, it formally exceeds men and their knowledge. Put aphoristically, truth was not only produced but also *disclosed* in and through the participatory act. This in turn had important implications for citizenship *qua* ethical subjectivity. To be a citizen implied commitment to the assumption that truth is not coextensive with ones activities or cognitive capacities; no matter how well-informed an individual opinion may be, citizenship demanded an 'openness' which recognized that truth can be articulated and ratified only through participatory processes. Moreover, this also implied that the individual as well as the collectivity could err, not simply in the sense of reaching a wrong decision, but in the substantial sense of a failure to live *in* truth. And this not only enabled critical self-reflection but also opened the space of *repentance*.

   Let us try to sum up. Insurrectory events usually implicate an activation of the masses spurred by a demand for justice. The Greeks in developing and regularizing such a type of common activity, gave it name and positive form; politics, the *bios politicos*, political government. And ever since then, any invocation of a politics that is not reduced to administration, of a *genuine politics*, is also an invocation whether explicit or implicit of the Greek experience. In the preceding paragraphs, thus, I tried to delineate the following points; politics are emancipatory, egalitarian (which is why Žižek is right that genuine politics are also always democratic)[30] and utopian in the substantial sense that they *enact the good society*, a society, that is, of freedom, justice and reciprocity. Accordingly the citizen as the ethical subject that embodies politics is a universalizing subjectivity that is grounded on and performs a positive affirmation of human equality. Last but not least, a genuine political consciousness is an *open* consciousness that is committed not only to freedom, justice and equality but also to the transcendent and dialogic nature of truth. We may return to the red and black.

Politics in Utopia

Arendt has observed that Marx's ideal society, 'is a state of affairs where all human activities derive as naturally from human "nature" as the secretion of wax by bees for making the honeycomb'.[31] Upon such images of individual assimilation to community or species-life it has been argued that Marx's vision of the future society is deeply anti-political.[32] In his article on 'Marx and Utopia' Richard Nordahl has attempted to challenge this thesis.[33] Likewise, in a more recent essay Claudio Katz endeavors to demonstrate that Marx's thought is substantially informed by the

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[30] *In Defence of Lost Causes*, p.416
[31] H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p.89n21
[32] For Marxism/socialism in general a classic expression of this view is Bernard Crick's, *In Defense of Politics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)
[33] R. Nordahl, 'Marx and Utopia: A Critique of the "Orthodox" View', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 20:4 (1987), pp.755-783

classical Greek political experience.[34] Both scholars I believe make a good point. Not only in his early ruminations on 'true democracy', but also later, especially in his writings on the Paris Commune, it is apparent that for Marx participation, self-government, egalitarian relations etc, will be constitutive features of the communist society.[35] Moreover, beyond Marx, it would be unfair not to recognize a commitment to a substantial type of politics -to *genuine* politics, in Marxist or Marxisant thinkers and groups, from the *Spartakusbund* to the *Autonomia Operaia*, exemplified above all in the central place attributed to (workers) councils.

A similar argument can be applied to anarchism; indeed for the latter, with its explicit commitment to decentralized, down to top, organization etc the central place that participatory politics occupy is even easier to sustain for its main intellectual figures, (from Bakunin to Murray Bookchin and Hakim Bay) as well as for several anarchist groups, the most representative instance being the Spanish civil war. Given that, it is not accidental that current social movements, like the now fading 'anti-globalization movement', have adopted anarchistic tactics of direct action or that even communist thinkers, like Negri and Badiou, follow anarchist thought in stressing the importance of autonomous spaces that escape the logic of representation and embody unmediated forms of association.[36]

My argument here is that both anarchism and Marxism take over the Greek political paradigm and inscribe it within an *explicit universal project of emancipation*. This does not concern direct historical influence (though in some cases like Marx it is that also). It does not matter if thinkers and movements have not been explicitly 'inspired' by the Greek political experience; it does not also matter whether the term 'politics' has been deployed. The point is that both Marxism and anarchism, from their very beginning, have been committed to a form of communal association and organization that invokes the political paradigm of the Greeks while seeking, as Marx put it in a different context, 'to reproduce its truth on a higher plane'[37]. But this is only one side of the coin.

