

Introduction

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This issue proposes some lines of enquiry around three interrelated themes: the migratory flows of people in today global factory, the dynamics and hierarchies underpinning the production of value for capital, and the production of values other than those for capital. The search for the connection among these themes is what allows us to weave together these papers so much different in style and subject matter.

Devi Sacchetto's article focuses on people and capital flows in the case on the South-Eastern and Central Eastern Europe. Here migration is understood as a flow of social subjects between areas of different values. The production of these value differences is brought about by wars, migrations, direct investment and the patterns and direction of enlargement of the EU. As a result of economic disparities and cultural differences, social actors from Maghreb to the Ural Mountains have *different* degrees of freedom of movement and of political initiative. Migrants, investors, professional people in charge of humanitarian aid, smugglers of undocumented migrants, traders, mercenaries, seamen define and play out their strategies within this value-segmented context. Furthermore, from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU has set a trend in social and economic policies, not only for members states, but also for some countries of the Mediterranean southern rim. The EU norms and policies have promoted trends of migration and flows of commodities and information that rise or fall for different regions, depending on the institutional and economic changes in the peripheral countries. These trends on the other hand, are associated to patterns of international economic and humanitarian cooperation as some of the

main instruments assuring the hegemony of transnational elites. Here Sacchetto draws a crucial link between EU's policies of immigration and asylum and the foreign policy and the international cooperation through NGOs of member countries. The EU elites have today the increasing opportunity to act freely in both European and non-European territories where they operate. A neo colonial freedom emerging from the submission of the sovereignty of local states to request by new local and transnational power breakers seeking to rewrite and re-interpret legislation according to their will. Thus export-processing areas are established in which labour has few rights and environmental legislation are laxer, giving raise to a re-stratification of value areas and the formulation of new disciplinary instruments to face persistent threats to their articulation. Finally, the new power breakers overseeing these dynamics who flow back and forth from the home countries to the "neo-colonial" posts — whether business investors, EU officials or humanitarian agencies — develop a new colonial mentality based on the stigmatization of the local populace for the molecular resistance they are putting against this new form of capitalist neo colonialism. How this stigmatization contribute to the development of racism in the home country is an open question.

Massimiliano Tomba addresses the question of value segmentation along global production networks by re-reading Marx's theory of absolute and relative surplus value. The starting point of the article is the critique of Marxist stage theory that sees the evolution of capitalism as moving from lower to higher levels of developments. In different ways this "stage" stance has plaid a role in both mainstream XXth Century Marxism and some of its critiques, such as Italian post-operaismo. Echoing a problematic raised by other interventions in previous issues of *The Commoner*, Tomba instead argues that "the first, second and third worlds" are levels that are reciprocally interpenetrated giving rise to the co-existence – even in spatial proximity – of high tech and absolute forms of extraction of surplus value. This way we cannot talk about a *tendency* of the "old" forms of labour and exploitation to develop into new form, say of "mass workers" to develop into "immaterial labourers". To avoid the problems associated to these historicists stance, Tomba finds it necessary to "re-descend" with Marx of *Capital* into the "laboratories of production", showing how absolute and relative surplus-value should not be conceived in a diachronic succession, "but synchronically in an historical-temporal *multiversum*". We can follow the chains of valorization that crosses the boundaries of the factory gates and of the national frontiers. A chain that gives rise to the wage hierarchy. This mapping of delocalisation is than read through the vivid colours of the

subjects of living labour, the migrant workers who in affirming their freedom of movement, clash with the capitalist interest to construct and preserve wage hierarchy within and outside Europe.

The uncritical reliance on social “tendencies”, is also Ferruccio Gambino’s object of critique in this 1990s article on fordism and post-fordism. Gambino contribution expose to historical scrutiny the very early literature that has coined the concept of “post-fordism” in the 1980s, that one associated to the regulation school. Today this term is often taken for granted and used to capture all sort of transformations that the literature posit as element of novelty in relation to “fordism”: an atomised, flexibilised and non union worker, a state that no longer guarantee the material cost of reproduction of labour power. In its Toyotist variant post-fordism is seen as the result of a “tendency” to new forms of rationalization as well as of new and more advanced relations of production, giving rise to new sociality that might well prefigure new forms of democracy. To a certain extent, the contemporary conceptions of cognitive capitalism and immaterial labour have perhaps their roots in these early post-fordist constructs.

