

Capitalism, Neoliberalism and the Renewal of Socialism

*Interview with Greg Albo**

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Praksis (P): Let's start with a general question about the nature of capitalism today. Considering the general direction that the global capitalism moves, there emerges two extreme positions in naming the general tendencies of capitalism today. On the one side, there are some scholars, who argue that the current state of capitalism is in no respect qualitatively new because they say that it is possible to encounter certain similarities between the tendencies of capitalism in the late 19th century and today. For instance, scholars like Hirst and Thompson and to a certain extent Arrighi, say that in terms of the internationalization of capital, the 19th century's capitalism was as global as today's capitalism. On the other side, there are some scholars like Hardt and Negri who argue that we have entered into a new era, which represents a rupture with the classical capitalism so we have to find new categories and concepts to define the current conditions of global economy. How do you position yourself between these two poles?

Greg Albo (GA): I think I don't endure the either pole because it is partly reinstated wrong methodologically. At an abstract level, obviously capitalism has similar dynamics, patterns of reproduction, certain drives and tendencies toward the production, the appropriation and the distribution of value. But historical conditions are never the same; they are always diverse in time and space. Contemporary capitalism has a lot of specific features, which are different from the past. And the question for Marxism is again a better understanding of the abstract laws of capitalism but also its concrete manifestations. I think the contemporary debate in these polarizations around the thinkers you have mentioned are particularly illustrative of a political impasse. Within these polarities we have hard time thinking about how to intervene in this conjuncture; if capitalism is all the same one has sense of certain immobility unless one could overthrow capitalism as a whole, which gives us a very little sense of how to organize and intervene in contemporary capitalism. And if contemporary capitalism is so specific all one has is attempting to intervene in these particular, episodic forms of capitalism today, we get for example an incredible reformism of those people who so much specify contemporary capitalism with post-Fordism. And they attempt to reduce radical politics to particular changes in and around the labour process and technological change. This proved to be a remarkable misreading of what contemporary capitalism, what neoliberalism is and has become. And I think it led to very very bad decisions and strategic orientations within the labour movement. So I think theoretically, there is always a need to understand both the abstract structure of capitalism but it is not putting out to intervene right now to understand the concreteness of any particular, historical situation and find the way to intervene in it with longer term revolutionary goals and objectives. I think that is what we need to focus our attention on.

P: How can you elaborate on the concreteness of this sort of conjuncture?

GA: Elaborating that again both understands more abstract processes and dynamics of capitalism and also understanding its more specific elements. I think at a more abstract level you know the reorganization of capitalism that began in the late 1970s and 1980s was a drive in turn of capitalism to reestablish the political foundations for the production and the appropriation of the value because of the economic crisis, economic impasse of 1970s. So we had a long period of

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attempting to reestablish those conditions, which given with the nature, what capital is, brought a very specific and particular process of producing the value in particular places with particular class relations. And it is also an attempt to realize that value in the world market so that central dynamic at an abstract level with both transforming the conditions for producing value in particular places with particular class relations, shifted the balance of power towards capital away from that labour movements that were ascended in 1970s and towards capital shifted the balance of power away from production. Within this process also remade the conditions for world market that had a lot to do also with the reorganization of the relationship between dominant and dominated social formations, restructuring the entire governance architecture of the world market and also reestablished the conditions for the distribution and the realization of the value. I think that generally, what secured and what makes the historical particularity of neo-liberalism as opposed to the conditions of the postwar period is being a particular political project, that political project has become generalized so we get neoliberalism everywhere no matter when we change political parties and power we tend to get neoliberalism. That is one of the key historical particularities of the period. Another particularity obviously is the forms of the internationalization of capital both the extent of financial internationalization, its new characteristics of the big, so heavily oriented new forms of speculative capital markets. Another characteristic uniqueness of the period is the internationalization of the service capital, which has been through banks, insurance companies, but also consultancies, the whole range of people providing producers' services. That internationalization is a new feature. I think another new feature that has to be accounted for is of course those changes in the labour process, the particular forms of technological change. What has gone on the other side is the particular disorganization of the working classes right now. There is a particular, historically unique phenomenon; much of the sweep of the historical capitalism from the mid-19th century to present was a period of the accumulation of working class capacities. Not always, uniform, but always accumulation of the dominant terms of the state of organization at the workplace, the extent that socialist parties being organized. We are dealing with a historically unique period where both those processes are being reversed either while we have the greatest proletarianization in history. I think that is a unique condition as well and probably leading our political dilemmas as well, exactly that one.

