### No alternative to capitalism --- even socialists agree

Erik Olin Wright 7, Vilas Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, “Guidelines for Envisioning Real Utopias”, Soundings, April, www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/Published%20writing/Guidelines-soundings.pdf

To be a radical critic of existing institutions and social structures is to identify harms that are generated by existing arrangements, to formulate alternatives which mitigate those harms, and to propose transformative strategies for realising those alternatives. There was a time when many intellectuals on the left were quite confident in their understanding of each of these: theories of class and political economy provided a framework for identifying what was wrong with capitalism; various contending conceptions of socialism provided models for alternatives; and theories of class struggle and socialist politics (whether reformist or revolutionary) provided the basis for a transformative strategy. Today there is much less certainty among people who still identify strongly with left values of radical egalitarianism and deep democracy. While left intellectuals remain critical of capitalism, many acknowledge - if reluctandy - the necessity of markets and the continuing technological dynamism of capitalism. Socialism remains a marker for an alternative to capitalism, but its close association with statist projects of economic planning no longer has much credibility, and no fully convincing alternative comprehensive model has become btoadly accepted. And while class struggles certainly remain a central source of conflict in the world today, there is no longer confidence in their potential to provide the anchoring agency for transforming and transcending capitalism.

### Their authors are ahistorical—power politics mean cap doesn’t cause war and the alt fails

Burchill, Lecturer in IR, 7 [Scott Burchill, Lecturer at Deakins University in Australia, “Marxism” in An Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives, Ed. Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke and Jim George, pp. 69-70]

Galtung is very legitimately interested in problems of world poverty and the failure of development of the really poor. He tried to amalgamate this interest with the peace research interest in the more narrow sense. Unfortunately, he did this by downgrading the study of inter346 national peace, labeling it "negative peace" (it should really have been labeled "negative war") and then developing the concept of "structural violence," which initially meant all those social structures and histories which produced an expectation of life less than that of the richest and longest-lived societies. He argued by analogy that if people died before the age, say, of 70 from avoidable causes, that this was a death in "war"' which could only be remedied by something called "positive peace." Unfortunately, the concept of structural violence was broadened, in the word of one slightly unfriendly critic, to include anything that Galtung did not like. Another factor in this situation was the feeling, certainly in the 1960s and early 1970s, that nuclear deterrence was actually succeeding as deterrence and that the problem of nuclear war had receded into the background. This it seems to me is a most dangerous illusion and diverted conflict and peace research for ten years or more away from problems of disarmament and stable peace toward a grand, vague study of world developments, for which most of the peace researchers are not particularly well qualified. To my mind, at least, the quality of the research has suffered severely as a result.' The complex nature of the split within the peace research community is reflected in two international peace research organizations. The official one, the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), tends to be dominated by Europeans somewhat to the political left, is rather, hostile to the United States and to the multinational corporations, sympathetic to the New International Economic Order and thinks of itself as being interested in justice rather than in peace.

The Peace Science Society (International), which used to be called the Peace Research Society (International), is mainly the creation of Walter Isard of the University of Pennsylvania. It conducts meetings all around the world and represents a more peace-oriented, quantitative, sciencebased enterprise, without much interest in ideology. COPRED, while officially the North American representative of IPRA, has very little active connection with it and contains within itself the same ideological split which, divides the peace research community in general. It has, however, been able to hold together and at least promote a certain amount of interaction between the two points of view.

Again representing the "scientific" rather than the "ideological" point of view, we have SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, very generously (by the usual peace research stand- ards) financed by the Swedish government, which has performed an enormously useful service in the collection and publishing of data on such things as the war industry, technological developments, armaments, and the arms trade. The Institute is very largely the creation of Alva Myrdal. In spite of the remarkable work which it has done, however, her last book on disarmament (1976) is almost a cry of despair over the folly and hypocrisy of international policies, the overwhelming power of the military, and the inability of mere information, however good, go change the course of events as we head toward ultimate catastrophe. I do not wholly share her pessimism, but it is hard not to be a little disappointed with the results of this first generation of the peace research movement.

Myrdal called attention very dramatically to the appalling danger in which Europe stands, as the major battleground between Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union if war ever should break out. It may perhaps be a subconscious recognition-and psychological denial-of the sword of Damocles hanging over Europe that has made the European peace research movement retreat from the realities of the international system into what I must unkindly describe as fantasies of justice. But the American peace research community, likewise, has retreated into a somewhat niggling scientism, with sophisticated methodologies and not very many new ideas.

