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*On the dialectics of power and revolution***

A few reflections on the work of John Holloway

Change the World Without Taking Power

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**translated from Greek by Anna Holloway

"This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end — the abolition of classes"
Resolution of the London Conference on Working Class Political Action as adopted by the London Conference of the International, September, 1871

"The question of power cannot be evaded or brushed aside because it is the key question determining *everything* in a revolution's development and in its foreign and domestic policies."
V.I. Lenin, "One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution"

"In short, without the form of the Party, the movement remains caught in the vicious cycle of "resistance", one of the big catchwords of "postmodern" politics, which likes to oppose "good" resistance to power to a "bad" revolutionary takeover of power. The key "Leninist" lesson today is: politics without the organisational form of the Party is politics without politics, so the answer to those who want just the (quite adequately named) "New Social Movements" is the same as the Jacobins' answer to the Girondin compromisers: "You want revolution without a revolution!"
Slavoj Žižek, *Revolution at the Gates, Žižek on Lenin, The 1917 Writings*

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Introduction

Without doubt, the collapse of the regimes of "really existing socialism", at a period when the politics and ideology of neoliberalism had already prevailed on a global scale, caused many to feel defeated and disappointed. On the other hand, one must admit that the "fall of Rome" revealed the need to elaborate a theory of communism as a true movement under *new* conditions and urged us to go deep down to the *root* of the problem and search for a *contemporary* theory of revolution.

The, more or less forgotten, words of young Marx were once again dramatically inscribed in our memory: "To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But for man the root is man himself".[1] And, in this sense, I believe Professor John Holloway can undoubtedly be considered a *radical* thinker. Against the grey backdrop of the collective denials and under the faint rays of light shed by the so-called 'anti-globalisation movement', Holloway digs into the soil of revolutionary theory and practice of the 20th-century communist movement so as to get to the root, man himself. The purpose of this venture is none other than to cultivate the evergreen tree of revolution, so that it may, through new methods and practices, give fruit once again, other than the bitter fruit tasted by those who gave in to the charms of the dream of revolution in the relatively recent or far-off past.

In the first place, Holloway's work is a token of positive response to the Marxian *imperative* of changing the world: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it".[2] So, then, let's change the world, Holloway agrees; however, according to his line of argument, a radical change of the world, a change towards the communist direction, implies *not* taking power.

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[1] See Marx Karl, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, vol.1., p.385-408 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm

[2] 11th Thesis on Feuerbach : "Die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden interpretiert; es kommt aber darauf an, sie zu verändern." Note the syntactic absense of the subject in the second semi-sentence, where Marx mentions not the interpretation, but the change of the world.

In what follows, I will approach this line of argument with a critical eye, moving upon three different but intertwining tracks - epistemological, ontological and sociopolitical. In any case, I reject the cold and value-free posture towards Holloway's theorem. Besides, I do not believe that access to the truth is guaranteed in terms of a cognitive-theoretical purity. On this, let me recall Slavoj Žižek's bold formulation:

> "Lenin's premise –which, today, in our era of postmodern relativism, is more pertinent than ever-- is that universal truth and partisanship, the gesture of taking sides, are not only not mutually exclusive, but condition each other: the universal truth of a concrete situation can be articulated only from a thoroughly partisan position; truth is, by definition, one-sided."[3]

Indeed, *militancy* opens the way towards the truth. But not any kind of militancy. From my own militant point of view, the ***open Marxism*** of the author of the much-discussed *Change the World Without Taking Power,* which bears the characteristic subtitle *The Meaning of Revolution Today,*[4] will be confronted critically through the deployment of the wealth of a Marxist tradition that he *chose* to dismantle and reject, in parts, as mainly responsible for the *bankruptcy* of the communist revolutions of the 20th century.

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[3] Slavoj Žižek, "Afterword: Lenin's choice", as included in *Revolution at the Gates, A selection of Writings from February to October 1917. V.I.Lenin,* (edited and with an Introduction and Afterword by Slavoj Žižek), Verso, London and New York, p.177.

[4] The book was first published in English in 2002 by "Pluto Press", while the Greek edition was published by "Savvalas" in 2006, transl. Anna Holloway.

I. The *paradigm* of "open Marxism": an epistemological introduction to Holloway's theory on "the meaning of revolution today"

To fully understand Holloway's perception of science, in general, and of Marxism as a theory of revolution, more specifically, one must consider the indissoluble connection between the theorist's views and the epistemological and philosophical *paradigm* which at the beginning of the 1990s came to be known as **"open Marxism"**.

In 1992, approximately ten years before the publication of *Change the World Without Taking Power*, the first two volumes of the three-volume work ***Open Marxism*** were published. It was a collective work, edited by Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn and Kosmas Psychopedis, including, amongst others, articles by Antonio Negri and John Holloway, who was co-editor of the third volume, published in 1995.[5]

So, let us observe how the theoretical undertaking of open Marxism is approached by its own proponents in the introduction to the first volume of their scientific brainchild:

> "Almost *all* 1980s Marxism counts as 'closed' Marxism in this, scientistic and positivistic, sense. [...] Hence, the timeliness of supplying an alternative reference-point: open Marxism. 'Openness', here, refers not just to a programme of empirical research –which can elide all too conveniently with positivism—but to the openness of Marxist categories themselves. This openness appears in, for instance, a dialectic of subject and object, of form and content, of theory and practice, of the constitution and reconstitution of categories in and through the development, always crisis-ridden, of a social world. Crisis refers to contradiction and to contradiction's

[5] Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), *Open Marxism*, Pluto Press, London 1992, vol. I, II. Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, John Holloway and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), *Open Marxism*, Pluto Press, London 1995, vol. III

> movement: this movement underpins, and undermines, the fixity of structuralist and teleological-determinist Marxism alike. Rather than coming forward simply as a theory of domination -- 'domination' reporting something inert, as it were a heavy fixed and given weight—open Marxism offers to conceptualise the contradictions internal to domination itself. Crisis, understood as a category of contradiction, entails not just danger but opportunity. Within theory, crisis enunciates itself as critique".[6]

In this context, as its proponents themselves claim, open Marxism emerges in opposition to a ***closed Marxism***, a Marxism which either accepts the theoretical horizons of the given world as if they were its own, or gives in to a teleological or causalist determinism.[7] The closed character of such an epistemological and generally philosophical pattern is recognised in that it approaches social relations, as well as conceptual categories themselves, *qua* things; therefore, the object of open Marxist criticism *par excellence* is so-called ***fetishism***.[8] According to the theoretical representatives of the open Marxism, fetishism, insofar as it is the expression of the ***reification*** of social relations, i.e. an inverted form of relations between people as relations between things, *transforms* Marxism from a programme/process of critique into a closed and fossilised ideological system.

In short, "openness" is proposed and applied mostly as a synonym of ***critique***,[9] while the "closed character" refers mainly to fetishism, which was targeted by the rich theoretical tradition of radical thinkers such as Luxemburg, the young Lukács, Korsch, Bloch, Pashukanis, Adorno, and other more or less renowned intellectuals mentioned by the proponents of open Marxism. [10]

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[6] Ibid., vol. I (*Dialectics and History*), p.xi
[7] Ibid., p.xii
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., p.xiii
[10] Ibid.., p.xii

Through such a lens, the theorists of open Marxism refuse to approach the social act as a simple observation of the "unfolding of structural or deterministic 'laws"'.[11] In this sense, the *opening up* of the categories themselves imposes not the pinning down of categories as things in the "solid ground" of a system of social structures, but their dynamic evolution as theoretical resonances of social processes in the "quicksand" of class struggle, where, according to the theorists of open Marxism, "instead of the theoretical certainty of a Marxism of dogmatic closure, open Marxism reclaims the incompleteness of the process of thinking and readopts [...] the unpredictability of the movement of class struggle".[12]

In this sense, the open character of the categories is organically linked to the fluidity which derives from the "antagonistic nature of social existence" itself, a fluidity which is caused, in the final analysis, by class struggle and its own character, equally open as regards its outcome.

However, it is not only through the critique of fetishism that the *paradigm* of open Marxism is constructed and supported. Using the classic Marxist posture on the ***unity of theory and practice*** as a point of reference, the proponents of open Marxism note that:

> "Open Marxism urges both the opening of concepts on to practice, whose capacity for renewal and innovation always surprises us, and the mediating of that practice through categories of a critical and self-critical kind. Thereby, [open Marxism] transcends the dichotomy: theory *or* practice. The notion that theory and practice form a unity is as old as Marxism itself; however, traditional schools of Marxism [...] have tended to see the theorists as standing outside of society and as reflecting, externally, upon it. Within such conceptual frameworks, the unity of theory and

[11] Ibid., vol. II (*Theory and Practice*), p. xi
[12] Ibid.,p.xii

> practice can amount only to the *application* of theory to practice. Structuralism and voluntarism are dichotomous, though conjoint, outcomes of such an approach. Structuralism and voluntarism are complementary inasmuch as they are the result of the separation between allegedly abstract laws and subjectivity. Open Marxism moves beyond such a dichotomy by acknowledging theory to obtain in and of practice and by acknowledging practice (that is, human or social practice) to occur only in some reflectively considered, or unreflectively assumed, set of terms. Theory can be no less concrete than practice, and practice can be no less abstract than theory. We do not have two movements dualistically counterposed but a single theoretico-practical class movement which, to be sure, contains differences and diversity within itself.[13]

On the other hand, however, it becomes obvious that the theorists of open Marxism try to upgrade, in an epistemological but also generally philosophical way, the concept of ***relation*** over that of ***structure***. They essentially reject the notion of capital itself as structure --which imposes *limits* on the theory and practice of the active subject—and, instead, favour the approach of capital as a relation amidst which class struggle, ever-open as to its outcome, occurs: "understanding capital as a social relation implies that there are no inescapable lines of development. Alleged 'lines of development' are the fetishised forms of the capital-labour relation itself, i.e. of class struggle".[14]

It is in the context of this antagonistic relation between capital and labour that, according to this same line of argument, capital continuously tends to ensure its reproduction, inscribing and subjecting the other pole of the relationship, i.e. labour, to its own conditions. Capital is approached by open Marxism both as a ***relation*** within which class antagonism takes place, but also as a ***subject***, i.e. an active pole of a relationship whose opposite pole is labour.

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[13] Ibid.,pp.xiii-xiv
[14] Ibid.,p.xii

More specifically, it must be underlined that the representatives of open Marxism, following at this point the line drawn in the 1960s by the *operaista (autonomist/workerist)* Mario Tronti,[15] consider this relation between capital and labour to be defined by an ***asymmetry*** definitely crucial for Communist revolutionary theory: "capital depends upon labour, for its valorisation, but labour for its part in no way depends, necessarily, on capital's rule".[16]

This argument by Tronti is brought up again in the context of open Marxism by Werner Bonefeld, who points out that "capital cannot autonomise itself from living labour; the only autonomisation possible is on labour's side. Capital's domination is a process of its own self-contradictory mode of existence."[17] At the same time, capital, insofar as it prevails in its antagonistic relation to labour, imposes upon the latter, albeit temporarily, the form which is needed in order to satisfy its own (capital's) needs. This agrees with the philosophical approach which sees forms not as static recipients of a certain content, but as antagonistic and asymmetric processes.[18]

In this context, class struggle, as the mode of existence of classes and, therefore, as a process of their constitution and reconstitution between and amidst antagonism, emerges as a ***logical and historical determinant/precondition of class structures.***

> "I want to show", Bonefeld insists, "that 'structures' are modes of existence of the class antagonism of capital and labour. The 'laws of capitalist development' are an abstraction in action, a historical reality, a process and a movement of the presence of labour within capital. [...] The notion of the primacy of class antagonism effectively says that structures do not exist. Of course in a sense

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[15] I refer to the article by Mario Tronti "Lenin in England", first published in *Classe Operaia* in January 1964 and also referred to by John Holloway in *Change the World Without Taking Power*.

[16] Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), ibid., vol. II (*Theory and Practice*), p.xiii.

[17] Werner Bonefeld, "Social Constitution and the Form of the Capitalist State", *Open Marxism*, ibid., vol.I (*Dialectics and History*), p. 103

[18] As Werner Bonefeld notes, ibid. p.105, "form is seen here as the *modus vivendi* of antagonistic relations".

> they *do* exist, but they exist only as modes of existence of class antagonism and hence as social process, and not only as social process but as historical results of the working of class antagonism and hence as historical premises for class struggle. As such, structures exist as things *qua* reification of human relations". [19]

To sum up: through the epistemological/philosophical prism of open Marxism, the fetishist forms used to perceive social relations *call* for a comprehension using their *open character* as a starting point. What is actually needed is the re-interpretation of those static and lifeless forms as life-giving processes, class struggle itself being the most eminent amongst them, at least according to Marxism. In these terms, alienation, for example, is not considered the outcome of a static structure based on the private ownership of the means of production, but the contrary: private ownership itself is perceived as the outcome of a process through which living labour becomes alienated and exists.[20]

Thus, we conclude in the drawing of a crucial epistemological/methodological path:

At a moment when the fetishism of capital and commodity, this *religion* of capitalism, thrusts us towards a perception of the world as a system of structures and things, open Marxism reminds us of the Marxian critique: we must *open up* anything that appears as a thing, i.e. statically, and approach it as a *relation*, as an *open process*, i.e. in the dynamics of its contradictory movement.

Condensing the epistemological proposal of open Marxism in the words of Werner Bonefeld, we read:

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[19] Ibid., p p.98, 114

[20] Werner Bonefeld, "Capital as Subject and the Existence of Labour", in Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, John Holloway and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), *Open Marxism*, vol.III (*Emancipating Marx*), p.205

> "Capital, however, is not a thing. Marx's critical insight focuses on the question why human beings produce, through their own labour, a reality which increasingly enslaves them. This insight throws into relief the treatment of either capital or labour as things in themselves, or as two externally related subjects [...] Capital is thus constituted as a living contradiction. Contradictions can not be defined, as if they were a world apart from human social practice. Rather, human social practice constitutes, suffuses and contradicts the perverted world of things".[21]

However, one could claim that, in a sense, the discourse of open Marxism regarding capital and its fetishism merely ***repeats*** Marx's own analysis. Indeed, the author of *Grundrisse* and *Das Kapital* approached and analyzed ***capital as a relation***, he studied its genesis, accumulation and modes of transformations as processes that evolve through the relation of capital with living labour and its taming under the form of wage labour. It is Marx, *par excellence,* who refused to reduce capital and commodity to things or to a set of things, seeking, in each case, the social relation that defined their becoming and their being.

