

The Cards of Confusion

Reflections on Historical Communism and the 'End of History'

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For Tom and Martha, divisibly

... it is well known that History is not a good bourgeois.

Roland Barthes (1957)

An anti-Communist is a cur. I couldn't see any way out of that one, and I never will.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1961)

The contemporary topos of the 'End of History' has a distinguished pedigree, ancient and modern, rendering it a virtual cliché of intellectual culture.* Eschatological and soteriological doctrines of the Final End have been around since the very beginning – Christianity, with its distinction between calendrical and providential time, being only one such.¹ Ends come and go; or, as they used to say in Eastern Europe, 'the future is certain; the past is unpredictable.'

In the twentieth century, the immediate precedent for current sightings of a cessation or culmination of history is to be found in Cold War liberalism – in particular, Daniel Bell's *End of Ideology* (1960). The latter, issue amidst the Khrushchevite switch to 'peaceful coexistence and competition' in the USSR, revolved around the postulate of a convergence between East and West: the tranquil conclusion of the contest between capitalism and socialism as a result of the post-war 'democratic social revolution', which had solved the riddle of modern history with the reconciliation of liberty and equality, efficiency and humanity, in regulated capitalism. A less exultant – indeed, bleakly pessimistic – left-wing version of the thesis was advanced concurrently, in one of the classics of Western Marxism: Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), which counterposed an impotent 'Great Refusal' to the omnipotence of the ubiquitous 'technocratic society'.²

* This is the full text of which versions were read at the *Radical Political Thought* Conference, 'Towards the Good Life', University of Sussex, and the *Rethinking Marxism* Conference, 'Marxism in the New World Order', University of Amherst (both November 1992). I am grateful to all those – Peter Osborne and Fred Halliday, in particular – who commented on it, however critically, before or after the event.

For To End Yet Again and Other Fizzles...

The intervening social, cultural and political turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s having passed without undue perturbation of the OECD order, another variation upon the theme has emerged in the 1980s. To characterize today's cultural climate as one in which 'endism' is pandemic would doubtless be an exaggeration. And yet the efflorescence of what might be called the P-word is surely an index of something: postmodernism, post-structuralism, post-Fordism, post-industrialism...; the prefix is neither fortuitous, nor innocent. The final decade of the second millennium AD signals, according to a certain apocalyptic litany, the death of communism and socialism, the passing of the working class, the termination of the Cold War, the waning of industrial society, and – most portentously of all – the 'end of history'. *Fin de siècle, aube de siècle* – except that the contours of the new dawn are only dimly discerned, the future invariably being depicted as the eternal repetition of the transitional, untranscendable present: a future of no future, so to speak.

Considerations of time and tact prevent me saying anything very much about the cultural complex known as postmodernism. But I do want to indicate two things. Firstly – and, I imagine, uncontroversially – propositions to the effect that the West is in passage to a post-industrial society, a post-Fordist economy, a post-socialist politics, and a post-ideological culture, wherein post-metaphysical philosophy comes into its own – these are half-truths, where not outright falsehoods: symptoms of a late-twentieth-century reality systematically misrecognized, not adequately conceptualized. Secondly, the class of '68 which articulates (or recognizes itself in) them coincides, albeit inadvertently and in a distinct idiom, with Cold War liberalism in its assessment of the socialist legacy. 'Post-Marxism' may locate itself at the intersection of Heideggerian, Wittgensteinian and post-structuralist trends in philosophy. A neglected feature of its depreciation of historical materialism, however, is its unpremeditated antecedent in the thought of Berlin, Popper and co., who likewise contrasted the philosophico-political 'pluralism' of the liberal tradition with the 'monism' of Marxism (even if in defence of the Open Society, rather than the Democratic Revolution).³ What Richard Rorty calls 'North Atlantic Postmodern Bourgeois Liberal Democ-

racy' and North Atlantic Modern Bourgeois Liberal Democracy have more in common than the self-images of the age, infused with the 'narcissism of small differences', care to acknowledge.

As critics have demonstrated, postmodernist affirmations of an 'end of history' – in the shape of the 'metanarrative of emancipation' targeted by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) – succumb to a series of crippling performative contradictions, which prevent them from grasping their indicated object.⁴ The reconfiguration of avant-garde Anglophone theory leaves much of the Left intelligentsia carolling the virtues of a meretricious miscellany which, as has been remarked, would shake all metaphysics (Marxism included) to the superflux, while leaving material structures intact (therewith replicating metaphysics in the very gesture of repudiating it). Today, to assign class an explanatory status is to invite the charge of 'classism'; to posit a social totality (never mind a global system) with organizing principles, that of 'essentialism' ('economism', should – ultimate sin – one of them be economic); to assign causal priority (misconstrued as exclusivity) to anything, that of 'reductionism'; to invoke history (unless tendentiously serviceable), that of 'historicism'; to mention science – without scare quotes – that of 'scientism'; and as for objective knowledge, well, it is known to be passé (undesirable, even were it attainable). Quite how any essay in social explanation – of necessity, selective (reductive, but not *eo ipso* reductionist) – can secure acquittal on the charge of suppressing 'difference' is one of the many imponderables, given the infinite, facilely iconoclastic, spiral inherent in these premises. A little difference goes a long way.... As Francis Mulhern has remarked, 'metaphysics is safe in the keeping of the disenchanted.'⁵