As mentioned, Marx and Bakunin drew a distinction between 'political' and 'social' struggles. Behind this distinction operate two major assumptions. First, a functional-instrumental reading of 'the political' that renders politics a *means* to an end. The very talk about a 'political struggle' that can either be adopted or not as a medium for reaching a social formation whereby 'political power' will no longer be *needed* is a clear testimony to this proposition. Secondly, and in close proximity, the identification of the political with the State, which leads Marx to claim, 'From the political point of view the state and any organization of society are not two distinct things'; and later, 'The political soul of the revolution consists…in a tendency of the classes without political influence to end their isolation from the top positions in the

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[34] C. Katz, 'The Socialist Polis: Antiquity and Socialism in Marx's Thought', *The Review of Politics*, 56:2, (1994), pp.237-260 This is also recognized by Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p.131n82
[35] K. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, *The Civil War in France*, *Selected Writings*, p.33ff, 584ff; McLellan and Harrington are probably right that Marx's *encomium* of the Commune must not be taken at face value. Still, whatever Marx believed about the Commune and its prospects, it is generally safe to assume that he recognized in the insurrection certain institutional structures and corresponding practices that would have a central place in the post-capitalist society.
[36] For current social movements cf. R. J. F. Day, 'From Hegemony to Affinity: The political logic of the newest social movements', *Cultural Studies*, 18:5, (2004), pp.716-48; B. Epstein, 'Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movements', *Monthly Review*, September 2001, pp.1-14
[37] K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, *Selected Writings*, p.395

state'.[38] By upholding these related assumptions both thinkers are well within the confines of modern thought. It is secondary if Marx and Bakunin do not conceptualize the State as the emergence of order upon a fictitious natural condition, along the lines of Hobbes or Locke; the crucial point is that they adopt the premise that 'the political' corresponds to a central apparatus that is distinct from the social formation which it regulates and organizes.[39] It follows, both thinkers mainly understand by political struggle activities directed towards the organization of a party that competes for centralized power, or, as Bakunin once does, a negative activity which seeks to destroy the state apparatus.[40] Moreover, since both Marx and Bakunin stress that complex social units are structured along vertical lines of class-antagonism they cannot but conclude that the political is the formal organization of oppression. Of course, Bakunin highlights that the State is an oppressive mechanism in its own right. Yet, the shared conviction is that the main function of the political consists in coercion. Thus, Marx, who assumes that a transitional period will exist between the old and new world, advocates the need of a political formation that will suppress the reactionary forces, whereas Bakunin, who is adamant that the revolution has to implement the new society immediately, dispels such an apparatus altogether.

The point driven at here is that there is an ambiguity that lies at the heart of both ideological traditions and that has accompanied them in their unfolding, sometimes even within the same persons and groups. On the one hand an advocacy of a non-instrumental, non-statist politics and on the other a functional reading of the political that locates it 'above' social reality as the formal organization of the conflicting forces that cut through society. And even now when the positively political strain in Marxist and anarchistic groups has come to the fore, notably in their entanglement in current movements of direct action and the creation of zones of self-regulation, the age-old distinction between 'political' and 'social' struggles, and consequently the divide between those who opt for or dismiss the former, continues to persist.

Now, if the problem could be reduced only to a misreading or confusion, it could be overcome by a more refined articulation of politics, one that explicitly subtracts it from the State and divorces it from coercion and the means-ends logic. In simplified terms, it would be enough to acknowledge that social struggles, when they aim at a re-/trans-formation or displacement of existing relations, are political in the most substantial sense. Such a task, which is already performed by thinkers such as Badiou et al, would after all only clarify what is already present. Sadly, things are not so easy.