I must confess that when I first became involved with the peace research enterprise 25 years ago I had hopes that it might produce something like the Keynesian revolution in economics, which was the result of some rather simple ideas that had never really been thought out clearly before (though they had been anticipated by Malthus and others), coupled with a substantial improvement in the information system with the development of national income statistics which reinforced this new theoretical framework. As a result, we have had in a single generation a very massive change in what might be called the "conventional wisdom" of economic policy, and even though this conventional wisdom is not wholly wise, there is a world of difference between Herbert Hoover and his total failure to deal with the Great Depression, simply because of everybody's ignorance, and the moderately skillful handling of the depression which followed the change in oil prices in 1-974, which, compared with the period 1929 to 1932, was little more than a bad cold compared with a galloping pneumonia. In the international system, however, there has been only glacial change in the conventional wisdom. There has been some improvement. Kissinger was an improvement on John Foster Dulles. We have had the beginnings of detente, and at least the possibility on the horizon of stable peace between the United States and the Soviet Union, indeed in the whole temperate zone-even though the tropics still remain uneasy and beset with arms races, wars, and revolutions which we cannot really afford. Nor can we pretend that peace around the temperate zone is stable enough so that we do not have to worry about it. The qualitative arms race goes on and could easily take us over the cliff.

The record of peace research in the last generation, therefore, is one of very partial success. It has created a discipline and that is something of long-run consequence, most certainly for the good. It has made very little dent on the conventional wisdom of the policy makers anywhere in the world. It has not been able to prevent an arms race, any more, I suppose we might say, than the Keynesian economics has been able to prevent inflation. But whereas inflation is an inconvenience, the arms race may well be another catastrophe. Where, then, do we go from here? Can we see new horizons for peace and conflict research to get it out of the doldrums in which it has been now for almost ten years? The challenge is surely great enough. It still remains true that war, the breakdown of Galtung's "negative peace," remains the greatest clear and present danger to the human race, a danger to human survival far greater than poverty, or injustice, or oppression, desirable and necessary as it is to eliminate these things. Up to the present generation, war has been a cost and an inconvenience to the human race, but it has rarely been fatal to the process of evolutionary development as a whole. It has probably not absorbed more than 5% of human time, effort, and resources. Even in the twentieth century, with its two world wars and innumerable smaller ones, it has probably not acounted for more than 5% of deaths, though of course a larger proportion of premature deaths. Now, however, advancing technology is creating a situation where in the first place we are developing a single world system that does not have the redundancy of the many isolated systems of the past and in which therefore if anything goes wrong everything goes wrong. The Mayan civilization could collapse in 900 A.D., and collapse almost irretrievably without Europe or China even being aware of the fact. When we had a number of isolated systems, the catastrophe in one was ultimately recoverable by migration from the surviving systems. The one-world system, therefore, which science, transportation, and communication are rapidly giving us, is inherently more precarious than the many-world system of the past. It is all the more important, therefore, to make it internally robust and capable only of recoverable catastrophes. The necessity for stable peace, therefore, increases with every improvement in technology, either of war or of peace.

### Zizek’s structural violence impacts are wrong and politically and morally crippling---it lays the groundwork for mass violence and totalitarianism

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A major goal of Violence is to redefine violence and persuade the reader that its indisputable manifestations are not necessarily the most important or most reprehensible from a moral-ethical standpoint. Zizek argues that there is on the one hand “systemic” (structural, or objective) violence by which he means conditions or antecedents by themselves not violent which breed violence, that is to say, “violence inherent in a system” - and on the other “subjective” violence that is more visible and which is what we generally mean by violence. Systemic violence includes not only physical violence but also “more subtle forms of coercion... Our freedom of choice ... often functions as a mere formal gesture of consent to our own oppression and exploitation.” In the second volume he again addresses the issue: “Our blindness to...‘systemic evil’ is perhaps most clearly perceptible apropos debates about Communist crimes: there responsibility is easy to allocate...with agents who committed them, and we can identify the ideological sources...