The intrinsic problem with this sub-Maoism of the signifier – combining, to quote Mulhern, 'a fanciful belief in subversion *ordinaire* with a knowing disdain for revolutionary ideas, in a mutant creed that might be called anarcho-reformism' – is that it flouts its own protocols. It employs reason as an instrument of illumination to denounce reason as an arm of oppression. It deploys a metanarrative – and one of the tallest, if not greatest, stories ever told – to deliver metanarrative its quietus. It constructs an expressive social totality, the entirety of whose phenomena would be exfoliations of the postmodern essence, therewith trampling pertinent differences underfoot. Disposing of history historically, of theory theoretically, of ethics ethically, of politics politically, this intellectual recidivism drafts its own indictment: *de te fabula magna narratur*.⁶

Viewed in the twilight of the idols, what is striking about Francis Fukuyama's essay, 'The End of History?',⁷ otherwise so consonant with the ideological *Zeitgeist*, is its avoidance of such performative contradictions. Despite following Derrida's lectures in Paris, Fukuyama reverts to the French Hegelianism – metanarratives of speculation and emancipation, *par excellence* – against which, so the standard intellectual history runs, (post-) structuralism was largely directed. Fukuyama, I want to argue, borrowing Blake's verdict on Milton,⁸ is, in at least two senses, 'of the Devil's party without knowing it': a circumstance which may account for the hostility or suspicion with which his

original article of 1989 was greeted on the Right.

Fukuyama is of the Devil's party *analytically*, insofar as he has resurrected totalizing (and globalizing) theory as an indispensable mode of conceptualization of the 'One World' impending on the threshold of the twenty-first century. His work displays the arresting paradox of a (post-)Cold War liberal political individualism whose historicist philosophical framework, with its holism and teleologism, was anathematized by his Anglo-American predecessors as the royal 'road to serfdom'. For them moral-political individualism entailed methodological individualism, while teleological prospects dictated 'totalitarian' results. By the norms of mainstream Anglophone philosophy Fukuyama is culpable of the kind of dialectical metaphysics extirpated by the inter-war 'analytical' (counter-)revolution.⁹

Fukuyama is of the Devil's party *politically*, insofar as he has punctured some of the historical amnesia induced by the Right during the 1980s. For, truth belying comfort, Fukuyama reminds us what was at stake in the Second Cold War: a comprehensive reversal of the consequences of the Second World War in the First World (Keynesian welfare capitalism); in the Second (the existence and performance of Stalinism); in the Third (the defeat of colonialism). As Fred Halliday has written, 'The actions of the Reagan Administration and its allies in Europe sought to reverse these consequences, using the recession, anti-communism, and historical amnesia to impose a new set of values and policies on the world.'¹⁰ They have largely succeeded; and Fukuyama's is one, especially ambitious endeavour to prospect the 'New World Order' arising upon the ruins of formerly existing socialism: the only actual socialism, *hélas*, that we have known.

After the Deluge

'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism.'¹¹ Overly optimistic, historically, at the moment of its composition, the opening line of the *Communist Manifesto* was, by its centennial in 1948, unduly pessimistic geographically, as accomplished or imminent revolutions in Asia compounded the post-war transplantation of Stalinism from one country to a whole geographical zone, occasioning the Cold War in concerted Western response. Some four decades (and a second Cold War) further on, the ghost has been exorcized. The spectre haunting the world today is not the end of 'prehistory' envisaged by Marx, but the 'end of history' envisioned by Fukuyama: the global apotheosis – as opposed to the global abolition – of capitalism.¹² The main premise of the *Manifesto* might be thought to have been vindicated, close to a century and a half later, while its consequent has been informed en route. The predicted global expansion of capitalism has finally transpired, but in such a way as to eliminate its principal twentieth-century impediment: 'historical Communism', tributary to the Bolshevik Revolution – 'the moment when' (according to Edmund Wilson) 'for the first time in the human exploit the key of a philosophy of history was to fit an historical lock'.¹³

For another right-Hegelian philosophy of history, capitalism has vanquished its secular antagonist – actually existing socialism – in the East, and dug the grave of its

appointed gravedigger – the proletariat – in the West, allegedly rendering socialism utopian (for lack of agency and rationality as a goal), and Marxism redundant (for want of explanatory or normative purchase). The knell of socialized public property has sounded: the expropriators are expropriating.¹⁴ Satirizing a ‘scientific socialism’ which certified the inevitability of the classless future, the French Communist Paul Nizan had written in 1938 of a ‘world destined for great metamorphoses’: great metamorphoses the reverse of those foreseen have supervened.¹⁵ What, for Fukuyama, do they consist in?