Ideology & Truth

Among the several vague notions and concepts used by political theory, 'ideology' is arguably one of the most contested; hence, it would be pretentious to aspire to offer an

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[38] 'Critical Remarks on the Article: "The King of Prussia and Social Reform"', *ibid*, p.134, 135; This assumption, and its implications discussed below become apparent also in the following texts: 'On the Jewish Question', *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 'Inaugural Address to the First International', p.63ff, p.232, p.575ff; of course the most famous expression is the *Communist Manifesto*; for Bakunin apart from the texts cited so far see also the brief article 'Political Consciousness and the Culture of Statism' in *The Paris Commune of 1871*, pp.91-3 and the programmes he had composed for the Alliance in *Selected Writings*, ed. A. Lehning, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), pp.166-77

[39] From this assumption stem other modern conventions like the translation of the *polis* as 'city-state' or that the 'primitives' lacked any political organization. On the latter issue see the chapter in Clastres', *Society against the State*, 'Copernicus and the Savages', pp.11-32

[40] M. Bakunin, 'Political Consciousness and the Culture of Statism', p.92

exhaustive definition.[41] But there is no reason to pursue such an endeavor. Rather the term here is deployed in the sense adopted by standard text-books to refer to the various currents of thought that have defined the modern political landscape: a body of 'ideas' and 'concepts' regarding man, history and order. For sure, Foucault's observation about liberalism (that it is a 'practice…oriented towards objectives and regulating itself by means of a sustained reflection')[42] may well be applied to all other major ideological traditions; in fact, it could be said to be their primary form. Yet, one cannot also deny that, as they develop, ideologies (in spite of the fact that within them there is room for bewildering variations) are defined by the cementation of a basic ensemble of 'ideas' towards which the person who espouses them feels committed.

This is enough in terms of a primary definition; what interests me on this occasion is the tendency of political ideologies, and particularly the revolutionary ideologies of Marxism and anarchism, to 'close' upon their selves, to become, that is, totalizing systems of thought and identity which 'block' human consciousness. The notion of 'closure', as a technical term, is drawn from Eric Voegelin, one of the most trenchant critics of (revolutionary) ideologies.[43] For sure, Voegelin maintained that the primary closure effected by ideological systems of thought is towards the transcendent Ground of reality; in other words, though he was reluctant after a point in his career to use this term, ideologies for Voegelin have brought a *religious* closure which cuts off human beings from the divine Ground of (their) existence, the end result being a deformed-pathological type of subjectivity.[44] As a matter of fact, it has been argued here as well that politics implicate a *transcendent* moment, but, whether the latter testifies to a movement whose terminus is a divine Beyond has to be bracketed off. Rather, my use of the term is considerably modified; by ideological closure I refer to the cementation of a set of rigid ideas and ultimately identity, i.e. a referential form of *self-recognition* and *self-localization*, that (a) hinder 'reflective distance' from ones certainties;[45] (b) present the other person in a *categorical form that prevents genuine dialogue*. The problem, which exceeds anarchism and Marxism, has been diagnosed pertinently by Horkheimer:

> Ideas today are treated with a lazy seriousness…Human's desire to submit to them or revolt against them as if they were gods. Ideas begin by playing the role of professional guides and end

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[41] For a comprehensive review see Roger Eatwell's 'Introduction' in R. Eatwell – A. Wright (eds.), *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, (London-new York: Continuum, 2000), pp.1-22; Paul Ricoeur's *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, [ed. G. H. Taylor, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)] remains an invaluable reading; also, a very interesting analysis of the concept that I read recently, with rich bibliography, is from Catherine Bell in her *Ritual Theory-Ritual Practice*, (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.187ff

[42] 'The Birth of Biopolitics', p.74

[43] Voegelin took over this concept by Henry Bergson who used it –in conjunction to the respective one of 'openness'- in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*

[44] See, for instance, E. Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, ed. J. H. Hallowel, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1982), *The Political Religions, The New Science of Politics, Science, Politics and Gnosticism: Modernity Without Restraint, The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, Vol. 5, ed. M. Henningsen, trans. V. A. Schildhauer, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics, Collected Works* vol. 6, ed. D. Walsh, trans. M. J. Hanak, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), pp.280-96, 341ff, 'Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme', *Published Essays 1966-1985, Collected Works* vol. 12, ed. E. Sandoz, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), pp.315-75, 'The Eclipse of Reality', *What is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings, Collected Works*, vol. 28, eds. T. A. Hollweck-P. Caringella, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990, pp. 111-62

