The Introduction is available on the web site as the first two parts of the report presented last year. Part One is in progress but should be finalized by the end of the semester (it is still a rough draft, especially the last two sections that are still in an embryonic stage; the first section, pp. 1-8, was presented last year as #3). Part Two is also in progress, and Eric will try to forward a very rough draft of it, but since this is not sure we have enclosed the first rough draft (that will be totally revamped). The overhauled “Part Two” will historically present antisystemic movements from 1968 and their transformation and links, as well as their effects and outcomes, before assessing a few dominant contemporary movements and orientations that carry antisystemic tendencies and that may pose a threat in the early part of the 21st century to the Capitalist World System. The Conclusion will summarize our findings, with a special focus on the transformation of the World System in the later part of the 20th century, and will discuss the possibility of “antisystemic movements” per se after 1968.

*We apologize for the “roughness” of the enclosed drafts.*
PART ONE

“D’innombrables gestes hérités, accumulés pêle-mêle, répétés infiniment jusqu'à nous, nous aident à vivre, nous emprisonnent, décident pour nous à longueur d’existence. Ce sont des incitations, des pulsions, des modèles, des façons ou des obligations d’agir qui remontent parfois, et plus souvent qu’on ne le suppose, au fin fond des âges... C’est tout cela que j’ai essayé de saisir sous le nom commode—mais inexact comme tous les mots de trop large signification—de vie matérielle.”


THE RELEVANCE OF 1968: THE PRIMACY OF CONSUMPTION

From the perspective of the “Longue Durée,” the analysis of 1968 requires a close assessment of the evolution of antisystemic forces from at least 1848 (if not 1648 and before). But due to our limited scope, we should at least start with 1945 and what is commonly called the “Cold War.” We are not talking of a “political” situation but of a complex situation where economic, political, and socio-cultural forces converged around a specific antagonism between systemic and antisystemic forces. As is the case after any major antisystemic event or revolution, systemic powers crack down and increasingly pressure any opposition, using cultural and political institutions to consolidate their gains and to insure their own ascendancy. While after 1848 and after 1870, systemic forces emerged victorious, 1917 marked an instance where antisystemic forces were invigorated through the seeming victory of the Bolsheviks and the possible creation of an antisystemic “center.” The ascendancy of antisystemic forces to power, through taking control of state institutions, became a real threat to those upholding Capitalist centers of power. No matter what we may label the Communist system established in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in the world starting 1917, it presented a “clear and present” danger to centers of Capital and to systemic powers worldwide. Conscious or unconscious systemic forces, including the powers of business/political elites, started setting state policies and creating or orienting cultural and social trends and institutions that could, through ideological, religious, or communal forces override social needs, drives, or motivations for people.

It is out of fear of the social needs and motivations of their peoples converging towards ideological or communal forces pertaining to Socialism or Communism that the ruling elites of various countries attempted to deal with the threat, real or imagined, of the existence of a Communist system. The period of 1945-1989 was a decisive one for such an attempt, with 1968 being at the center of it. The major transformation of the system, through the interaction of various forces, was manifested especially through the increasing “primacy of consumption” as the domain of Capitalist expansion and consolidation through the projection of “consumerism” as a basic societal “need” and a “motivation” for peoples everywhere. Through a very long process extending as far back as the preliminary “individuation” forces carried through “Modernity” and “Enlightenment,” a major shift of economic, political, social and cultural forces was able to slowly set “purchase power” as a universal human “value,” making it the desire, motivation, and popular drive that is equated with the social needs of populations across the globe. This complex and long process allowed Capitalism to establish its “center” within the “production of subjectivities” (thus producing global “consumer subjects”) rather than rely mainly on the “state” as its epicenter of power. That does not mean that the interstate system and the particular states forming it lost their ability to control the desires and needs of the populace but that the primordial forces that were controlling desires and needs became “global” through permeating the “cultural
“worlds” at the basis of the interstate system and were able to directly influence the “meanings” and “values” embedded in the “material life” of various populations. This shift occurred with the help of the expanding networks of communication and of information that were disseminating “consumerism” (associated with the ideological banners of “freedom,” “rights,” and “choice”) as the way of living and relating to the world.

After 1945, throughout the era that is commonly called the “Cold War,” the fear from a “communist” takeover and the “ideological” battle (or competition) between “Capitalism” and “Communism” set the tone of national and international policies across the globe that permeated economic, cultural and social domains. The Marshall Plan in Europe, while meant to be a “political” policy aiming at saving European allies from Communism developed into a socio-cultural force that helped in setting “consumption” as value in Europe: the cultural “freedom” of the “West” (the euphemism for the Capitalist Bloc, as opposed to the “East,” the Communist Bloc) became equated with the economic possibility of accessing goods and commodities that were available for mass consumption; in the same way the economic viability of the West depended on “free markets” created through supporting countries that should not only produce but also consume goods and commodities. Similarly, the anti-colonial movement allowed for the creation of “geocultural” spaces where the “consumption of goods and services” could become possible, beyond the mere “extraction of resources.” The trend towards implementing “modernization” theories calling for “development” and for supporting education, infrastructure building, and the implementation of Fordist policies were not only politically motivated (in order to retain newly “liberated” states from joining the Communist Bloc); they were first and foremost cultural and economic investments in establishing future consumer markets and producing potential consumer subjects. In the U.S., Fordist practices were inevitably linked to the provision of the surplus necessary for the purchase of consumer goods, and the introduction of the “Credit Card” in 1950 only helped increase that “desire” (soon to be turned into “need”) to consume: “short-term consumer credit rose from $8.4 billion in 1945 to almost $45 billion in 1958. Of equal interest is the fact that the production of cars in the USA rocketed from two million in 1945 to 40 million in 1950, 51 million in 1955, and 62 million in 1960.”

The West’s privileging of discourses of “freedom and democracy” and of “human rights” were not only politically motivated (through opposition to Fascism, Nazism, or Stalinism); they were culturally and economically significant, by setting up “independence,” “autonomy” (or “self-reliance”)—cherished even by Socialist countries—as the drive and desire of whole populations who can become independent contractors, entrepreneurs, but most and foremost “free agents” that own or are (for at this stage, equating “having” and “being” is taken for granted) singular individualities with particular “styles” to which corresponded various “rights” but more importantly numerous “goods.” Independent “identities” (or “lifestyles”) were being set up for the “market segmentation” of the “free” markets to come. “During the postwar era, American Capitalism went, quite literally, into the business of constructing consumer identity,” says Thomas Frank, but Capitalism also went into the construction of the “freedom” necessary for such an identity and stood for “independence” and “rights” worldwide. This meant standing against “Taylorism” (or other coercive means of organizing production) since it may produce a certain kind of “automatons” that could not experience the “freedom” and “choice” of consumerism. While in the U.S., Taylorism was quite appropriate to combat “labor radicalism” in the pre-consumer age, it was charged with “turning Americans into conformists and was

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actively discouraging initiative, entrepreneurship, creativity, and most important of all, consuming.” Freedom also entails a certain distance from “assembly lines” (after all, according to Marx, they bring “cooperation” to levels that may unite workers!). Assembly lines will in less than two decades be replaced by the “piece-work system”—or “lean production” associated with “outsourcing.” The only “togetherness” that freedom was interested in building was that of small groups or fragmented units built on identities that could be co-opted through consumerism and that can become profitable “niches” for consumer development.

The 1968 movements should not only be seen under that light: they were the offspring of a more complex intercourse resulting from the multiple social, political, and cultural transformations across the globe. What is described above as Capitalist forces were not developed as such, for they were originating from various antagonistic forces that became—as we describe them and rigidify them—more effective as systemic. Many forces that cannot be classified simply as systemic or antisystemic shaped the rich historical intersection that is 1968, and that is what makes it the final “rehearsal” before 1989—a historical rehearsal of chaotic and creative forces that may have been reacting to the splitting of the world into “black” and “white.”

It is impossible to untangle the rich fabric of “material life” that was 1968: it reflected various and multiple forces that were not localizable on the horizon of a simplistic systemic-antisystemic dichotomy. From the Cultural Revolution in China came yet another wind of change, another shape of “freedom” and “autonomy” that not only unleashed anti-bureaucratic tendencies but also revived the possibility of “cooperatives,” “collectives,” and “communes.” Related or unrelated people started building their own “identities,” based on shared experiences, proximity of goals, similarity of needs, thus creating new traditions, movements, orientations: feminist movements, student movements, sexual liberation movements, ethnic movements, peace and ecological movement, and many more, in most cases with overlapping constituencies, came to join the “family” of nationalist, socialist, and labor movements.

The movements of 1968 have left a legacy that can still be felt and experienced today. Autonomous trends imbued with Socialism or Anarchism that developed into “self-management” practices still inspire the so-called movements “from below” that confront the authoritarianism of management and the top-down policies of the state and of international institutions. The desire for “direct action” and for “destruction” breathed the air of “terrorism”—that, while indebted to the Sandinista’s guerilla struggles in 1920s Nicaragua or even to the guerilla tactics of the Boer war in the Transvaal of the late 1890s, was mainly inspired by Che Guevara’s “guerilla warfare.” The taking over of schools and factories were transposed onto “squatters” movements and onto building “takeovers.” The movement against national borders and in support of immigrants continues to this day in the internationalist tradition of various movements “without borders” and movements in support of immigrants and against discrimination. Vietnam’s Tet offensive reverberated into “anti-imperialist” struggles and reinvigorated a long lasting “anti-war” or “peace” movements. Even modern-day “gangs” could be related to the Black Panthers party’s “revolutionary intercommunalism” collapsing into “gangsterism.”