I will not exhaust the argumentation on this, indeed crucial, issue. Instead, I will content myself with selecting and setting out certain samples of Marxian literature on this subject, as it evolved during the years that Marx occupied himself with the critique of political economy.

So, let us begin with a characteristic fragment of Marx's lecture at the German Working Men's Club in Brussels in 1847, which was published on April 4th, 1849, under the title "Wage Labour and Capital" in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

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[21] Werner Bonefeld, "The Principle of Hope in Human Emancipation: On Holloway", *Herramienta*, http://www.herramienta.com.ar

> "A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become capital. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold is itself money, or sugar is the price of sugar.
>
> Capital also is a social relation of production. It is a bourgeois relation of production, a relation of production of bourgeois society. The means of subsistence, the instruments of labour, the raw materials, of which capital consists – have they not been produced and accumulated under given social conditions, within definite special relations? Are they not employed for new production, under given special conditions, within definite social relations? And does not just the definite social character stamp the products which serve for new production as capital?"[22]

But also in the *Grundrisse* of the 1857-1858 period, Marx insists on analytical approaches[23] or condensed formulations, such as the following:

> "Finally, the result of the process of production and realisation is, above all, the reproduction and new production of the *relation of capital and labour itself*, of *capitalist and worker*. This social relation, production relation, appears in fact as an even more important result of the process than its material results. And more particularly, within this process the worker produces himself as labour capacity, as well as the capital confronting him, while at the same time the capitalist produces himself as capital as well as the living labour capacity confronting him. Each reproduces itself, by reproducing its other, its negation. The capitalist produces

[22] Karl Marx, «Wage Labour and Capital", in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.6, pp.407,408 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/ch05.htm

[23] On this, .see Karl Marx's analysis in Notebook IV of *Grundrisse*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.42, esp.363 ff.

> labour as alien; labour produces the product as alien. The capitalist produces the worker, and the worker the capitalist etc.[24]

A few years later, in his economic works of the 1861-1864 period, and especially in the draft of Chapter 6 of *Capital*, where he refers to the results of the immediate process of production, Karl Marx mentions:

> "Capital is no more a *thing* than money is. In capital, as in money, definite *social relations of production between persons* are expressed *as the relations of things to persons*, or definite social connections appear as *social characteristics belonging naturally* to things. As soon as the individuals confront each other as free persons, there is no production of surplus value without a *wage system*. Without the production of surplus value there is no capitalist production, hence no capital and no capitalist! Capital and wage labour [...] merely express two factors in the same relation."[25]

It is, in essence, the same line of approach to the relation between capital and wage labour, but also to capital itself as a social relation, that is phrased in the most strict --epistemologically speaking-- way in the pages of *Capital*, with formulations such as this:

> "Capital, land labour! But capital is not a thing, it is a definite social relation of production pertaining to a particular historical social relation, which simply takes the form of a thing and gives this thing a specific social character. Capital is not the sum of the material and produced means of production. Capital is the means of

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[24] Marx, *Grundrisse*, ibid., p.371 (english translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch09.htm) c

[25] Karl Marx, "The Direct Production Process", draft of Chapter 6 of *Capital*, in Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, vol.34, p.355 ff.

> production as transformed into capital, these being no more capital in themselves than gold and silver are money."[26]

So, is there any doubt that it was Marx, long before the theorists of open Marxism, who systematically approached concepts and *material* realities, such as capital and money, as a *condensation* of social relations and corresponding social process? None whatsoever! By no means do we discover America by claiming, in the 1990s, that "for Marx the social individual in capitalism has no existence outside perverted forms", that "capital has no logic independent of labour's social practice", or that "Marx's theory of value is, foremost, a theory of 'social constitution'".[27]

Neither does the programmatic affirmation that "Marxism is an emancipatory theory and, as such, must always criticize not only a perverted social existence but, and at the same time, the perversion of thought through which it [Marxism] itself exists"[28] lay claim to a prize of originality. Let us remember that Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, for example, had already reached the same conclusion in the 1930s, when he wrote that "the philosophy of praxis is an expression of historical contradictions; it is, actually, the most complete expression, as it is the most conscious" [29]

So, where lies the sharp edge of the *ambitious* theoretical plan to emancipate not only Marxism, but Marx himself, that the representatives of open Marxism propose and defend? In their own words:

> "The first concern is the emancipation of Marx (and Marxism) from the sociological and economic heritage which has grown up around it under the banner of 'scientific Marxism' [...] We regard

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[26] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol.III, p.953.

[27] Werner Bonefeld, "Capital as Subject and the Existence of Labour",in Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, John Holloway and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), *Open Marxism*, ibid., vol.III (*Emancipating Marx*), pp.197-203.

[28] Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, John Holloway and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), *Open Marxism*, o.π., vol.III (*Emancipating Marx*), p.3

[29] Antonio Gramsci, *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1996, pp.118-119

> (open) Marxism as the site of a self-reflection which clears the way towards a defetishised and emancipated social world. Only if we work to clear the massive deadweight of positivist and scientistic/economistic strata can Marxism emerge again as a constitutive moment in that project of emancipation which is its heartland and its home. [...] The Open Marxism project does not aim to reconstruct Marx's thought, in the sense of presenting an interpretation which masquerades as the sole "correct" one. Such an approach would not be helpful, for it would presuppose the possibility of a uniform and finished interpretation of Marx's work. Instead we wish to reconstruct the pertinent theses of his work with a view to freeing them from the ballast of their dogmatic presentation."[30]

At this point, all we have to do is closely observe the main lines of this plan to *liberate* Marx and Marxism from its *positivist* and *economistic* dependencies, a plan which the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power*, John Holloway, tries to materialize. Amongst the representatives of open Marxism, he is the one to try to organically link this specific theoretical model with the multifarious, so-called "anti-globalisation" social movements.

II. The epistemological issue: Holloway's argumentation as a critique of the tradition of "scientific Marxism"

Holloway's critique of "scientific Marxism" is, in essence, the process through which the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* formulates his own proposals on science and knowledge, through the development and expansion of the epistemological points of open Marxism. In this sense, it is

[30] Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, John Holloway and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.), *Open Marxism*, ibid., vol.III(*Emancipating* Marx), p.1

interesting to clarify from the beginning how the author himself places and defines his work in relation to the multidimensional Marxist tradition:

> "The most powerful current of negative thought is undoubtedly the Marxist tradition. However, the development of the Marxist tradition, both because of its particular history and because of the transformation of negative thought into a defining '-ism', has created a framework that has often limited and obstructed the force of negativity. This book is therefore not a Marxist book in the sense of taking Marxism as a defining framework of reference [...] far less is it neo-Marxist or post-Marxist. The aim is rather to locate those issues that are often described as 'Marxist' in the problematic of negative thought, in the hope of giving body to negative thought and of sharpening the Marxist critique of capitalism."[31]

Therefore, the category of ***negation***-- or, to put it in other words that Holloway himself alternatively uses, the category of ***non-identity***-- is rendered crucial. The evident influence of Adorno's ***negative dialectics*** on Holloway's thinking, mentioned at many occasions in the pages of his work,[32] urges the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power*, to claim that "for Marx, science is negative. The truth of science is the negation of the untruth of false appearances. In the post-Marx Marxist tradition, however, the concept of science", Holloway claims, "is turned from a negative into a positive concept".[33]

And for clarity's sake he explains that, contrary to what many erroneously claim, Engels is not the sole responsible for this "positivisation" of science and of Marxist theory. Certainly, the author claims, the pamphlet "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" played a decisive role in the determination of

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[31] John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power. The Meaning of Revolution Today*. Pluto Press, London, 2002, pp.8-9

[32] In a characteristic reference to Adorno's negative dialectics, Holloway, ibid. p..74, mentions: "Over all our reflections on identity stands the terrible warning of Adorno: 'Auschwitz confirmed the philosopheme of pure identity as death'"

[33] Holloway ibid. p.118

the identity of "scientific Marxism"; it is also true that this tradition of "scientific Marxism" was developed through time by theorists such as Kautsky, Lenin, Luxemburg and Pannekoek. Nevertheless, still according to the author, the "positivisation" of Marxist theory "is far more deep-rooted than that would suggest. It certainly finds expression in some of Marx's own writings (most famously the '1859 Preface' to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [...].[34]

One cannot help but be impressed by the broadness of the spectrum of theorists and works that contributed, according to Holloway, to the determination of a Marxist positivism or, more accurately, to the *absorption* of Marxist critique by the positivist version of science. Indeed, one is even more impressed when focusing on the content and characteristics that the author attributes, in an undifferentiated manner, to contrasting theoretical approaches, so as to *construct* the object of his critique, what he calls the "tradition of scientific Marxism". According to the author himself: "In the post-Marx Marxist tradition the concept of science is turned from a negative into a positive concept". It is, of course, the already mentioned tradition from which -- as open Marxism had foretold—Marx himself must be *liberated*, as he too gave in to the sirens of *positivism* and *scienticism* in certain aspects of his work!

To be more specific, the line of argument of the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* in relation to Marxism as a science evolves around the following axes, which must be specified before we can approach them with a critical eye:

1. Claiming that, in Marx, science has a chiefly negative and in this sense critical character, he determines three cognitive-theoretical and ultimately *political* waves that urge Marxism towards ***positivism*** and ***scienticism***. As we already noted, the first of these waves unfolds in the texts of Marx himself, the most

[34] Ibid., p. 119

characteristic being, according to Holloway, the 1859 Preface to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.* The second and most powerful wave is constituted and developed through the dialectics of nature, as introduced by Engels, while the third one, under the strong Engelsian influence in the sphere of German Social Democracy, is embedded in the thought of its major representatives such as Kautsky and Luxemburg and, through them, reaches until Lenin. In the context of such an approach, this course towards positivism would undoubtedly find its completion in the form of the "scientific Marxism" of the Soviet text-books. It is precisely on the basis of such a consideration that Holloway concludes:

> "The collapse of the Soviet Union represents both a danger to Marxism and a liberation. The danger is that it will simply become a dead language, with fewer and fewer people reading *Capital* and being able to understand all the debates that presuppose a knowledge of Marx's work. The liberation is that we are at last freed of the positivisation of Marxism that the Soviet tradition represented and able to sharpen Marxism as negative thought".[35]

2. The downgrading of the negative, i.e. *critical*, character of Marxian thought, as occurs especially in the sphere of "scientific Marxism", marks its mutation into a ***functionalist theory of society***. According to Holloway, "the integration of Marxism into social science, far from giving it a secure home, actually undermines the basis of the categories which Marxists use. The understanding of Marxism as a theory of society gives rise to a particular type of social theory which can be described as functionalist".[36] Functionalism as a characteristic of "scientific Marxism" consists, on the one hand, in that everything is now studied through the lens of the reproduction of the capitalist system and, on the other, in that the greater objective of changing the world is relegated to a more or less far-off future.

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[35] Ibid., Ch.1, fn.12, p. 216
[36] Ibid., p.136

To put it in Holloway's words,

> "Functionalism, or the assumption that society should be understood in terms of its reproduction, inevitably imposes a closure upon thought. It imposes bounds upon the horizons within which society can be conceptualised. In Marxist functionalism, the possibility of a different type of society is not excluded, but it is relegated to a different sphere, to a future. Capitalism is a closed system *until* –until the great moment of revolutionary change comes".[37]

3. Treating Marxism as a science, in the spirit of what Holloway defines and denounces as "scientific Marxism", leads to an ***instrumental approach*** to knowledge itself. In this sense, all that is defined as knowledge or science is used as a tool in the hands of privileged owners in order to enlighten and, ultimately, subjugate those who have not yet been enlightened by scientific knowledge. Class struggle itself, according to Holloway, is treated by such a *scientific paradigm* not as a "process of self-emancipation", but as an "instrument to achieve a preconceived end".[38]

4. The belief that Marxist science can foresee, by itself and without the shadow of a doubt, the future of class struggle, of revolution and of the communist society that will result from a deterministically developing and socially materialised **Logic of History**, is yet another crucial point which, according to Holloway, characterizes the deviation of Marxist and Marxian critique towards a closed and dogmatic system of theses. In other words, in the cognitive and theoretical corpus of Marxism, the category of ***certainty*** prevails over those of ***contingency*** and ***indeterminacy***, thus leading the process of critique to stagnation.

As the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* claims and monotonously repeats,

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[37] Ibid., p.137
[38] Ibid., p.127

> "In the tradition of scientific Marxism, criticism does not play a central role. Certainly there is criticism in the sense of denunciation of the evils of capitalism; but there is no criticism in the sense of the genetic criticism of identity. [..] The core of orthodox Marxism is the attempt to enlist certainty on our side. This attempt is fundamentally misconceived: certainty can only be on the other side, the side of domination. Our struggle is inherently and profoundly uncertain."[39]

5. Immediately related with the epistemological and philosophical-historical notion of certainty is, according to Holloway's analysis, the ***absorption of subjectivity*** in the profound field of objective reality. "Science, in the Engelsian tradition which became known as 'Marxism' is understood as the exclusion of subjectivity: 'scientific' is identified with 'objective'". [40]

In this sense, it is rendered obvious that Holloway blames the 'Engelsian tradition' for the subjection of Marxian critique to the model of scientific positivism, a process that, according to the author, is mainly materialised through its dialectical nature, as brought forward by Engels and developed not only through the work of the major representatives of the Second International, but even that of revolutionary Marxists such as Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky, who, while trying to resist positivism and economism, were not able to avoid ***objectivism***, meaning subjugation of the subject to the object or, in other words, the subduing of process to structure:

> "Against the quietistic, wait-and-see interpretations of historic necessity favoured by the main body of the Second International, all the revolutionary theorists of the period (Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, Pannekoek, and so on) stressed the need for active

[39] Ibid., p.138
[40] Ibid., p. 121

> revolutionary intervention. But this emphasis on the subjective was seen in all cases as complementary to (if not subordinate to) the objective movement of capitalism." [41]

6. Ultimately, and in full consonance with the epistemological paradigm of what is known as "open Marxism", Holloway detects the root of the dogmatism expressed by the tradition of "scientific Marxism" in the overlooking of the issue of ***fetishism***: "a Marxism that is blind to the question of fetishism is inevitably a fetishised Marxism".[42] Fetishism corrodes the core of Marxian theory itself, tending to transform it from critical thought and science of denial and subversion into a fossilised system of theses for the interpretation of the capitalist world.