[45] The quoted notion is again borrowed from Voegelin; *Order and History V: In Search of Order, Collected Works* vol.18, ed. E. Sandoz, (Columbia-London: University of Missouri Press, 2000), p.63ff

up as authorities and *Fürer*. Whoever states them is treated as a prophet or as a heretic, as an object that the masses have to adore or as a prey to be hunted by the Gestapo. This treatment of ideas only as verdicts, guiding lines and mottos characterizes the weakened man of today's era. Long before the Gestapo appears his spiritual functions have been reduced to declarative propositions. The movement of thought is confined to slogans, diagnoses and prognoses. Every man is classified: fascist, Jew, foreign or 'ours'. And this determines the stance adopted towards him for good.[46]

That such critical and 'intersubjective' closure is related to a general closure towards reality will be also suggested here; my main concern, though, is its thoroughly anti-political implications.

There is an issue, however, where my analysis explicitly digresses from Voegelin's. The latter held that anarchism and Marxism are intrinsically symptoms of a 'close soul', a verdict which he passed to socialism (or communism) in general. I strongly disagree. Though this is hardly a sufficient definition, it is safe to argue that socialism signifies a historical movement (metaphorically and literally) that seeks to establish forms of social organization and material production based on cooperation and equality. Voegelin castigates the latter as a perilous fantasy, but, this cannot be possibly considered a 'realist' position; it is itself a conviction in need of explanation. In any case, *qua* historical movement socialism is also an *event*, not in the sense of a momentary occurrence, but of something that *emerges* out of a situation and as a *response* to it, the situation broadly being the industrial order of capitalism and its failure to realize the ideals of the French Revolution. In this vein, thus, anarchism and Marxism should be seen primarily as practical-critical vehicles of the event of emancipation that socialism embodies, which is to say that in their own turn Marxism and anarchism constitute responses to the event of socialism. It follows that instead of dismissing them *a priori*, like Voegelin, the crucial task is to track the path through which they trail towards ideological closure.

In his early critique of Hegel Marx argued that

> It is therefore the task of history, now the truth is no longer in the beyond, to establish the truth of the here and now.[47]

Similarly, in his celebrated 'Theses on Feuerbach' (second thesis) he states that

> The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice.[48]

No matter how much Marx's thought developed afterwards it is arguable that these programmatic statements lie at the heart of the Marxian project to 'change' instead of merely 'interpreting' the world. Bakunin for his part did not generally create systematic works of theory and thus comprehensive and sophisticated formulae like those of Marx. Yet, he was as well an ardent materialist who sought to expunge from his thought any shred of 'metaphysics'. Thus, 'thought' and 'revolt' -the main principles that differentiate man from his animal basis and at the same time the motors of historical movement- are conceptualized as emergent properties of 'creative matter' (revolt specifically is an 'instinct') without reference to any orientating transcendental

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[46] M. Horkheimer, 'Art and Mass Culture' in M. Horkheimer, T. W. Adorno *et al*, *Art and Mass Culture*, ed. & trans. Z. Sarikas, (Athens: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1984), p.64

[47] 'Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction', *Selected Writings*, p.72

[48] 'Theses on Feuerbach', *ibid*, p.171

principles.[49] To this extent, it is arguable that Bakunin would not only concede with Marx's statements, but that the latter can be profitably used as summaries of his programmatic position as well.

Now, on one level Marx's statements seek to sustain, against an idealistic or dualist denigration of material existence, that praxis is a necessary moment in the articulation of truth. This is not only a fundamental insight (to my eyes at least), but it also takes up and re-articulates the experience that we found in Greece; was not truth there as well brought from a Beyond down to the level of human activity? Yet, if we pay more attention to the statements, we will find a subtle but fundamental difference. For, Marx does not simply redraw truth *into* the Real, nor does he only say that every truth is materialized and ratified through human praxis. What he does is to *identify* truth with human activity; as such, any space between truth and action, bodily or mental, collapses.