P: I think in relation to the first question we can talk about the nature of capitalist state today. I think a similar kind of polarization that we mentioned in the first question is valid in the nature of capitalist state today. On the one side, there are again those who argue that in parallel with the unprecedentedness of the conditions of today's capitalism, the classical capitalist state is withering away. On the other side, there are some scholars who claim that there is nothing new under the sun. And they still insist on sticking to the idea that the nation-state still possesses its traditional functions. How do you locate yourself in these two poles?

GA: I think contemporary capitalist state remains the locus of power in capitalist societies still where ruling class powers condensed. The nation-state structure however contingently wrapped with capitalism remains an embedded institutional structure to the power relations of capitalism. For your question is again to understand the abstract features of capitalist state and its particularities in the present conjuncture. I think the abstract nature of the capitalist state remains a particular separation from economic exploitation and its providing forms of rule of law, protectionary property relations, and whole set of juridical relations which are specific to capitalism, first and foremost, remain condensed at the nation-state level. And international politics still remains a system of the relations between states; it is the relations of the state system. And what is particular today is a couple of features of that are the reorganization of the state apparatuses internal to the state and the shifting of some of those apparatuses of the state to different levels. Some of the functions of the state have been shifted juridically to the

international level, have been allocated to international level and some have been lowered down to the local and municipalities. There has been an important spatial restructuring of state in the contemporary capitalism. Those that have been done at the international level have particularly been related to the international circulation of capital. And I think new forms of interpenetration and coordination between the power blocks of different countries, which is registered in a different dynamic, the formation of historically unique multinational blocs, and new forms of diplomatic and military relations between imperialist powers. Therefore, power structures of coordination within the imperialist powers, which is historically unique and has to do with how they condition the political and economic structures of the world market. Internal thing to the states, there is, of course, how the apparatuses of the state have become organized under neo-liberalism. And the coercive apparatuses of the state rather than having disappeared or disarrayed have become hardened at the national level in terms of internal policing, internal security structures. For the most part, these have not been allocated to the international level or decentralized to the local level. You see the hardening of the security apparatuses everywhere at that level. The other thing you see is the expansion of the apparatuses of the state dealing with the international circulation of capital and the protection of the property rights structures of capital. And all of these have been strengthened at the national level, whereas the structures dealing with welfare, redistribution, employment policy have been reordered within the state and have been made more marginal, more subordinated to banking policy, stabilization policy and often have been downloaded to the local level as kind of internal distributional politics have splintered and they shifted it down to the local level, where it is harder to find cross-class distributional bargains over property relations in particular.

P: In relation to the same discussion, there have been some debates on the question of revolutionary emancipatory agency. Now I'm going to pass on to some resistance questions. In accordance with the supposed novelty of the current era, it is sometimes claimed that old strategies of resistance such as revolutionary party, working class organizations and class politics do not meet the needs of today's problems, these people tell to replace these so-called outmoded strategies with the new agents such as identity politics, alternative globalization movements or multitude etc. If we, as Marxists, are still insisting on the relevance and necessity of class politics in envisioning an emancipatory project, how can we prove the currency and relevance of our position? In other words, how can we struggle against these ideas, which declare the end of proletariat?

GA: The easiest answer is of course we always prove our politics in practice. In the practice, the proletariat will win but that is more a cliché than an answer. Two things partly break apart; one is the historical development of labour movement has always been an articulation of working class politics to other social struggles and identities. Historically the struggle for women's liberation, struggle for the vote for women was articulated to the struggle of working class movement, took its reference through the working class movement but was never ever historically the same, either there was always an independent women's politics struggling for women's equality apart from the working class movement. When one looks historically at the anti-racist movement, anti-slavery rebellions that occurred historically also took partly in terms of the working class movement, partly apart from the working class movement; they have always had an independent dynamics. The question is partly posed wrong; political position of those against working class politics is partly posed wrong. There were always differentiated social struggles; emancipatory politics was the question of how they were articulated on a broader politics of human emancipation. And through the late 19th and early 20th century, these became especially articulated with the development of emergent socialist movements. Today, what occurred is that the working class movement is irrelevant and the articulation of identity politics is now not in terms of broader projects of emancipation, they have become more