When one draws attention to the millions who died as the result of capitalist globalization...responsibility is denied: this just happened as the result of an ‘objective’ process, nobody planned and executed it...” He is especially preoccupied with the “new disguises” of evil and tyranny perpetrated by “enlightened democratic administrators.” These are far from original ideas and they have an unmistakable affinity with Herbert Marcuse’s notion of “repressive tolerance” (nowhere acknowledged); his name doesnt even appear in the index. Marcuse and Zizek both believe that they have privileged insight into the discrepancy between appearance and reality, that the apparent freedom and non-violence of capitalist democracies is an illusion, or sham, that behind or beneath the apparent tolerance (or non-violence) lurks the profound (systemic) violence (or repression) cleverly disguised. Zizek relishes showing (or thinks that he is showing) that entities thought to be different from one another are not - he is a champion of moral equivalence. For example “...the delicate liberal communist... [he means liberal or moderate leftist - P.H.] - and the blind fundamentalist exploding in rage are two sides of the same coin... liberal communists are the very agents of the structural violence which creates the conditions for the explosions of subjective violence.” Nor is there any difference between terror and “state power waging war on terror.” Capitalism, needless to say is the prime culprit generating systemic violence: “...it is the self-propelling metaphysical dance of capital that runs the show, that provides the key to real-life developments and catastrophes. Therein lies the fundamental, systemic violence of capitalism, much more uncanny than any direct pre-capitalist socio-ideological violence; this violence is no longer attributable to concrete individuals...but is purely ‘objective,’, systemic, anonymous.” A major example of “our blindness to systemic violence” is the overemphasis on communist crimes and insufficient attention to “the result of capitalist globalization.” He writes: “Responsibility for communist crimes is easy to allocate...But when one draws attention to the millions who died as the result of capitalist globalization... responsibility is largely denied.” All this is presented as a triumphant revelation. But surely we have been told innumerable times during and since the 1960s (by new leftists and radicals of every stripe) that capitalism is the omnipresent, unchanging, immanent source of the most reprehensible forms of violence (indeed of all evil), that “poverty is violence” as is racism, sexism or homophobia. Stretching the meaning of the concept of violence has a transparent inspiration: to raise levels of moral indignation about matters (e.g. poverty or sexism) which might not stimulate as much indignation or outrage as violence conventionally defined, such as mass murder. These Soc (2010) 47:358–360 359 semantic manipulations help Zizek to assert that capitalist systems are the most violent, and more generally, to undermine the hierarchy of morally relevant distinctions. As he sees it even language can be designated as a “more fundamental source of violence” because it imposes “a certain universe of meaning.” Zizek takes pride in claiming to be one of the few “who remain faithful to the legacy of the radical left” and argues that “the terrorist past has to be accepted as ours.” The terrorist past, that is to say “the lost causes” he defends, are the French Revolution, Stalin’s slaughters and Mao’s Cultural Revolution. In Defense of Lost Causes is touted on the cover as a “major new work” but appears to be instead a collection of disparate pieces likely to have been published before. In at least two instances this reviewer found sentences which appeared in Violence (p.50 and 52) and are repeated verbatim in this book (p. 14 and 15). This verbose volume makes it even clearer than Violence that Zizek seeks to “remain faithful to the legacy of the radical left,” to “radical emancipatory politics.” Even more remarkable, that - according to the cover description - he is said to be engaged in looking “for a kernel of truth in the ‘totalitarian’ politics of the past” and searches for “a redemptive moment that gets lost in the liberal-democratic rejection of revolutionary authoritarianism and the valorization of soft, consensual, decentralized politics” he despises. Zizek’s ideas about political violence are more outlandish in the second volume including the insistence that “our task today is precisely to reinvent emancipatory terror.” It remains unclear what he means by “emancipatory terror” other than terror of good intentions. Of Stalinist terror he writes: “The Stalinist terror of the 1930 s was a humanist terror: its adherence to a ‘humanist’ core was not what constrained its horror, it was what sustained it. It was its inherent conditions of possibility.” The chapter that contains these gems is entitled “Stalinism Revisited Or, How Stalin Saved the Humanity of Man.”

Given Zizek’s longing for violent revolution it is not surprising that he admires the Chinese Cultural Revolution as “the last truly great revolutionary explosion of the 20th century”. More generally he wishes to “give the dictatorship of the proletariat a chance!” - the subtitle of chapter. He urges to “thoroughly demystify the scarecrow of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’...” He approves of this dictatorship because it represents “the properly ‘terroristic’ dimension of every authentic democratic explosion: the brutal imposition of a new order.” He chides “the contemporary Left” for its “fear of directly confronting state power” and praises Lenin for his willingness to start the revolution under adverse conditions.

