

THE (FULFILLED) PROPHECY, PARTS I TO III

Roberto Ribeiro Baldino

Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

rrbaldino@terra.com.br

Part I

This text is a prophecy announcing the coming decision of the International Committee of MES to ghetto the discussion of certain unpleasant messages in the listserv into a sub-list reserved for those who want to discuss a certain subject. The decision is foreseeable, and my hope is that the prophecy will defeat itself. I would not retain it for the pleasure of saying *I saw it coming*.

I will argue for the thesis that *democracy is rapidly been replaced by fascism as the dominant ideology of capitalism*. The reason is simple: “it’s the economy, stupid”¹. My conclusion will be that one may limitate the maximum daily number of messages addressed to all as well as the length of messages, but any *control on the content* of what is said is a *fascist practice*, as defined bellow.

My argument will need the explanation of why people develop an *active blindness* about what *surplus-value* consists of. I will explain surplus-value in terms of infinitesimals. I will consider *fascism* as the endeavor to obliterate, in the level of discourse, all possibilities of taking sides with the workers against capital. Referring to (Baldino & Cabral, 2013, 2015, 2019), I argue that school is a place of economic production of qualified labor power; teachers own this commodity that functions as capital for them. Thereby they are prone to become pray of the *global fascist ideology* resulting from the blockage of capitalist expansion due to the finiteness of the Planet. I consider the teachers’ unconscious formation by the “inculcation” of global fascist ideology and end up discussing a few examples from the recent debate in the MES listserv.

Two centuries ago, economists like Quesnay, Smith and Ricardo were aspiring to constitute political economy into a science. They realized that prices match the human work contained in commodities. Since in a regime of stable prices, commercial transactions *exchange equal values*, they could not answer the question: where does the increase of the gross domestic product (GDP) of nations come from? The only contribution that Marx apported to political economy was to elicit a commodity that he called *labor-power* whose *use generated more value than its cost*. Economists had long been *looking at this commodity without seeing it*. This kind of *active blindness* Althusser called a *symptom*; Lacan stressed: it was Marx who invented it.

¹ Phrase of James Carville, 1992 : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It%27s_the_economy,_stupid

No more should need to be said about the work-power. However, active blindness has been reinforced since the time of Marx and affects us all. The following explanation becomes necessary, as though my experience tells me that seldom it is sufficient.

Labor power is a commodity that belongs to the worker. Working during part of the day, the worker exchanges a crumb of labor-power by a crumb of salary. Here we have $dA_L = dA_S$. The crumb of salary is the price of one-day reproduction of the crumb of labor power (room, board, and education for the family). There is no exploitation here, both values are equal. However, during his work time the worker's *total labor* produces a crumb of commodity whose value is $dB > dA$. The value $dB - dA$ is collected by the employer. It is called *surplus-value*. Here lays the exploitation, the unpaid work, the injustice, etc. Integrate $dB - dA$ over one year to get the contribution of this worker to the GDP.

In resume, labor-power is a commodity whose effective use produces more value than what it costs to the capitalist. Once this simple fact is realized, the question: how much the owner of the means of production will be willing to pay for the labor-power? is replaced by this one: *how much of his total labor is the worker willing to relinquish to keep the capitalist's ownership of the means of production?* The existence of the capitalist is a *gift of the worker*. This question founds political economy from the working-class perspective. We will call it the *ground question (GQ)*. It stems from Marx, was supported by Engels and effectuated by Lenin and Trotsky. It became the ground of the international movement that lasted seventy years, known as *communism*.

In different countries, *fascism was created as a radical movement of opposition to communism*. From all characteristics of the fascist movement² I will keep its endeavor to *anticipate and obliterate, in the level of discourse, all possibilities of the GQ to emerge*.

Part II

The infinitesimal generator of capitalism is $dB - dA > 0$. This means that capitalism cannot exist without growing. Indeed, democracy has provided one century of steady capitalist growing, nuanced by crises and two global wars. Humanity had never seen such globalization of markets and cheapening of commodities. However, the Planet is round and finite, despite efforts to say it is plane. There are no new markets to be conquered, the amount of capital necessary to extract profit from production and sale of commodities tends to infinity. The welfare state proportioned by democracy has ended.

“Fascist governments advocated for the resolution of domestic class conflict within a nation in order to guarantee national unity.”³ However, from the point of view of the capital, there is only one nation in the planet, dominated by the alliance of Western with Chinese capital. The growth of capital can only depend on the reduction of the cost of the labor-power. This means suppression of acquired rights, increase of worked hours,

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism>

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism#Economy>

discharge of unproductive people, etc. The repression of the workers' protests requires the rapid *replacement of democracy by fascism as the dominant ideology of capitalism*.

The mentioned papers have not produced much impact, probably because teachers do not like to learn that they are the best qualified in the school race and that their role is to introduce children into an economic practice. They own a commodity whose value they seek to increase and preserve, just like a capitalist takes care of his capital.

Unknowingly, they too, have been initiated to the fundamental capitalist practice: the qualified labor power is their capital. In the split capital/labor established by GQ they tend to align with capital. Thereby they become pray of the global fascist ideology. This deserves the following explanation.