particularistic in their political projects, particularistic goals of identity –important struggles on their own but less articulated to wider political projects of emancipation. And what is paradoxical at the same time, historically working class movement, particularly in this sense more narrow working class politics, trade union movement has never been more open to politics towards women’s liberation, towards gay rights, towards the peace movement. So it is paradoxical at the same time most identity politics movements pulled apart from workers movement, workers movement is more open and positive in engaging these projects in terms of its membership more than it has historically. This is a real historical transformation in narrow working class politics. I think the other part is that we can see with the impasse of working class politics right now: the capacity to address important distributional issues, income distribution across classes that drive ahead with workers struggling to gain a higher portion of the value they produce in terms of the wage struggles, the capacity of workers to struggle over whole regulatory structures of labour market. Without an active working class movement, we can see the difficulty of being able to address those issues. In that sense, we are mainly getting the negative example, the impasse of workers movement being short of limited capacity to address distributional issues. The wider projects of social transformation are completely marginal without a working class movement addressing the general limits of capitalism; without that kind of politics and movement, we see that transformative projects are more difficult to sustain. I think there is a consequence under neoliberalism: the dynamic that started with the relative separation of identity politics away from the socialist movement means that much of these identitarian politics is also finding various forms of accommodation for these struggles internal to neoliberalism. So they have even become more narrow in their own objectives in terms of dealing with narrow civil rights, which can be dealt with in terms of neoliberalism and less about wider projects of egalitarianism that might be internal to those identity politics. So there has been an internal transformation of the strategies of those kinds of movements that you see across Western Europe and North America in particular, but it will be less so outside those places, where struggle for those identity politics is still more directly major struggles for distributional qualities as well.

P: May be these social movements or the multitude of Hardt and Negri were the categories that were replaced for the proletariat but these alternative globalization movements have much more heterogeneous characters. There are also some Marxists inside them; there are also some debates about how to name it. Do you think that it has a promise for class politics or how do you appreciate their future?

GA: I think in one sense we are all part of alternative globalization movements, that such a general term captures all of us. I think it captures the search for working class politics; it captures new forms of NGO political activity; new forms of identity political struggles that are occurring on a global level. It captures a lot of that dynamic. Second thing it captures is that we are searching in a structural way, in a historically unique way, a search for a new internationalism. The internationalisms that dominated socialist movement through the late 19th and 20th centuries, through the various Internationals are all finished. First, Second, Third; Fourth International if you want. They are all finished. Then we are attempting to find new forms of internationalism and what it looks like is not at all clear. Certainly, it is not the World Social Forums, simply because these do not give us very much of the capacity to move from large gatherings of social justice activists, social justice fairs to campaigning organizations. What we are struggling for that level is to find a new internationalism that represents but does not give yet the capacity to struggle. And I think there are new signs of some of these are emerging, these new forms; part of it is in Latin American particular, where the impact of the Bolivarian process in Venezuela is articulating a new Latin American left, which is also finding a way to struggle together, forming a new internationalism out of that. How we will develop

internationalism beyond that is not so clear. I think alternative globalization movements, in particular, its organizational form in the World Social Forum right now is just a necessary step of an internationalism that the socialist movement must have. But we have not found its pure organizational structure yet in the process of trying to historically find that. In that sense, I find myself completely disaffected from the attitude of Hardt and Negri; also Holloway, range of those positions, which think that this form of political spontaneity is enough to what we need at the international level. I don't think that helps us to capture the way that we need to have deeper forms of organizational linkages to break from capitalism and to build the support those political processes, which are engaging in an active way, trying to break away from capitalism and don't give us enough structural capacity to fight.

P: Let's move to our third question. It is related to what you have just said. When we look at the locus of the resistance to neoliberalism today, we see that the organized resistance has taken different forms. On the one side, there is a socialist power in Cuba; and the populist government in Venezuela; and the landless peasant movement in Brazil; and some other revolutionary struggles in other parts of the world. This shows that in line with the specific conditions of the context, the revolutionary struggles would follow different paths. And in one of your articles about Venezuela, you have said that there is no blueprint about making a revolution against capitalism. What could be some conclusions that we can draw for the left when we consider these diverse ways of resistance against capitalism?