Gambino argues that this approach does not really analyze social relations of production, but rather the economic/state institutions that oversee them. In this way, the regulation school “stresses the permanence of structures, and tend to overlook human subjects, their changes and what is happening to them with the disorganization and reorganization of social relations.” For Gambino, not only the very formation and dynamic of “preunion fordism”, “fordism” and global “post-fordism” is centered on struggles of concrete waged and unwaged workers. Also, what is seen as a passage from one “ism” to another is the effect of changing capital’s strategies at a rhythm imposed by the constraints and ruptures of various struggles. For the Regulation School instead, fordism and post-fordism appear both as stable tendencies waiting to be fulfilled. Against the appearance of stable structure and predictable social “tendencies”, the experience of fordism in the 1950s and 1960s shows that what appeared as a stable system began soon to fall apart ripped from the inside. At the end of the 1960s the class struggle, “overturned capital’s solid certainties as regards the wage, the organization of the labour process, the relationship between development and underdevelopment, and patriarchy”. Without understanding the radicality of this challenge and, we would add, the ways this radicalism has been outflanked by capital planetary re-organisation, what is called today “post-fordism” assumes the character of “a crystal ball, in which . . . it is possible to read some signs of the future”. Such a chrystal-ball approach makes it impossible to grasp the elements of crisis and uncertainty in capital’s domination,

with the political consequence of being unable to problematise the issue of class political re-composition.

This is a point also stressed in the two articles that follow, one a joint work by Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis, and the other by Massimo De Angelis. Both articles were recently circulated in the the "edu-factory" list (www.edu-factory.org) as part of a debate on "cognitive capitalism". We invite the reader to explore the many contributions in this important forum to follow this debate and that on other related themes. There are two main lines of Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis argument against theoretically de-centering the problematic of class hierarchy and dynamics of stratification. First, an empirical/theoretical one, in which they claim that the history of capitalism demonstrates that capital's subsumption of all forms of production is not predicated on the extension of the "highest" level of science and technology to all workers contributing to the accumulation process. Cases such as the capitalist organization of the plantation system and of housework suggests that work can be organized for capitalist accumulation with the laborer working at a level of technological/scientific knowledge below the average applied in the highest points of capitalist production. This also suggests that the "inner logic" of capitalist development can only be grasped if we look at the totality of its relations rather than only at the highest points of its scientific/technological achievements. Looking at this totality reveals that capitalism has always produced disparities along the international and sexual/racial division of labor. These disparities are both the product of its inner workings and of clear strategies which give rise to the "underdevelopment" of particular sectors and are amplified by the increasing integration of science and technology in the production process. From this theoretical/empirical point follows, second, their political argument. There is in fact a political consequence in using constructs such as "cognitive capitalism" and "cognitive labor" in such a way as to overshadow the continuing importance of other forms of work as contributors to the accumulation process. And this is the development of a discourse that precludes *class recomposition*. There is in fact the danger that by privileging one kind of capital (and therefore one kind of worker) as being the most "exemplary of the contemporary paradigm" we contribute to create a new hierarchy of struggles, thus engaging in forms of activism that "precludes a re-composition of the working class." To become possible, this political re-composition must be predicated on the awareness of the continuity of our struggle across the international division of labor and wage hierarchy, which mean that we need to "articulate our demands and strategies in accordance to these differences and the need to overcome them."

Massimo De Angelis contribution builds on this twofold argument around the problematic of the wage hierarchy and articulates it to other themes debated in the edu-factory forum such as "labour abstraction", "translation" and "excess". The processes responsible for the ongoing creation of value stratification can be grasped theoretically and empirically though Marx's classic texts reinterpreted in lights of the issues raised by the struggles of those subjects that in that text were mostly invisible and yet are and have always been so fundamental to capitalism (women, the unwaged reproduction workers, the slaves, the peasants). The two main coordinates of these processes are the systematic and continuous "enclosure" strategies and the process going on "behind the back of the producers", the process of the formation of "socially necessary labour time". The former continuously re-stratify the hierarchy with a variety of violent means, but also through the use of technology and knowledge products developed at the highest levels as instrument of these enclosures. The latter is what Marx labels the process going on "behind the back of the producers", the process of the formation of "socially necessary labour time" which is referred here as "disciplinary integration", since market processes act as disciplinary mechanisms that allocate rewards and punishments and hence contribute again to produce hierarchy. This "inner logic" of capitalism is predicated on a way of *measuring* life activity which subordinates concrete specific humans to the quantitative imperative of balance sheets. This subordination means that the sensuous *and* cognitive features of concrete labouring are subordinated to the drive for making money. It also implies that "an excess" which is not put to value by capital always exist. This "excess" is the outcome of the struggles of situated workers facing the frontline and contesting the reduction of their life-activity to abstract labour. Yet, we must be cautious that the dynamism of capitalism is based on the ongoing attempt to recuperate and subsume these excesses and turn them into moments of capital accumulation. Thus, in contrast with the view that sees cognitive labour as commons across a stratified class, here the argument is that in so far as capital production is concerned what is really common across the "multitude" is that social production occurs through the subjection of multiplicity to a common alien measure of doing, of giving value to things, of ranking and dividing the social body on the basis of this measure. Through this valorisation process, human powers are transmuted into commodities, and social doing is transmuted into work, into abstract labour. In this sense, abstract labour is not so much the result of a "translation" as some claim, although processes of translation are always occurring. It is the result of a real abstraction, i.e. a transmutation, as a transmutation of one species into another, one

species of humans into another one. Hence, despite being a crucial issue, the central question for political recomposition is not “translation”, but the *transformation of our interconnected lives*. And this transformation cannot avoid posing the question of the overcoming of existing divisions as the *central* problematic of our organisational efforts.