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4 Refer to Thomas Frank, One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy, NY: Doubleday, 2000, pp. 180-188. Frank sarcastically describes how business writers conveniently assess that: “Rooting out the vestiges of Taylorism wasn’t just a matter of greater productivity; it was the forward movement of democracy itself; it was an uprising of the dispossessed; it was economic justice finally brought home to the workplace.”

5 The “color line” was literally one set of these forces of transformation, the ones associated with civil rights movements in the U.S. (exemplified particularly by the struggle of SNCC from its 1963 march to Washington until its declaration of “Black Power” in 1966) and with the anti-colonial movements in the Third World (from Algeria to Biafra, from Cuba to Brazil, from South Africa to Palestine).

1968 also emboldened Capitalism, reassured somewhat that a takeover of the state is not going to be such an easy task, especially after vigorous and long-term mechanisms implemented to circumvent the possibility of such a takeover across the “free” world. Seriously threatening antisystemic movements were put in check in the U.S., in Europe, in Latin America, in Africa, and in many parts of Asia through various concerted efforts, including assassinations, covert actions, infiltrations, purchase of loyalties, etc. After 1956 Capitalism and Bureaucratic Communism were cohabitating peacefully, the only wars between them (the “Cold War” that is) being purely “symbolic” and acted out on a geopolitical map (Angola, Vietnam, etc.). A judicial effort to take over the “international order” and to depict it as “free” was launched by Capitalist powers, associated with a discourse of “human rights” incidentally intensified after 1968. The various “explosions” of 1968 (and after, particularly 1970 and 1973) momentarily perturbed the order necessary to the functioning of some states, but Capitalism flourished, having discovered “new” markets that could be opened targeted through “brands” and lifestyles that cater to the “revolutionary” demands of various groups. The “co-optation” started in 1968 when, all of a sudden, revolution became “hip.” It wasn’t only *Playboy Magazine* that started catering for the “new revolutionaries” in its advertisements; various media and integrated marketing strategies depicted their “brands” and products as directly associated with the life experiences of the sexual revolution, the hippies movement, the feminist movement, the “peacenik” movement, etc. Soon enough it was the “product” that expressed one’s identity, and one’s individuality was expressed through the things one consumes, which opened a vast array of possibilities for change—and an incredible potential for an intensive proliferation of consumer goods without the actual need for geographic expansion. Thomas Frank, who has written two books on the subject, adequately describes the consequences of such a “Capitalist Revolution” in America:

[… ] Rebellion had deeper usefulness as well. It brought home the realm of consumer goods as a cult of the new (that had long characterized the world of art) in the form of a heightened sensitivity to obsolescence. […] Everyday Americans would now be required to remain continually one step ahead of the crowd, ever updating their cache of possessions and constantly reassessing the “Establishment” tastes against which they would rebel. As soon as a product was “in” it was “out,” on and on in a never ending spiral of style obsolescence. (pp. 84-85)

What changed between the Fifties and the Sixties was not “The Establishment,” however it may have been forced to allow rock music to be played, youngsters to have sex, or even to admit women and non-WASPs to its ranks. Capital remained firmly in the national saddle, its economic and cultural projects still running smoothly and unimpeded even though years of “conformity” had given way to those of “cultural radicalism.” What changed during the Sixties was the way consumerism was presented to the American public, the new ideology by which the great changes associated with market segmentation and flexible accumulation, it discovered rebellion as a useful metaphor for itself. Almost as soon as the Hipster had been theorized he had been taken up as a symbol of the new economic regime. (p. 445) ⁷

There is a lot more to be said about this path of “co-optation” that has taken the form of commodification of antisystemic movements, but there is even more to say about how these movements were not and could not be totally subsumed by Capitalism. Take for example the particular section of the “sexual liberation” movement associated with what is commonly called “The Gay and Lesbian Movement.” While it is possible to follow how, from the 1960s-70s to the 1980s-90s the movement was co-opted through various factors, including a “consumer culture” that catered for this particular section of the population—as fleshed out by Alexandra Chasin in Selling Out: The Gay and Lesbian Movement Goes to the Market, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000, for example—, the case is a lot more complex than that. First, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Gay and Lesbian Movement branched out into various orientations some of which were and continue to be antisystemic, while others have become liberal-reformist—and some even anti-repressive. Certain activities of ACT-UP (culminating in the Durban summit on AIDS) have been aiming at addressing the issue of AIDS in Africa, and elsewhere, in ways that could only be called antisystemic since they demand setting certain limits (described as “responsibilities”) on the need (considered natural by many) for blind capital accumulation and on the unimpeded drive for extraction of surplus-value by multinational Pharmaceutical companies. These efforts, if successful, may create a precedent that would put “economic scarcity and need” in a more prominent place in a Capitalist environment that unquestionably sees profit as its first and last “responsibility.” To complicate matters further, while Capitalist imaginaries may have co-opted Gay and Lesbian issues, they also were permeated and transformed by different aspects of these issues. Early on, one of the main issues of non-traditional Gay and Lesbian “ways of living” has been to undermine the centrality of “reproduction” to sexuality and to defining sexual partnerships. Due to the “sexual revolution” and to various forces associated with the Gay and Lesbian movement that transformed the cultural receptivity of non-reproductive (non-hetero)sexuality, Capitalist “market forces” were able to easily commodify increasing forms of sexual pleasure, producing various objects of consumption for a variety of consumer subjects. Such a transformation occurs over a long period of time, and across various “cultural” domains, and is shaped through the interaction of anti-repressive, antisystemic and liberal-reformist movements—since cultural forces of opposition may take different forms depending on the dominant social imaginary. The fact that Capitalist imaginaries are becoming dominant globally means that this kind of transformation will be facilitated further through systemic forces in certain sites. Similar analyses could be applied to feminist or other movements.

With 1968, the nature of “movements” themselves started to change. As forces of “individuation” were unleashed globally, structures of knowledge were also being transformed in ways that would lend support to the new modes of subjectivization. Students movements of 1967-1968 that took on an enormous dimension worldwide,8 were a complex reflection of, and a triggering mechanism for, the change of the face of education: the discourse of “progress” was bankrupt and education veered from producing elites with a political and social “consciousness” that may contribute towards “development” to producing “professionals” with the expertise necessary to fill the various productive slots in old and new emerging segments of productive activities. The emerging “new” segments were related to the “immaterial labor” necessary for the commodification of the “free time” and the tapping into the “disposable” income of everyone who has any. While in the core, the labor movements have been able to relativize the extraction of absolute surplus-value of their members, offering them increasing benefits in terms of “free time” and “disposable income,” the developmental schemes in the periphery and semi-periphery have been producing a specialized “elite” that can lead the former colonies towards “freedom and democracy” through the proper channels: consumption of goods and services that reflect the

8 Cf. “Map 1-Major Student Disruptions, 1968-1969” and “Table 1-Events of Student Protest as Reported in Le Monde” in The Imagination of the New Left, pp. 38-39 and 44-45 respectively.
lifestyles of the educated elite of the core. Thus was created a small but influential intensive market in the periphery and semi-periphery that keeps up with the “styles” and modes of consumption of the core, preparing the local elites to join the ranks of the future “global elite.” The anti-Taylorist and anti-Fordist practices that will become the norm in the 80s and 90s were transforming the face of “work” everywhere. While Marx predicted “as the number of co-operating workers increases, so does their resistance to the domination of Capital, and necessarily, the pressure put on by Capital to overcome their resistance,” he could have never imagined how Capital would overcome such a resistance. He dreamt of a “real subsumption” that, with increasing relativization of surplus-value extracted from labor, would create some “free time” for the development of the individual, as he writes in the Grundrisse: “The saving of labour time [is] equal to an increase of free time, i.e. time for the full development of the individual, which in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labour as itself the greatest productive power. From the standpoint of the direct production process it can be regarded as the production of fixed capital, this fixed capital being man himself.” The transition from “formal” to “real subsumption”, as elaborated by Marx in Capital I (including the discarded draft of its sixth section), combined with Marx’s writings on “consumption” and “fixed Capital” (in the section of the Grundrisse referred to above, for example) have allowed a few scholars, such as Jason Read, to find in Marx an analysis of Capital’s “production of subjectivities” (related to Capital’s investment in the aforementioned “free time”) linked to the increasing importance of “immaterial labor”—that takes on the task of shaping and producing “fixed capital.” Subjectivities are still produced through the web of social relations, but these relations are increasingly situated within the “immaterial” or “intangible” field that inhabits one’s “free time.” That “free time” is constantly expanding to encompass all other time, including “production time,” due to the decreasing relevance of “assembly lines” in factories and “cooperative” efforts in the workplace and in the household, and to the increasing relevance of “individuation” in the workplace, at schools, and in households. Capitalist imaginaries are inhabiting, permeating, and transforming other social imaginaries and various aspects of “material life” worldwide, including the “cultural domains” of the interstate system, through various direct (but mostly “indirect”) means including, but not limited to, the media, multiple information and communication networks, and global entertainment and marketing industries that are producing, directing, and shaping people’s activities, desires, needs, etc. Consumption becomes a primary player in the transformed System that is sometimes referred to as “Post-Industrial Capitalism,” “Late Capitalism,” “Consumer Capitalism”—or plain “Globalization.”