GA: Historically after the Russian revolution, we were divided in the left among two main orientations. Internal to the communist movement, following the way that Komintern formed, all the communist parties around the world developed national orientations to socialism. Particularly attempting to find different national compromises with the national bourgeoisie and in-and-around deepening the institutional bases of working class power. So all the political programmes then were structured around various designs of wider popular front and from that popular front conquering state power and institutions at a time. The dissent, which was to a large extent, my assessment of the Trotskyist movement of the Fourth International, was largely a mirror image. For the most part they have had the orientation to argue against socialism in one country and national paths, and then for arguments toward world socialism and arguments then for proletarian revolution, for world government. And all other struggles were subordinated to, different Trotskyist tendencies supported strongly national liberation movements than others, but you know always an orientation to forming a world federation of socialist states, obviously their political objective in the longer term, but to large extent no helping us to find the way to struggle in particular local and national contexts. And I think one of the reasons why the Trotskyist movement was always a marginal political force in the world run, it was never a political force anywhere beyond capturing 5% of orientations in some places is because it never found the way to struggle and put the program for on local and national levels. In one sentence, we are stuck with today; the political dilemma today is trying to find a way behind those political orientations. The national roads, a strategy in the particular way, step by step we will conquer the state power or leaving those kind questions how to struggle, how to overpower at local and national levels to dream of forming an international socialism. That is where I think we have to get away from thinking about particular blueprints, the blueprints of the past. And what we have to do today is to be particularly imaginative and daring in the ways that we imagine making political breakthroughs and it will not be by one of the setbacks of the past. And I think, therefore we should be encouraging, at this point of time, revolutionary, egalitarian movements that are forming in different places, at different points of time and finding new ways to support them; and new ways to help gather those political forces into new concrete organizational expressions. On this I think one can find the leading examples to some extent out of the landless movement in Brazil is one form of community organization, community developments,

community struggles taking revolutionary direction in the ideological thinking that goes along with concrete activities of seizing the land. On the other hand, from a very kind of different trajectory, taking state power in a particular way or taking government like Chavez in Venezuela and finding a way from that position to articulate the different kind of community struggles in a way and each case trying to find new organizational expressions of transformative social projects. In the West, Western Europe or North America, difficulty of finding linkages, organizational expressions of a new radical community politics with new developments within political parties residing as articulations inside neoliberalism yet. Therefore, in those cases, we have not yet seen any kind of breakthrough, in my assessment anyway, of a new kind of transformative politics there. You see pockets of it elsewhere, particularly in Latin America and few places elsewhere with that kind of new breakthroughs occurring.

P: May I have a little objection to what you have said? I think that the idea of permanent revolution has a sense of internationalism of communism. Therefore, I don't think that it should be an obstacle against having some communal, local and national steps. I see that you are criticizing this theory of socialism in one country. But don't you think that a project that does not aim at internationalism can be stuck in isolated places in some specific countries?

GA: If one deals a capitalist world, one need to keep generalizing your politics and finding new ways to struggle; and finding new political formations at the international level is absolutely a strategic conclusion. The difference I have with that is very little specified including *The Transitional Program* of how to think about those struggles in local and national context. The other part of its mirror image within the historical communist movement was to develop national roads and capture national state power with the notion of socialism in one country. Telling that is very much about how to generalize those struggles because there was accepted certain impasse, Cold War impasse at that level, which also he was not very oriented to breaking and bridging this impasse; that cut off many radical movements because of that aspect. Therefore, the notion was to do it all in the national context and when state power by institution because they did not want to upset the international correlation of forces. My view is let's take the strategic lessons less from the past, take the concepts and ideas, and historical examples to think about the present context in refine the way to reimagine what the articulation between local struggles, national struggles and international struggles would be. And less accept those kinds of blueprints as the way we organize and develop our revolutionary organizations today. That is what I mean when we say that the blueprints of the past don't serve as very well anymore, which is not the same the thing as saying that some the concepts of historically learned or historical struggles don't help us to frame when we need to think today. But as revolutionaries, we need to think of a different way of acting today and finding new ways to articulate these political projects today.