Occasionally Zizek is capable of sober reflection as for instance when he writes that “today, as religion emerges as the main source of murderous violence around the world, one grows tired of the constant assurances that Christian, Muslim, or Hindu fundamentalists are only abusing and perverting the noble spiritual message of their creed...” He is also on target when he writes that “... the lesson of today’s terrorism is that if there is a God, then everything, even blowing up hundreds of innocent bystanders is permitted to those who claim to act directly on behalf of God, as the instruments of his will, since clearly a direct link to God justifies our violation of any ‘merely human’ constraints and considerations. The ‘godless’ Stalinist communists are the ultimate proof of it: everything was permitted to them since they perceived themselves as direct instruments of their divinity, the Historical Necessity of Progress towards Communism. ”

The latter observations are hard to reconcile with his advocacy of purifying terror and offer no help for distinguishing laudable from inauthentic violence. Zizek personifies the confused longing for meaning, social solidarity and utopian fulfillment to be achieved by bold, cleansing violence that permeated totalitarian movements and systems of the past century. Intellectual historians of the futurewill not find it easy to explain why these longings and their incoherent expression made him a celebrity but they will probably recognize that he embodied and expressed many dubious cultural and political currents of our times.

### Their root cause and invisible violence arguments are nonsense and the alt doesn’t solve them---the alt’s indignation in the face of the 1ac impacts is politically and ethically disastrous

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Violence By Slavoj Zizek Profile, 218pp, $35 WHO are the most contented people on earth? The rich, no doubt, being served breakfast on their yachts by liveried staff. And painters, brush and palette in hand, the smell of oil paint in their nostrils, their easels set up in a sunny corner of France in sight of Mont Sainte-Victoire.

And the sadhus of India and other such repudiators of the rat-race, released from the struggle to make do on behalf of their families and the remnants of their self-respect.

And finally, I am morally certain, the cultural critics, as they are called, the self-selected radical quasi-philosophers (usually trained as sociologists or literary theorists) who enjoy the unaccountable, responsibility-free luxury of being able to criticise everything and everyone, to sneer and accuse, to blame and complain, to analyse, anatomise, judge and condemn, without fear of being asked to do better themselves.

Or even to suggest alternatives or solutions. This in effect is the take-home result of Slavoj Zizek's meditations on violence, which he concludes by recommending that in response to the various forms of violence that confront us, chief among them the violence of the state and capitalism and the wickedness of philanthropy (I explain all this and especially the latter in a moment), we should do nothing. Yes, nothing.

The man who thinks this, sociologist and cultural critic Zizek, is a Slovenian who studied Lacanian psychoanalysis in Paris and has made a stellar career out of applying Lacanianism-Marxism to every imaginable subject, including to film, his next greatest passion after these two isms. His reputation as "the Elvis Presley of postmodern thought" was enhanced by his film The Pervert's Guide to Cinema, which gave a psychoanalytic reading of nearly 50 assorted movies.

As a propaedeutic to giving this explanation, let me recall that cliched story about the starfish, which goes like this: millions of starfish are stranded on a shoreline by a freak tide and a young girl starts throwing them back into the sea one by one. A man passing by says, "There are so many of them, what you're doing can make no difference." To which she responds, as she throws another into the water, "It makes a difference to this one."

A certain kind of moral imagination gets down to the level of individuals: one less rape victim in Darfur, one more saved person in the Irrawaddy Delta. Of course one wishes it were possible to save everyone -- mainly, of course, from themselves -- but there is consolation in the thought that, as the Talmud puts it, "to save one life is as if you have saved the world".

One disconcerting consequence of Zizek's take on violence is that this kind of moral imagination, which sees value in trying to rescue individuals from the danger and effects of violence, has to be seen not merely as beside the point or only a distraction from the real task, which is to "learn, learn and learn" about the true nature of violence, but as somehow complicit in its causes. That is why we must do nothing about it. The world may be in the midst of agonies, but we must be brave and not yield to the temptation to let any practicality sully the crucial task of theorising.

Zizek's main argument is that "subjective violence" -- demonstrators throwing stones at police, for example -- gets put into perspective when we switch viewpoint and see its background is not a neutral state of peaceful order but a far greater violence: the "objective violence" of the system, in particular the capitalist system, which is a monster feeding its gross appetites in blithe unconcern for people or the environment.