The “capacity” of building movements that are based on cooperation, or to mobilize masses with common goals and shared experiences was thus undermined and with it the nature of social “movements.” After 1968 movements became more and more scattered, circumscribed, and contained! Labor movements across the globe moved from an internationalist path to a localized liberal-reformist or anti-repressive struggles. From the 1970s to the early 1990s, labor movements in the core (and in a few countries of the “rising” semi-periphery, including “Communist” countries such as Poland or Czechoslovakia, became more and more preoccupied with their self-serving interests associated with the “professionalization” of workers. In the 80s

11 Cf. Jason Read, The Production of subjectivity: Marx and Contemporary Continental Thought, Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 2001. Also refer to the works of Maurizio Lazzarato on “immaterial labor” and the early works of Antonio Negri.
and 90s, labor movements in the core cease to generate any antisystemic activities, and many of their constituencies felt as if they belonged to a “professional class” that will be discussed below, an amalgamation of “white collar” with “blue collar” workers, all engaged on the professional path towards higher levels of “credit” and of “purchase power.” During the same period, labor movements in the periphery and other “rising” semi-peripheral countries, especially in Southeast Asia and in Latin America, were mushrooming in an anti-repressive struggle. The “outsourcing” policies of core countries that will benefit semi-peripheral nations first, led initially to a growth of unionization drive that was in many cases antisystemic in orientation. Only in the 90s, with “sub-contracting” to smaller and non-unionized factories, and with yet another wave of “outsourcing” from the semi-periphery to the periphery, did the “piece-work system” replace the assembly lines in the semi-peripheral countries. That led to the decimation of labor unions and to more repressive work conditions that were encouraged and allowed by the “Savage” Capitalism of the 90s that re-integrated in the World-System the extraction of absolute surplus value or a “new slavery” at a large scale as will be discussed below (“sweatshops,” “forced prostitution,” “indentured labor,” etc.). A reinvigorated internationalist orientation of labor, with special links between the core, the periphery, and semi-periphery were re-established in the late 90s, but the mobilization power of these efforts are still very negligible. The majority of the peasants or farmers living in the periphery and the semi-periphery will be hard hit in the 90s, after the dismantlement of Fordist policies and the implementation of structural adjustment programs or similar policies that undermine farm subsidies—and in some cases food subsidies. Some may join the “professionalization” train, but most will become “casual laborers” as will be described below. The worst off and their families may end up trapped in “migrant importing” or “slave exporting” schemes, thus swelling the ranks of the “new slavery.”

Nationalist movements that did not have the adequate resources—or an “eternal patience”—needed to “take over the state,” along with Socialist and Communist forces that rejected statist and bureaucratic Communism and were disillusioned by the state, carried over the necessary mix of “direct action” and “destruction” to become “terrorists.” Immersed in desperate situations, dwindling members of these movements resorted to desperate means: terrorized by Capitalism and/or by Authoritarianism (of the state, of the management, of the university, etc.), they returned the package “back to sender.” But instead of “smashing” the state machine, as recommended by the Marx of the 18th Brumaire, they “perfected it”—yet again through the fabricated need of “security.” It is the interstate system, under a second U.S. hegemony starting around 1989/1991, that smashed most antisystemic terrorists (those terrorists who targeted Capitalist institutions or centers of power and who were motivated by a socialist or communist ideologies—for example: Brigate Rossa, Baader-Meinhof, Black Panthers, PFLP, Japanese Red Army, etc.), one after the other, using its new found tool of controlling imaginary significations—along with the military and economic muscle necessary for any hegemon to control the means of terror and mass genocide. Reported “terrorist” incidents increased from 572, in 1975, to 1511, in 1978, to 2701, in 1981, and to 3525, in 1984. Nationalist movements were only antisystemic in the anti-colonial stage, as they tended to undermine the resources and threaten the economic, as well as the political and socio-cultural stability, of core Capitalist countries. Nationalist movements that were Socialist in ideology (and in practical application) were antisystemic in orientation, but most of them, along with other nationalistic movements who achieved control of the state, participated in the consolidation of the interstate system.13

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13 The approach to historical development as linear has been an impediment on understanding transformation. Take for example the case of de-colonization: it is not sufficient, for an adequate historical understanding, to look at the struggles in the colonies as mere antisystemic movements aiming at taking
“Identity” movements dominated the world scene after 1968, thus providing the privileged sites of association for groups and individuals who share common motivations, goals, or objectives. While the student movements discussed above, strongest around 1967-1968, came to an abrupt end with the “transformation” of the face of education worldwide, feminist movements, Sexual Liberation movements, ecological and environmental movements, international peace movements, as well as ethnic and religious movements thrived and continued throughout the last three decades. Each of these so-called “movements” is rather a complex grouping of different peoples with various orientations, some of which are concomitant or connected with, or radically opposed to, other orientations within or outside the “umbrella” designations that are not meant to point to any homogeneity. These movements were not only heterogeneous but they also were constantly transforming, being permeated and permeating each other within the overall intercourse of forces—situated within a particular social-historical intersection. What is designated as “Ethnic” and as “Religious” movements dominated the 80s and 90s, encompassing Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines, Spain, France, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Morocco, Belgium, China, Australia, Guyana, Guatemala, the United States, as well as Rwanda, Burundi, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Albania, Germany, Iran, Afghanistan, Zaire/Congo, Fiji, just to cite a few. Within the large umbrella of “identity” movements (post-1968 movements), there are movements with many connections and links with “new” movements that emerged in the late 90s as antisytemic in orientation, and which will be adequately explored in Part Two:

1) International terrorism: decaying and decrepit, but seems to be re-emerging as the savagery of the current System is innocently exterminating millions;
2) Radical Ecological/Neo-Luddite movements, in the most general sense: Indebted and still connected to Anarchist movements, Squatters movements, Communitarian and Collective movements, they resist commodification in its many manifestations;
3) Internationalist organizations, including certain NGOs, that are calling for economic equality on a world scale and for North-South solidarity;
4) Ethnic and Religious movements that explicitly reject Capitalist tenets and “Western” notions of universalism, human rights, freedom, and other discourses embedded in liberal-modernist geoculture.

1989 AND BEYOND: “SAVAGE” CAPITALISM AND SECOND U.S. HEGEMONY

1989-1991 will witness yet another revolution: not that of the collapse of the Communist Bloc but the unleashing of the wild forces of Capitalism, no longer checked by an external threat. The savagery of systemic forces will culminate in the abolition of most elementary benefits that were “negotiated” through the opposition of systemic and antisystemic forces. As antisystemic pressure abated through the slow decay of the Soviet Union and World Communism, the control of the resources and escaping colonial oppression. It is equally important to look at the systemic forces of such movements along with the antisystemic ones: the possibility of becoming a full-fledged partner of the camaraderie of the interstate system and of becoming an independent producer goes hand in hand with the systemic tendencies of creating new spaces for consumption, new identities, new ethnicities, new “free” markets. Needless to say, one should also acknowledge the role of Imperialism and Colonialism in initiating the process of production of subjectivities necessary for both antisystemic and systemic orientations. Hence the need to look at transformation as the process of the intercourse of multiple forces, some of which will be more effective than others in shaping short-term outcomes, while others will determine long-term outcomes, without having to undermine the complexity of the process as a whole.
interstate system was consolidating itself on various fronts. With the help of antisytemic forces associated with what came to be interpreted as “terrorism,” the banner of “security” was raised along that of “human rights” in setting up a disciplinary juridico-political system that complemented (and supplemented) the consumerist system of control. While finance and speculative capital may have overshadowed industrial capital in the 80s, the 90s would bring forth to the limelight information, communication, and technological capital, as media and communication conglomerates and computer and software companies started making “mad money” and swelling the numbers of billionaires, especially in the United States). There was no more need for “development” since containing “third world radicals” was no longer a priority after the collapse of Socialism as an effective threat to the Capitalist World System. Disengaging from such “benevolent” policies showed to what extent capitalist centers were becoming confident with their newly acquired powers of persuasion. “Freedom” has won and the late 80s and 90s will reinvent the meanings of “free market” as a new ideology. The new dominant ideologies—Post-Fordism and post-Keynianism—exhibited a total disregard to the basic needs of the world population as it prioritized the needs of the “economy.” Production was changing as well, as state policies that undermined labor unions and employee protection supported “outsourcing” and the “piece-rate system.” Savage Capitalism was setting in, bringing back a thing form the past: absolute surplus value! While relative surplus value may lead towards unionization and eventually to real subsumption, there was a drastic increase in the number of “new slaves” that are for the most part involved in “sweatshops” and sweatshop-like conditions (associated with indentured labor, forced labor, prison labor, migrant schemes, etc.) or in “prostitution,” sexual exploitation, or criminal exploitation.

Media, communication and information networks, took on increasing roles in shaping the means of controlling needs and desires (thus producing subjectivities) and in transforming the cultural systems and the interstate system. Starting with the “Committee for Public Information” in the U.S., from 1916-1918, and continuing with Soviet, Fascist, and Nazi propaganda, the generalized means of production of needs and of desires reached unprecedented heights in the second half of the 20th century, culminating in the roles of marketing and public relations firms, of national education curricula and other state policies and institutions, as well as of international media conglomerates and international institutions that, along with Capitalist multinational and cross-national interests, have been reproducing means of control that are no longer centered on the nation-state. The nation-state itself is being regulated more and more by supranational and international institutions and regulations, many of which developed in ways to disguise a second U.S. hegemony that is being contested by some European core powers at the juridical-political and economic levels. Institutions such as the United Nations, WTO, IMF, World Bank, as well as international NGOs (or the equivalent international Public Relations, Marketing, and Consulting firms), Capitalist multinational companies were increasingly becoming effective sites of control as well as sites of struggles for hegemony and of increasing competitiveness between various forms of Capital (technological, informational, finance, industrial, etc.) still centered in core—and some semi-peripheral—countries.