P: You were talking about the practical problems of Trotskyism in organizing the masses because of this too much sticking to internationalism and the difficulty of presenting a concrete political project for the people who are suffering from their local / national problems. Our next question will be in that direction too but I think this is a problem not difficult to Trotskyism but it is a problem of many international socialist movements because internationalism has always been a very consistent principle of socialist movement and we see that resistance against capitalism might take different forms with respect to the inequalities generated by different spatial factors. How are we going to take up the question of resistance in advanced capitalist countries? For instance, what about Canada? You are coming from Canada and you are very familiar with the socialist movement there. And as far as we know, the fundamental mutual constraints on which the different parts of the left wing converged is different than the Turkish left. Let us expound our concern more, on the one side we recognize the fact that there are some

specificities with regard to the space and context, where a resistance movement takes place. On the other hand, as socialists we are still defending the internationalist essence of the revolutionary left wing struggle. On the one hand, there is a fact; on the other hand, there is a principle of socialism. So, how is it possible to reconcile this tension? What could be the commonalities that could enable us to put all these struggles in the same context and in the same level? Is this whole slogan of “solidarity” sufficient for resolving this tension?

GA: Development of a new socialist politics, a new kind of socialism, which is often the way Chavez is speaking about a transformative politics today which I think captures those terms. In one sense, internationally the linkages between political activists of all kinds, I will include analysts of NGO movements to political parties to more structured movements; say anti-war movement that meet under the umbrella of World Social Forum are brought their ideology because of the socialist ideology is in the back of the heads of all these political actors. And this historical ideology of socialism that gives us a certain kind of internationalism is still crucial to the linkages of processes of different struggles. In a structured way, where there are still forms of linkages between the Trotskyist movements, historical communist movements to labour movement, to NGOs, I would even say, people who staff them are largely coming out of different kinds of socialist thinking. They provide the linkages, where there is an orientation towards internationalism, although we have not yet discovered a way to confront those new gatherings that occur under the World Social Forum context, from being social justice fairs to being organizational struggles. We have not found those new organizational forms yet. What I think is unique is the disembedding of socialist politics from the workers movement in local and national contexts. Socialism and socialist politics were thrown up by the workers themselves. They were the ideologies that emerged with working class movement then with intellectuals, there is kindly Marx, Engels to Fabians and others articulating different aspects of working class politics. What has occurred is the disembedding of socialist ideas from the working class movement itself, its organized forms in political parties or the trade union movement. And our need is less to find those linkages at the international level to make for a viable socialist politics but to reembed socialist ideas in the working class movement, make it part of working class culture again, make it part of working class organizations. Right now Marxism lives in breeze more in the academy, than in the working class movement itself. There has been a relative separation from those of us with a working class background and educated themselves to become academics from workers movement themselves. We have to reestablish the linkage between socialist ideas and the working class movement. That means we have to look at this as a project of culture, education and as well as political struggle to reembed the ideas of a different society, of a different vision of the way we can live within the workers movement itself. That is I think what we lack. In Western Europe, the different historical development of socialist political movements, in Western Europe you have large historical memories, structures, even parties where socialism was the majority vision, won votes and elections, you know large culturalist institutions. That is both good and bad, you have a historical ideology built up in a national context, socialism has been an integral aspect of national community and national culture as you see in Germany or in England. You know socialism is part of the historical ideological structures of those states. The difficulty there is, of course what became of the socialist movements as organizational entities has completely become accommodated to capitalism and neoliberalism: whether that SPD in Germany with its orientation to structural reforms in the 2010 agenda, or Britain Labour Party under Blairism. They have much in the way that the historical memory but now major institutional obstacles. The difficulty in North America is quite distinct; the development of socialist politics and socialist ideas never formed to the extent they did in Europe so the development of socialist ideas, socialist organizations, structures never formed part of the national political community, the national culture formation to the same extent. The reasons for this are very complex that has to do with the overt strategies