And yet! Let me insist: this *epistemology* which defends the cause of changing the world without taking power is resisted not only by the work of Marx himself but also by that of Marxist thinkers, such as Lenin, Luxemburg and others, who Holloway indistinctively seeks to incorporate to what he defines as "the Marxist tradition after Marx" or "the tradition of scientific Marxism". To substantiate my own critique to Holloway's argument --although the analysis of the Marxian and, by extension, the Marxist concept of science is surely an issue that exceeds the lines of this essay—I will point out just a few characteristic moments of the mentioned resistance, of what Marxism defines as *science* in opposition to the epistemological rhetoric of Holloway and his open Marxism.

1. So, let us examine the validity of Holloway's main argument, that for Marx science is *negative* and tends to become *positivised* in the process through Marxian texts such as the '1859 Preface' to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

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[41] Ibid., p.124
[42] Ibid., p.138

Firstly, it must be stressed that it was Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who, having already written the *German Ideology* and having come to rupture with idealistic metaphysics, pursued the constitution of the materialist conception of History on the basis of, or --better-- under the form of ***positive science***:

> "Where speculation ends – in real life – there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men".[43]

Undoubtedly, not only does *positive science* --as it is expressly defended from the very beginning by Marx and Engels-- not oppose mechanically the critique of past and present social reality, it is actually organically linked to critique itself. Critique based on the **observation (Betrachtung)** of true life is at the core of positive science, i.e. of the ***scientific knowledge*** of social formations, as it is reflected in their being as well as in their potential becoming. In this sense, the critique liberated by negation tends to adopt a positive content, a content of *positive* knowledge of the history of class societies. It is this observation from a specific viewpoint -- through the particular lens of the proletariat as a revolutionary class and, more specifically, as a class which negates the class constitution of society and, therefore, potentially its existence as a class— which allows the grounding and constitution of a critique of ideology as false

[43] Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.3, p.27 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm#5a4)

conscience, meaning the grounding of the materialist conception of History as a positive science.

We are familiar today with the scientific form that Marx himself tried to attribute to the conclusions of the systematic observation of the practical activity of people, of the "truly active people", as they produce and create in the context of the capitalist economy. Of course, we are talking about the ***critique of political economy*** which could, according to his own indications, be identified without doubt and inhibition with its synonym: a positive science of political economy. Without doubt and inhibition precisely because, for us, there is a distinct line that differentiates the Marxian and, why not, Marxist interpretation of science from its positivist version.

In terms of the history of ideas and movements, the existence of such a dividing line is undeniable; however, it is not located where Holloway erroneously tries to draw it. It does not run through the lines of the "1859 Preface" and the texts of the "tradition of scientific Marxism" in a general, confused and hazy manner. As for the socialist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries and their ideas, the "positivisation" of Marxism, i.e. the eradication of the dividing line between Marxism and positivism, was pursued in a conscious and systematic way by the neo-Kantian "ethical socialists" of the Second International, such as Bernstein and Vorländer, and the so-called "orthodox Marxists" like Kautsky, in the beginning, and the theoretical proponents of Stalinist "Marxism" further on.[44]

But let us examine the much discussed fragment from Karl Marx's "1859 Preface", the starting point --always according to Holloway-- of the "infection" of Marxian theory by the virus of positivism.

In a time of social revolution, Marx writes, we experience

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[44] In this same line, see Lucien Goldmann, "Is there a Marxist sociology", *International Socialism*, Autumn 1968, no..34, Chicago, pp.13-21.

> "The material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production".[45]

The *continuity* of this Marxian excerpt in relation to the *German Ideology* is obvious. Positive --and not positivist-- science presupposes the *Betrachtung*, the precise observation of the subversions that are *already* taking place at a given moment in history, as it is only on the basis of this systematic observation that one can perceive the social dynamic itself. Marx does not prepare, as positivist Comte, "recipes for the cook-shops of the future", he does not *prophesy* revolutions; he rather observes and studies his own time, his own society, as it is *already* evolving, and he discerns *tendencies*. In this sense, the radical and all-embracing subversion, as well as the society which will emerge through this process of subversion, are not judged on the basis of the arbitrariness of will and mind, but rather through their founding on ***positive facts***.

On this I shall insist: Marx's break with idealistic metaphysics does not lead him to adopt a "Social Physics".[46] Contrary to what a positive epistemology would demand, the positive fact, according to Marx, is not identified with the empirical fact. The positive fact of Marxian science is not obvious, it is not exhausted at the level of experienced phenomena. Marxian *positive* science constitutes the very path from phenomena to essence, it is the *negation* or,

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[45] Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.13, p.9 (English translaiton available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm)

[46] In the epilogue to the second German edition of *Capital*, Marx protests: "Thus the Paris *Revue Positiviste* reproaches me in that, on the one hand, I treat economics metaphysically, and on the other hand –imagine ! – confine myself to the mere critical analysis of actual facts, instead of writing recipes (Comtist ones ?) for the cook-shops of the future.

even better, the interpretative ***transcendence***, the interpretative ***Aufhebung*** of the phenomena and the revealing of their essence: "But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided".[47]

In this sense, one cannot but remind Professor Holloway of the distinction proposed by the anti-positivist Marx between the mystical version of dialectics, which had become a "German fashion" in mid-19th century, and its rational version, adopted and defended by the author of *Das Kapital*:

> "In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."[48]

Neither is the subject of this process of transition from phenomenon to essence, the *positive* scientist, a socially neutral, detached observer of the social reality of which he/ she is part. The Marxian scientific point of view is not that of the allegedly value-free positivist conception of science. The positivist distinction between ***fact*** and ***value***, which leads up to the schematic, neo-Kantian fragmentation between ***Marxism as science*** and ***Marxism as ideology***, is the very opposite of the conception of science as was constituted and studied

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[47] Marx, *Capital*, ibid., Vol. 25, p.825 (English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894-c3/ch48.htm)
[48] Karl Marx, Capital, ibid, Vol. 23, p..28 (English version available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/p3.htm)

by Marx in each separate phase and aspect of his work.[49] Marx's scientific viewpoint is a ***militant viewpoint***, dictated not by the *apparent* but by the *essential* reality of the working class as a revolutionary class.[50]

Besides, we must not ignore the fact that Marx as a revolutionary thinker of the proletariat had made his conception of *militant science* very clear from the beginning:

> "Just as the *economists* are the scientific representatives of the bourgeois class, so the *Socialists* and *Communists* are the theoreticians of the proletarian class. So long as the proletariat is not yet sufficiently developed to constitute itself as a class, and consequently so long as the struggle itself of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie has not yet assumed a political character, and the productive forces are not yet sufficiently developed in the bosom of the bourgeoisie itself to enable us to catch a glimpse of the material conditions necessary for the emancipation of the proletariat and for the formation of a new society, these theoreticians are merely utopians who, to meet the wants of the oppressed classes, improvise systems and go in search of a regenerating science. But in the measure that history moves forward, and with it the struggle of the proletariat assumes clearer outlines, they no longer need to seek science in their minds; they have only to take note of what is happening before their eyes and to become its mouthpiece. So long as they look for science and

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[49] On this, see:
- Lucio Colletti, "Bernstein and the Marxism of the Second International" in *From Rousseau to Lenin: Studies in Ideology and Society*. New Left Books, London 1974,. esp. pp.44-50
-Lucien Goldmann,, "Is there a Marxist sociology?", available at
http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/isj/1968/no034/goldmann.htm

[50] As Lucio Colletti smoothly notes in Marxism: Science or Revolution", in *From Rousseau to Lenin: Studies in Ideology and Society*, ibid. p.236, "Marxism, therefore, is a science. It is an analytical reconstruction of the way in which the mechanism of capitalist production works. On the other hand, as well as being a science, Marxism is revolutionary ideology. It is the analysis of reality from the viewpoint of the working class. This in turn means that the working class cannot constitute itself as a *class* without taking possession of the scientific analysis of *Capital*. Without this it disintegrates into a myriad of "categories". The working class [...] is not a *given* factor, it is not a product of nature. It is a destination point: the product of *historical action*, i.e. not only of material conditions but also of political consciousness".

> merely make systems, so long as they are at the beginning of the struggle, they see in poverty nothing but poverty, without seeing in it the revolutionary, subversive side, which will overthrow the old society. From this moment, science, which is a product of the historical movement, has associated itself consciously with it, has ceased to be doctrinaire and has become revolutionary."[51]

Without doubt, the role and content of the ***revolutionary science*** that Marx refers to cannot consume itself in the negation of the existing order. In rejecting capitalist society, the critique of Communists as theorists of the proletarian class simultaneously points towards the tendencies to constitute a new society. In this sense, the revolutionary science proposed by Marxian discourse is historically grounded and radically distinct from positivist scienticism and utopian visions alike. The rejection of the existing order contributes to the ***abolition*** of the conditions that, until today, ensure the reproduction of the capitalist formation, simultaneously promoting and *setting* the preconditions for a new society.

However, it is obvious that the dialectical notion of *Aufhebung* is not acceptable in the conceptual framework of Holloway's epistemology.[52] *Position and Negation* are externally opposed, without the philosophic mediation of the dialectic of *contradiction*.[53] To approach revolution, Holloway rejects science,

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[51] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Collection «Les auters classiques», Édition électronique, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques, p.83 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/ch02.htm#s7)

[52] Let us recall how Hegel himself defines the double meaning of **aufheben**: "We mean by it (1) to clear away, or annul: thus, we say, a law or a regulation is set aside; (2) to keep, or preserve: in which sense we use it when we say: something is well put by. This double usage of language, which gives to the same word a positive and negative meaning, is not an accident, and gives no ground for reproaching language as a cause of confusion. We should rather recognize in it the speculative spirit of our language rising above the mere 'either-or' understanding" (*Logik*, §96, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grudrisse* [English edition included in references])

[53] Let us observe how Hegel himself defines **contradiction**, but also the relation between positive-**negative**: "Contradiction is the very moving principle of the world: and it is ridiculous to say that contradiction is unthinkable. The only thing correct in that statement is that contradiction is not the end of the matter, but cancels itself. But contradiction, when cancelled, does not leave abstract identity' for that is itself only one side of the contrariety. The proximate result of opposition (when realised as contradiction) is the Ground, which contains identity as well as difference superseded and deposited to elements in the completer notion". (*Logik*, §119, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grudrisse* [English edition included in references])

which he practically identifies with the positivist ideology. Nevertheless, the danger of Marxism being reduced to positivism cannot be avoided through the fetishism of negation. It cannot be avoided by mechanistically cutting off negative dialectics from positive science, as Holloway does. On the contrary, it is only through organically linking it with the dynamics of History as class struggle –and more specifically interweaving it with the struggle of the proletariat—that revolutionary science can arm itself against the danger of its positivist distortion.

2. However, could it be that to study the *modus operandi* of the capitalist formation through the prism of its reproductive mechanisms does indeed lead to a reduction of Marxism to a ***functionalist social theory***, as Holloway claims? Faced with the anti-dialectical approach to the relation between "reproduction and subversion ", which imbues and defines Holloway's analysis, we insist that the scientific understanding of how capitalism works, i.e. how it reproduces itself, is a *conditio sine qua non* for its overturning; only through this process can the conditions of consciousness be created so that people might perceive the struggling contradictions, the class contradictions, and move towards their abolition. Only through this process can they act in a revolutionary way.

Once again we must resort to the neo-Kantian positivism of the Second International in order to point out the repercussions of schematically dividing the study of the conditions for the reproduction of capitalism from the study of the conditions for its overturning. An entire generation of renowned theorists of the German social democracy has tried to support the opinion that Marxism as a science is in no way related, or should at least not be confused, with the moral ideal of the socialist society.

"The Positive is the aforesaid various (different) which is understood to be independent, and yet at the same time not to be unaffected by its relation to its other . The Negative is to be, no less independently, negative self-relating, self-subsistent, and yet at the same time as Negative must on every point have its self-relation, i.e. its Positive, only in the other. Both Positive and Negative are therefore explicit contradiction; both are potentially the same."(*Logik*, §120, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grudrisse*[English edition included in references])

As Karl Kautsky points out characteristically:

> "Even the Social Democracy as an organisation of the Proletariat in its class struggle cannot do without the moral ideal, the moral indignation against exploitation and class rule. But this ideal has nothing to find in scientific socialism, which is the scientific examination of the laws of the development and movement of the social organism, for the purpose of knowing the necessary tendencies and aims of the proletariat class struggle.
>
> Certainly in Socialism the student is always a fighter as well, and no man can artificially cut himself in two parts, of which the one has nothing to do with the other. Thus even with Marx occasionally in his scientific research there breaks through the influence of a moral ideal. But he always endeavours and rightly to banish it where he can. Because the moral ideal becomes a source of error in science, when it takes it on itself to point out to it its aims".[54]

Holloway naturally condemns this epistemological and, ultimately, political logic, but in what way and to what effect? The fear of repeating the *error* of neo-Kantian and "orthodox Marxist" theorists leads him to the anti-dialectical generalisation that to study capitalist society through the conditions of its reproduction is to inevitably limit the scope of this critique and, therefore, of subversive action.

However, it is not the study of the reproductive mechanisms of capitalism that relegates the issue of communist society to a vague future, but failure to approach these mechanisms as processes defined through the struggle between contrasting forces, meaning *dialectically.* In this sense, it is rendered obvious that "Marxist functionalism", as an expression of the "tradition of scientific Marxism" that Holloway opposes, is a "contradiction in terms".

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[54] Karl Kautsky, *Ethik und materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, in the collection *Marxismus und Ethik, Texte zum neukantianischen Sozialismus*, (Herausgegeben von Rafael de la Vega und Hans Jörg Sandkühler), Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1970, p..258. [English translation avaialable at http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1906/ethics/ch05b.htm#s5d)

Revolutionary science, as defined by Marx and developed by certain Marxist theorists such as Lenin and Luxemburg, approaches the couple "reproduction-subversion" in its dialectical unity. To activate the forces that will overturn the capitalist formation and to render them effective, we must study them epistemologically and establish them on the solid ground of *positive* facts, on the *positive* knowledge of the mechanisms of reproduction of this specific capitalist system. On the other hand, such a study can indeed turn into a functionalist social theory –and, therefore, become disconnected from the discourse and spirit of Marxism—if it does not systematically unfold and orient itself towards the radical questioning and overturning of the *status quo*.