Flexibility became an important characteristic of a System that was learning how to be even more malleable and permeable to all aspects of life. The rigid structures of the state and the “societies of discipline” were being replaced by “societies of control,” a kind of control that is non-coercive, non-abrasive, and non-apparent. Parallel to this truly “Invisible Hand” a “Heavy Hand” will be apparent, especially after 1989 when Capitalism will go wild with a new U.S. Hegemony in the era after the collapse of Communism. There are two kinds of “hegemony” or two hegemonic processes at work (that started as far back as the 17th century if not earlier): the overt and coercive hegemony associated with control of political and economic “centers” has been traced and attributed to the Dutch, the British, and finally the Americans. One could still talk of “crisis” in terms of direct forms of control over the interstate system (political) and in terms of the manipulation of capital accumulation on the global scene, including the regulation of
production, trade, finance, investments, and technological mechanisms among others (economic). In relation to this kind of hegemony, while it was fashionable in the 70s and 80s to speculate on the “decline of U.S. hegemony,” it is somewhat more difficult after the 90s to assert any such decline, considering what has been happening at the political and military levels (direct military interventions in Iraq, Serbia, Afghanistan, etc., and control of the political infrastructure of the interstate system) as well as on the economic levels (regulatory policies through G7, WTO, IMF, and World Bank). Furthermore, while the 80s could have shown a drastic increase in capital accumulation in Japan and other Southeast Asian countries (in the “high times” of speculative and finance capital), the 90s concentrated wealth (after technological capital) in the United States (see charts and tables below). The second kind (or process) of hegemony can best be exemplified in the control over the cultural worlds of the World System and over the means of subjectivization all over the globe. It should more properly be called “domination” of social imaginaries, in this case capitalist social imaginaries, where such domination functions at the levels of desires, needs, drives and orientations that affect production, consumption, distribution, exchange, as well a vast array of social relations that do not fall under any specific category. This kind of hegemony, while not purely political or economic (in the traditional sense), permeates the economic and the political through the intersecting “cultural” traits, drives, or meanings. We will describe below the emergence of a new class structure concomitant and competing with the existing international division of labor that is the direct result of these new forms of control and production of subjectivities—usually delegated to state apparatuses (both repressive and ideological in Althusserian terms) but that have been transferred to a global field. The global media, and the transnational information and communication networks can instill the domination of Capitalist imaginaries and permeate various socio-cultural means of subjectivization and produce subjects that are globally situated beyond “state” borders—while still entrenched in them. This started with the fragmentation and identities of 1968 and developed into consumer subjects where values are transcribed and inscribed through the permeation of images, desires, goals, and orientations that motivate and orient human subjects—beyond education, technology, as well as immaterial labor (marketing, information, services, lifestyles, etc.).

Who has the most billionaires?

Forbes, 3/18/2002
The World’s Top Banks (see The Economist, July 20, 2002):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank Name</th>
<th>Core Capital (US $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citigroup (U.S.)</td>
<td>close to 60 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of America (U.S.)</td>
<td>close to 42 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizuho Financial Group (Japan)</td>
<td>close to 40 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. P. Morgan Chase (U.S.)</td>
<td>close to 38 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC (U.K./U.S.)</td>
<td>close to 34 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumitomo Mitsui (Japan)</td>
<td>close to 30 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Agricole (France)</td>
<td>close to 29 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi Tokyo (Japan)</td>
<td>close to 25 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind &amp; Comm Bank of China (China)</td>
<td>close to 23 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of China (China)</td>
<td>close to 22 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutsche Bank (Germany)</td>
<td>close to 22 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wealth by region of high net worth individuals* in Strn (*those with investible assets of 1 million or more) (see The Economist, March 23, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Rest of the World</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLASSES WITHOUT BORDERS

The “global elite” was becoming more and more sufficient in terms of sustaining a market that was deepening and broadening at the level of subjects—mainly those in the core. Consumer culture, through media, information, communication, etc., was further setting the image of success as “purchase power.” Credit cards that were conveniently started in the 1950s, established “credit” or “personal” credit as measure of one’s worth, and the more unlimited one’s credit is the more “purchase power” one has. The “plastic miracle” is multiplying the consumption of households not only in the core but in many semi-periphery and periphery countries as well. The debts associated with “easy credit” have multiplied the cases of “predatory lending” at the level of countries as well as at the level of households—resulting in an increase in short-term profits at the expense of long-term dependency, bankruptcy, or some kind of enslavement. The measure of value was set as absolute purchase power that an increasing number of billionaires were able to attain—through technological capital and the short-lived “dot-com boom.” Lottery and Chance became the only possible revolution for the masses of the 1990s and beyond. Revolution was no longer about redistribution of the means of production or of wealth but about striking it rich and becoming one of the new elite that has absolute purchase power. Role models were no longer Che Guevara or Castro but rich celebrities and business elites who became the measure of success as they reached higher levels of purchase power. All of this was developing in the core, and in small sections of the periphery a and semi-periphery—mainly related to those who were in control of the resources and thus belonged to the “global elite.”
Identity formation and the feeling of belonging were also being set through the capability of purchasing specific products and becoming part of a particular class determined through its purchase power.\textsuperscript{14}

This section will introduce certain practical “designations” that point to dominant “class structures” across the interstate system today. These “classes” designate somewhat separate domains of different fabrics of “material life” but that are still intersecting (through “luck” or “criminality”) and where “purchase power” is presented as the “value” dominating social relations in a world where everything is commodified, including “human life.” While such a difference is not absolute, it is substantial enough to warrant different material development of social relations. The similarities across intersecting class domains entail processes of social conditioning and of socialization relevant to the integrated global networks of information, communication, and media. The differences are inevitable, however, when processes of social conditioning and of socialization are shaped through various levels of productive and non-productive activities.

\textit{Global Elite: absolute purchase power}

The global elite does not need to engage in an occupation to provide for its necessities (which can be anything, thus not limited to “basic” necessities). This class engages in no or very little productive activity, and if any, it would be managerial or organizational. In terms of social interaction, this class deals with the professional class in the productive realm. In the realm of leisure and entertainment, education and training, however, this class is self-enclosed and interacts in closed circles that are nonetheless global in scope. The households of the global elite reproduce a “private sphere of freedom” that is idealized by both the professional class (in a tangible way, as its realization may be possible) and by the casual laborers class (in an intangible way, as there is very little chance of realization). The global elite could be determined not through

\textsuperscript{14} Let us consider the example of “brand names” in relation to consumer values worldwide. In core countries, the elite can purchase “brand names” that give value (and not only “status”) to their life as consumer subjects. While certain brands are only accessible to the few rich and powerful (e.g. Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Rolex, Cartier, etc.), there are other brands that copy the expensive brands and market them for cheaper (say Salvatore Ferragamo, Banana Republic, Kenneth Cole, Movado, Gucci, etc.) for “elite” wannabe or those aspiring, through purchasing those items, to “belong” to a particular class and to fit into the images their segment of consumer society fabricates as valuable (by setting acceptable delineations of purchase power). There are as many brands as purchase power delineations and that reflect “belonging” to a particular segment of the population of core countries (from Tommy Hilfiger to Dolce e Gabana, from Ralph Lauren to Calvin Klein, from the Gap to Old Navy, etc.). Those who cannot afford to “belong” directly to any particular segment with a high “purchase power” can buy at outlets and discount stores the same name brands for less (Donna Karan, Ralph Lauren, UBU, or Kenneth Cole at half price) and can thus “experience” the elite style for a while. Finally, in the core, those who cannot even afford to buy at discounted price, spend their time “watching” other elites in their glory by experiencing a “proximity” conveyed through television, magazines, sensational newspapers, and other media that make them feel like they “belong” to this consumer society with high purchase power. As the lower classes get to know intimately the “rich and famous” and follow their daily routines, Hollywood stardom, business success, and even nobility become “part” of their lives—to the extent that they genuinely experience the pain of the loss of Princess Di or John F. Kennedy. In the periphery and semi-periphery, there are similar hierarchies, although there are many more informal markets through which fake Levi’s, CK, Polo, Nike, etc., can be accessed as cheap as the local purchase power and only the global elite can share the class of the elite of the core.
income levels but by the amount of investible assets available (that could be set for as high as 1 billion dollars and as low as 100 million dollars in the core—although it may be set lower in the semi-periphery and periphery).

*Professional Class: occupation that regularly provides for “basic necessities” AND more, with various levels of “available credit” and “purchase power”*

The professional class is engaged in an occupation as its means of livelihood or for gain. This occupation sustains an increasing consumption and a higher accessibility to credit. Basic necessities vary from core, to semi-periphery, to periphery. Wage earners, farmers or peasants, workers, or anyone engaged in an occupation that provides for “basic necessities” and more, belong to the professional class. As long as credit is high and basic necessities include paying enough for debt AND more, the person is professional. Lower levels of professional are different in the sense that the disposal income after basic necessities (including credit payments) are lower than others, thus they have less “purchase” power—and thus less status as well. In the periphery and semi-periphery “Status” functions more effectively than “credit.” Anyone who is not engaged in an occupation, be it full-time, part-time, or occasional that does NOT provide basic necessities for oneself or one’s household does not belong to the professional class; but if one or more member of this household are occupied in what may provide basic necessities or more, the household and all working members of the household are professional.