of the ruling classes to break socialist ideas every time they emerged. To some extent, USA is the good example, where ruling classes probably fought socialist ideas and broken socialist organizations more vehemently than anywhere else in the world. We can have a bit difference that there was more room historically for the formation and development of working class identities, working class organizations. So our task there is both to generalize and make socialist ideas part of a national culture, national political identity through welding it within working class politics and winning the culture and ideological traits as much as possible for working class, for socialist ideas. And alongside that beginning to form new political organizations, finding new ways to articulate political organizations in a way to accumulate resources rather than fragmenting them. I think concretely that has a number of tasks; one is finding ways to bring together different elements of the radical left that are formed either communist parties, Trotskyist movements, independent Marxists in a way that they begin practically working together in different forms of political relationships; the second thing is to sustain behold Marxist ideas, culture, strategic orientations within the organized working class and trade union movement and to keep winning space within the organized working class for Marxists and for socialist ideas and strategies towards struggle. The third thing is to find a way into the very specific organizations, where socialist ideas, socialist orientations begin with some residents and begin to build space in those organizations for those ideas and finding then ways to bring these different strands together. I think practically in neoliberalism the way to begin together is less a capacity to form, to have some large national meetings that all assembled these different organizations come together and form a new political grouping. This is not on the agenda right now, although it has to be a longer term political project. What is on the agenda right now is to find ways for particular struggles against neoliberalism to bring these different strands together to provide a practical unity in the struggle against neoliberal initiatives. You can bring those kinds of strands together; say the struggle against the war, the U.S. intervention in Middle East, in Afghanistan or Iraq; in particular campaigns against privatization for example there are youth struggles around the privatization of the health care system in Turkey, England, Canada. You can bring those practical lines together; civics, unions, radical left. With these kinds of alliances we can lean on the defeat of neoliberalism, can block neoliberalism. And other that begin forming a new organic unity among these different fragments. I think crucially than at that level, there is a certain test for socialists and the revolutionary cadres is to show that we can move beyond historical paths and make those ideas and thinking practical in the strategic orientations of these groups. To find the way ideologically to make these linkages to wider projects of social transformation; I think that is the struggle of Marxist cadres right now, particularly in North America, to find the way to bring the elements of these Marxist ideas into this concrete struggles against neoliberalism; and push those struggles along and be the ones making the argument that we need to accumulate across these different types of struggles to find new forms of practical organizations beyond them. I think the final point on this that has to be registered is this involves taking seriously the contemporary social democracy, which organizes much of the working class politics and much of the left. We have to take on the question of analysis of the realignment and accommodation of social democracy towards neoliberalism and we must bring that aspect, the difficulty of challenging neoliberalism without pointing to the fact that contemporary social democracy does not want to break with neoliberalism and operating consistent with neoliberalism.

P: As you know, Turkey somewhat possesses a strategic position in the structuring of international capitalist system. We see for a long time that the developments such as the occupation of Iraq and the EU enlargement process occupy the agenda of this country and that of the Turkish left. As Canadian socialists what do you think about Turkish capitalism's moves in these issues, topics? Let's start with the role of Turkey in the recent occupation.

GA: I want to begin answering this question partly more abstractly. The reorganization of the world market and the international state system and the neoliberalism involves also a reorganization of imperialism. And the reorganization of imperialism today is also about the reorganization of sub-imperial powers. And personally I think Turkey is one of these sub-imperial powers in a particular way. It has always played a strategic role in terms of the geo-military alliances in this area, in the world and plays a sub-imperial power / rule vis-à-vis these military alliances. It is not purely Turkey an imperialized country and it has a subordinated role in the international system but it has its own internal dynamics and its internal orientations. And the Turkish military in particular is a crucial linchpin in international imperialism and plays the role strategically vis-à-vis the imperial powers; plays a reactionary role vis-à-vis the struggles in Palestine, plays a reactionary role vis-à-vis the resistance struggles in Iraq; plays a reactionary role in the struggles of the Kurdish people for self-determination. And we see now, of course a different political turmoil occurring in countries around the Black Sea that Turkey is playing a reactionary role vis-à-vis those political developments. It plays that role actually, a bid of synthesis of the political objectives both Europe and the U.S. of integrating these states within the international capitalist system. So I think in a specific sense the struggles of the socialist movements in Turkey bring into account the Turkish state and particularly Turkish military and its role internationally is very very important struggle for all of us because it is a crucial linchpin in the international state system and in international capitalism. I think the other point is of course very very important sectors of Turkish capital that are internationalizing and becoming important for the circulation of international capital and the penetration of capitalism in these states. Turkey is playing again a particular sub-imperial role and Turkish capital of integrating these states also through the market system. So for example the large role Turkish capitalists play, almost the major role, in the attempted rebuilding of Iraq is absolutely crucial for the integration of Iraq back within the international capitalist system. And Turkish capitalists are playing a similar role vis-à-vis many of the other states in and around the Black Sea. And it plays a crucial role in that sense. And I think it is one of our difficulties everywhere is to understand the new role that the domestic capitalist classes are playing in this sense particularly those occupying an intermediary position within the international capitalist system. They both are imperialized and play a particular subordinate role vis-à-vis, in this case, Europe and U.S. but also have very important roles and projects of their own internationalization and their own attempts to integrate other states within the international capitalist system. I think there are very important struggles going on in Turkey, historical struggles of the socialist movement to bring into account Turkish state and to bring into account the Turkish military in particular remains crucial to widening the space for a new socialist politics. If we can't win these fights in Turkey, it is going to be much more difficult to win them elsewhere. To the extent that we can win some of these fights in Turkey, we can also begin to win them in and around some of the surrounding states, bridging that kind of power and that kind of linkages to the international state system are crucial also to the densening of transformative politics in and around this entire area of the world.