In sum, the ‘epic of transition’ heralded by Lenin amid the ‘highest stage of capitalism’ has proved to be a mere *divertimento*. Sundown having fallen on the Union, Minerva’s owl spreads its wings and spies the materialization of Kant’s ‘Universal History’: ‘an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism’ over its ‘world-historical’ competitors, portending a “‘Common Marketization’ of world politics’, or ‘liberal democracy in the political sphere combined with easy access to stereos and VCRs in the economic’. Following Hegel, then, for Fukuyama ‘the History of the World is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom’;¹⁶ and that consciousness has prevailed. The ‘triumph of the West’ – or of the ‘Western idea’, at any rate – has concluded history, not in the sense of bringing empirical events to an abrupt halt (these will continue); but in the sense of realizing a goal: ‘freedom’ as the ‘end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’. (Culmination, not cessation: to mobilize two Americanisms, ‘end-times’ are ‘quality time’.) The end of history is the end of ideology, for the consummation of one universal ideology. History with a capital ‘H’ – construed as a *Kampfplatz* between competing universal ideologies, ‘embodied’ (so Fukuyama stipulates) ‘in important social or political forces and movements ... which are therefore part of world history’ – has arrived at its terminus. Contrary to Plekhanov’s classical Marxist assurance that ‘We, indeed, know our way and are seated in the historical train which at full speed takes us to our goal’,¹⁷ the train of history has terminated not at the Finland Station, but at the nearest hypermarket. All roads lead to Disneyland... Sartre’s projected dystopia in the event of the defeat of Stalinism in post-war France has come to pass: ‘the universe will be bourgeois.’¹⁸

Given Fukuyama’s construction of ‘History’, the myriad malcontents of post-historical civilization, whatever their visibility or volubility, represent no challenge to his basic thesis. As he himself argued in an article on the Gulf War (baldly entitled ‘Forget Iraq – History is over’), apparent discomfiture of his speculations in the event supplied substantiation of them; failing even to hegemonize Arab nationalism, Iraqi Ba’athism was scarcely a world-historical force. The ‘strange thoughts occur[ring] to people in Albania or Burkina Faso’ – we should now have to substitute the former Yugoslavia or India – are impotent before the march of history. The ‘past’ is unpredictable; the future is certain: an Americanization of the planet – a ‘universal homogeneous state’ of liberal capitalist democracy – from which system-threatening antagonisms (or contradictions) have been eliminated. *Contra* Hegel, the Earth forms a sphere and capitalist history is describing a circle around it.

Not that this triumph prompts a triumphalist tone. Indeed, Fukuyama’s article strikes an elegiac note in conclusion: ‘The end of history will be a very sad time’, bereft of the ‘struggle for recognition’ and the audacity it elicited from human beings, and reduced to consumerism and technocracy. To conjugate the terms that provide the title of Fukuyama’s book-length expansion of the prospectus, the Hegelian End of History will be inhabited by Nietzschean Last Men, wedded to their ‘pitiable comfort’ or (in De Tocqueville’s fastidious phrase from *Democracy in America*) ‘trivial and vulgar pleasures’.¹⁹ A narcissistic culture of conspicuous self-consumption – ‘Dionysus in Disneyland’?²⁰ – is condemned to the spiritual vices of its material benefits.

Mystical Shell and Rational Kernel

When, in a Postface to the second edition of Volume One of *Capital*, Marx sought to specify his relationship to the Hegelian dialectic, he famously contended that via its ‘inversion’ he had ‘discover[ed] the rational kernel within the mystical shell’.²¹ I want to attempt an analogous operation with the ersatz Hegelian dialectic of Fukuyama.

A first – and pervasive – objection to the thesis has been its apparent irrefutability. What evidence, if any, could refute it? Or is it, consequent upon the definition of ‘History’, a vacuity, immune to contradiction? This, to back-track, is the gravamen of the critique of metanarratives *stricto sensu*. Lest anyone think that I am now praising what I had earlier damned, it should be noted that the single most influential contemporary form of Marxism-Althusserianism – was precisely based upon dissent from Orthodox Historical materialism, with its epic tale of the forward march of the productive forces towards an ineluctable communism, on the grounds that it was a ‘materialist’ inversion of Hegel’s philosophy of history – starring the Ruse of Economic Reason – which secreted a mystical kernel within a technological shell.²² As Edward Thompson memorably satirized this ‘diabolical and hysterical mysterialism’ in his verse on the Emperor of Ch’in: ‘However many the Emperor slew/The scientific historian/(While taking note of contradiction)/Affirms productive forces grew.’

For Althusser the abiding sin of philosophies of history reposed in their incorrigibly *narrative* structure, which plotted a story with a hero and an appointed end. Literally telling stories, even (or especially) under the guise of Marxism, these ‘philosophical novels’ necessarily abstracted from the complexities of the specific historical conjuncture which it was the explanatory task of an authentically historical materialism to elucidate at any given time, so as to furnish the objective knowledge of a ‘concrete situation’ indispensable to any responsible political practice aspiring to transform it for the better. Philosophical novelists were no more adequate a guide to action than the ‘alchemists of revolution’ derided by Marx. *Capital* – the ‘Book in which the Second International read the fatality of the advent of socialism as if in a Bible’²³ – supplied, so Althusser maintained, the requisite corrective: the opening up of the ‘continent of History’ to *scientific* exploration.