3. The way in which Holloway's open Marxism opposes science as a means/instrument for emancipation, a value in itself/an end in itself, leads to an anti-dialectical comprehension of the "science-revolution" couple and, ultimately, to a distorted understanding of the Marxian conception of knowledge and its bearers as external and oppressive factors for the movement and the revolution. For example, the fact that the Marxian critique of political economy operates as a means in the process of comprehending and, ultimately, subverting capitalism in a communist direction, does not single-handedly entail the formal instrumentality of knowledge and science in relation with the goal of revolution, as Holloway erroneously claims. Lenin, Luxemburg and Gramsci do not regard science, Marxism itself as science, as completed objects to be used by the proletariat in order to satisfy its needs.

In this case too, the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* generalizes dangerously in his conception of the "tradition of scientific Marxism". Through his epistemological approach, Holloway ascribes an ***instrumental conception*** of knowledge and science to the "tradition of scientific Marxism", a characteristic which is mainly linked to neo-Kantian and "orthodox Marxism". The *external relation* of science towards the labour movement and the corresponding *power relation* of the bearers of knowledge

over the working class are very different from the understanding that Marx himself –as well as important Marxist theorists—had of science and its relation with the proletariat and its movement.

According to Marx and Engels, but also to other Marxist theorists that clash with the positivism and scienticism of the Second International, although revolutionary science is not *immediately* produced by the proletariat, its constitution presupposes the existence of the revolutionary class as well as the existence of a theoretical and political vanguard that is *organically linked* with the proletariat itself. Of course, I am not overlooking Holloway's critique against the Kautskian thesis --a thesis repeated by Lenin in *What is to be Done?*-- regarding the introduction of revolutionary ideology to the labour class consciousness "from the outside", a deeply *political* issue which I will discuss further on. For the time being, I will merely repeat what those who accuse Lenin of an instrumental conception of knowledge and an oppressive approach towards the working class ignore with great ease: not in a distance, but only through an ***organic connection*** with the working class and its movements can the isolated bourgeois theorists and scientists, as well as the party as a collective organizer and thinker as Lenin or Gramsci conceived it, constitute and examine the theses of a revolutionary science and, ultimately, of the science of revolution itself.

4. Also, Holloway's pinning of the epistemological and, indeed, philosophical-historical sin of ***certainty*** upon the "Marxist tradition after Marx" unveils a strong tendency to smooth away important differences which are obvious even to the naked eye in the work of the theorists of Marxism. For the time being, I will only stress certain points that are related to the cognitive and theoretical *status* of *certainty* in the cognitive and theoretical corpus of Marxism.

Firstly, a detailed reading of the "1859 Preface", such a favorite target of critique, amongst many others, for the *anti-positivist* proponents of open Marxism, effortlessly leads us to the conclusion that Marx does indeed defend

the possibility to reach conclusions with "the precision of natural science". However, he particularly refers to the study of processes that have *already taken place* or, in any case, are *in the course of realisation*, in the exclusive field of economy and under the form of completed or ongoing developments and subversions caused by the clash between the social productive forces and the relations of production.

In this sense, one could arguably claim that Marx's scientific analysis does not turn towards the future *too*, at least not with the same certainty that imbues its conclusions about the past and present of class societies and, more specifically, of capitalist society. Also, the scientific approach of certain domains of human activity, apart from that of the economy, is not characterised by the same degree of scientific precision in each separate field of research.

There is no doubt that Marx was greatly captivated by the rapid progress of positive science and technology in his time, and that is reflected in his use of examples and terminology coming from the field of sciences such as biology and physics.[55] However, he systematically insisted on the *particularity* of social sciences, resulting from the Marxian approach to society and nature as distinct poles of a dialectical unity of oppositions. This particularity is also expressed in Marx's *social* understanding of ***matter***, as well as in his disagreement with the abstract or mechanistic materialism of *philosophes* such as Helvetius or d'Holbach, or with Feuerbach's naturalistic materialism. It is exactly this particularity that makes the author of *Capital* speak of ***tendencies*** when studying the capitalist economy, despite his use of terms such as "natural" or "iron rules"; a clear example of this is the *tendency* of the rate of profit to fall, so important for the dynamics of the capitalist system.

There is no doubt that Marxism cannot persist in its epistemological and generally cognitive *conatus* if disconnected from the determinist philosophical approach. Therefore, if a critical evaluation of Marxism, such as the one

[55] See, for example, characteristic formulations in the preface to the first (German) edition of *Capital*.

undertaken by Holloway, does not wish to give in to the destructive appeal of ***vagueness,*** it should at least search and evaluate the differences between the determinism proposed by the Marxism of Lenin or Gramsci, on the one hand, and the one expressed by the ***evolutionism*** and ***economism*** of the theorists of the Second International, on the other. In relation to this, let us remember the ***breakdown theory*** (**Zusammenbruchstheorie**) and the storm of discussion and analysis it caused amongst the theorists of the 19th and 20th-century labour movement; that will help us to grasp the simplifying and generalizing character of Holloway's assertion that the "Marxist tradition after Marx" *in toto* dismisses critique in favour of certainty.

5. However, Holloway commits an equally grave epistemological *faux-pas* when he blames the multidimensional tradition of "scientific Marxism" for excluding the subject from its theoretical analysis. Holloway's own failure to perceive the relation between "structure and process"[56] --and, ultimately, the relation between "object and subject"-- epistemologically as well as philosophically, in dialectical terms, leads him to approach Marxism as an epistemological version of ***objectivism***.

Once again, he hastily generalizes when he claims that subjectivity yields before the hard positivist discourse of "scientific Marxism" which, parting from Engels's analysis, considers the subject as a mere consequence of the object. However, at this point, having obviously realised the extremely generalizing nature of his line of argument, he partly excludes theorists such as Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky and Pannekoek from this charge of objectivism. Indeed, Holloway cannot but acknowledge the presence of the subject in the analysis of the mentioned Marxist theorists, who decisively opposed the tradition of the Second International and its crude objectivism; however, he does "discover" -- and, therefore, criticize—that, in their work also, the subject is reduced to a *complementary* role, a "stooge" to the objective conditions of social reality.

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[56] On this, see the related comment by Leigh Binford in his article "Holloway's Marxism", *Historical Materialism*, vol.13(2005), 4, esp. pp.254-257.

But what could be the meaning of Holloway's assertion that, from a Marxist point of view, the subject and its action are limited to a complementary role, "if not subjugated [!] to the objective movement of capitalism"? No matter how much one magnifies the importance of the subject, no matter how much one *opens* Marxism towards the side of subjectivity, as a Marxist, one cannot but limit oneself before ***subjectivism***. The criteria for such delimitation -- violated by the epistemological and broadly philosophical subjectivism of the proponent of "open Marxism", John Holloway-- have been clearly formulated by Marx himself: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."[57]

At this precise point, the subjectivism that distinguishes Holloway's argumentation, or, better, his *negations* regarding Marxism as a science, meets his corresponding propositions about revolution, this deliberately incomplete theoretical plan of his about revolution today, a plan that the author *evaded* completing, in a vain attempt to avoid his meeting with the metaphysics of *identity*.

Anyway, just before observing and evaluating, on a Marxist basis, this "incomplete symphony" of revolution proposed by Holloway, let us summarize our critique of his positions on Marxism as a science:

Regarding the post-Marx Marxist tradition as an expression of positivism, scienticism and objectivism, Holloway rejects the ***dialectic of contradiction***[58] and attempts a ***mechanistic inversion***, which substitutes the positivist conception of science with a theology of Negation, the thesis of scientifism

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[57] Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis* Bonaparte, as included in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.8, p..115 (English text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm). But even through the critique of political economy, Marx clearly distances himself from *subjectivism*, with formulations such as the following: "Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object" (Introduction to *Grundrisse*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, ibid.., Vol.42, p.27, English text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch01.htm)

[58] According to Phil Hearse in "Change the world without taking power?", in Phil Hearse (ed.), *Take the Power to change the World*, Socialist Resistance, London 2007, pp.23-37, Holloway fails to comprehend that, to any Marxist, "contradiction in reality (not just thought) is a fundamental epistemological proposition of any real science."

with activism, and that of objectivism with subjectivism. However, the problem with the epistemology of the Holloway's anti-dialectical approach lies not only in the mechanistic character of this inversion, but also in its generalizing-leveling scope. As a result, the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* ends up compressing the plurality of Marxist tendencies into a "caricature" Marxism, which he himself draws out and turns against.

III. The ontological question: the cry of "abstract subjectivity" and the theology of Negation

"In the beginning is the scream. [...] Faced with the mutilation of human lives by capitalism, a scream of sadness, a scream of horror, a scream of anger, a scream of refusal: NO".[59] Holloway poses this *existential inner voice* as the ontological starting point of his reflection on the "meaning of revolution today". It is an existential expression of the rejection of capitalism by those who are oppressed by this system, the "explosion of non-identity contained-in-but-bursting-from-identity".[60]

We inevitably place this formulation side by side with the theological motto: "In the beginning was the Word!". We do not, we cannot begin from the word, Holloway claims, but from the ***scream***: this perhaps inarticulate expression of despair caused by all that we witness, but also of our refusal to continue witnessing it. Certainly, nothing can guarantee that these screams of distress and horror will not degenerate into a deep "sigh of the depressed" harmless to capitalism; a sigh that, from the beginning of the 1840s, Karl Marx linked to religion, the soul of a heartless world, none other than the "opium of the people". On the other hand, how can we pursue the transformation of the scream into a constituted critique of capitalism? Or should we avoid such a *systematic* critique, for fear of handing negation over to the deadly embrace of identity? In any case, such fear was unknown to Marx himself:

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[59] Holloway, ibid., p.1
[60] Ibid., p.7

> "Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower. [...] It is, therefore, the *task of history*, once the *other-world of truth* has vanished, to establish the *truth of this world*. It is the immediate *task of philosophy*, which is in the service of history, to unmask self-estrangement in its *unholy forms* once the *holy form* of human self-estrangement has been unmasked. Thus, the criticism of Heaven turns into the criticism of Earth, the *criticism of religion* into the *criticism of law*, and the *criticism of theology* into the *criticism of politics*. "[61]

What could the relation between Marx's critical *discourse* and Holloway's cry from within be? Certainly, for young Marx, the young Marx of the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, the subject of revolution already has an identity: "by heralding the *dissolution of the hereto existing world order*, the proletariat merely proclaims the *secret of its own existence*, for it is the factual dissolution of that world order".[62] In its articulation with those philosophers who do not content themselves with interpreting the world but wish to contribute to changing it, the proletariat expresses and acts upon Negation, not in an abstract, but in a very specific way: "By demanding the *negation of private property*, the proletariat merely raises to the rank of a principle of society what society has raised to the rank of *its* principle".[63]

I would not be focusing my attention on this Marxian logic of the *specific*, this Marxian *ontology* of the subject --that attempts to discover and reveal the "secret of its existence" as proletariat, meaning as a class that negates class

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[61] Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction*, ibid. p. 379 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm)

[62] Ibid., p.391 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm)

[63] Ibid., [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm)

society-- were it not because, in a sense, Holloway moves towards the opposite direction, one dictated by the principle of the ***indeterminacy of the subject***, or, as he prefers, of ***subjectivity***.

> As the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* notes,
>
> "The aim of this book is to strengthen negativity, to take the side of the fly in the web, to make the scream more strident. We quite consciously start from the subject, or at least from an undefined subjectivity, aware of all the problems that this implies"[64]

This point calls for a more detailed analysis. In a statement that lays no claim to originality, Holloway will remind us that, contrary to animals, humans act as subjects, in the sense that "subjectivity refers to the conscious projection beyond that which exists, the ability to negate that which exists and to create something that does not yet exist".[65] However, in this case, one must accept that the ontological primacy of negation defended by Holloway's line of argument cannot and must not be mechanically severed from the quality of truly active people to **plan** and, in this sense, to **set the goal** of creativity, meaning of the *formation* of a new world at a micro-social as well as a macro-social level.

The dialectical comprehension of social becoming results from a double delimitation against the theology of Negation on the one hand, and the servile, i.e. non-critical, adherence to the *thesis*. The history of ideas and movements has experienced, and continues to experience in different variations, both anti-dialectical versions: either under the form of a Stirnerist ***anarchism***, in the first case, or of ***positivism*** and its political expressions at different times, in the second. However, in what concerns a contemporary theory of revolution and its subjects, the issue is still -as it has been during past critical periods in the history of movements of social emancipation-- to comprehend subjectivity in a way that breaks with both the abstract negation of social reality and the passive submission and adoration of it.

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[64] Holloway, ibid., p.8
[65] Ibid., pp.25-26

In this sense, it is obvious that the "scream of complete refusal to accept the misery of capitalist society" alone, to use Holloway's exact formulation,[66] is not enough to radically challenge this society. But enough. If one wanted to follow Holloway's line of argument, as has been correctly stated, one should try to at least answer the obvious question: "Why did all those cries, those millions of cries, repeated millions of times over, not only leave capital's despotic order standing but even leave it more arrogant than ever?"[67]

For a radical questioning of capitalist society not to be consumed in acts of letting off steam or in the sigh of the weak faced with their everyday martyrdom, there must be an activation of the ontological dimension of humans, which is equally important as that of negation and is currently suspended in multiple ways: the capacity to *set* goals, to draw plans, to *live* the future *beyond* the suffocating limits of the present. The more radically the subject, i.e. the truly active person, *negates* its given situation, the more it *tends* to *set* the foundations for a new mode of organisation of its social and personal life. Through negation, the subject, be it individual or collective, simultaneously tends towards the formation of its identity.

However, according to Holloway, ***definition*** in the broader sense as well as the definition of the ***identity*** of the subject, more specifically, is the moment of death of subjectivity, which will either be *vague* or will be reduced to the fetishised world of objects. "Definition delimits us, denies our active subjectivity",[68] Holloway claims in an attempt to schematically interpret, for the needs of his own argumentation, the Spinozian phrase «*omnis determinatio negatio est*». Thus, he suggests the following critical ontological and methodological distinction between ***subjectivity*** and ***identity***.