P: Our next question is about the concept of “Social Europe”. Do you think that the working classes of Europe could transform the European integration project into a more social one as opposed to the neoliberal trend that we witnessed in last fifteen years? And also there are some arguments mentioning that the EU is a counter-balancing force against the American imperialism in the Middle East. And EU project is representing a cosmopolitan, humanist project and its some civilizational values that should be spread to other countries especially to Turkey, which suffered from non-democratic practices for a very long time. What do you think about these ideas?

GA: There is a lot to disentangle thinking about EU. I think it has been a minefield of strategic thinking on the part of the left for a long time. Because in one sense the project of socialists has to be the formations of multinational blocs which recognizes explicitly and in an institutional form international solidarity attempting to reverse the uneven development of capitalism to spread levels of development to deal with a whole range of social problems, which do not obviously respect nation-state boundaries. And obviously the project of the socialist movement is to recognize the linkages and solidarity between humanity and forms of political government and at the same time develop an express all those differences of communities around the world and find ways to support them that capitalism obliterates. Obliterates local languages, obviously in Canada this is important because we will obliterate more languages through the development of capitalism in Canada and in any other place of the world through the suppression of the indigenous peoples. You know the struggle against capitalism is also to struggle to find ways of diversity. With that general orientation, the question has always been then what the socialists and left then think about the project of EU? At that level, I think the thinking of socialist left has been a mess that is because I think there has been a very economistic orientation to think that the project of that kind of multinational federation could be built on the backs of integrating and making more interdependent capital and capitalism. Therefore that somehow the project and foundation for a “Social Europe” or “Socialist Europe”, we can think of that could be built on the basis of internationalizing German capital, internationalizing French capital. This was an incredibly economistic understanding of that project. And this has been a major travesty of the socialist left weigh back to have that kind of orientation. This economistic understanding of building a new socialism. I think the second point of this analysis is the fault lines of the French left was to say that the capitalism has become too big for national spaces and therefore all new distributional projects have to be formed at the multinational level. Therefore the stake of socialist politics now has to be founded at the European level. And therefore an orientation to supporting this way and that way, willy-nilly European integration because this is the level, where politics has to be founded. Again I think this was mistake of historical proportion because it led to the support of a single European Act and the neoliberal integration of the EU based on the symbolic presence of Social Charter, juridical social rights. They had no policy built around it at the European level. And no explicit policy objectives at the European level and in fact the Social Charter has become a basis for the political right and the social democratic parties to argue for structural adjustment policies at the European level now in terms of employment policies, welfare policies etc. So that trade-off was quite clearly a strategic failure of historical proportion for European working class movement. I think in that sense what has to be rethought is the whole approach to the EU and the whole approach to think about what Europe is. Let’s take a step back and rethink what is EU institutional structure and what is its objective now. If one looks at the major initiatives that are formed in last ten years, EU constitution, the Stability and Growth Pact, the Treaty of Nice, the enlargement project and the Maastricht Treaty on monetary union, they have all had neoliberal strategic orientation and have been a project of deepening neoliberalism. The consequence of this has been to fasten internationalization of capital inside the EU and as a basis from there to the internationalization European capital on an international scale as well. The other corollary of this is to reorient European stabilization policies; European social and unemployment policies towards the defense of the internationalization of capital in particular. So exchange rate pressures, the pressures from the internationalization of capital inside Europe and outside Europe have all been on the working class movement. Anybody thinking about the dynamic of contemporary capitalism would have pointed out that would be the outcome of those institutional and constitutional changes that have occurred at the European level. And therefore conclusion would be this would be the impact of disorganizing the working class movement across Europe. This systematically has been the consequence: the internationalization of European capital and the disorganization of workers movement across Europe. Obviously now what has to be found is a new way of struggling and