Just as the founding gesture of Althusserianism was

rejection of the Stalinist-Marxist prolongation of the philosophy of history in a 'right-Hegelian' version – economism as *raison d'état* – so too it refused the option of a 'left-Hegelian' variant by way of anti-Stalinist response – humanism as *raison de la révolution*. Before Althusser was Althusser, as long ago as 1950, he declined a central postulate of the Hegelian Marxism nourished by Kojève's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (1947): the notion of an end of history. Reproving Jean Hyppolite's attribution – reiterated by Fukuyama – of an Hegelian postulate to Marx, the young Althusser insisted that the latter had conceived communism as the end of 'prehistory' – historically determinate economic alienation/exploitation – and not the end of history – some realm from which the dialectic and contradictions would have vanished, ushering in universal harmony.²⁴ A 'process without a subject or goal(s)', to use the specifically Althusserian category, history was not agonistic alienation – the descent from primitive communism into class society – or its irenic sublation – the realization of the classless goal present in germ at the origin. To the irreducible complexity of the historical process corresponded the constitutive complexity of any communist society which *might* arise from it. Notoriously, communism would not be marked by the end of ideology.

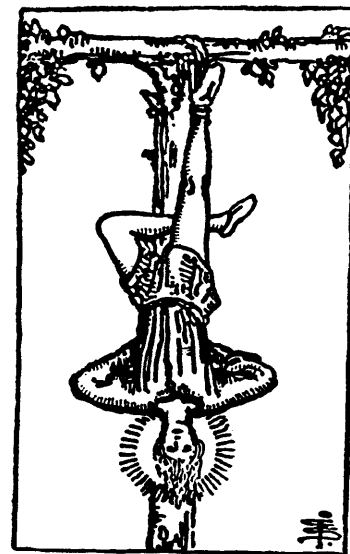
Althusser's critique of the philosophy of history *tout court* as (bourgeois) historicism – an Enlightenment progressivism which has no place in historical materialism – is scarcely unprecedented within the Marxist tradition. Repudiation of it is central to Walter Benjamin's 'Theses on History', which detected in Social-Democratic theory and practice a 'concept of the historical progress of mankind [which] cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogeneous, empty time'.²⁵

The first dimension to Fukuyama's mystical shell, then, is what Althusser identified as the mystical kernel of Hegelian Marxism (and which is preserved intact in this inversion of the inversion): the very notion that History harbours goals and progressively realizes them – be they the Soviet Communism indicated by Kojève in the aftermath of Stalingrad (Comrade History); or the Western liberalism identified by Fukuyama after the deluge (Citizen – or is it Sovereign Consumer? – History). As regards the latter, it is worth remembering that Hegel, let alone Kojève, was – dialectically – *anti-liberal*, rejecting the social contractarianism and individualist pluralism of the classical liberal tradition. Trotsky had claimed that the revolutionary-socialist movement 'leads humanity from out the dark night of the circumscribed I'; for Fukuyama its eradication heralds the radiant dawn of the circumscribed I.²⁶

A second area of contention concerns Fukuyama's quite non-Hegelian understanding of 'contradictions'. For him, unlike Hegel and Marx, contradictions are exogenous to systems, not endogenous to them. The relevant contradictions are *inter-systemic* (between systems), as opposed to *intra-systemic* (within systems). Hence the transition from a bi-polar world system, principally structured by the antagonism between capitalism and historical Communism, to a multi-polar world system, comprising competing capitalisms – a restoration, in other words, of the pre-war primacy of intra-systemic contradictions – is read as an

elimination of significant contradictions. A certain historical myopia construes the exception – the post-Second World War composition of capitalist differences for the pursuit of the 'great contest' – as the norm. Yet historical Communism was one product of – a response to – a capitalist ascendancy riven by antagonisms so acute as to plunge the world into two cataclysmic wars in the span of a mere quarter-century. Communism was given its chance in 1917 by liberalism (not to mention Social-Democracy). It came into existence promising to resolve the chronic problems generated by the 'combined and uneven development' of capitalism. It manifestly bequeaths those problems – social inequality, global inequity and ecological despoliation – to liberal capitalism which, if its immediate horizons stretch no further than 'ready access to stereos and VCRs' on a planetary scale, is doomed to exacerbate them. One competitive capitalist world, in which survival is strictly reserved for the fittest, is an unpromising formula for survival.