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[66] Ibid., p.26

[67] Daniel Bensaïd, "La revolution sans prendre le pouvoir? À propos d'un recent livre de John Holloway", *Contretemps*, No. 6(Février 2003), p.47 (English translation availabe at http://www.marxists.org/archive/bensaid/2005/xx/holloway.htm

[68] Holloway, ibid, p.62

> "For bourgeois theory, subjectivity is identity, whereas in our argument, subjectivity is the negation of identity. [...]
> Much of what is seen as a [postmodern] attack on subjectivity is simply an attack on identity, on the bourgeois identification of subjectivity with identity. [...] To identify the bourgeois subject with subjectivity as a whole, however, is a most murderous throwing of the baby out with the bathwater. To confound subjectivity with identity and criticize subjectivity in an attempt to attack identity leads only to a total impasse, since subjectivity, as movement, as negation of is-ness, is the only possible basis for going beyond identity, and therefore beyond the bourgeois subject".[69]

Without doubt, this anti-dialectical --at least from a Marxist point of view-- reasoning of Holloway is imbued by Adorno's negative dialectics. Once again, we stand before a fetishism of the concept. According to the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power*, the concept of identity stands against that of subjectivity in a schematic and absolute manner. Subjectivity represents the active, subversive, *negative* load of the human being. On the other hand, identity expresses the inert, passive and, in this precise sense, apologetic stance of human beings faced with the conditions of their own lives.

And yet, from the viewpoint of a dialectical approach to this matter, subjectivity, when moving subversively within the class field of the capitalist society, cannot but *tend* towards the constitution of its *revolutionary* identity. The transition from *class in itself* to class *for itself* is what constitutes this precise process of unveiling –and not constructing!-- the identity of the class subject, a process that leads to a borderline convergence of object and subject, being and consciousness. If, according to Holloway, bourgeois theory equates subjectivity to identity, revolutionary/communist theory considers that subjectivity cannot be deduced through a mechanistic inversion, i.e. as the "negation of identity". The subject acts in a revolutionary way not when it

[69] Ibid., pp.70-71

abstractly negates the identity imposed upon it by capitalism, but when it moves towards *self-determination*, when it tries to constitute its own *sui generis* class/non-class identity. Without setting the ***goal*** of transforming abstract subjectivity into a ***concrete subjectivity*** through action, the potential of individual and collective subjects cannot be transformed into revolutionary action. In any case, **the pursuit of identity, as well as its rejection, is an ontological component of humans as social beings.**

In this sense, identity is not "an illusion really generated by the struggle to identify the non-identical",[70] as Holloway claims. Identity is the, albeit temporary, condensation of a process which moves through the contrasts that define it. ***Abstract identity***, failing of course to endure the contradiction, amounts to death. "Abstract self-identity is not as yet a livingness", Hegel argues and goes on as follows: "something is therefore alive only in so far as it contains contradiction within it, and moreover is this power to hold and endure the contradiction within it. But if an existent in its positive determination is at the same time incapable of reaching beyond its negative determination and holding the one firmly in the other, is incapable of containing contradiction within it, then it is not the living unity itself, not ground, but in the contradiction falls to the ground."[71]

In perceiving identity only as its abstract, dead version, Holloway ignores the version of *concrete identity*, the identity that still encloses a moving contradiction.[72] He essentially fails to comprehend that becoming is a result of the unity of being and non-being and, therefore, it is not limited to the moment of non-being, but also contains the moment of being,[73] just as contradiction

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[70] Ibid., p.100.

[71] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, in Hegel, *Werke*. Vol. 6, Frankfurt a. M. 1979, p. 76. [English edition included in references, p.440]

[72] On this, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Logik, §115, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grudrisse*

[73] With the terminology of his *Logic*, Hegel approaches Being as follows: "Hence Being Determinate is (1) the unity of Being and Nothing, in which we get rid of the immediacy in these determinations, and their contradiction vanishes in their mutual connection –the unity in which they only constituent elements. And (2) since the result is the abolition of the contradiction, it comes in the shape of a simple unity with itself: that is to say, it also is Being, but Being with negation or determianteness: it is Becoming expressly put in the form of one of its elements, viz. Being" (*Logik*, §89, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grudrisse* [English edition included in references])

«contains not merely the negative, but also the positive [...]. The result of contradiction is not merely nullity. The positive and negative constitute the *positedness* of the self-subsistence. Their own negation of themselves sublates the *positedness* of the self-subsistence. It is this which in truth perishes in contradiction.» [74]

In the last analysis, the anti-dialectical character of Holloway's line of thought does not allow him to comprehend that, for Marx, just as for his teacher, Hegel, the ***ground*** of existence is not only identity, but neither is it only difference: "The **Ground** is the unity of identity and difference"[75] and, in this sense, it is only through their unity --and not through the absolutisation of their opposition-- that the two moments express the truth of man/woman as a *struggling* subjectivity.

Clearly, the *opening* of identities, as of categories in general, "to reveal that their content is struggle"[76] presupposes in some cases its *determinate negation*, meaning to *lay siege to it* through the action of a subjectivity that is in the course of being concrete. Through this process, the subject *is posited* as an identity, *temporarily solving* the nexus of contradictions that move it and define it as such; however, precisely because it is constituted at the ***limit of*** --and is delimited through-- contradiction, it is simultaneously driven to exit itself, to negate its own identity. In terms of the Hegelian dialectics of the Idea, the limit between being and non-being, moving towards and across the *borderline*, is characterised by ***unrest***.[77] **In terms of a Marxist dialectics, unrest is an ontological feature of human existence, the struggle of the subject not only to negate power, but also to *plan* -as a negation of this negation- the setting of the foundations for a new world.**

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[74] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ο.π., p.67 [English edition included in references, p.433])
[75] Hegel, *Logik*, §121, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grudrisse* [English edition included in references])
[76] Holloway, ibid. p.89
[77] Βλ. την εξής χαρακτηριστική διατύπωση στο Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ο.π., p.138: «The other determination is the unrest of the something in its limit in which it is immanent, an unrest which is the contradiction which impels the something out beyond itself. Thus the point is this dialectic of its own self to become a line, the line to become a plane, and the plane the dialectic to become total space." [English edition included in references, p.128]

Only through the prism of such an ontological approach --that recognizes the ***Setzung,*** the *positing* of a goal, as a basic ontological characteristic of human existence without identifying ***objectivisation*** and ***alienation***, as Holloway erroneously does--[78] can the activity of truly active people be conceived in its core as ***praxis***. Marx wrote about the *Setzung* in the pages of his *Capital*,[79] but it was Marxist theorist Lukács who developed a much more detailed analysis in his argumentation for an ontology of social being that is also focused on the labour process:

> "Marx's ontology of social being just as sharply rules out a simple, vulgar materialist transfer of natural laws to society, as was fashionable for example in the era of 'social Darwinism'. The objective forms of social being grow out of natural being in the course of the rise and development of social practice, and become ever more expressly social. This growth is certainly a dialectical process, which begins with a leap, with the teleological project (*Setzung*) in labour, for which there is no analogy in nature. This ontological leap is in no way negated by the fact that it involves in reality a very lengthy process, with innumerable transitional forms. With the act of teleological projection (*Setzung*) in labour, social being itself is now there. The historical process of its development involves the most important transformation of this 'in itself' into a 'for itself', and hence the tendency towards the overcoming of

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[78] On this, Michael Löwy is very much to the point in his critique of Holloway's thesis, Review of "Change the World without Taking Power", (2002), in Phil Hearse (ed.), *Take the Power to change the World*, ibid. pp.79-83

[79] "We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will". (Marx, *Capital*, in *MEW*, Vol.23, p.193 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch07.htm)

> merely natural forms and contents of being by forms and contents that are ever more pure and specifically social.
>
> The teleological project (*Setzung*) as a form of material transformation of material reality remains something fundamentally new from the ontological point of view".[80]

The fact that Marx and Lukács approach the *Setzung*, the teleological projection, as it is rendered manifest in the labour process, as a socially constituted and cultivated ontological human characteristic, allows for the admittance of this ontological starting point in the approach to the communist revolution *too* as, in this sense, a ***teleological process*** *par excellence*. In this case, based upon the *scientific* study of the *tendencies* that rule historical conditions, all we have to do is project the *revolutionary plan* on the screen of the future and pose as our *end*, in the sense of a goal, the revolutionary change of the world in a communist direction.

From this viewpoint, it is obvious that the cries of denunciation, and even the collective negation of the capitalist order, will not suffice. No matter how much Holloway might insist, the meaning of revolution today –recalling the subtitle of his book—just as yesterday, just as tomorrow, cannot be limited to negation. The demon of *telos haunts* human existence and, in this sense, it is inherent in the revolutionary process itself, in the planning and selection of the means for the realisation of the communist society. Negation, when anti-dialectically severed from *concrete* possibility, from the *goal* of the communist society, is condemned to reduce the revolutionary dynamic to an *event* or to the events of one or more uprisings. Such events denounce the capitalist world in a phantasmagoric way only to be then turned by this precise world into picturesque moments of its ongoing domination.

In this case, the crucial issue is not univocally reduced to perceiving ***doing*** as an open process "impregnated with negativity".[81] Besides, Holloway correctly

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[80] Georg Lukács, *The Ontology of Social Being (2. Marx)*, The Merlin Press, London 1978, p.7

[81] Holloway, ibid. p.23

specifies that "in the tense and tired couple dialectical materialism, dialectics has precedence. Our thought is negative, therefore materialist".[82] However, what he insistently does not perceive is the fact that, although doing encloses the moment of negation, in no case is it limited to it. In a provokingly contradictory way, Holloway admits that "projection-beyond is seen by Marx as a distinctive characteristic of human doing"[83] but, at the same time, using the abovementioned famous Marxian comparison between the spider (and the bee) with the architect, he insists that human doing begins and is completed through the negation of what exists:

> "The doing of the architect is negative, not only in its result, but in its whole process: it begins and ends with the negation of what exists. Even if she is the worst of architects, the doing is a creative doing".[84]

But enough! This faith in the demonic force of Negation, this unquenchable passion that is engendered by *submission* to the demon of Negation, this "Mephistophelian spirit" that Holloway serves[85] --a spirit the he himself counterposes to the fullness of the plain life of Francis of Assisi, called upon by the authors of *Empire*, Hardt and Negri—does not express, in its one-sidedness, the theory and practice of the communist revolution.[86]

If doing began and ended in the negation of what exists, it could not possibly be *creative*. And it is creative, because it begins with the negation of what exists and, through projection-beyond, through setting goals and planning the actions and the means necessary to achieve them, it leads to the *negation of negation*. If people are *ecstatic* while animals are not, as Holloway claims, i.e. if "they exist not only in, but also against-and-beyond themselves",[87] that

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[82] Ibid., Ch.3, fn.8, p.217
[83] Ibid., p.24
[84] Ibid., pp.24-25
[85] Ibid., p.151
[86] Ibid., pp.174-175. On this, also see the interesting comments by Alex Callinicos, "Sympathy for the devil? John Holloway's Mephistophelian Marxism", *CAPITAL & CLASS* 85(2005) [with an answer by John Holloway].
[87] Ibid., p.25

simultaneously means that, in negating what negates their existence, as subjects-creators, they *set* the foundations for a new way of organizing their own lives.

To sum up: Holloway's interest is riveted to the *Unruhe*, the ***unrest*** that characterizes the subject that, driven by its contradictions, borders its limits and negates an identity resulting from its struggling against something else. Thus, the theorist of *open Marxism* is compelled to break all contact with the moment of the *negation of negation* and, ultimately, with dialectics itself. Hegel, in his attempt for non-identity to be absorbed by the philosophy of identity, proved --as Adorno claimed-- that he "lacks sympathy with the utopian particular that has been buried underneath the universal".[88] On the contrary, Holloway's liking of the utopia of the specific and of non-identity --on a philosophical and, ultimately, *sociopolitical* level—is such, that he gives in unconditionally to the demonic, Mephistophelian spirit of negation. In his effort to avoid the "deification of History", this *Vergötterung* of History that Adorno had once again denounced in his *Negative Dialectics,* blaming even "the atheistic Hegelians, Marx and Engels"[89] for it, the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* ended up as a follower of the theology of Negation.

IV. The sociopolitical issue: power and revolution

Holloway's focus on the core of a social theory of emancipation is marked by a distinction, of Spinozian inspiration, between ***power-to*** (***potentia***) and ***power-over*** (***potestas***). Through the prism of an ontology of the social being, power-to expresses precisely this particularity of man as a social being that negates the limits and conditions of his own existence, sets goals and draws out plans to achieve them. On the other hand, as a process aimed at manipulating every

[88] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1966, p..312 (English translation available at www.books.google.gr)
[89] Ibid., p..315

subversive social dynamic, power-over acts antagonistically and oppressively upon power-to, controlling the power-to of suppressed individuals in benefit of its own individual or collective bearer.

In the words of Holloway himself,

> "The antagonistic existence of doing can be formulated in different ways: as an antagonism between power-to and power-over, between doing and labour, between done and capital, between utility (use value) and value, between social flow of doing and fragmentation. [...] 'Power', then, is a confusing term which conceals an antagonism (and does so in a way that reflects the power of the powerful). 'Power' is used in two quite different senses, as power-to and as power-over. [...] Power-to exists as power-over, but the power-to is subjected to and in rebellion against power-over, and power-over is nothing but, and therefore, absolutely dependent upon, the metamorphosis of power-to.
>
> The struggle of the scream is the struggle to liberate power-to from power-over, the struggle to liberate doing from labour, to liberate subjectivity from its own objectification."[90]

At this point, the author's intention to achieve an *opening* of a fetish category, in this case ***power***, is once again obvious. Turning against Foucault, who "fails to open up the category of power, to point to the fundamental antagonism that characterizes it",[91] Holloway attempts to achieve this precise *opening* by treating *potentia* and *potestas* as clashing components/aspects of a whole: "power-to exists as power-over: power-over is the form of power-to, a form which denies its substance".[92] In other words, if Foucault's analysis of power, as Holloway claims, is a "change from one still photograph to another, but no

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[90] Holloway, ibid. pp. 34-35, 36
[91] Ibid., p.42
[92] Ibid., p.40

movement",[93] the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* tries to project ***anti-power*** not as the mechanical reflection of power-over, but as the emancipation of power-to from the class ties imposed upon it by power-over.

Anti-power is, in essence, the social equivalent to the burden that Holloway attributes to Negation within the context of his philosophical and ontological reasoning. Anti-power, as its proponent argues, does not *invert*, but rather *negates* the conditions of existence and reproduction of power.[94] However, he insists, eminent Marxist revolutionaries, such as the leaders of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, trapped in the logic of a schematic inversion (bourgeois power-proletarian power) failed to *radically* reject the class society of their times.