The problematic, difficulties and contradictions of political recomposition across value chains and constitution of political subjectivity founded on “other” values is faced up by Patrick Cunninghame paper on the Zapatista’s “Other Campaign” (so-called in mock reference to the 2006 presidential electoral campaigns). This was catalysed by the Zapatistas call for a renewed anti-capitalist resistance movement “from below and to the left” against neoliberal capitalism in Mexico and internationally, in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle (the Sixth) in July 2005 and in the broader socio-political context is framed by the events surrounding the July 2006 presidential elections, which proved to be particularly “dirty” and fraudulent. Here attempts have been made of “horizontal coordination of autonomists, anarchists, Zapatistas, socialists, indigenous and peasant movements” as well as independent trade unions and the more radical NGO campaigns. The paper also discusses the problems faced by the organisation and mobilization of the Other Campaign in the trans-border region of Chihuahua-Texas-New Mexico in Northern Mexico-Southern USA. The mobilisations were against “the femicide of some 450 working class women and girls in Ciudad Juarez since 1993, as well as other issues based around migration, the US-Mexico border, the hegemonic maquiladora (corporate assembly plant for export) hyper-exploitation model and the social violence and urban degradation produced by “savage capitalism”.” This “other” organizational paradigm, also include the “Other on the other side” (of the border), and therefore attempts to connected with the May Day Latino boycott movement in the US against the criminalisation of undocumented migrants.

Finally, there are three interrelated short contributions by Mariarosa Dalla Costa, linking the making and remaking of the planetary value hierarchy through enclosures (which systematically reproduce its lower layers), with the political problematic of the production of food as common, and of new relations to land and agriculture. In “Renaturalising the world” she begins reflecting on the continuing expulsion of populations from the land accompanying development projects and the new enclosures. This is the eradication of a population that derived from the land the possibility for nutrition and settlement, and that instead adds to urban slums or takes the

route of migration. The outcome, similar to those following patterns of enclosures which occurred five centuries ago at the injection of capitalism, is the “expropriation from, and the accumulation of, land on the one hand, and the accumulation of immiserated individuals who could no longer reproduce themselves because they had been deprived of the fundamental means of production and reproduction, above all the land itself, on the other.” But crucially, this continuous replenishing the ranks of the eradicated and expropriated, “functional to a further expansion of capitalist relations and to the re-stratification of labour on a global level.”

This ongoing re-stratification of the “conditions of labour and of life of men and women across the world, regardless of where they live,” is based upon the expulsion from the land. It is here that “the condition for class is re-founded and labour within the global economy is re-stratified.” And there are really no solutions within the traditional remedies. On one hand, “it is unthinkable that jobs will multiply” in accordance with the number of those expelled. On the other hand, “nor is possible to fool oneself into hoping for a global guaranteed income of such vast proportions. Yet even if it arrived one day, replacing the bombs perhaps, could we really delimit the matter to one of money, money sufficient for the purchase of a farming product which, in its industrial and neoliberal formulation, increasingly pollutes our bodies, destroys small economies and their jobs, and devastates the environment? And, beyond this, how much freedom would we have when all of the earth’s inhabitants depended only and exclusively on money for their survival?”

This is the context in which Dalla Costa builds her analysis of the struggles around land, farming and nutrition by self-organising networks of the global movement of farmers that developed in the nineties. This analysis is furthered in her second piece, “Two Baskets”, in which she moves from the need of what she calls the “great reawakening”: “one that is being enacted by farmers and citizens (who are challenging their role as merely “producers” or “consumers”) against the great machine of industrial agriculture and the politics that bolster its delivery of noxious foods, environmental devastation.” Here she discusses the coordinates of a political project that aims at “re-localise development” and “re-ruralize the world”. An argument that fully open to the last paper on food as common, in which she argues that “food is only regained as a fundamental right in its fullest sense when it is regained as a common. It is regained as a common if, along the way, all its conditions are also regained as commons. This is what is already apparent from the ways in which networks of farmers,

fisherpeople, and citizens who are not only consumers organize themselves.”