If Fukuyama is able to exclude systemic intra-capitalist contradictions from his panorama, it is as a result of the sleight of hand whereby Fascism is assimilated to Communism – a standard Cold War move, of course (the trope of 'totalitarianism') – and both are counterposed to capitalism.²⁷ This conveniently dissimulates the historical reality that, the parliamentary road to Fascism having proved considerably more fecund than that to socialism, Fascism was a general tendency of pre-war capitalism. Horkheimer's dictum assumes a new urgency: those who do not wish to speak of capitalism should keep silent about Fascism – just as, I would argue, anyone who has nothing to say on the subject of imperialism is disqualified from pronouncing on Stalinism. One would not guess it from Fukuyama, but on the fiftieth anniversary of Stalingrad there is less excuse for neglecting an uncomfortable fact: namely, that Stalinism – and not liberalism, which had collapsed in the 'thirty years civil war' of 1914-45 – vanquished European Fascism, therewith, paradoxically, laying the foundations for the revival of liberalism after 1945.²⁸ 'Progress,' to quote Freud, '... allied itself with barbarism' on the Eastern Front, where the Red Army eventually halted – and then broke – the hitherto invincible Wehrmacht.



Fukuyama may be an unreliable guide to the past; most criticisms of him centre on the present, however. And it is here – in Fukuyama's reading of contemporary history – that the rational kernel of his thesis is to be found. Setting aside the discursive alchemy whereby, capitalism supposedly no longer being capitalism, it cannot be said to have triumphed, we may attend to the converse consolation: namely, that formerly existing socialism not having been socialism, the latter cannot be claimed to have suffered a setback – indeed, can only benefit from a termination of a travesty and tragedy in the East.

Regrettably, this line of critique seems to me seriously misplaced. It is true that the Second World was not, nor had ever been, socialist, and would have failed the most cursory inspection of its credentials by Marx and Engels. Moreover, contemporary capitalism might appear to furnish – in the classical Marxist schema – the material and social preconditions for international socialism (thus permitting an Hegelian-Marxist philosophy of history to construe it as returning to the main line after a secular detour via peripheral tracks. It may be supposed also that, quite the reverse of being utopian, the vision of a global socialist order is the new realism dictated by the immense challenges besetting humanity, so that the alternative lies between a renovated socialism or a resurgent barbarism. If, in all these respects, the collapse of historical Communism removes the Stalinist incubus – the calamitous descent of socialism *into* barbarism in the twentieth century – which has functioned as one of the main impediments to the struggle for human emancipation; nevertheless, notwithstanding all this, in the current conjuncture that collapse constitutes a decisive defeat for socialism, which may be the abstract order of the day, but which is nowhere on the concrete agenda. Why?

First we may note the efficacious propagation of the Cold War equation: Socialism = Stalinism = (optimally) Penury + Tyranny – an imposture sufficiently credible, in the foreseeable future, to inoculate not only those recently liberated from the 'prison of peoples', but many more besides, against the socialist plague. Its prosperity derives not solely from the depredations of Stalinism, but from the palpable absence of any feasible and desirable alternative to it as a non-capitalist societal future. For the disappearance of the international Communist movement has not redounded to the benefit of Social-Democracy, whose own crisis has rather been accentuated by it. Having long ago renounced its vocation – the 'democratic-socialist' resolution of the problems that induced the birth of Communism – Social-Democracy has defaulted on its pledge of a humanization of capitalism: good for little more than winning elections, it is no longer good at that. Thus, what has occurred in the 1980s is the extinction or exhaustion of the two central traditions of socialist politics in the twentieth century – without anything plausible emerging to fill the vacuum.²⁹ And capitalist nature abhors a vacuum.

Alternatives to Communism and Social-Democracy – futures for socialism that could clear its name, rehabilitate its reputation – have come and gone with alarming regularity. Restricting the focus to contemporary history, the spectacular promise of '1968' – the global return of the revolutionary repressed in punctual refutation of Marcuse's

prognosis – was flagrantly breached. A conjuncture marked by the triple crisis of imperialism in the Third World (the Vietnamese Tet), of Stalinism in the Second (the Prague Spring), and of capitalism in the First (the Parisian May), seemingly resynchronized dialectical theory and the historical dialectic. The harvest of May dissevered them once more. In the East the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia brutally arrested de-Stalinization, irremediably disfiguring 'socialism with a human face'. In the West an unexpectedly resilient liberal capitalism surmounted yet another 'terminal' crisis, condemning the Fourth International(s), renescent in these years, to a protracted death-agony, once the Spanish transition and Portuguese Revolution had incorporated the Iberian Peninsula into Western Europe. Among the bitterest fruits for the revolutionary class of '68 was the failure of elective Third-Worldist alternatives to the Soviet model: the exposure of the Chinese Cultural Revolution as a virulent Oriental compound of *Zhdanovschina* and *Yezhovschina*, prior to its replacement by Dengist market Stalinism; the involution of the Cuban regime in the aftermath of Guevara's ill-fated Bolivian expedition and the failure of the '10 million tons' campaign in 1970; the murderous dispensation of the Khmers Rouges in Kampuchea Year Zero; Vietnam's embroilment, courtesy of Cambodian incursions and Chinese invasion, in wars with two 'fraternal countries' within years of the liberation of Saigon.