So, escalating his argumentation to the level of a theory of social struggle, Holloway formulates the target of his critique with the greatest possible clarity:

> "From the perspective of the scream, the Leninist aphorism that power is a matter of who-whom is absolutely false, as indeed is the Maoist saying that power comes out of the barrel of a gun: power-over may come out of the barrel of a gun, but not power-to. The struggle to liberate power-to is not the struggle to construct a counter-power, but rather an anti-power, something that is radically different from power-over. Concepts of revolution that focus on the taking of power are typically centered on the notion of counter-power. The strategy is to construct a counter-power, a

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[93] Ibid., p.40

[94] In any case, it must be noted, as Marcel Stoetzler correctly does in "On How to Make Adorno Scream, some Notes on John Holloway's *Change the World without Taking Power*", *Historical Materialism*, Vol.13(2005), Issue 4, pp.193-215, that in Holloway's analysis "the concept of 'anti-power' is dangerous as long as it remains under-determined. Not every force that opposes the currently predominant form of 'power' works in the service of communism, and the concept of 'anti-power' needed to be defined more closely until it stands the test of reversal: do, for example, fascist anti-statism and antisemitic anti-capitalism also fit under the category of 'anti-power'? Although we might share Holloway's suspicion that Adorno's refusal to publicly support any specific oppositional political agenda may have been overstretched, we still have to take Adorno's suspicion that apparent opposition might really be a form of affirmation dead seriously".

> power that can stand against the ruling power. Often the revolutionary movement has been constructed as a mirror image of power, army against army, party against party, with the result that power reproduces itself within the revolution itself. Anti-power, then, is not counter-power, but something much more radical: it is the dissolution of power-over, the emancipation of power-to. This is the great, absurd, inevitable challenge of the communist dream: to create a society free of power relations through the dissolution of power-over. This project is far more radical than any notion of revolution based on the conquest of power and at the same time far more realistic."[95]

However, what concept of revolution was ever based solely on taking power? Definitely not the Marxist theory of Lenin, Trotsky, Mao or Gramsci. As we shall discover further on, Holloway does not overlook –how could he, actually?— the fact that Marx's own theory of the state and revolution is not reduced to the issue of taking power. On the contrary: it was founded and developed through the thesis of the shattering (***zerbrechen***) of the bourgeois state machinery as a *conditio sine qua non* for the transition towards a communist society, a society without a state or classes. Just listen to Marx's own words:

> If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire* you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent.[96]

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[95] Ibid., p.36-37

[96] Marx's letter to Kugelmann, April 12th, 1871. The relative excerpt from the *18th Brumaire*, included in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.8, p.197, goes like this: "All revolutions [until now] perfected this [State] machine instead of breaking it. The parties, which alternately contended for domination, regarded the possession of this huge state structure as the chief spoils of the victor."

And yet, this radical approach to the issue of revolution and political power --an approach that was later on appropriated and analyzed, amongst others, by Lenin, in the third chapter of *The State and Revolution,* and also by many other Marxist theorists—is bypassed by Holloway with an, admittedly admirable, verbal pirouette:

> "But, it might be objected", the proponent of anti-power admits, that "Lenin spoke not just of conquering state power but of smashing the old state and replacing it with a worker's state, and both he and Trotsky were more than aware that the revolution had to be international to be successful. All this is true, and it is important to avoid crude caricatures, but the fact remains that the capturing of the state has generally been seen as a particularly important element, a focal point in the process of social change, one which demands a focusing of the energies devoted to social transformation. The focusing inevitably privileges the state as a site of power."[97]

But how does Holloway himself avoid the use of crude caricatures when he once again resorts to arbitrary generalisations and claims that "the capturing of the state has generally been seen as a particularly important element, a focal point in the process of social change"? Let's, at last, "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's". This opinion has not been defended *generally*, but very particularly in the context of the reformist tradition of European Social-democracy and not by the representatives of revolutionary Marxism. If Bernstein's logic of reform, as developed in his *Preconditions of Socialism* and Kautsky's "orthodox Marxism", as expressed in *The Social Revolution* and *The Road to Power*, reduced parliamentary democracy and its mechanisms to fetishes, for Marxists such as Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky or Gramsci, on the contrary, the dialectics of the state and revolution is not conceived in terms of

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[97] Holloway, ibid, p.15

assuming or *taking* power, but of crushing the bourgeois state machinery in each and every one of its institutional and operational expressions.[98]

However, in his effort to radically counterpose *power* to *anti-power*, Holloway must bypass such theoretical issues!

> "It would seem that the most realistic way to change society is to focus struggle on the winning of state power and to subordinate struggle to this end. First we win power and *then* we shall create a society worthy of humanity. This is the powerfully realistic argument of Lenin, especially in *What is to be Done?*, but it is a logic shared by all the major revolutionary leaders of the twentieth century: Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, Gramsci, Mao, Che. Yet the experience of their struggles suggests that the accepted realism of the revolutionary tradition is profoundly unrealistic. That realism is the realism of power and can do no more than reproduce power."[99]

This does not occur by chance. Despite his claims to *opening* concepts, Holloway succumbs to their fetishisation or demonisation, at an epistemological and ontological, as well as a sociopolitical level. Science, identity and power are taboo concepts, notions that --according to the author-- pin down the subject and lead it to its death. The only way to avoid the unavoidable is *inversion*, an inversion that, in Holloway's case, is dictated not by dialectics, but by formal logic.

In terms of cognitive theory, the track followed upon by the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* is very clear: from the dialectical reasoning of Hegel and Marx straight back to Cartesian thought. In terms of social and political theory, however, the rejection of the theses of revolutionary

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[98] To categorically contradict Holloway's argumentation, one needs simply to point out Lenin's own critical comments on the theses developed by Kautsky in his works *The Social Revolution* and *The Road to Power*. The comments can be found in the drafts as well as the final text of *The State and Revolution* where, contrary to what Holloway claims, the emphasis is not put on the **taking**, but on the **crushing** of the power institutions of the brougeois state.

[99] Holloway,ibid., p.18

Marxism, *mutatis mutandis*, marks a regression which is equivalent to the stereotypical anarchist argumentation of the 19th century:

> "The struggle [...] is lost once power itself seeps into the struggle, once the logic of power becomes the logic of the revolutionary process, once the negative of refusal is converted into the positive of power-building. [...] They do not see that if we revolt against capitalism, it is not because we want a different system of power, it is because we want a society in which power relations are dissolved. You cannot build a society of non-power relations by conquering power. Once the logic of power is adopted, the struggle against power is already lost".[100]

Indeed, on the basis of such formulations, an issue of ***mechanistic approach***, a question of a ***formal reflection*** of the theory of communist revolution arises. In fact, this formal reflection is not representative of Marxist analysis of the relation between bourgeois and proletarian power, as Holloway claims. For the theorists of revolutionary Marxism, for whom dialectics is the algebra and not the arithmetic of revolution, the notions of bourgeois and proletarian rule are *asymmetrical* and cannot be fitted into an inflexible and predefined *linear* relation of *first/after*.[101]

From a Marxist point of view, the crushing of the bourgeois state is conceived dialectically: firstly as negation and, secondly, as the negation of negation, as the crushing of institutions and mechanisms of bourgeois rule, but also as the construction of *particular* new institutions, the institutions of the

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[100] Ibid., p.17

[101] It is this precise linear relation of a before/after that Marx challenges when referring to the proletarian revolutions in the *18th Brumaire* (*MEW*, ibid., Vol.8, p.118 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/hist-mat/18-brum/ch01.htm):
"Proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, constantly criticize themselves, constantly interrupt themselves in their own course, return to the apparently accomplished, in order to begin anew; they deride with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weaknesses, and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their opponents only so the latter may draw new strength from the earth and rise before them again more gigantic than ever, recoil constantly from the indefinite colossalness of their own goals – until a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves call out:
Hic Rhodus, hic salta!
Here is the rose, here dance!"

transitional revolutionary proletarian rule. They are the two sides of that *moment* of mediation, the two sides of the ***dictatorship of the proletariat*** as a first-level communist society, not enforced because of reasons of *conjuncture*, such as the scant development of the productive forces or the low index of nationalisation of capital, but *in all cases* due to necessity; for, as Marx himself asserted, we do not have the right to ignore or forget that, in the beginning "what we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges".[102]

So, I insist: in the Marxist theory of revolution, proletarian rule in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not posed as an inverted image of bourgeois rule; for the theorists of revolutionary Marxism, there is asymmetry between bourgeois and proletarian rule, in form as well as in content. It is not, therefore, revolutionary Marxism, but the formal logic of the proponent of *anti-power* that fails to theoretically conceive power itself through its contradictions. It is Holloway's simplifying approach that fails to comprehend historical processes and *moments* in their complexity and contemporariness, such as the 1917 Russian *dual power*, where bourgeois and proletarian power, the parliament and the soviet, intersected in a context of intense class struggle. It is not the Marxism of the 20th-century revolutions that is trapped in the deadly allure of an inverted reflection, but Holloway's discourse through the schematic confrontation of power and anti-power, just as the discourse of Bakunin and his comrades had been trapped a century-and-a-half ago.

> "If we cannot change the world through the state, then how?", Holloway wonders. "The state is just a node in a web of power relations. But will we not be always caught up in the web of power,

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[102] Karl Marx, *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol.19, p.20. (English version available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/ch01.htm.)

> no matter where we start? Is rupture really conceivable? Are we not trapped in an endless circularity of power? [...]
> The only way in which the idea of revolution can be maintained is by raising the stakes. The problem of the traditional concept of revolution is perhaps not that it aimed too high, but that it aimed too low. [...] What has failed is the notion that revolution means capturing power[...] The only way in which revolution can now be imagined is not as the conquest of power but as the dissolution of power. The fall of the Soviet Union not only meant disillusionment for millions; it also brought the liberation of revolutionary thought, the liberation from the identification of revolution with the conquest of power".[103]

However, revolutionary thought, as it is founded and as it develops through the history of social movements, does not lack subversive scope and effectiveness because revolution is generally identified with taking power, but because it fails to mobilize "material forces" in an anti-capitalist and, ultimately, communist direction. To *imagine* revolution not as a ***taking*** but as an ***abolishing*** of power is not enough to stop power from expanding and reproducing itself. The issue of how to achieve this abolition cannot be dealt with *in abstracto*, "as if by magic", but *in concreto*, through specific strategies and tactics; in this sense, Holloway's abstract discourse, the utopia of a *hic et nunc* abolition of power, brings to mind the "simple and childish fantasies" of those Young Hegelians, whom Marx and Engels caustically criticised using the following parable: "Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out

[103] Holloway, ibid., pp.19-20. In the same line, see also: "Our scream is a scream of frustration, the discontent of the powerless. But if we are powerless, there is nothing we can do. And if we manage to become powerful, by building a party or taking up arms or winning an election, then we shall be no different from all the other powerful in history. So there is no way out, no breaking the circularity of power. What can we do? Change the world without taking power" (ibid. p.10)

of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water".[104]

Perhaps we are being unfair to Holloway! For the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power*, power is not an idea but a *material* reality. And yet, his approach to power is no different from that romantic idealism of the German philosophical heroes that Marx criticised. No doubt, power, the state, the party, the parliament are not ideas, but tangible processes, *material* institutions and mechanisms. But if we agree with Holloway's argument, we are compelled to approach this *materiality* of the social world just as the valiant fellow of the Marxian narration dealt with gravity in the material world, as if it were simply an idea. No matter how much its proponent might insist, the idea that we can change the world *without taking power* has no more chances of becoming true than man has the capacity to *free himself* from the law of gravity.

However, it is not only the strategy of taking state power that is targeted by Holloway's theory of revolution in an anti-dialectical and rather schematic way. It is also the notion itself of the revolutionary subject, as well as the role of the party as an organised political vanguard of the labour class. Bypassing all the crucial tensions and nuances that marked the discussion of the so-called issue of organisation in the context of revolutionary Marxism, especially at the beginning of the 20th century and the course towards the October Revolution, the theorist of anti-power and revolution turns not only against the Bolsheviks, but also against the opinions of Luxemburg, Gramsci and Lukács and even those of council communists such as Pannekoek, repeatedly attacked by Holloway's undifferentiated discourse.

Let us examine a representative excerpt of *Change the World Without Taking Power*. Although its critique is directed mainly against the theory of the party and class consciousness in the work of the young Lukács, *History and Class*

[104] Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, as included in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, ibid., p.13-14 (English version abailable at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/preface.htm.)

Consciousness, it highlights the overall axis of Holloway's theoretical attack against the Marxist theoretical tradition:

> "Who is the critical-revolutionary subject? Who can have this 'imputed' consciousness that is distinct from the psychological consciousness of the proletariat? Lukács resolves this problem by sleight of hand, by bringing in a *deus ex machina:* the bearer of the 'correct class consciousness of the proletariat' is its organised form, the Communist Party.[...]
>
> The Party is drawn out of a hat. Unlike the tight and rigorous argument that characterises the essays as a whole, there is never any explanation of *how* the Party is able to go beyond reification and adopt the perspective of totality. In contrast to the long and detailed argument on the consciousness of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat, the 'sublime role' of the Party as the 'bearer of class consciousness' is just asserted.[...]
>
> If the Party is simply drawn out of the hat, however, it is because it is in the hat from the beginning. The answer of the Party is already implicit in the way in which the theoretical problem is set up. From the beginning the whole question of dialectics, of overcoming reification, of class consciousness and of revolution is posed in terms of the category of totality [...] However, the emphasis on totality immediately poses the question of the Know-All: who is it that can know the totality? Clearly, in a reified world, it cannot be the proletariat itself, so it can only be some Knower who knows *on behalf of* the proletariat. The category of totality already implies the problematic (if not necessarily the answer) of the Party. [...] The attempt to combat fetishism leads, because of the way in which fetishism is understood, to the creation (or consolidation) of a new fetish: the idea of a Hero (the Party) which

> somehow stands above the reified social relations of which, however, it is inevitably a part.[105]

Once again, Holloway *constructs* his ideological adversary in order for his line of argument to prevail. Which might be the "critical-revolutionary subject" that he recognizes in the theory and action of an all-knowing party, a party that is the hero and saviour of the working class itself? Which is the political organisation that acts on behalf of class, replacing it in its role? In the last analysis, is the party as proposed by Lenin or the party as a collective intellectual, defended by Gramsci, what Holloway describes and criticizes, or could it be that the proponent of anti-power presents the Blanquist conception of the political subject as if it were a Marxist theory of the party, a **conspiratorial conception** of a political organisation that acts *on behalf of* the revolutionary class and is not organically connected to it and to its movement?