This is the "fundamental systemic violence" that the fat cats of the World Economic Forum, meeting annually at Davos, try to persuade themselves and us is in our interests. The leading figures among capitalists -- Bill Gates, George Soros -- go further and commit themselves to vast acts of philanthropy to prove the point, but the humanitarian mask conceals the face of exploitation that brought the surplus wealth into these philanthropic hands in the first place.

For Zizek, the philanthropists, whom he bizarrely calls "liberal communists", are "the enemy of every progressive struggle today". Terrorists, religious fundamentalists and corrupt bureaucrats are merely local figures in contingent circumstances, minor in comparison to these true enemies of progressive endeavour, who are the embodiment of the system that is itself the true violence in the world.

Zizek has much else to say, not least in analyses of media coverage of crime and unrest, and the role of fear in motivating attitudes in societies that think of themselves as liberal without being so. This is therefore and emphatically a topical book, whose approach to present preoccupations with terrorist attacks, Danish cartoons, the clash of civilisations and Islam is unconventional.

But the plausibility of its approach turns on the idea just described: that the main violence to which contingent acts of violence are a response is the globalised capitalist system itself and the apologetics that work on its behalf. The problem is not the rather wearisome invocation of views owed to Karl Marx, Jacques Lacan, Walter Benjamin, Alain Badiou and the other usual suspects who shape a certain (arguably implausible and certainly tendentious) way of thinking but the key logical fallacy in Zizek's premise, namely, the equivocation on the word violence.

You can, and should, complain vociferously about the harms and wrongs perpetrated by capitalism, but to describe them all as violence makes it impossible to distinguish between what happens when an multinational oil company raises its prices and when it pays to have people bullied off land above an oil deposit. Being paid a low wage and being shot in the head are two different things. If you use the same word for both you are muddling, weakening and misdirecting your argument.

This underlies the discussion in Zizek's book and it is why the discussion is not about the difference between the relatively infrequent situation in which, say, a small number of religious fanatics carry out mass murder and the standard situation in a Western liberal democracy in which security forces, existing at the implicit and occasionally explicit desire of its citizens, are maintained to enforce laws arrived at, and changeable by, non-violent political processes. So there is no discussion here of the psychology of violence, or of the tensions and contradictions in non-totalitarian polities that occasionally express themselves violently, or of the forms of non-political violence (evidently this phrase has to be a contradiction for Zizek) that take place at football matches, with much greater frequency than politically motivated violence. Can football violence be blamed on capitalism? Might Zizek think it is not really violence, despite broken heads and black eyes? On the evidence of this book, the answer to both would seem to beaffirmative. The least plausible idea is that the response to the systematic objective violence of the dominant ideology and its institutions, namely global capitalism, is to do nothing: "The first gesture to provoke a change in the system is to withdraw activity, to do nothing: the threat today is not passivity but pseudo-activity, the urge to 'be active', to 'participate'." This is not consistent with the remark quoted earlier, that to oppose racism, sexism and religious obscurantism one has to compromise with the system, for to do any of these things is to be active and to participate; revealingly, the system's efforts to oppose these things have to be compromised with because they are tainted: presumably they are bad opposition to racism and so on, whereas non-capitalist anti-racism is ostensibly good anti-racism. But such a view is altogether too self-serving, too precious. We have to fight on many fronts at once: against the system, with the individual, for the good whatever its shape and local name. The idea of the disengaged intellectual is an unappealing one, and lends weight to the distrust and suspicion that transfers to the intellectual's stock in trade, which is ideas. Moreover, ideas themselves are empty vessels unless applied, tested, connected with practice. It is odd that Marxist intellectuals -- a sort of antediluvian breed of self-describing hairy mastodons -- of all people should have forgotten Marx's strictures on the topic of praxis and gnosis, of changing the world and not just describing it. Just like folk of a religious proclivity, it seems that intellectuals of that stamp are prone to cherry-pick their texts for convenience and ease. Zizek's account of violence, which is so little about violence and so much about states of affairs we must do nothing about, tastes of picked cherries all the way through.