The imitation, rather than the supersession, of the Soviet experience – amounting, in some cases, to the repetition of history as worse tragedy – could, in every instance, only discredit (as well as demoralize) those who had hitched their socialism to the red star over Peking, Havana, or Hanoi. With the passing of such reveries, the Soviet experience appeared exemplary, not aberrant – the 'totalitarian' corollary of 'totalizing' politics: in E. M. Forster's cheering liberal rendition, 'programmes mean pogroms'. At all events, what cannot be gainsaid is the record of failure of socialism, West and East, North and South, in the twentieth century, prompting perception of it as utopian (unviable) or dystopian (undesirable). Writing in *Le Monde* in October 1991, the Spanish ex-Communist Jorge Semprun suggested that 'to-day we are confronted with this reality: the society in which we live is an untranscendable horizon.' Wittingly or not, his terms echoed a slogan with which the 1960s had opened – Sartre's celebrated characterization of Marxism as 'the untranscendable philosophy of our time' – while reversing its verdict: the adventures of the dialectic vindicate 'dialectical' theory *à la* Fukuyama, not *à la* Sartre.³⁰

What, however, of the post-Marxist intelligentsia who would point to the 'new social movements', rather than the old socialist movement, as the bearer(s) of an emancipatory politics? Granted, it might be said, that socialism as traditionally conceived is dead, but what of its recasting, for example, as one moment of a more capacious project for a 'radical and plural democracy' – a goal involving the extension of the liberty and equality borne by the 'democratic revolution' of 1789 to other sets of social relations (economic, sexual, ethnic, etc.), and a concomitant pluralization of political agency, beyond the (diminishing) ranks of the industrial working class, to other social forces?³¹

The answer is simple: lacking the requisite agency, organization and strategy, these are not – and are not set to become – (counter-)hegemonic forces of the kind required to refute the Fukuyama thesis. In the absence of articulation and mobilization of the anti-capitalist ‘general interest’ to which their concerns ultimately point, hegemony will be endured, not forged.³² Moreover, those on the Left who detect a silver lining in acid-rain clouds, drawing solace from the putative fatality inscribed in capitalist accumulation (viz., its destruction of the ecological preconditions for its own reproduction), overlook the fact that ‘environmentalism’ precisely possesses no necessary class belonging. In and through its very ‘universalism’, it is *socially* indeterminate – compatible, in the medium term at any rate, with a grotesquely inegalitarian and authoritarian global capitalist order.

Not least among the reasons for a certain scepticism about the ‘new social movements’ as a contestant of the new order is their own manifest crisis (invariably neglected by those who harp on the crisis of the labour movement) and eclipse by some very old social movements: the furies of communalism, fundamentalism, nationalism, etc., their militantly particularist dystopias stamped with the mark of exclusion. And yet, if the prominence of regressive social movements on the current world scene contributes to the disconsolation of socialists, does it not simultaneously discountenance Fukuyama’s prospectus – the beneficent global diffusion of liberal commerce? Yes and no. Yes: the ‘Common Marketization’ of global politics is a fanciful projection (we need look no further than the present Maastricht imbroglio of the Common Market itself). No: for almost by definition, they are not of the requisite ‘universal’ character. Furthermore, the occasional rhetorical declamation notwithstanding, they are scarcely anti-capitalist, offering no alternative to the economic ‘modernization’ – *le dur commerce* – of whose contradictions and dislocations they are a symptom, rather than a solvent. The dialectic of Enlightenment qualifies, but does not contradict, the Fukuyama thesis.

Results and Prospects

With the destruction of actually existing socialism – the eradication of the Second World and its ongoing integration into the First – we are witnessing the elimination, possibly only temporary, of socialism as a world-historical movement. ‘*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*: world history is the final arbiter of right,’ Fukuyama, invoking Kojève, proclaims in his book.³³ We need not accept that economic might is political right. But it would be paradoxical, to say the least, were professed historical materialists to evade the reality that world history is the final arbiter of might – or the conclusion that, relative to the projections of classical Marxism, socialism is utopian once again: a desirable future confronting an unamenable present.

By any realistic calculation, the ‘intelligence enough to conceive, courage enough to will, power enough to compel’ adduced as prerequisites of socialism by William Morris are wanting today. In none of its significant embodiments has socialism succeeded in inventing a mass political organization that did not degenerate into either a simulacrum of the

bourgeois-democratic state (the parties of the Second International), or a bureaucratic-centralist machine (those of the Third). In the advanced capitalist states it has not hit upon a strategy for a transition beyond welfare capitalism (and could not prevent a regression behind it); the reformist route has proved ineffectual, the revolutionary road chimerical. Where it has gained power (or office), its programmes have not realised the goal envisaged by Marx: the economic, political and cultural *supersession* of liberal capitalism. In the West, Social-Democracy humanised capitalism, but did not abolish it; and utilized the liberal-representative state, but did not fundamentally transform it. In the East, where (as Trotsky would have it) history took the line of least resistance, Communism abolished capitalism, but substituted the command economy; and uprooted despotic states, but established authoritarian regimes. The social agent identified by socialists as possessing the requisite combination of a material interest in, and a structural capacity for, the achievement of socialism – the industrial working class – has not performed the role allotted it in the classical scripts. Notwithstanding recurrent economic militancy, and intermittent political radicalism, it has largely ceded composition of the ‘poetry of the future’ to the institutions of formerly existing socialism and actually existing Social-Democracy.