Am I splitting hairs here? I think not. For the Greeks, as we saw, truth though not outside reality exceeded human knowledge and action. Thus, the discursive practices that were developed in Greece for attaining and embodying truth had as governing principles and presuppositions participation and openness to reality and to the other person. This meant that action, whether 'political', 'aesthetic', or 'theoretical', was experienced as a *responsive testimony* to principles such as Justice, Beauty, Wisdom, which transcended human beings. Such ontological categories in Marx and Bakunin are foreclosed. Man *makes* truth and that is why eventually the latter is ratified and finds its ontological domain, its 'Court', in history. The truth of man is his historical becoming and the truth of history is the productive activity of men. By the same token, the consciousness that action is summoned forth by reality and constitutes as such, a mode of *giveness* is obfuscated; action, that is, loses its responsive dimension and is reduced to an assertion of man's *will*.

This conviction would be complemented and its dynamic accentuated by another experience, which we can designate as the deformation of utopia from an orientating horizon to a historical certainty situated in the future. Voegelin has detected here an 'immanentist' version of the Christian eschatological expectation of deliverance; what was other-worldly and offered by Grace is to be realized by the human-all-too-human. This diagnosis is suggestive insofar it intimates that at the root of this transformation of faith sustained by hope and love into certainty we can trace the belief that thought and praxis have no resting points beyond themselves. Yet, apart from its commitment to a problematic dualism (which by the way fails to do justice to the dynamic of Christian political spirituality), such a schema tends to simplify under the category of '*ersatz* religiosity' operations which, as Voegelin knows, are more complicated.

In Marxism the deformation of utopia is largely effected through this 'deterministic, scientific aspect' of Marx's thought, which Guy Debord has characterized as the 'rift' leading to 'ideologization'.[50] This is the well-known celebration of productive forces that allowed Marx to put forward arguments such as that 'Steam, electricity, and the self-acting mule were revolutionists of a rather more dangerous character than even citizens Barbès, Raspail, Blanqui'.[51] Marx's thought, to be sure, is too nuanced to be accommodated in a single schema, but, this cannot alter the fact that Marx entertained the idea that he was discovering laws that function as the laws of natural sciences. The

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[49] See M. Bakunin, *God and State*, trans. N. B. Alexiou – A. Gikas, (Athens: Eleytheros Typos, 1986), p.26ff

[50] G. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Sylvia, (Athens: Diethnis Vivliothiki, 2000), §84, p.62

[51] 'Speech on the Anniversary of the People's Paper, *Selected Writings*, p.368

result was quite ambiguous, nay paradoxical; by positing the classless society as a historical inevitability, the 'truth' that human activities produce was detached from the latter and became something like (evolutionary) Providence. Truth was discovered before it was actually practiced.

In the anarchist movement scientific pretensions have not been absent from its main thinkers, notably Proudhon and Kropotkin (or later Bookchin), but also Bakunin. Yet anarchism did not generally claim for itself a title like 'scientific socialism' nor did it produce reductive-deterministic philosophies of history. Anarchism's eschatological strain was rather accentuated by an apocalyptic fervor, that is, a burning faith verging into dogmatic certainty in this moment whereby the old world will be enveloped in a 'holy fire', out of which will spring the new society. To quote Bakunin,

> Revolution in the present is the negative, as soon however as it triumphs it will automatically become positive. There will be a qualitative change, a life-giving apocalypse, a new sky and a new earth, a young and all-mighty world within which all present disharmonies will be resolved in a harmonious whole.[52]

Such an apocalyptic experience is not alien to Marx and Marxism, quite the opposite. But, it is incorporated in and modified by the latter's scientific aspirations; in contrast, in anarchism, insofar as it bents and looks towards an essentially *volitional* moment of Negation, such aspirations have been generally relegated in front of the preponderant presence of the apocalyptic.[53] Having pointed, however, the differences, it remains that the end-result was substantially common: the truth of history was surrounded with a finality far surpassing the teleological and/or progressivist schemata created by modern thought that far.

To avoid misrepresentations, I do not argue that anarchism and Marxism as bodies of ideas and practice and eventually as closed systems of thought and identity can be reduced or arise directly from the two experiences under consideration. Yet, the latter, and especially the identification of truth with action and its reduction to an assertive operation, may be said to be their primary gestures, which were soon to turn into self-evident givens, that is, into 'a habit of mind'.[54] As such they must be also considered to be their largely un-reflected ground; that is so insofar as under their formative spell, ideas and practices wouldn't be perceived as participatory acts searching to disclose and embody truth but as the assertive manifestation of a 'truth' that has been absorbed by man and which, to make things worse, was certain to be realized in history. This did not only lead to 'a catastrophic faith in revolution'[55] that would consistently forestall 'true democracy' in favor of authoritarian regimes, reformist complacency or a celebration of destruction; before that it affected the way men perceive and communicate with others.