fighting for a different orientation within working class movement. Many elements of the left are coming together to point out this neoliberal dynamic; the other that was not pointed out as much but was the central objective of this course was the militarist, the imperialist, the revisionist are all behind of the next stage of European Union to be able to have a structure to integrate the dominated countries in-and-around Europe and discipline them to be in Europe as capitalist states. Another particular objective of developing a European defense capacity, developing European military industries – this was in the constitution- and to reorient European capacity, rapidly intervening hotspurs around the world, which is particularly obviously an attempt to discipline different facets of resistance. Now the question of whether this, then a project to develop a European counterweight to US: Yes or no, neither and both. Obviously capital always forms both in particular places and also internationally. In assessing that question, we have to understand the nature of the internationalization of capital today. The internationalization of capital today has obviously aspects of competitive rivalry for the integration of different countries within the international state system, to different poles of imperialism. And the EU project obviously is partly about that competitive rivalry and the integration of different countries in-and-around Europe within the European wide zone. That was partly a political project and there is a specific imperial project, specific to Europe at that level. The other part of international capitalism today is the interdependence that has occurred and is quite different from the classical age of imperialism. And that there is an extensive interdependence between the capitalist groups within different states; American capital is in Germany, German capital is in US. They have different orientations to building national economic spaces in the past and there is extensive coordination between these zones over the world market. Therefore, rivalry in the classical sense, competitive rivalry spreading over to military rivalries between Europe and U.S. seems to be a massive misreading of contemporary capitalism. At this level what we see is there is still the most extensive coordination possible between the Europe and U.S. in and around these types of projects. Yes the Europeans have some different orientations; NATO has some different orientations between unilateralism and multilateralism. But this is not a break of rivalry in the sense of geopolitical, direct political conflict between Europe and North America. This is a difference between friends on how to beat up their enemies, that is all.

P: Our last question will be about us. We are all Marxist academicians in the universities. What could be your message for the socialists in the universities? How can we bridge the gap between academics and actual political practice? What should we do as socialists in the universities?

GA: Our first responsibility is towards students in the sense that one has to be the best of scientist. That is the teachers; that is our objective. One wins people to socialist ideas because of the relevance of our arguments. Our ability is to explain the world; our ability is to give the most integrated understanding of the natural and the scientific world. And I think widening the space for scientific debate also widens the space for socialist ideas above all others. Secondly, our responsibility is to the institutions we work in. If we do not treat these institutions as a transitory spaces of employment, but also important spaces of production and organization they have to be democratized. We have to engage in those struggles for democratization within these institutions in terms of unions of students, unions of teachers and calling to account the administrators both at the university and the state level to always be democratizing of the institutions of the project, democratizing of the institutions of the education. One of the greatest gains of the working class movement through the 20th century was the insistence that the working class kids, working class children have the right for higher education. And what we see is that the neoliberalism is reversing that in particular by the spread of user fees against the demands of the socialist movement historically of free education. We are losing the space and argument that education should be free also at the university level. And it is terrible for the university unions, for the

faculty that they have not supported the fight against the rise of tuition as much as they should have. That is an important struggle that has to be reconnected. Finally, of course, there is the relation of university lecturers to wider social life. I don't think this is a question that should be spelled out in a program, where three hours you teach in the classroom, you must teach four hours in the community or something like that. I don't think these kinds of formulas will work, but I do think there is a political and moral imperative to connect the research that we do, and the educational capacities that we develop with the working class movement, with the socialist movement to participate in those struggles, to be part of those struggles, and to reattach as an organic intellectual of those struggles. Therefore, those struggles both shaping our agendas but also those agendas of wider socialist politics shaping our own agendas. I think one of the paradoxes the New Left of 1960s and 1970s in the struggle for working class access to higher education, struggle for the penetration of Marxist and socialist ideas in the university curricula, and winning that struggle has paradoxically disconnected people often from wider political engagements and there is a need to reestablish these intellectuals with the wider working class movement as organic intellectuals rather than intellectuals apart from the working class movement. I think that is the agenda for those of us working in the university system.

P: Thank you very much.