The results of socialism to date, then, might be tersely summarised as ‘the painful failure of revolution in the West and the almost equally painful success of revolution in the East’.³⁴ And yet there is more to be said about what must now be characterized as the even more painful failure of revolution in the East. For if much of the Left consistently underestimated the durability and vitality of capitalism, as a result of its disastrous record from 1914 to 1945, it similarly discounted the significance of historical Communism. Not to the extent that it constituted an obstacle to socialism in the West, given its dire record in numerous respects; but insofar as it possessed, in addition to much that was simply deplorable and unforgiveable, what Lucio Magri has called ‘another side’:

A historical experience is now ending in painful defeat – an experience which, both materially and in terms of ideas, served sometimes as a model and in any case as a reference point for broad movements of liberation. It is now fashionable in the West, even on the Left, to treat that connection as a thoroughly harmful product of manipulation or folly – that is, to consider the October Revolution and its sequel not as a process which degenerated in stages but as a regression *ab origine*, or a pile of rubble. But the historical reality is rather different. First Stalinism, then the authoritarian power of a bureaucratic, imperial caste, were one side of that historical process.... But for decades another side also continued to operate: the side of national independence; the spread of literacy, modernization and social protection across whole continents; the resistance to fascism and victory over it as a general tendency of capitalism; support for and actual involvement in the liberation of three-quarters of humanity from colonialism; containment of the power of the mightiest imperial state.³⁵

To speak thus, controverting a certain anti-Communist commonsense on the Left, is to court the charge of 'closet Stalinism'. For is it not to identify a socialism deserving of the name with formerly existing socialism? To accept the sometime Soviet Union and its satellites at their own mendacious (and now definitively repudiated) self-valuation? To deny the reality of an odious system whose crimes have besmirched the reputation of socialism the world over? One might as well come out of the closet: the unequivocal response is 'no'. It is to insist that, whereas Social-Democracy had already sold the pass at the outbreak of the First World War and again at its conclusion, its derelictions marked by the social patriotism of August 1914 and – arguably the most significant date in twentieth-century socialist history – the German October *manqué* of November 1918; had proved unequal to the test of the Second World War, when it effectively disintegrated; was restricted to the advanced capitalist world (Europe and Australasia); and matched its accommodations to capitalism at home by collusion with imperialism abroad, enthusiastically prosecuting the Cold War against the Second and Third Worlds – by contrast, the record of Communism was significantly different, offering some support for Shaw's contention that 'a Bolshevik ... is nothing but a socialist who wants to do something about it.'³⁶

Crudely inventoried, the existence and performance of historical Communism were positive in three crucial respects.³⁷ First and foremost – as has already been indicated – in the resistance to, and defeat of, European fascism: a fact incontrovertible by any amount of Cold War mythology and accounting for the prestige in which the Soviet model was held after 1945, Stalingrad constituting an even more potent symbol than Petrograd. Had the Swastika been run up over Moscow or Leningrad, it might still be flying over Paris or Prague.³⁸ Second, in the subsequent emergence of the Third World and its protection thereafter. As Noam Chomsky has argued, the rational kernel of 'deterrence theory' is to be found here: i.e., in the Soviet deterrent to imperialist designs on the South.³⁹ Where that deterrence failed to avert US intervention, the forces confronting it prevailed only when sustained by the Second World: the tanks that entered Saigon in April 1975 were made – and where else? – in the USSR. A third – and final – merit of historical Communism was its role in precipitating the post-war compromise in the First World itself; the presence, within and without, of the 'red menace' weighed decisively in the meliorist reconstruction of Europe – counter-cyclical economic regulation, full employment, welfare services, universal suffrage, etc. – after Liberation.

Considerations such as these explain why it was rational, given the dilemma of *les mains sales*, to opt for Communism or, in the manner of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, for 'anti-anti-Communism'.⁴⁰ To wash one's hands of the Communist movement was to risk dirtying them with something else – the implacable domination of capital – or to elect for political innocence at the cost of historical impotence. To the predictably adverse impact upon the reputation of socialism of any collapse of historical Communism must be added, then, a second fundamental reason for looking to a regeneration of the revolution *where* it had



degenerated: the contradictory character, internally and externally, of Communism as a historical phenomenon.