Marx, as hinted, was too serious a thinker to fall to the trap of his own doctrinal tendencies and, with some qualifications, so was Bakunin. And yet, the effects of ideological closure become apparent already within the First International. Earlier,

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[52] Cited in G. Rousis, *The State*, p.211

[53] That anarchism is the most representative instance of an apocalyptic-chiliastic consciousness among 'modern utopias' has been long ago noted by Karl Manheim in his *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. G. Androulidakis, (Athens: 'Gnosis', 1997), p.231ff

[54] The quoted notion is borrowed from Stuart Hall, cited in W. Brown, 'Resisting Left Melancholy', *Boundary 2*, 26:3, (1999), pp.19-27; http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/boundary/v026/26.3brown.html (accessed 23/06/2009)

[55] J-P Sartre, 'Is this a Democracy?', *Modern Times: Selected Non-Fiction*, ed. G. Wall, trans. G. Wall – R. Buss, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p.147

heed was paid to Gouldner's argument that the disagreement between Marx and Bakunin was colored by non-theoretical factors. In a similar tone, George Rousis notes that the Marx-Bakunin debate was determined by a 'misrepresentation of one's opinions by the other, in the context of a public confrontation and the search for ideological prevalence, an accentuation of existing oppositions at the expense of existing fundamental common views and mainly common problematics'.[56] Whatever personal motivations or qualities of character may have had a contributory role here, I wish to focus on the very fact that a debate which revolved around crucial theoretical issues like the nature of the State was turned into a ferocious (and sterile) polemic. Foucault has summed the character of polemics nicely. 'The polemicist…proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question. On principle, he possesses rights authorizing him to wage war and making that struggle a just undertaking; the person he confronts is not a partner in the search for truth, but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful and whose very existence constitutes a threat'.[57]

Is it not reasonable to assume that in the case of Marx and Bakunin, the deformation of debate into a polemic, resulting not surprisingly in an expulsion, was related to the way they configured and experienced truth? Especially for Marx his well-documented penchant for polemics cannot be divorced by his belief that the truth which is to be proved by man's praxis can be deciphered in the isolation of the National Library. Bakunin, who insisted on the impossibility of a single scientific-philosophical Truth, may seem more democratic; for once, he was ready to recognize Marx's contribution.[58] Yet, we also know that he promoted the creation of small circles that would act as an 'invisible dictatorship' and that would give the necessary push in order for the masses to meet their destiny.[59] Scholars, e.g. Carr, usually concentrate on the role of Bakunin's personality; evidently this was a serious factor. At the same time though, whether they are fictitious or not, are not such shadowy organs of propaganda always animated by the conviction that they hold the truth that is to be made?

Subsequently, when the process of ideologization would be complete, Marxism and anarchism became a body of 'ideas' grounded upon the now habitual conviction that truth is not only man-made but seized and waiting to be realized, and ready to be used as slogans and weapons by its militants: 'democratic centralism', 'destruction is creative', 'real basis and superstructure', 'propaganda by the deed', 'one solution, revolution'. These (and other) are the well-known formulae that, to borrow Wendy Brown's succinct observation, we end up loving 'more than we love the existing world that we presumably seek to alter with these terms or the future that would be aligned with them'.[60] Corresponding to this process would be the constitution of 'the Marxist' and 'the anarchist' as forms of self-identification that reveal a subject committed not so much to a universalizable event, but to the prevalence of the correct ideology. That is, Marxism and anarchism were to become, to a considerable extent, identities that rendered their adherents not partners in the quest to realize the good society but *functionaries of truth*; the party-vanguard who plans and the revolutionary

[56] *The State: From Machiavelli to Weber*, p.206
[57] M. Foucault, 'Polemics, Politics, and Problemizations: An Interview', *The Foucault Reader*, p.382
[58] 'The International and Karl Marx', p.62; see also his letter to Herzen cited in Carr, *Mikhail Bakunin*, p.385
[59] See, for instance, his letters to Albert Richard and Nechaev in *Selected Writings*, pp.178-94
[60] 'Resisting Left Melancholy', p.21

who bombs his way to communism (the truth of history) are the most representative figures here.