The ideological interpellation does not reach the subjects directly, but through what Žižek calls the subject-effect: "The crucial dimension of the ideological *effet-sujet* is not in my direct identification with the symbolic mandate (...) but in my experience of the kernel of my Self as something that pre-exists the process of interpellation" (Butler, Laclau & Žižek, 2000, p. 134). If the subject responded directly to the ideological interpellation as Althusser apparently states, we would be turned into psychotic "mechanical dolls". It is when "I, the subject, experience the innermost kernel of my being as something which is not merely 'that' (the materiality of rituals and apparatuses)" (134) that the effect-subject takes place.

It is when the teacher believes to have surpassed fascism, that she can freely exercise fascist practices, because all awareness of what she is doing will have been repressed into her unconscious. The unconscious is the discourse of the Other, says Lacan; in this case, this discourse is the discourse of global fascism, uttered by the alternance of speech/silence of the media which is supported by the capitalist advertisers. From then on, the well dissimulated fascist ideology will only emerge through symptoms in the teachers' speeches.

For instance, taking advantage of the brief period when the moderator opened access to the 800 members of the listserv, I introduced a message that amounted to this one-line statement: *obliterating debate is a fascist practice*. I foresaw that some would agree, others would argue that it is not, and a third group would just delete the message as non-sense. But a fourth group appeared, of those who took offence but remained silent and sent e-mails to the moderator. Evidently, somehow, they felt touché. Why? Is this a symptom that they were trying to avert the proximity of the GQ? On what grounds?

Someone argued that he was receiving too many e-mails and had inadvertently deleted an important one. I asked him: how many e-mails are you willing to receive per day? We can find a consensual number above which the moderator will block the messages. I got no answer. Is this a symptom that the excessive number of messages was not the true motive for the protest? Was it again an attempt to avoid the proximity of the GQ?

Someone else argued that only messages of information, not of discussion should go through. Is it possible to legislate about the distinction of "information" and "discussion". Can we find a criterion to separate them? Perhaps, but how would divergences be solved? By a moderator? Thereby we would get someone deciding whether what one says, and writes may or may not be addressed to all. Under what

criterion? Again, asking for this criterion was considered offensive. Why? Is this a symptom of what?

I also argued that to rely on a “moderator” to filter content of messages is already a fascist practice, because it *leaves open*, (should I repeat?) leaves open the possibility of averting the GQ. Is this not a fascist practice? Or, perhaps, on the contrary, should we decide that the moderator must occupy herself only of blocking-off content that refers to the GQ?

Part III

Two years ago, we had an identical discussion in a general list of UFRGS. At that time, people also complained that e-mails were too long. I asked: which size will you accept as reasonable? I got no answer. Certainly, the reasons alleged to block the GQ off were false, but the unconscious formation of the protesters made them believe they were true. The end of that discussion was the same: the dean intervened, ghettoed the discussion into a sub list so that people could discuss freely, without disturbing the cuco’s nest. Never occurred to him to consider *with whom we wanted to discuss*. Should fascist ideology be put at safe from discussions? I am criticizing actions, the same exclusionary actions we find in mathematics classrooms; I am not attacking people. Why is it useless to say this? People continue to take offence. Is this a symptom that they feel that somehow they are subjected to active blindness?

For more than forty years people tell me that I should find another way of communicating my idea about social practices to avoid people to liminary reject them. I have tried, but, whenever the proximity of the hard kernel of fascism was recognized as such, the result was the same: people took offense.

Surprisingly, one of the founders of MES declared that he would delete messages that were not about mathematics in some way. I wonder if he would delete this message: *due to their ownership of a special qualified labor power, mathematicians tend to obliterate debate about the GQ*.

The initial idea that MES should be a space to discuss the social together with mathematics education seems to be lost. With the present decision of its IC, MES will continue being just one more cultural tourist congress with avenues for publishing, increasing the value of qualified labor power (curriculum), reproducing the sameness disguised under long reference lists, obliterating research where the GQ is most likely to emerge, like in summative assessment (Cabral & Baldino, 2021). MES will continue to contribute to the well-being of the publishing empire with the publication of thick books that are useless for the classrooms but consume cellulose from trees extracted from the rain forest.

People will say that I am unjust, that I do not consider the huge effort of a dozen of volunteers who have made all these congresses to happen. Ok, but the amount of work does not determine the ideological position. The war and the pandemic have only elicited what was already there: MES discursive practice contradicts the content of these same discourses which recommend justice, inclusion, and equity in the classroom. Are

these only words? Today in Ukraine, the possibility of finding a swastika beside a British flag does not seem to disturb the tranquility of the 800 members of the listserv. In the name of what is the IC blocking this discussion? We may “discuss”, but only with those who agree with us. Do fascist practices have the right to remain concealed?

The prohibition to speak in favor of Russia in any circumstance, amounts to the prohibition of thinking, because *there is no thought without expression*. With the thought-police we are back to “1984”, the expression of the ridge of fascism.

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