The higher echelons of this class are also self-enclosed and may “spill” into the global elite class, through successful investments or through speculation, for example—the stock market functions as the “lottery” or the window of chance for this class. The lower levels may “fall” into the casual laborers class if they overdraw credit or blow their chance by taking high “risks” (investments, stocks, or other means of gambling in the “free market” casino). The professional class is always upward looking but being the most cautious class, rarely takes risks and does know its limits. It is the largest growing class in the core (the folding of the upper and lower middle class, or white and blue collar) and is growing fast in many semi-periphery and periphery countries, although mainly at the higher levels of entrepreneurs rather than at the lower levels of bureaucrats and administrative officials.

The professional class household is the “consumer subject” par excellence: cable, electronics, Internet, games, gadgets, etc. are essential to the household as are fashion, style, access to information and communication. Cultural consumption, gifts, purchase power is at the basis of one’s lives and credit is easily accessible. Interaction on a social level occurs on a large scale, in the schools, malls, and movies. The larger section of the intelligentsia and artists. Kids growing up are engaged in less and less physical activity and are growing up in front of TV, computer, video games, etc. and their consumption is increasingly cultural. (Magazines, TV, Cinema, Internet, games, gadgets, etc.) Also sport and competition, along with the proper attire as well as travel and .As for higher education, it is of specialized nature and prepares for a career. They are more involved in productive time than the global elite class and are necessary to the functioning of the economic and political arenas including governments. Time is productive and needs to be filled, very little non-productive time, Household activity is mechanized and relativized except in higher echelons where “time” is sold. Lower levels may include the “criminal” element that made it from the casual laborers class, or just started in the professional class. Conformity is a particular aspect of this class, as they tend to establish a stability that is planned and accounted for [productive activity versus “free time” of household that is invested by immaterial labor].
Casual Laborers: Anyone who cannot regularly provide, through one or more occupation, for one’s basic necessities or those of one’s household (including the occupational earning of other members of the household), and who depends on external aid and support, governmental or otherwise.

Causal laborers have no access to credit or have more debit than income, so they would NOT have a disposable income left and have to live day to day, with less than the minimum requirements, using if available help programs. Credit is NOT the measure of casual laborers but the irregularity of income and the constant fear of not being able to provide. This class is the one that is most affected by the “consumer culture” (especially through television and tabloids) that brings it closer to “consuming” without having to “purchase.” In other words, the proximity offered through the media guarantees a certain satisfaction of needs while accentuating the desire of belonging to the “upper classes.”

This is the class where criminality (theft and murder), prostitution, drug dealing, or other “miracles” (especially lotteries) introduce these people to the American dream—their only possible “revolution” (striking it big, making it, etc.) [Professionals have less time to dream since they are busy acquiring things they need. Needs are shaped through productive activity, and the casual laborers’ households spend a lot of free time watching TV. Professionals tend to be more calculating, more determined to follow certain rules, while they may still strike it rich, but they are not taking risks; Professionals’ revolution is the “stock market” while that of the Casual Laborers is the lottery or criminality.]

Farmers, households of peasants and workers, who rely on exchange, help, assistance, are included in this class as are refugees and the unemployed lower strata on government assistance. Are also included those homeless people in the core who have regular access to soup kitchens, shelters, and occasional paying jobs, etc. They are concerned with subsistence and with scarcity but nonetheless may have more “free time” to be pacified through projection onto other classes (proximity to and familiarity with the rich and famous satisfies their needs as does “intangible” consumption through TV, tabloids, etc.). Sports and entertainment are a major “cultural” occupation and they are more easily convinced of political and ideological rhetoric than other classes (they are actually becoming the conservative backbone of this new capitalist division of labor).
New Slavery: Those who are forced into situations of long-term or indefinite use, for sexual trade or other occupations such as sweatshops or criminal activity. Such use, usually associated with absolute extraction of surplus-value is not based on labor power (use-value or exchange-value) but on human commodities (disposable bodies) that are constructed through direct coercion (kidnapping, buying, etc.) or indirect coercion (luring, repaying an indeterminate debt, or under threat of violence to oneself or to others). Usually these slaves are spatially restricted and are stripped of any “purchase power.”

While this class mainly includes those who are kidnapped, purchased or lured into closed spaces in order to perform productive or instrumental roles, it also encompasses all those who are indentured laborers who, through coercion or threat of violence have to work in less circumscribed spaces but within similar situations where there is no “free time” or “purchase power” accorded to them. International trafficking in women and children (see for example, “Hearings before the… Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate,” Feb 22 and April 4, 2000, S. HRG. 106-705) has become one of the most profitable “trades” and provides a generous supply of sex workers and victims (who not only are forced to engage in continuous sexual acts but are used as ready-made-victims of criminal passions and obsessions, whereby some privileged people pay to “dispose” of the life of a woman, a young boy, or an assortment), sweatshop workers (who are forced to work in horrific conditions in return for some food and drink, while being locked up day and night or put under constant surveillance), as well as mercenary soldiers (where young people are coerced into joining a group of soldiers, militias, or gangs, or into committing criminal acts such as assassinations, at the risk of losing one’s life or someone else’s). Prisons have also become, especially in core countries where they are becoming increasingly “privatized,” suppliers of cheap laborers that are swelling the ranks of those legally condemned to “forced labor.” This class may also include “illegal” laborers (victims of “migrant schemes”) that are underpaid and overworked and that are not allowed any “free time” and are not provided with enough compensation to cover their “basic necessities.” Those people who benefit of some kind of physical mobility can rarely move up the echelons of class hierarchies since they cannot take the “risk” of spending a dollar on a lotto ticket; they have no time, no surplus, no dream, no way out… except through escape, liberation, or death. Those who are homeless, hungry, who have to fight on a day to day basis for food and subsistence, shelter, basic necessities, for themselves and households, especially in the periphery and semi-periphery, and who do NOT receive help or assistance from NGOs or governments could also qualify as “new slaves.”
The word “movement” entails conscious and self-reflective teleology. Movements are new historical constructs dating back to bourgeois “liberation”: they are associated with the voice of the people\textsuperscript{15}—for example with the rise of parliamentary politics (in England) or the third estates (France). Movements are traditionally considered popular struggles were a mass of people consciously or unconsciously organize towards the achievement of an ultimate goal. It is important to point out that the “popular” nature of movement does not necessarily imply a “populist” orientation. Movements are about voice and demands, but these are rarely expressions of the oppressed classes since they are usually intertwined with aesthetic bourgeois values. Romanticism and Neoclassicism, for example, played an important role in the consolidation of the liberal themes of the French Revolution and the subsequent national movements as struggles of liberation (the same can be said of certain socialist, communist, or reactionary movements).

We should assess any/all movements in relation to the forms of resistance discussed in the introduction in order to designate them as anti-systemic or not. Many movements were and are not anti-systemic per se but could be described as “anti-repressive.” Anti-repressive movements may be aimed against the repressive state apparatus but not the ideological state apparatus—if we were to seriously consider this Althusserian distinction. The term “anti-repressive” as appropriated here may address specific issues related to modes of production, wage labor, surplus value, capital accumulation, and/or redistribution of wealth, but as long as these issues are not set against the basic tenets of Capitalism in ways that will detrimentally affect the international division of labor and the cultural and political dimensions inherent to the interstate system, they cannot be called anti-systemic. Anti-repressive movements may transform the system but can neither destroy it nor resist it effectively. To demand an increase in wages or a reduction of the working hours may improve the working conditions of many, but such improvement does not detrimentally affect the Capitalist World Economy—while to demand the abolition of wage labor would be considered anti-systemic in orientation.

The fact that a movement cannot be designated as anti-systemic according to our own criteria does not take away from its importance as an anti-repressive movement that positively contributes towards the well being of an oppressed class. The same goes for any/all “liberal reformist” movements that struggle in order to demand certain “rights” or privileges—usually individual. These kinds of movements do not question the Capitalist World Economy but are only concerned with the special interests of certain groups and individuals, or with opposing the “authority” of certain individuals, entities, or institutions. Nonetheless, the process of empowerment that accompanies either anti-repressive or liberal reformist movements can indeed encourage or contribute towards future anti-systemic forces, trends or orientations—but it can also undermine anything anti-systemic.