This event in turn (something that as pointed out is especially true for Marxism, whose scientific pretensions made it far more prone to dogmatization) would create rifts even within the creeds; the question would arise who is the 'real' Marxist or revolutionary and who the 'traitor', since it was assumed that inferences which were perceived to be wrong were nothing less than betrayals of the Cause. We return to the previously hinted problem of orthodoxy; and wherever orthodoxies appear the space arises for sectarianism as well, that is, for the creation of groups who believe that they are the carriers of truth usually in protest to a dogma that has prevailed. To be sure, truth may be separated from any (historical) objectivity or finality and become purely 'subjective'; this is the stance adopted, for instance, by the new urban guerilla group in Greece 'Sect of Revolutionaries'.[61] Still, since they continue to firmly believe that truth is coextensive with action the result is more or less the same: truth loses its dialogic character and becomes purely assertive, so that it can be attested even in the assassination of a small-rank police officer.

Of course, the historical anarchist and Marxist movements can neither be reduced to the above mentioned figures nor to sectarianism and a battle for orthodoxy. It should also be recognized that anarchist and Marxisant groups in the previous century had in certain instances attempted to develop political spaces far more inclusive than those formed in Greece (temporary ones though mostly during revolutionary upheavals). To this extent, we should speak of *gradations* of closure and openness within the two ideological traditions. The primary problem of revolutionary ideologies however, threatening all anarchists and Marxists and *which remains a problem for us today*, is the constitution of a self-righteous identity that tends to stifle to its adherents preconceived ideas of what is true and right and what is to be done. In other words, the primary problem is the construction of an identity that separates even when it calls us to gather. To this extent, ideology *qua* such an identity has to be placed at the antipode of politics. So, where does this lead us in terms of the question posed at the beginning?

Aufhebung

Nothing is further from my intentions than to claim to have offered an exhaustive explanation of the 'failure' of anarchism and Marxism. My pivotal assumption was that both revolutionary creeds, even those segments whose actual practice dispensed with open dialogue and persuasion altogether, have been committed (even only for the future) to a 'politics' whose first explicit actualization occurred in ancient Greece. In this context, it cannot be ignored that although Marx and Bakunin (as well as other thinkers) entertained on many occasions the idea that the 'new world' was round the corner, the sociopolitical formation that both anarchism and Marxism have in mind has not been materialized. Evidently, the reasons for such 'failure' are many and, apart from much more space, it would take a more detailed historical analysis to reconstruct them. Yet, it is far from unimportant, especially if we recall that Marxism and anarchism were the two main ideologies informing most revolutionary upheavals in the last century, that the divide between the red and black served as a basis of bitter conflicts within revolutionary movements as well as a stumbling block that prevented

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[61] This is made known in the manifesto they sent after their latest act. The document is posted in the Athens *Indymedia* site: http://athens.indymedia.org/front.php3?lang=el&article_id=1048828

the one from hearing the other, even if it was only a matter of taking seriously letters of caution, like those Kropotkin sent to Lenin.[62] To this extent, the cementation of Marxism and anarchism from practical-critical vehicles of emancipation into closed ideological systems of thought and identity should be regarded as a main operative factor obtruding the development of this form of consciousness or better *participatory ontology* that would be necessary for the full-flourishing of a truly political life.[63] And what I have argued in turn is that one line of meaning leading to this closure stems from the absorption of truth into the orbit of praxis, which lies at the origin of both creeds.