1. Firstly, Holloway is right in asserting that, no matter what meaning the Marxists give to subjectivity, the active factor in History, they all, each one in his own way, inscribe the action of the subject in the horizon of objective, historical necessity.[106] But how else could a theory of revolution such as Marxism –drawing its limits against objectivism and, more specifically, economism-- avoid voluntarism, a theological faith in the unconditional and unlimited potential of the subject to shape its own history?

"Whichever way around it is put, there is the same dualist separation between the objective and the subjective"[107] Holloway critically insists, referring to the theoretical tradition of Marxism. However, the **dualist separation** between object and subject has to do with his own formal logic, and not with that of the Marxist theorists he turns against without reserve and distinction. For them, such fundamental separations as the one between object

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105 Holloway, ibid., p.83-84
106 Ibid., pp.124-127
107 Ibid, p.126

and subject are not ***dualist***, but ***dialectical***, they are a differentiation in unity and not a schematic confrontation of one pole against the other.

Holloway's failure to comprehend the role of the subject in the context of the materialist conception of History, founded by Marx and Engels and developed in their own way by theorists of the revolution such as Lenin, Luxemburg or Lukács, is also due to this point, to the gap that separates his thought from Marxian dialectics itself.

2. However, if the relation between object and subject is dialectical and is comprehended as such in the context of revolutionary Marxism, then it cannot but be ***mediated***. Thus, in political terms, the party appears as "drawn out of a hat", as Holloway repeatedly asserts. There can be --and, in fact, there has been-- long, unending discussion on the nature of this mediation, i.e. on the organisational form of the political vanguard and the content of its action. However, anyone who reflects and tries to act in terms of a Marxist dialectics, no matter how *openly* this person might comprehend Marxism, cannot question the moment of mediation itself and, ultimately, the moment of politics.

The political theory of Lenin, Lukács or Gramsci never treated the party as a "hero" or a "Messiah"; that is an approach that has long ago been considered trite and oversimplifying, an approach though adopted and reproduced by Holloway. The Marxist theoretical tradition does not consider the party to be a metaphysical concept, but rather a socially *defined* and politically *necessary* subject, whose form and content of action change according to historical conditions.

I will not argue in more detail on this issue. But let us recall how Lenin invited his critics to approach *What is to Be Done?*, a book that poses the great questions on the relation between the spontaneous and the conscious, the working class and the *intelligentsia*, the working class and the political vanguard:

> "The basic mistake made by those who now criticise *What Is To Be Done?* is to treat the pamphlet apart from its connection with the concrete historical situation of a definite, and now long past, period in the development of our Party. [...] The organisation it [*What is To Be Done?*] advocates has no meaning apart from its connection with the 'genuine revolutionary class that is spontaneously rising to struggle'".[108]

So, insofar as the political party is conceived in the context of shifting historical conditions and as a projected expression of the action of the revolutionary social subject, it is not considered --at least from the Marxist point of view -- as a *deus ex machina*, as Holloway wrongly claims. The role of an all-knowing bearer of metaphysical/theological truth, who imposes his will on the proletariat from above, has nothing to do with the Marxist theory of the party, of a collective political leader and organizer of the revolutionary movement.

3. Even the schematic confrontation between the ***party*** and the ***movement*** that imbues Holloway's work in every possible way expresses the author's denial to reflect dialectically on the issue of revolution itself.[109] That is why, to the question "party or soviet" that Lenin faced amidst the Russian 1905, Holloway could never give a dialectical answer as the leader of the Bolsheviks did: "the party *and* the soviet".[110] For the dialectical Lenin, the development of a revolutionary movement such as the one appearing in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century not only does not exclude, but actually demands the issue of

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[108] V.I.Lenin, Preface to the Collection *Twelve Years*, included in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1972, vol.13., pp.93-114 (English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1907/sep/pref1907.htm)

[109] As Alex Callinicos correctly points out in his confronting John Holloway, "A debate between John Holloway and Alex Callinicos. 'Can we change the world without taking power?'", World Social Forum, Porto Alegre (27 January 2005), http://archive.iire.org/pamphlet_nsf_2006.pdf , the issue for a theory of revolution is still the combination of **centralisation** and **self-organisation.** "My ideal in this respect", says Callinicos, "is the one articulated by the Great Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci. He talked about the dialectical interaction between the moment of centralisation represented by the parties and the self-organised impulse from the movement which is the fundamental driving force of revolution".

[110] V.I. Lenin, "Our tasks and the Soviet of Worker's Deputies", in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965, vol.10., pp.17-28

the organisation and action of a conscious political vanguard, of the revolutionary party itself. On the contrary, the proponent of anti-power and author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* considers the proletarian party as an inverted image of the bourgeois political parties, just as he considers the proletarian rule to be a symmetrical reflection of the bourgeois rule, and thus aphoristically concludes:

> "Whether or not it ever made sense to think of revolutionary change in terms of the 'Party', it is no longer open to us to even pose the questions in those terms. To say now that the Party is the bearer of the class consciousness of the proletariat no longer makes any sense at all. What Party? There no longer exists even the social basis for creating such a 'Party'".[111]

However, was there ever a Marxist theorist who treated the party as an *a priori* bearer of the revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat? Holloway might possibly be trying to blame revolutionary Marxism for the mysticism with which Stalin and his own system of rule invested the party as a historical creation. If that is the case, however, he should prove why and how Marxist political theory is responsible for the Stalinist theory and practice of the party through a concrete analysis of the specific situation, instead of turning once more to the metaphysics of abstraction.

4. Holloway is again right in stating that, from the beginning, the theoretical tradition of Marxism --with the theory of Lukács being perhaps the most characteristic and discussed case-- approaches issues such as class consciousness, revolution and political organisation through the viewpoint of ***totality***. But how does he reach the conclusion, of which he tries to persuade all of us, that "emphasis on totality immediately poses the question of the Know-All" and, more specifically, of the ***all-knowing party***, which knows the truth *on behalf* of the proletariat?

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[111] Holloway, ibid., p.85.

It is obvious that, in this case, Holloway's left-wing postmodernism attempts to *construct* a Marxism centered on a conception of a ***closed totality***, which could be recognised in the context of a Hegelian philosophy of *reconciliation*, but is, however, miles apart from a Marxist category of totality. This type of ***open Marxism***, one that, through the abolition of irreconcilable class struggle, detects not only the ***end***, the closing of the ***prehistory of humanity***, but also the ***beginning of its true history*** in the movement of a global communist society, is the open Marxism that Holloway insists on ignoring.

Revolutionary Marxism, including that of Lukács, never considered totality as a *given* thing in its relation with the actions of the revolutionary-critical subject. As the author of *History and Class Consciousness* claims, the theory of totality can and should be conceived *dialectically*, because "only the dialectical conception of totality can enable us to understand reality as a *social process*"[112] In this precise sense, the Hungarian Marxist theorist delimits himself equally in relation to ***fatalism*** and ***voluntarism***, and approaches the category of totality in its conceptual relation with the category of ***objective possibility***, characteristically claiming that "the objective theory of class consciousness is the theory of its objective possibility".[113]

Let us repeat: insistence on totality in terms of a Marxist dialectics does not amount to the conception of an all-knowing party, neither does it presuppose the class consciousness of the proletariat, as Holloway erroneously asserts. Insistence on totality means to pursue a process which is open as to its outcome, the process of a social movement whose goal is to create a communist society, where not only the party but the working class itself is dissolved.

So, if Holloway fails to keep up with the objective possibility of the working class to perform a *leap* from a situation where it only *screams* against capitalism, i.e. from a "class which opposes capitalism", to a class that consciously struggles against the capitalist system as a totality, i.e. a "class for

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[112] Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, Luchterhand, Darmstadt und Neustand 1986, p.77 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/orthodox.htm]

[113] Ibid., p.167 (English version available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/lukacs3.htm)

itself ",[114] it is certainly not because of the theory of Lukács and other important Marxist theorists on the party and class consciousness but, once again, because of Holloway's own refusal to adopt the viewpoint of Marxist dialectics.[115]

In conclusion, the way in which Holloway tries to conceive, *also* on the sociopolitical level, "the meaning of revolution today" highlights the *ideological*, in the negative sense of the term, nature of his theory. As we already pointed out during the analysis of Holloway's epistemological and ontological preconditions for revolution, the theology of Negation, insofar as it demonizes science and even knowledge in the broader sense of the word,[116] is none other but a *return* to the generalisations and fanciful rhetoric of anarchism and other related libertarian movements that have developed from the end of the 19th century. This return was made even clearer in terms of social and political theory, i.e. where the libertarian metaphysics of anti-power calls for an indiscriminate and unmediated *negation* and abstract condemnation of the State, as well as the party "in general".[117] The discourse of anti-power that emerges through the lines of *Change the World Without Taking Power* is a challenge not to Marxism, but to a "crude caricature" of Marxism, formed by elements of an *anarchist-oriented movement* based on mechanistic and, in this sense, anti-dialectical patterns.

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114 Ibid, p.90

115 At this point, we must underline yet another crucial methodological *misstep* committed by Holloway in his approach of this social-political issue: it goes without saying that a party which acts within History, a party which acts within an organic relationship with the revolutionary class and its movement, cannot and must not be confused with the *ideotypical* construction of a party-bearer of true labour class consciousness. However, Holloway falls into this precise error when he overlooks that what Lukács calls the ***zugerechnetes Bewußtsein, the imputed consciousness*** of the revolutionary class, to which he counterposes "***psychological consciousness***", echoes the Weberian methodology of the "*ideal types*". This methodology greatly influenced the author of *History and Class Consciousness* during the crucial period of his intellectual youth, and should not be confused with the party as a *historical* subject.

116 Holloway, ibid., p.212: "The crisis of Marxism is the freeing of Marxism from dogmatism; **the crisis of the revolutionary subject is the liberation of the subject from knowing**" (emphasis added by me)

117 Michael Löwy 's argumentation moves along the same line in his Review of "Change the World without Taking Power", (2002), ibid, pp.79-83. This argumentation is contested by the author, who evades a direct approach to the points at issue: "Reply to Michael Löwy", http://www.herramienta.com.ar/debate-sobre-cambiar-el-mundo/about-change-world-without-taking-power-0. Holloway claims that this abstraction is the result, amongst others, of trying to distance himself from what he considers to be the "endless, deadening left-wing discussions of Stalin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Kronstadt, etc."!

V. An open-ended epilogue on revolution and communism

In any case, there is a useful element in Holloway's theory of revolution and communism in the 21st century: it brings back to the fore of ideological discussion issues that had been posed during crucial moments and periods of the socialist-communist movement of the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Issues that emerged, as I already mentioned, through the break between Marx and Bakunin, Marxism and anarchism, on the one hand, and through the clash between social democrats and Bolsheviks, on the other, an immense theoretical and political confrontation caused in the heart of the movement by the patriarch of revisionism, Eduard Bernstein, and by the evolution of the theses of Karl Kautsky, considered the theoretical representative of "orthodox Marxism".

But how and towards which direction does Holloway return to the classic themes of the strategy and tactics of a global communist movement? Based on the previous analysis, I can now assert that, from an epistemological/ cognitive-theoretical point of view, Holloway's proposals are marked by a crude anti-scienticism which identifies science with positivism and, as a result, turns into agnosticism.

Of course, the consequences of this agnosticism are not limited to the epistemological level; they are intensely developed in the author's social and political conclusions.

> "The Leninists know, or used to know. We do not. Revolutionary change is more desperately urgent than ever, but we do not know any more what revolution means.[118]

However, if we don't know *what revolution means*, if we can't define the "critical-revolutionary subject", because "the critical-revolutionary subject is

[118] Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power, The Meaning of Revolution Today*, p. 215

not a defined 'who' but an undefined, indefinable, anti-definitional 'what'",[119], then *how do we make* communism, what plan do we follow, how do we choose the goal and the means if we don't want to "unconditionally" surrender to nihilism or at least to the spontaneous and the subjective? Indeed, Lenin knew or at least he *tried to find out*, adopting Marxism as a guide to action and firmly asserting that it is impossible to develop a revolutionary movement without revolutionary theory. In fact, he never had the certainty of a positivist 'scientist'. "We, however, acted in conformity with the tenets of Marxism", says the leader of the Bolsheviks and immediately links the general with the specific and the determinate with the unpredictable, in a display of dialectical acuteness: "At the same time, the political activities of the Central Committee in each concrete case were determined entirely by what was absolutely indispensable. **We were often obliged to feel our way**".[120] (the emphasis is added by me)

In this sense, the Zapatista phrase "asking we walk", that Holloway uses in order to make his own agnosticism appear as anti-dogmatism,[121] is not at the antipode of the supposedly dogmatic stance of Lenin and his colleagues. On the other hand, we must not underestimate the fact that the actual posing of questions is a crucial and by no means *innocent* process, both methodologically and politically. The content of the question, but also the way of posing it, presuppose a certain *engagement*, meaning a *militant* point of view; in this sense, the theorists of revolutionary Marxism never hid their identity as Marxists, their secondary differentiations notwithstanding. Holloway, on the contrary, as the representative of a *postmodern left* who is struggling to avoid this allegedly fatal attraction of identity, has nothing left to do but pay the price of his agnosticism.

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[119] Ibid., p.150

[120] V.I. Lenin, Report Of The Central Committee , Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) March 18-23, 1919 [English translation available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/rcp8th/02.htm]

[121] Also see Holloway's characteristic formulation: "Revolution cannot be understood as an answer, but only as a question, as an exploration in the creation of dignity. Asking we walk" ("Twelve theses on changing the world without taking power" [2004], in Phil Hearse (ed.), *Take the Power to change the World*, ibid., pp. 15-21, [also available at http://libcom.org/library/twelve-theses-on-changing-the-world-without-taking-power])

In this case, as Daniel Bensaïd correctly claims, the fact that "we have difficulty in imagining the strategic form of revolutions to come [...] is not something terribly new[...] So, renouncing dogmatic knowledge is not reason enough to make a *tabula rasa* of the past, providing that we save tradition (even revolutionary tradition) from the conformism that is always threatening it".[122] I have already insinuated this: criticism and self-criticism, a characteristic of proletarian revolutions according to Marx himself, are the most effective way of protecting revolutionaries from the Scylla of dogmatism, but also the Charybdis of nihilism. After all, revolutions do constitute an obvious break with the past, but they never start from naught.[123]

However, one must not assume that the agnosticism of the proponent of anti-power is diligently followed by Holloway himself. How could he support a theory of revolution when insisting on his fortress of agnosticism until the end? Even if Holloway and the unidentified revolutionary subject that is summoned to change the world without taking power do not know *what revolution means*, they do adopt and propose, as a regulating principle of doing, that "the idea of a communist revolution is to create a society in which we are not led, in which we all assume responsibility".[124]

At this point, I cannot but comment: if German philosopher Immanuel Kant attempted to abstractly and formalistically reflect –for the purpose of pure practical reason—upon the ideal of a ***Kingdom of Ends (Reich der Zwecke)***, Holloway reflects with an equally abstract and formalistic way on the kingdom of communism as a result of the unlimited *will* of the subject to be self-determined and to change the world.