\textsuperscript{15} The Capitalist imaginary has been able to silence, control, shape and regulate any/all “voices”—especially “voices of the people.” Hand in hand with Science, Reason, Universality, and Education, Capitalism silenced any/all voices (besides its own echo) and disqualified any/all epistemologies through a civilizational process supported by Imperialism and Colonialism. Today, it is the meaning/belief provided by different social imaginaries that the capitalist imaginary is attempting to eradicate.
The assessment of what is called “social movements” changes over the years due to the change in the social-historical conditions. In the 1920s, for example, a classification of social movements included many more anti-systemic movements than purely liberal reformist or anti-repressive movements. Savel Zimand of the Bureau of Industrial Research of the City of New York, in his *Modern Social Movements: descriptive summaries and bibliographies*, lists the following major movements (selections). 16 1) Trade Unionism (“the common needs and problems of the wage workers”); 2) Cooperative Movement (“a form of cooperative effort aiming at the association of producers or consumers in self-governing workshops or consumers’ societies… An effort to control the production and distribution of things needed to satisfy their wants, where things should be done and commodities should be produced for use rather than exchange”); 3) Copartnership (“a means of better, fairer, and more just relationship of so-called employer and employee resulting in better production activities… Under a system of copartnership, the employer-capitalist would have his employees-workers who had been with him for a certain number of years as copartners”); 4) Socialism (“a social system that seeks a system of organized industrial and political government in which use instead of profit shall be the dominant motive of production and its control shall be democratic. Public ownership of the socially necessary means of production is advocated in order to emancipate production from private profit… The Socialist idea can be traced back to Babeuf, Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen.”); 5) Guild Socialism (“the association at the national level of all the workers of every kind, administrative, executive, and productive, in any particular industry, to constitute a self-governing organization of the industry and to carry on that industry on behalf of the whole community. The aims of the guild socialism are the abolition of the wage system, and the establishment by the worker of self-government in the industry through a democratic system of national guilds working in conjunction with a democratic state”); 6) Syndicalism (“In 1902 the French Confédération Générale du Travail…accepted the ideal of a society without political state organization but gave it a practical means of expression through industrial government. Syndicalism repudiates collectivist and parliamentary tactics, preferring direct action by means of the general strike and sabotage. It wishes the organized workers to own the land and capital and administer all industry”); 7) Bolshevism (described as socialism aiming for Communism in Russia with references to Lenin and Trotsky); and 8) Anarchism (“As advocated by its present adherents it stands for communal ownership of land and capital without state control and without obligation to work. It wishes to substitute for parliamentary machinery a community operated by all members of society on a voluntary cooperative basis”). It is obvious that at least the Cooperative movement, the Socialist and Guild Socialist movements, Bolshevism and Anarchism can be considered antisystemic to some extent.

If we now were to look at a more recent attempt at a comprehensive listing of social movements —albeit from a peace and non-violent perspective—we’ll find the following in *The Radicalism Handbook: Radical Activists, Groups and Movements of the Twentieth Century* of John Button, an environmentalist activist, compiled in 1995: 17 1) Arts and Empowerment; 2) Civil and Human rights; 3) Environmental campaigning with a political or social dimension; 4) Gay and lesbian rights; 5) Labor movements (especially where these have a wider social element); 6) Liberation theology; 7) Non-violent struggle for self determination; 8) The Peace movement; 9) Peaceful anarchist movement; 10) Radical education; 11) Radical therapy; 12) Radical economics; 13) Women’s rights including suffrage and equal rights campaigners [xiii]. Although these categories were meant to describe radicals, it is surprising that very few would fit into our description of may be considered anti-systemic. Almost none—except to a very limited

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extent some forms of labor, anarchist or radical economics movements—could be considered full-fledged anti-systemic. Even if we were to look into the section of “groups and movements” in the book, the only ones that come close to fit our own criteria are: the Black Panthers Party of 1966-1975, the Communes movements of 1825-, the Fabian Society 1884-, The Heiminsha of Japan 1903-1907, the Industrial Workers of the World of the U.S. 1905-, and the Internationals 1864-1970. All of these so-called groups or movements are now defunct or inactive.

The above comparison may indicate how—at least in the contemporary imaginary—movements have become less of the anti-systemic kind and more of the liberal reformist and anti-repressive kinds. But let us attempt to trace any such movements historically, from around 1968 till the present. If 1968 was a period of expressed “disillusionment” of the masses with the historical anti-systemic movements (namely nationalism and socialism) as claimed by Wallerstein, it was also the last breath of a “popular” manifestation of anti-systemic struggles across the globe and a point of transformation of the nature of these struggles. Having presented in the introduction a set of criteria to assess whatever can be called anti-systemic, it is obvious that we cannot accept the strict division of anti-systemic movements into four categories: Socialist—including labor; Nationalist; Feminist; and Ecological. From our standpoint, each one of these broad categories needs qualification, namely the concordance with the criteria depicted as detrimental to the Capitalist World Economy. Many socialist movements that subscribe to a competing ideology and advocate a different economic system may qualify as anti-systemic. Only labor movements that advocate a real change in the international division of labor (and/or are related to one of the forms of resistance described above) can qualify as anti-systemic but not those trade unions that work for the benefit and interests of their “constituency”—these would be anti-repressive or liberal reformist movements, depending on their demands. Similarly, ecological and feminist movements only qualify to be called anti-systemic if they aim at the effective transformation of the World System in ways that detrimentally affect it—especially if they fit the anti-systemic forces described above as religious, communal or ideological forces.

Our method has been to draw inferences from historical observations in order to designate practical categories that do not claim universality, objectivity, or determinacy. We shall do the same now by focusing on world-historical events extending form the period of around 1968 to the present. Such events must have been detrimental to the Capitalist World System at the level of the international division of labor and the interconnected interstate system with its political and cultural dimensions. The major antisystemic events, movements, or orientations may be considered from three historical intersections, one extending from 1966 to 1979, the other extending from 1979 to 1989, and finally from 1990 to the present.

**1966-1979**


Three major historical processes were very influential in determining forms of popular struggles throughout this period: the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, and the Vietnam War. We are not claiming that these were the only determinants—or even the most influential—of anti-systemic forces or struggles. We are only trying to follow the threads of a few orientations or trends that may be directly or indirectly connectable with these processes.

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1) The “Cultural Revolution” started in 1966 and 1967 as destructive attacks by the Red Guards against the People’s Liberation Army (especially high officers) and the Communist Party bureaucracy (especially party leaders in the camp of Lui Shao-Chin). Only in 1968 did it change to a struggle supposedly carried out by peasant and workers—rather than of armed militants. Students and education were central to reshuffling the cards of class struggle and to enhance the self-importance of certain strata of society oppressed by other strata. But the violence of the destruction that was meant to destabilize an entrenched system resonated positively around the globe. Armed struggle was deemed necessary in continuous class warfare, where the masses can take on the task of shaping their future rather than trusting some specialized bureaucrats or party apparatchiks. The anti-bureaucratic struggle was thus a way of making sure that the masses, voiceless and shapeless, can take an active part in self-government.

2) This orientation was echoed in Cuba, where Ernesto Che Guevara, a close associate of Fidel Castro and a member of the Cuban Government from the victory of the revolution in 1959 until 1965, decided to disseminate the practice of “guerilla warfare.” Exactly around the same time where the Red Guards and other revolutionary groups were actively engaged in armed struggle in China, in 1966 and 1967, Che was engaged with Latin American peasants in rebellions and struggles aiming at taking their future into their own hands. As with the Red Guards, this engagement was halted in 1967 and Che was arrested and killed in Bolivia. Interestingly, Guevara wrote, as early as February 1963, a piece entitled “Against Bureaucracy” (Contre le bureaucratisme) in which he presents a form of re-education, invigorated through nationalism, as the median between what he calls “guerillarism” (guérilllerisme) and the “Junta Central de Planificacion.”

3) Nationalism is of course the drive behind the Vietnamese successes in opposing their aggressors, French or Americans. But this nationalism was characterized by a socialist ideology and was related to a struggle against “imperialism” that used any means necessary to achieve “liberation.” The constructed romantic imagery of a David defeating a Goliath—in the Tet offensive of 1968—permeated the imaginary of a whole generation that felt empowered to struggle against all authoritative and dominant power and to liberate itself from a new form of imperialism based on ideology but also from various forms of oppression.

The three processes described above were combined with numerous other instances of struggles that inspired “popular” movements across the globe. Although a variety of movements, listed below, flourished throughout this period, we need to note that while in predominantly agricultural economies, nationalistic struggles took on the ideologies of socialism, the popular imaginary in the core countries started veering towards what we will call “identity” movements—paralleled in the periphery and semi-periphery by “ethnic” movements.

a) Labor: The impetus of labor movements as anti-systemic tendencies has long been gone in the core but is invigorated in the semi-periphery and periphery. In the core states, the labor movement was predominantly guided by liberal-reformist tendencies interested in reforming the system institutionally in order to guarantee certain rights and privileges—rather than transforming the system as a whole. The majority of the strikes in the U.S. (around 2560 in 1968) were short-term and mainly concerned with the improvement of workers’ conditions; the CGT in France stopped its major strike in 1968 after Pompidou promised a 10% increase across the board and raising the minimum wage. The days of workers control of the means of production expired

with the last breath of self-management movements throughout Europe that flourishes around 1968-1971 in factories as more communes and collectives were being set up on the bases of “anti-production” and “identity” movements (hippies, peace, sexual revolution, ethnicity, etc.).

b) Nationalism and Socialism: The interest in socialist struggles, and nationalist anti-systemic struggles, has waned but not disappeared, especially since the Soviet Union became an entrenched bureaucratic system interested in its own self-preservation. With Khrutshev’s declaration in 1956 that the USSR aimed at a “competitive coexistence” with Capitalism, it became clear that the Socialist system can no longer be counted on as an alternative system aiming at the total destruction and replacement of the Capitalist World Economy. This resulted in reforms and reassessment of the roles and functions of the Communist and Socialist parties worldwide, but it also brought about a pessimism that could only be compensated through desperate methods such as “terrorism.” Both nationalist struggles and socialist ones started using terrorism as a form of resistance that aims at the destruction or at least the destabilization of the system—while at the same time being an exercise in reactionary self-affirmation. Terrorism took on the form of guerrilla warfare as advocated in Cuba, and undertaken by Guevara in 1966 and 1967, as well as the form of terrorism as undertaken by Palestinian liberation movements (FATAH started its first commando in 1965 and, of particular interest to us here are the PFLP and DFLP who have an anti-systemic orientation and who were formed respectively in 1967 and 1969).20 Guerilla warfare that was anti-systemic in orientation spread across the globe (Latin and Central America, Southeast Asia, etc.) as did anti-systemic terrorist activities (in the Mediterranean and the United States, especially in the 60s and 70s—Baader-Meinhof, Action Directe, Brigitte Rossa, Black Panthers, etc.).