Emile Cioran has remarked in one of his aphorisms that 'it is not easy to play with honesty Jeremiah or Isaiah'.[64] At a period where we face a cataclysm of apocalyptic warnings this is a timely reminder; then again, one does not have to be a prophet to recognize that if one of the possible worlds of tomorrow is the 'Fortress World', it is already being formed today.[65] In this gloomy vision, we should add that identity-politics are distinctly inadequate as responses to the challenges we face. For, not only they fail to constitute the basis for an affirmative egalitarian and unifying political vision, they also take the current institutional matrix for granted. The same inadequacy, it needs to be stressed, applies for the affiliated politics of tolerance.[66] In the end of the day, most 'cosmopolitan' Empires were keen to tolerate beliefs and practices as long as they complied or did not threat the status quo. To be sure, I am not saying that respect of difference is nothing but a façade; much less do I wish to undermine the important democratic gains that liberal societies have achieved. Yet, it would be a mistake to cling to worn-out clichés of multiculturalism, constitutional freedoms, individual choice etc, when we witness in front of us the sliding of democracy, even in its frail liberal form, to the current sociopolitical state of affairs, designated poignantly as a 'post-democratic society of the spectacle' or 'techno-oligarchy'.[67]

The point here is that if participatory politics are a desideratum, as it is so often said to be the case, then their emancipatory and utopian character has to be brought to the fore i.e. it has to be turned from a latent feature to an explicit *project*. We are back thus to the assertion made in the introductory section, concerning the relevance and salience of Marxism and anarchism. For all their self-righteousness, both traditions continue to produce indispensable critiques that point to the necessity of transcending the present order of things. Likewise, beyond the critical-theoretical level, Marxisant and (especially) anarchist groups remain central agents in the emergence of political spaces, that is, of heterotopias which irrupt the present by realizing within it *glimpses*

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[62] P. Kropotkin, 'Two Letters to Lenin', *To the Young*, trans. N. B. Alexiou, (Athens: Eleftheros Typos, 1975), pp.94-99

[63] Not that this would have guaranteed 'victory'. Obviously history does not work this way.

[64] E. Cioran, *The Evil Demiurge*, trans. Th. Hatzopoulos, (Athens: Exantas-Nimata, 1994), p.183

[65] The quoted notion is borrowed from A. Hammond, *Which World? Scenarios for the 21st Century: Global Destinies, Regional Choices*, (Washington DC: Island Press, 1998)

[66] Apart from the relevant observations of Badiou and Žižek, for some pertinent critiques of identity-politics and the 'cult of tolerance' cf. W. Brown, *Politics out of History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 'Subjects of Tolerance: Why We Are Civilized and They are the Barbarians' in *Political Theologies*, pp.298-317; E. Meiksins Wood, *Democracy against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*, trans. A. Oikonomou, (Athens: Ekdoseis Stahy, 1998), pp.233-56

[67] The first notion is from Agamben (*Homo Sacer*, p.30); the second from Hans Zolo, *Democracy and Complexity: A Realist Approach*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992)

of utopia. In a very real sense this is an actualization of the 'overcoming' proposed here.

   Important though as the creation of 'autonomous zones' or the 'newest movements' may be, the numerous singularities at work have not as yet fostered the production of a new political subject. This could be seen as a virtue; personally I agree with Badiou: against the 'false universality' of capitalism we weed the emergence of a genuine universal. In other words, the displacement and replacement of 'what-is' with 'what-ought-to-be' needs the constitution of an inclusive mass movement that will embody the new emancipatory politics. To this extent, anarchism and Marxism, insofar as they continue to enclose its militants within identities that separate, do not only foster the politics which are to come, but also inhibit them. Of course, to say that politics is part of the answer to our 'post-political' predicament is only to pose the problem. For, as it has been suggested throughout, such a politics pertain to the domain of ontology; what is to be transformed is not simply 'society' but the way we relate to each other and the world. In effect this ties the problem of emancipation to the problem of *redemption*. But this, as they say, is a different story.

   To conclude, Marx in the quotation used as an epigraph maintained that self-emancipation is the first step for human emancipation. On that occasion his reference point was religion. If by the latter we mean this doctrinal construct that expels hope for deliverance to the after-life while in this life sustains various forms of exploitation and domination one must agree. By the same token, however, is it not perhaps equally necessary nowadays to emancipate also from the ideological closure of revolutionary doctrines? If such is the case, then to overcome the divide *between* the 'red and black' may mean to move *beyond* them; not Marxists, not anarchists, but citizens.

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