### No alt

R. Moolenaar 4 department of philosophy, Tilbury University, netherlands “Slavoj Žižek and the Real Subject of Politics” Studies in East European Thought, 2004, Volume 56, Number 4, Pages 259-297 Springer

When reading Zizek one cannot miss that he takes in his work, as Ernesto Laclau has said, 'a patently anti-capitalist stance' (CHU: 205). Time and again he argues against the acceptance of capitalism as 'the only game in town', and the renunciation by 'post-modern post-politics' of any real attempt to overcome the existing liberal-capitalist regime (CHU: 95). But as Laclau argues in his noteworthy discussion with Zizek, it remains very unclear what 'overcoming liberal capitalist democracy' would actually amount to and what alternative model of society Zizek has in mind. What does it mean to really change the existing capitalist liberal order? Does this mean, for example, that Zizek wants to socialize the means of production and abolish market mechanisms? And what would then be Zizek's political strategy to achieve this, in Laclau's eyes, 'peculiar aim'? (CHU: 206) This 'peculiar aim', however, seems for Zizek precisely the point when he repeatedly pleads for 4a kind of direct socialization of the productive process' as the only solution' in the present global situation, 'in which private corporations outside public political control are making deci sions which can affect us all, even up to our chances of survival' (TTS: 350-357).

The growing insight that the unrestrained rule of the market presents a real danger and thus has to be constrained through some socio-political measures - in general, a more effective democratic control of the economy - seems in itself encourag ing, but this is for Zizek by far not radical enough. For under the present circumstances these kind of 'palliative measures' would only serve as a kind of 'damage control', by which the worst effects of unbridled globalization might be avoided, but without in any way posing a real threat to the 'reign of Capital' (TTS: 395, n. 34). For even if today there can be found a growing awareness for the need to counteract the reign of the 'depoliticized' global market with a move towards politization, THE REAL SUBJECT OF POLITICS 261 so that crucial decisions are taken away from experts and state planners and put the into the hands of the individuals and groups concerned, this need is mostly conceived in terms of a revitalization of civil society: active citizenship, broad public debate and so on. Although these kinds of proposals are to be welcomed, they usually stop short of putting into question the very basics of the anonymous logic of market relations and global capitalism, which imposes itself today more and more as the neutral framework accepted by all parties and which becomes, as such, more and more depoliticized (TTS: 351).

The main result of our 'post-political age', which preaches 'the end of ideology', is the radical depolitization of the sphere of the economy, so that the way the economy functions is ac cepted as a simple insight into the objective state of things. As long as this fundamental depolitization of the economic sphere is accepted, Zizek warns us, all the talk about active citizenship, about public discussion leading to responsible collective deci sions, and so on, will remain mostly limited to the 'cultural' sphere of religious, sexual, ethnic and other way-of-life issues, without actually encroaching upon the level at which the long term decisions that affect us all are made (TTS: 353).

The burning philosophical-political question Zizek is struggling with in most of his recent work is how to reformulate a leftist, anti-capitalist political project in our era of global capitalism and of, what he considers as its inherent product, the violent rise of all kinds of 'irrational fundamentalisms' (TTS: 4). Although Francis Fukuyama's thesis on 'the end of history' has been somewhat discredited, we on the whole still silently assume that the liberal-democratic capitalist global order is somehow the finally found 'natural' social regime. The threats posed to it by outbursts of irrational violent passions are mainly considered as anachronistic 'left-overs' from the past (TFA: 10;W DR: 132). In contrast to this, Zizek maintains that today's rise of 'irrational violence' should be conceived as strictly correlative to the 'depolitization' of our post-modern societies, that is, to the disappearance of the proper political dimension, its translation into different levels of rational expert social administration (WDR: 132). In post-modern, post-poli tics the clash of global ideological visions is replaced by the 262 R. MOOLENAAR collaboration of expert managerial bodies, negociating the interests of a multiplicity of particular social strata and groups, reaching a compromise in the guise of a more or less universal consensus. But, paradoxically, the final arrival of this truly rational 'concrete universality' - the abolition of old ideological divides, the 'mature' universe of the negociated coexistence of different groups and interests - coincides with its radical opposite, with thoroughly contingent outbursts of (pseudo naturalized ethnic-religious) violence (TTS: 202). What looks at first like a multitude of irrational 'remainders of the past', that should be gradually overcome with the ongoing spread of a tolerant multiculturalist liberal-democratic order, is to be per ceived, however, as this liberal order's very mode of existence (WDR: 133). In this regard there is for Zizek ultimately only one question which confronts political philosophy today: is liberal-capitalist democracy the ultimate horizon of our politi cal practice, or is it possible effectively to comprise its inherent limitation and thereby to open up the space for another polit ical articulation? (TWN: 221).