c) Identity: The term “identity” should be associated with strata of national populations whose empowerment concords with certain interpretations and/or indirect effects of the early stages of the Cultural Revolution in China (where the Red Guards used armed struggle against the entrenched forces of the bureaucracy). After 1966 and 1967, the struggle against a proclaimed new dominant class was led by “students” and “peasants” and through a process of re-education. Although re-education is important to any socialist revolution—as described by Che Guevara in his 1963 piece mentioned above—what was different about this kind of re-education is that it was a negative process that aims at empowering the lower strata of the population. We mentioned earlier how reshuffling the cards of class struggle enhanced the self-importance of certain strata of society that were oppressed by other strata. While in Cambodia, this led to taking class struggle to its logical limits, it proliferated in industrialized countries identity movements combating sexism, racism, as well as authority, assimilation, and integration—and that came to compete with nationalist or socialist identities. The Khmer Rouge’s imaginary took on the reshuffling of the class struggle to an extreme, interpreting it reductively. It took the cultural revolution’s aims of “transforming education, literature, art and all other parts of the superstructure which do not correspond to the socialist economic base” literally and realized that, the only logical attainment of such aims would be to achieve a one-class system through the systematic elimination of the intelligentsia, the class that carries within it ingrained bourgeois values and that sustains the capitalist superstructure. Most Western imaginaries, on the other hand, interpreted this aspect of the cultural revolution as a new crisis of legitimacy of authority, accompanied with the prevailing anti-bureaucratic tendency. A few reactions deserve to be

20 Both Guerilla warfare and terrorism have long histories that go back thousands of years: as an example, the first was practiced during Rome’s defense against the Carthaginian troops of Hannibal, while the second was practiced communally, in Japan, and individually, by the Khawarij. What we are referring to here as new is the adoption of such strategies in, or as, anti-systemic struggles.
1) Following the Chinese model of re-organization into collectives and cooperatives, pockets within countries such as France or Italy reacted to the later crisis by calling for workers’ autonomy and workers’ self-management. Such movements persisted until the late 70s but expired with the 1977 revolution of the emarginati in Italy. 21 Although short of granting autonomy, various cooperatives, collectives, and communes flourished throughout the West and the Third World, advocating self-management and non-hierarchical relations. Such reactions may have been combined with other communal, religious, or identity movements.

2) Focusing on the issue re-education and its relation to class formation, a “crisis of education” prompted a new student consciousness. May 1968 and after (until 1973), in France for example, or in Mexico City—was not only about students or workers, but it marked the Capitalist imaginary’s own interpretation of “new” classes that became new “identities.” These identities were associated with oppressed strata of society: gender, race, ethnicity, and religion, all were born anew from the perspective of 1968—as a marker that is not historically set. Identity movements will flourish and become synonymous with anti-systemic movements, but very few of them would qualify as anti-systemic according to strict criteria. The most influential of these movements were designated as civil rights movements in the 60s and 70s (e.g., United States) and in the 80s (e.g., South Africa), student movements in 70s and 80s (e.g., SDS in the U.S., Canada, West Germany, France, Italy, Japan, South Korea, England, Greece, India, Zambia, Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela) feminist movements, sexual liberation movements, as well as ethnic or religious movements (Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Srilanka, Thailand, Philippines, Spain, France, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Nigeria, Morocco, Belgium, China, Australia, and the United States), etc. Each of these designations engulfed a variety of movements within it and developed into various different orientations, but the most prominent were based on national, religious, ethnic, or racial identities.

The Global nature of movements was also extended through a new “internationalism” associated with new identities: the struggle against the war in Vietnam, against the cold war and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust, as well as against natural disasters worldwide brought people together in peace movements, and environmental movements, as well as movements aiming at the protection of human, animal, and earth rights. But coalitions emerged as alliances of nation-states under the banners of such internationalist tendencies, besides and sometimes against ideological tendencies: the non-aligned movement inspired various coalitions that previously had evolved into cartels of power politics based on regional economic and political interests. Although most regional coalitions emerged in the late 40s and in the 50-60s (e.g. OAS, OEEC, SEATO, Arab League, ECOWAS, etc.), international institutions that were either independent or part of the UN system flourished on the basis of such internationalism, their impetus starting to become effective only in the 80s.

1979 to 1992


It is in the 1980s that international institutions emerged as major players (systemically as well as anti-systemically) and were countered by resistance that was either popular or institutional. Identity and ethnic movements flourished as forms of resistance to an “internationalization” that grew more and more Capitalistic. Religion came to play an important role during this period, as did a revival of traditional values (i.e. values based on cultural mores and ethics). Afghanistan reinforced Vietnam as yet another David fighting against yet another Goliath. At the same time the revolution in Iran came to realize the anti-systemic religious ways of relating to the world that were repressed through modernist, socialist and liberal struggles. Religion became an effective component of various social movements in the Middle East, North and West Africa, as well as in India, Europe, and the United States: besides Moslems, Hindus, Jews, and Christians of the East and the West organized themselves politically and economically in order to confront the changing face of their societies. This period could be described as the decade of religious and ethnic or communal resistance, some of which were anti-systemic in nature, even if not in declared or conscious orientation.

Most of these need to be linked with the disintegration of the nation-state as the site of “meaning”—be it through socialism or nationalism. With Socialism no longer a viable option after the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union as a (hypothetical) alternative model to Capitalism, and with the emerging problems of the nation-state in providing basic needs and welfare to its population, due in part to the effects of a globalized economy and the growth of a global elite within the periphery and semi-periphery and due to the effects of increasing levels of (im)migration at local and global scales. With power struggles becoming devoid of modern ideologies and the universalist discourses of progress and development, an increasing instability in the periphery and semi-periphery (as well as in the emerging peripheries and semi-peripheries within core states) made it such that ethnic and religious struggles reflected struggles for power and on a micro level of struggles for hegemony. Increasingly, and starting this period, earlier phases of incorporation will revert to phases of de-incorporation with massive pockets and spatial locations within the World System being left “behind” as local elites struggle for control of resources within a globalized economy as will be described in the next period. “Globalization” here does not mean “expansion” and incorporation (since, at this stage, incorporation is complete) of the world system but rather a transformation of modes of subjectivization based on an extensive expansion of consumerism associated with a quality of consumers within core states and to a “global” elite that controls resources in the periphery and semi-periphery (“global elite” designates a minority within the periphery and semi-periphery that has easy access to education, information, credit, mobility, and control of resources; it is part of a global “network” of Capitalists that share similar interests and goals, through a process of subjectivization that will be

22 Islamist movements go back to the 17th century, much before modernity, nationalism or socialism influenced Islamic regions. In Islam, Sufism carries a perverted modernity within it, since it is the individualistic escape from the communal existence inherent to Islam—even if this escape is realized through a communion with God or Eternity. “Islam” can be linked in many ways to egalitarian or socialist principles.
explained below). The majority of inhabitants of the periphery and semi-periphery that cannot be low-wage producers for a limited time nor consumers will be left behind for the growing consumer pool in certain sectors of the World Economy. It is not an expansion thus that this period will highlight but the beginning of a “condensation” (and a possible move towards a post-incorporated world) of the world system itself (constantly transforming itself) and of its modes of production and the social relations at its basis.

The 1980s then experienced warfare and terrorism in the name of religion, and no longer in the name of nationalism or socialism (e.g. Hizbollah, Intifadah, MILF, etc.) and some nationalisms became religious rather than secular in orientation (Sudan, Algeria, etc.). This was also the beginning of the labeling of “rogue” states for any sites that may harbor or support threats to the cohesion of the interstate structure, threats that were anti-systemic but not socialist (Lebanon, Libya, Iran, etc.). In 1989, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan contrasted with the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia. One was leaving behind a “specter” while the other was abandoning a “cadaver.” The fall of the Berlin Wall came to prove the success of liberal dreams in impregnating imaginaries with “freedom” and “equality of rights”—surpassing dreams of “justice” and “economic equity.” Reaganism and Thatcherism provided for a counter-resistance that transformed socialism and communism taking them closer to the center—and thus transforming the meaning of socialism itself. The reign of Mitterand in France and the sweeping victory for Socialists throughout Europe was marker for a reformation and liberalization of socialism. The struggles against European unification revealed a growing opposition to centralization and an imaginary that demanded less centralized control and more localized interests. Freedom became the catch-word of this era, and with it the expansion of markets and elimination of restrictions on Capital became the major force where international institutions, controlled by certain powers, attempted to transform the relations within the interstate system in ways that would benefit them. Internationalism was transformed into an empty discourse of rights that overrode discourses of equity and distribution. Freedom brought with it the proliferation of global investments, the formalization of international intellectual property rights, and the increasing role of international institutions in both regulation and de-regulation.