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[122] Daniel Bensaïd,. "La revolution sans prendre le pouvoir? À propos d'un recent livre de John Holloway", ibid, pp.45-59

[123] It is once again Bensaïd, "Screams and spit. Twelve Comments Plus One more, to Continue the Debate with John Holloway" (2006), in Phil Hearse (ed.), *Take the Power to change the World*, Socialist Resistance, London 2007, pp.59-62 and on the internet: http://archive.iire.org/pamphlet_nsf_2006.pdf, the one who reminds us of Deleuze's phrase: "We always begin again from the middle".

[124] Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power. The Meaning of Revolution Today*, ibid. p.211

Let us remember that, as an ideal, the Kantian kingdom of ends is a "systematic union of different rational beings through common laws", a union of people who have to act in a way that treats the other person "always as an end and never only as a means", thus revealing the idea of ***dignity*** as a fundamental and regulating principle for the organisation of society:[125] But for Holloway too "dignity is the refusal to accept humiliation, oppression, exploitation, dehumanisation".[126] With a discourse that is, indeed, imbued with humanism, the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* insists: "It is not yet time to give up the dream of human dignity".[127]

However, how can the Marxian concept of [personal] freedom in the context of a communist society relate to the concept of dignity that is invested with the ingredients of a humanistic and, ultimately, idealistic rhetoric?[128] What relation can there be between Holloway's definition of communism as "social self-determination"[129] with the Marxian *materialist* conception of communism not as an order that needs to be established nor as an *ideal* to which reality must adapt, but as a *real* movement that abolishes the current state of affairs?[130]

The despair of those who scream and faith in the power of Negation are not enough to change the world order, the world outside us and the world within, in a communist direction. The subject develops its own dynamic, always according to the field in which it moves. Historical conditions are shaped by active people and, at the same time, the action of active people is defined by historical conditions, just as matter and its texture set limits to the expression of the person-creator. In this sense, for revolutionary Marxism, communism can

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125 Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in Akademieausgabe von Immanuel Kant *Gesammelten Werken*, pp.434-435

126 Holloway, ibid., p.154

127 Ibid., p.237

128 Paul (D')Amato is right in pointing out, in "The powerlessness of anti-power", *International Socialist Review*, 27(January-February 2003) that: "The philosophical underpinning of Holloway's ideas is an **idealism** gleaned mostly from Foucault and from Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, [an idealism] that rejects all forms of positive definition as a process that both creates, and assumes, fixed relations of hierarchy and domination. Holloway's is therefore a philosophy of pure 'negation'" .

129 Holloway, ibid.

130 Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, ibid. p. 35

only emerge based on the knowledge of the tendencies that rule the field of operation of active subjects, History as a becoming.

On the other hand, the need to know the tendencies that rule the historical contingencies must not lead to an approach of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement in terms of an ***instrumental rationality***. And in this sense Holloway is indeed right when he rejects the *recipes* for revolution and its organisation. "There can be no recipes for revolutionary organisation, simply because revolutionary organisation is anti-recipe".[131] But has any revolutionary Marxist tried to give out *cook-books* for revolution and communism?

The author that does not know what revolution means but who appears, nonetheless, to *know* that the world can't change by taking power, is very categorical in his estimations: "The orthodox Marxist tradition, most clearly the Leninist tradition, conceives of revolution instrumentally, as a means to an end".[132]

However, how easy is it to indiscriminately pin the instrumental approach to revolution on the Marxist theoretical tradition –which, besides, considers revolution to have a deeply educational and *self-educational* character? Revolution is not only a means for the achievement of the communist goal. Revolutionary Marxism perceives communism as a movement and a goal at the same time, a movement of the masses through which communism tends to transform from abstract possibility to concrete, historical reality. The Marxist theoretical approach to revolution in general and to revolutionary organisation more specifically is not of an instrumental type, contrary to what Holloway might assert. According to revolutionary Marxism, revolutionary organisation is ***organically and not instrumentally*** linked to the revolutionary class, as it is constituted on the basis of its principles and prefigures in micrography the society that it is struggling to create.

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[131] Holloway, ibid., pp.213-214
[132] Ibid., p..214

As Marxist Georg Lukács characteristically mentions,

> "The party called upon to lead the proletarian revolution is not born ready-made into its leading role: it, too, *is* not but *is becoming*. And the process of fruitful interaction between party and class repeats itself –albeit differently—in the relationship between the party and its members. For as Marx said in his theses on Feuerbach: 'The materialist doctrine concerning the changes of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated.' *The Leninist party concept represents the most radical break with the mechanistic and fatalistic vulgarisation of Marx.*[133]

In short: trapped in the abovementioned anti-dialectical/schematic confrontation between the spontaneous and the conscious, between movement and party, Holloway will not conceive revolution in a Marxist way as a **plan**, as *Setzung*, he cannot or will not conceive rebellion as an ***art*** with its own *rules*. If those rules are not acknowledged and put to use, even the most gifted ***improvisation*** of the subject will be reduced to an ineffective act of conspiracy of a Blanquist type or, as in Holloway's case, a fanciful and equally ineffective activism.

But let us take a look at the dialectics of rebellion as Lenin, the theorist and practitioner of rebellion, conceives it:

> "Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection specifically as an *art*, saying that it must be treated as an art, that you must win the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the

[133] Georg Lukács, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of his Thought*, Verso, London, 2009, p.37

> *offensive* against the enemy, taking advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?
>
> To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that turning-point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*."[134]

Rejecting infertile conspiratorial methods and principles that substitute the role of the movement of the masses with organisation –methods and principles which Holloway insists on "discovering" in the lines of Marxism-- Lenin and the Bolsheviks *do* rebellion as *art*: neither an arbitrary product of *will* nor a *quasi natural* outcome. At the limits of Marxist logic, rebellion as the art of revolution is not identified with the explosion of spontaneity, but neither is it an abstract "rational" design drawn out on blank paper. Rebellion, as the historical expression of the revolutionary process, is an art and, as such, it has its own laws. Although they set boundaries, these laws do not nullify the importance of *improvisation* on behalf of the active subject. This appearance of improvisation in the horizon of objective reality is precisely what an anti-dialectical reflection fails to grasp. Through the viewpoint dictated by the theology of Negation, the proponent of anti-power cannot but fall into the trap of accepting and adopting improvisation as a synonym of the omnipotence of volition and volition alone.

To talk of revolution today, at the time of world capitalism, of collapse but also of social movements, means to seek and define the thin line between our

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[134] V.I. Lenin, "Marxism and Insurrection" at http://www.marx.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/sep/13.htm

theoretical Marxist tradition and the need to highlight the new social and political situation at a national and international scale. It means to search for and define the relation of continuity and discontinuity between what is old and is dying, and what *is* new and cannot yet be born, to recall Gramsci's definition of ***crisis***.

But what place can the concept, the "moment" of crisis, has in a theory of revolution which, under the depressing weight of voluntarism, not only disturbs but defines the relation between revolutionary strategy and the tactics of a movement? Holloway's opinion that the capitalist system is incapable of reproducing itself *whenever* the labour forces decide to go against capital's productive and reproductive process, is *radically* mistaken.[135] It is a conception that, parting from the author's declared intention to clash with determinism, falls into an undifferentiated/homogeneous social time, given that revolution and the exit from history is pronounced possible at any moment:

> If revolution is in the future, then capitalism *is* until that future comes.[...] History in this view acquires a revered importance. History is the building up towards the future event... [...] The other conception of revolution says *no*: no to capitalism, revolution now. Revolution is already taking place. This may seem silly, immature, unrealistic, but it is not. [...] In other words, we must break history, smash duration, shoot clocks. [...] History is a nightmare from which we are desperately trying to awake. Revolution must drive its cart and its plough over the bones of the dead.[136]

How can anyone resist this torrent of voluntarism and optimism? If that's how you believe it is, that is how it is! Holloway wastes no opportunity to state or insinuate the distance that separates him from the dialectics of freedom and

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[135] As Leigh Binford argues, o.π., pp. 260-261, «the ubiquity and internality of 'class' struggle notwithstanding, accepting Holloway's confident assertion that just about anytime is the time for revolution requires an enormous leap of faith."

[136] John Holloway, "No", *Historical Materialism*, Vol.13 (2005), Issue 4, pp.265-284 (for the specific excerpts, pp.270-274). [also available at http://www.johnholloway.com.mx/2011/07/30/no/]) Holloway refers once again to the issue of time in the epilogue to the Greek edition of his work (ibid., pp.476-478)

necessity, of historical *law* and the volition of the subject. In the last analysis, he completely cuts himself off from strategy and politics, in the sense of a process that is organisationally constituted by, and at the same time constitutes, the subversive power of the revolutionary subject.[137] So, then, there is nothing left but the anti-powerist instigation to transit from the traditional politics of organisation to the postmodern anti-politics of events:

> "Think of an anti-politics of events rather than a politics of organisation", Holloway urges us. "Or better: think of organisation not in terms of being but in terms of doing.[...] But the aim is not to reproduce and expand the caste of militants (the organisation) but to 'blast open the *continuum* of history' (Benjamin). The shift from a politics of organisation to a politics of events is already taking place".[138]

But why must organisation, political organisation, the organised political vanguard, be necessarily identified with a *sect* of militants? And how can we *break* the continuum of History if we do not *repeat* Lenin,[139] if we do not incorporate the event into the dialectics of time, if we entrap rebellion in the present, if we disconnect revolution from its possibilities?[140] What meaning is there in discussing revolution today if we do not draw inspiration from acknowledging --not imitating-- the past and getting to know the strategic issues that were posed then and that still continue to exist openly, *mutatis mutandis*, in our times?

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137 As Phil Hearse points out, ibid., p.30, "in accepting that social relations can be directly transformed simply by the social practices of the oppressed, Holloway abandons the terrain of strategy, and indeed of politics altogether."

138 Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power. The Meaning of Revolution Today*, p.214

139 Žižek, ibid., p.11

140 In commenting Holloway's claim that "events are flashes against fetishism, festivals of the non-subordinate, carnivals of the oppressed", Daniel Bensaid, ibid., p.54, wonders: "Is carnival the form, found at long last, of the post-modern revolution?"
Also see Marcel Stoetzler's interesting observation, ibid., p.210, according to which Holloway's favourite reference to revolutions as *events* of celebration does not necessarily entail the abolition of the existence and the role of a political vanguard, as Holloway himself would wish. As Stoetzler reminds us, and Holloway overlooks, it is Lenin who, in the *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, calls revolutions the "festivals of the oppressed and the exploited"

To talk of revolution today means, *to repeat* Lenin, to once again talk of how to crush the bourgeois state in the context of the present. But it also means to *ask ourselves*, avoiding all tautologies and banalities, about the adventures of the dialectic between the state and revolution as it developed, before ending in tragedy, in the countries of "really existing socialism". After all, Stalin and his mechanism of rule are not an explanation, an answer to the problem, but rather a part of it. In this sense, Holloway rightly states that Stalinism must not be used --as it has been and still is, unfortunately-- as the perfect alibi so that a great part of the so-called revolutionary left will not trouble itself, will not enter into a critical confrontation with its own history.[141]

Therefore, to talk of revolution today means to search for the *structural* causes --though not only them— of why the crushing of the tsarist state did not lead to the triumph of the soviets but to their death, only a few years after the victory of the October Revolution. Inevitably, such a discussion is radically distinct from Holloway's argumentation, which reduces, with no theoretical reserve, the polymorphous Marxist reflections on the revolutionary state and the party to the Stalinist authoritarian version of the "socialist" rule, and to the equally authoritarian Stalinist view on the relation between the vanguard and the masses.[142]

I will not argue against the obvious and trivial: in a sense, Holloway is right in claiming that "when we turn to history, it is not to find answers, but to pick up the questions bequeathed to us by the dead".[143] Besides, expanding Marx's thought until our days, we cannot but agree that the social revolution of the 21st century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. Only, in our case, poetry from the future cannot be found in the lines of a contemporary book with no ending, such as *Change the World Without Taking Power*, but in

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141 John Holloway "Drive your cart and plough over the bones of the dead", in Phil Hearse (ed.), *Take the Power to change the World*, ibid, pp.67-68

142 On this, see:
-D'Amato, ibid.
-Hilary Wainright, "Response to John Holloway, Change the World by Transforming Power-Including State Power!", (2004), http://archive.iire.org/pamphlet_nsf_2006.pdf

143 Holloway, ibid., p.72

those of another book with no epilogue. I am talking about *The State and Revolution*, which Holloway chooses to treat as inexistent and whose last chapter, focused on the experience of the 1905 and 1917 Russian revolutions, was never written!

In the pages of *The State and Revolution*, the crushing of the old state machinery and the construction of a communist society with no classes or state are dealt with *dialectically*, meaning as organically linked aspects of a unified and, at the same time, contradictory process, just as Marx approached it in the pages of the *18th Brumaire*, *The Civil War in France* and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. However, it has been proven that Holloway's open Marxism has no room for such a dialectical approach. It seems easier to this movement-oriented version of the postmodern left to *by-pass* revolutionary Marxism and to confront its Blanquist or Stalinist caricature.

However, no detour, no skillful formulation can cover up or displace one of the most crucial dividing lines for the theory and practice of an international communist movement of the 21st century:

On the one hand, a *contemporary* Marxist theory, a *contemporary* revolutionary Marxism that attempts a *return*, with no nostalgia, to the uncertain future of the Paris Commune and the October Revolution; on the other, re-discovered anarchist-liberal views, such as Holloway's, who, using a postmodern methodology and an anti-capitalist rhetoric, focuses through his own lens and with over a century's delay, on the "great truth" that was once formulated by the patriarch of social-democratic reformism, Eduard Bernstein: "the movement is everything, the goal is nothing"!

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