The sad thing about our situation today, however, is that, after the breakdown of the Marxist alternative, none of the critics of capitalism, none of those who describe so convincingly the 'deadly vortex' into which the so-called process of global ization is drawing us, has any well-defined notion of how 'to get rid of capitalism' and radically change things. What we see today are unprecedented changes in production, caused by groundbreaking technological innovations, which have a radi cal transformational impact on our societies, but the ultimate outcome of this still remains very obscure. At the same time, all this obscure and frenetic change is accompanied by a kind of lethargy in the domain of politics - which leads some radical thinkers to argue that the epoch of groundbreaking political acts is, at least for the time being, over (DST: 137). Zizek himself is even prepared to admit that perhaps a fundamental economico-political change is not really possible, at least not in the foreseeable future (TTS: 352). So in this sense Laclau is definitely right: Zizek does not have a clear alternative - other than, somehow (but how?) 'socializing the means of produc tion' - and he does not provide a clear-cut strategy that would THE REAL SUBJECT OF POLITICS 263 put us on the right track to achieve this. But it is precisely with regard to this deadlock that Zizek evokes the name of Lenin: not as the nostalgic name for old dogmatic certainty, but Lenin as the one who found himself, in his time, also 'lost' in a 'cat astrophic new constellation' in which old coordinates proved useless, and who was thus compelled to reinvent the entire socialist project anew.

### Capitalism safeguards individual rights and sustains human life – it is the only moral system

### Tracinski, co-founder and Chairman of the Center for the Moral Defense of Capitalism, 1998 (Robert W., The Moral Basis of Capitalism, www.capitalismcenter.org)

What no one has grasped yet is that capitalism is not just practical but also moral. Capitalism is the only system that fully allows and encourages the virtues necessary for human life. It is the only system that safeguards the freedom of the independent mind and recognizes the sanctity of the individual.

Every product that sustains and improves human life is made possible by the thinking of the world's creators and producers. We enjoy an abundance of food because scientists have discovered more efficient methods of agriculture, such as fertilization and crop rotation. We enjoy a lifespan double that of the pre-industrial era thanks to advances in medical technology, from antibiotics to X-rays to biotechnology, discovered by doctors and medical researchers. We enjoy the comfort of air conditioning, the speed of airline transportation, the easy access to information made possible by the World Wide Web—because scientists and inventors have made the crucial mental connections necessary to create these products.

Most people recognize the right of scientists and engineers to be free to ask questions, to pursue new ideas, and to create new innovations. But at the same time, most people ignore the third man who is essential to human progress: the businessman. The businessman is the one who takes the achievements of the scientists and engineers out of the realm of theory and turns them into reality; he takes their ideas off the chalkboards and out of the laboratories and puts them onto the store shelves.

Behind the activities of the businessman there is a process of rational inquiry every bit as important as that of the scientist or inventor. The businessman has to figure out how to find and train workers who will produce a quality product; he has to discover how to cut costs to make the product affordable; he has to determine how best to market and distribute his product so that it reaches its potential buyers; and he has to figure out how to finance his venture in a way that will best feed future growth. All of these issues—and many others—depend on the mind of the businessman. If he is not left free to think, the venture loses money and its product goes out of existence.

The businessman has to have an unwavering dedication to thinking, not only in solving these problems, but also in dealing with others. He has to use reason to persuade investors, employees, and suppliers that his venture is a profitable one. If he cannot, the investors take their money elsewhere, the best employees leave for better opportunities, and the suppliers will give preference to more credit-worthy customers.

The businessman's dedication to thought, persuasion, and reason is a virtue—a virtue that our lives and prosperity depend on. The only way to respect this virtue is to leave the businessman free to act on his own judgment. That is precisely what capitalism does. The essence of capitalism is that it bans the use of physical force and fraud in men's economic relationships. All decisions are to be left to the "free market"—that is, to the un-coerced decisions of buyers and sellers, manufacturers and distributors, employers and employees. The first rule of capitalism is that everyone has a right to dispose of his own life and property according to his own judgment.

Government regulation, by contrast, operates by thwarting the businessman's thinking, subordinating his judgment to the decrees of government officials. These officials do not have to consider the long-term results—only what is politically expedient. They do not have to back their decisions with their own money or effort—they dispose of the lives and property of others. And most important, they do not have to persuade their victims—they impose their will, not by reason, but by physical force.

The government regulator does not merely show contempt for the minds of his victims; he also shows contempt for their personal goals and values.