1992–present


This era witnessed the proliferation of new forms of movements that are not ideological, religious or communal but anti-repressive and liberal reformists in orientation—with “global” or “local” labels. Various NGOs and international organizations became engaged in proclaimed “international” struggles—that are for the most part institutional struggles. The rhetoric of “globalization” emerged as both an enemy to confront and as a new and worthy development. At the same time, resistance has taken new forms: technology and the internet created the

23 While in the core, labor is becoming more part-time, household-based, and temporary (with less and less benefits of “wage” labor), the periphery and semi-periphery are experiencing more “temporary” or “sporadic” forms of wage labor where long-term “stability” is no longer offered as it used to be under Fordism.
possibility of new forms of struggle, but for the most part individual struggles. Movements have been broken down and very little organization at the mass level could be possible—except in the case of liberal reformist tendencies where individual interests are at stake. The freedom explicated in the 80s took on a new signification with the depiction of a globalization—as absence of limits and boundaries—and of a new cosmopolitanism. With e-trade and e-commerce becoming more and more accessible to anyone with internet access and a fistful of dollars, new forms of resistance developed: hackers and virus creators engaged in a new form of terrorism within a new community that is broken down to computer units. E-Terrorism can be an effective threat to the economic, industrial, and technological bases of Capitalism.

Economic prosperity (of an increasing middle class in core countries and a global elite in the periphery and semi-periphery) witnessed the fall of a WTO (Warsaw Treaty Organization) in 1991 and the emergence of a new WTO (World Trade Organization) in 1995—replacing GATT. The Eastern Bloc was gone and new markets were offering themselves to Capitalist speculation and investment. Social movements that were communal, religious, and/or ideological struggles were replaced by struggles for so-called human rights in ways that do not threaten the interstate system (but consolidate it) or the economic system of production and distribution (where technological capital complemented speculative capital). A new trend of “global egalitarianism” emerged that opposes global inequality and exploitation personified by multinational companies and such entities as the World Trade Organization. But this trend is basically a branch of the “human rights” movement that can only become an effective anti-systemic force if it calls and facilitates the implementation of these rights on the global level and inter-state level (between core states and states of the periphery and semi-periphery). Such an endeavor necessitates a proclamation of basic rights and needs that core states are obligated to provide to other less privileged states (including debt elimination AND means of redistribution of wealth)—something unlikely to happen soon. Technological Capital is built on products that are ephemeral in nature, with short life-spans and with an increasing need of replacement. Such products are not targeting more consumers (quantity) but rather the same consumers who need to and are capable of replacing older products (quality). Thus only a limited number of consumers are needed, those consumers-subjects with a new ideology that “new” is better and that their quality of life consist of changing and replacing their products as newer “more efficient” or “better” products are produced. This applies both to technology and information as well as to fashion and trends: Computers, software, Music, TVs, DVDs, but also Jeans, Sneakers, hip hop fashion, smaller cell phones, newer SUVs, etc. The new target consumers need to be produced as subjects through an increasing field of immaterial labor (marketing, advertising, film industry, etc.) and that can themselves have access to ever increasing capital. Consumers with limited income and with no access to unlimited credit are no longer necessary for such products and are thus marginalized on a world scale. Only a “global elite” can afford to follow the trends and can have a constantly renewable purchase power. Consumers within the periphery and the semi-periphery that do not qualify are left behind and that can only be targeted as consumers of basic products (industrial, alimentary, etc.). Social relations are transformed and shaped accordingly. With the purchase power of new “hybrid” cultures and the transformed households in core and some semi-periphery countries, an extensive market is built—not necessarily expanded spatially but exponentially within limited localities. “Globalization” is but the process of transformation of social relations and the imaginaries associated with desiring, dreaming, and purchasing the new and trendy and with the ever renewing need for certain technological, informational, and other tools. The “celebrity” status of a few individuals comes to cushion the new ideology that no longer aims at development, personal improvement, and progress except as a constant change and keeping up with the trends. Such ideology is supported and built by immaterial labor through a global informational network relying on the Media, the internet, as well as on those “industries” that are far reaching (Music, Films, Magazines, etc.).
The so-called new form of cosmopolitanism is opposed by struggles for ethnicity and identity (exemplified by identity politics in the West and ethnic conflicts in the South and East) by and for those who are excluded from this picture. Ethnic wars emerged all over the world (from Rwanda to Kosovo, from India to Chechnya)—supported by an economic hegemony that eliminates cooperation. Ethnicities and identities were further intensified through the discourse of human rights mentioned above, through which new “international” wars were declared. From rogue states, Iraq and Yugoslavia became a threat to a new world order and were dealt with accordingly through the efforts of hegemonic powers. An “international” community is being constructed through antagonistic forces where U.S. hegemony is undermined by resistance from certain U.N. members — exemplified in the U.N. Security Council veto issue, the Rome Statutes concerning the ICC, etc. Law and international institutions became the site of new forms of struggles for hegemony and control. A new breed of global elites that are consumer-subjects is produced through the new social relations encompassing immigration, sexuality, and consumerism in ways very different from any other time in the history of the World System. Rather than being entrenched in dinosaur-concepts that are no longer applicable, it is important for us to reach out and assess the transformations of the system in order to be able to assess what can be considered anti-systemic. The “longue durée” promises to be much richer in anti-systemic movements and orientations especially if “globalization” achieves its aims of catering for a global elite and excluding and marginalizing those who do not qualify as consumer-subjects. The future of such Capitalism may be threatened by a possibility of expansion of the marginalized in the periphery, semi-periphery, and in the enclosures within core states after the collapse of the welfare system and the increasing level of mass (im)migration. There is a standardization of finance, markets, technologies, information flows, transportation, institutions, and products that only a few will profit from but that affect everyone in the globe—that is what could be designated by a term such as “globalization.”

Conclusions

Our main claim is that the 1968 to present period witnessed the expiration of traditional “antisystemic movements” (related to labor, socialism, nationalism, etc.) and the emergence of a new focus on identity, both intensive (locality, ethnicity, religion) and extensive (internationalism, cross-cultural identities), that affected group dynamics and the possibility of “movements” as traditionally understood. Furthermore, the interstate system seems to be more cohesive than ever and the levels of consumption and production have intensified in measures that surpass the economic or population “growth” models—while at the same time showing signs of disintegration and/or compartmentalization on the long run due to certain global economic aspects, including (im)migration.

The incapacity of the state, and of state power, to fulfill the dreams of the masses and to provide for their basic needs, as experienced from 1848 to 1968, led to a distrust in bureaucratic institutions and in the movements that aimed at state control in order to fulfill political goals. When the socialists were able to take control of the state, they were not able to deliver what they have promised to the masses that entrusted them with their salvation. The Soviet Union that moved from an internationalist path of proletarianization to an entrenchment in statist strategies relying on bureaucracies and developmental schemes and circumscribed economic programs became the antithesis of what the masses expected. Experiments nevertheless continued as did movements, getting smaller and smaller, attempting to confront Capitalism through strategies varying from an empowerment of certain classes (peasants, workers, students, minorities, etc.) to

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24 This area may be promising, especially if issues of justice and equity were to be institutionalized within the covenants of a new world order.
the elimination of ruling classes (China, Cambodia, Albania, etc.) and to forms of “terrorism” reminiscent of earlier anti-systemic forces (Anarchism, Kommintern, etc.) and associated with “guerilla warfare” and “permanent revolution.” The goal was still to have one class, the proletariat, be it peasant or workers, go beyond the stasis of state bureaucracies to undergo a real revolution, described as “cultural.”

This move inspired the imaginaries of many oppressed populations across the world. Identity movements designated small groups of people that took on the sacred struggle and the chosen mission of combating inequality. Revolutions, rebellions, uprisings, started to sprout all over the globe from 1966 to 1971 (Europe, Africa, U.S., India, Czechoslovakia, Japan, etc.) All these took on a liberatory form where liberation, be it nationalist or anti-imperialist, was still tainted with the ideological divide of the Cold War. Vietnam contributed towards the highlighting of the similarity of difference and towards combating anti-imperialism. Ways of living changed due to these struggles where the enemy was defined as authority, as the state, as imperialism, as capitalism, and communes, cooperatives, etc., flourished in the core states while nationalists and socialists struggles intensified in the periphery and semi-periphery. The Black liberation movement in the U.S. as well as the hippies and the anti-nuclear pacifists were all part of this struggle against injustice in a world where it was clear who was just and who was unjust. Post-1968 was built on consumerism and the cooptation of such identities, after a short period of fighting them in the core and in the periphery and semi-periphery. These liberal-reformist identity movements no longer presented a threat but were integrated as part of the mosaic of capitalism while covert actions were able to undermine class-based anti-systemic movements and while Capitalist countries were able to undermine the competing system of socialism through various means. Women’s liberation, Gay and Lesbian rights, Civil rights, Religious, Ethnic, and National movements became consciousness movements that were no longer (except rarely) permitting of a class consciousness and it is thus that Capitalism’s consumerism started to cater for “identities” and to coopt them in the fluctuating market of trends, technology, and information. Subjectivities became more and more part of production through immaterial labor (mainly marketing and media) that allowed for Capitalism to open up an unlimited possibility of production and reproduction of goods and services. While Colonialism was simply a domination that could be opposed, direct production of subjectivities (or Neo-Colonialism?) facilitated the production of consumer-subjects: education, media, entertainment, moved the disciplinary state to a biopolitical production that requires indirect modes of control and domination.

Empowerment became the code name of movements, as was freedom, the two capitalists catch-words and empty concepts that were to replace “justice as inequality of resources”—and not of “rights.” With the Cold war, the so-called struggle for “international human rights” made sure that an equity that is understood as inequality of resources would not be the concern of “freedom” but rather an “inequality of rights” that would allow or “identities” to fight for their rights and that would disseminate “identity movements” across the globe. This was the winning card in an ideological war against all those who actually believed injustice to be an inequality of resources and justice to be an egalitarian redistribution of wealth.