Today, of course, it is fashionable to sneer that the USSR amounted to little more than an 'Upper Volta with rockets'. But we should remember that the rate of extensive, quantitative economic growth achieved by it – levels of 'stagnation' which M. S. Gorbachev would have done better to emulate at home, than impugn abroad – rendered it a potent force in the late 1950s and 1960s, when Khrushchevite de-Stalinization was underway, provoking some saturnine reflections from Harold Macmillan on the prospects for the Free World. In retrospect, the Soviet Union was clearly losing in the 'peaceful competition' with the West. And yet it imploded when apparently quite strong – in the aftermath of a wave of anti-imperialist revolutions in the Third World, in the 1970s. The USA had anxiously anticipated a domino effect in the South; the subsequent domino effect in the East was not expected by friends or foes. Sputnik ultimately gave way to Chernobyl; the latter was as much of a surprise as the former.

The last rites and ceremonies of the Cold War disclosed its systemic character: a great, but unequal, contest between opposed socio-economic and political systems, initiated by the Bolshevik Revolution. That contest has concluded, as predicted by Fukuyama, in the unqualified victory of capitalism, bringing an era – the era opened by 1917 – to a close. Sundown on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Christmas Day, 1991 – coda to a tragi-comic coup which hastened the denouement it vainly sought to deflect – means, for the time being at any rate, goodbye to all that, North and South. In his 'Theses on History', completed in the unrelieved gloom of spring 1940, Benjamin wrote: 'Even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins; and this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.'⁴¹ In the intervening half-century, the enemy ceased to be victorious: but only when and where the forces contesting capitalism and imperialism mustered under, or subsequently rallied to, the banners of the international Communist movement. In winding up the Cold War journal *Problems of Communism* last year, the US State Department filed an affidavit for the counter-hegemonic role of historical Communism. It would be paradoxical, to say the least, were the post-Communist Left, by traducing its memory, to sacrifice some of the dead to the enemy.

To the Watchtower

At the height of the first Cold War, in 1950, Isaac Deutscher wrote a review of *The God That Failed* which, *mutatis mutandis*, contains some salutary advice for those of us for whom the Communist movement has figured among the ties that bind:

It seems that the only dignified attitude the intellectual ex-Communist can take is to rise *au-dessus de la mêlée*. He cannot join the Stalinist camp or the anti-Stalinist Holy Alliance without doing violence to his better self. So let him stay outside any camp. Let him try to regain critical sense and intellectual detachment. Let him overcome the cheap ambition to have a finger in the political pie. Let him be at peace with his own self at least, if the price he has to pay for phony peace with the world is self-renunciation and self-denunciation. This is not to say that the ex-Communist ... should retire into the ivory tower.... But he may withdraw into a *watchtower* instead. To watch with detachment and alertness this heaving chaos of a world, to be on a sharp lookout for what is going to emerge from it, and to interpret it *sine ira et studio*....⁴²

In the spirit, but without the equanimity or eloquence, of Deutscher, I want to conclude by briefly identifying some 'ironies of history' – ironies which 'post-history' is unlikely to be spared – that dictate an ultimate reservation of judgement about the prospects for Fukuyama's thesis.

Firstly, then, if it is the case that Stalinism rescued liberalism at the mid-point of the century, this is sufficient to indicate that, whilst a week in British party politics may be a long time, fifty years in geo-politics is shorter than we think – though not for the human beings fated to live and die in unredeemed historical time. Half a century hence, socialism might – just might – have staged as dramatic a comeback as its antagonist.⁴³ But one precondition of any future peripeteia is an adequate explanation of its current effacement from the global scene: the coolly realistic message conveyed by Fukuyama.

Secondly, the scope of the ongoing reversal of the verdicts of World War Two arguably far exceeds the humbling of Communism. In 1945 the 'Big Three' defeated the Axis Powers. But if Britain's political and economic declension was sealed in the very act of 'winning' the war, courtesy of American dollars and Soviet arms; and if the USSR, having been promoted to global 'superpower' status by its role in the conflict, has been erased, these do not entail that a Pax Americana has succeeded Cold War and Pax Britannica alike. One verdict of 1945 has been reversed with the erasure of the Eastern bloc, leaving capitalism in possession of the field. The end of that history does not, however, betoken a New World Order in which the New World, untrammelled, gives the orders. As was demonstrated to sanguinary and deterrent effect in the Gulf, the USA is the world's only military superpower. Yet its military prepotency was already implicit in the outcome of the First World War – prompting those endists *avant la lettre*, the authors of *1066 and All That*, to conclude (in a chapter entitled 'A Bad Thing'): 'America was thus clearly top

nation, and History came to a...'⁴⁴ Militarily uni-polar, so to speak, the contemporary world is multi-polar economically. Within the inter-imperialist system that always persisted alongside the inter-systemic competition between historical Communism and capitalism, the USA is arguably no longer hegemon (as its search for subventions to finance the Gulf War attests).⁴⁵ With an impeccable sense of occasion, George Bush was laid low in Japan, as if in psychosomatic display of the anxiety that the US is set to repeat the post-war trajectory of the UK. For at its political meridian – the very moment of its 'unabashed victory' over the Evil Empire – America's economic descent – derivative, in part at least, from the 'over-extension' attendant upon prosecution of the Cold War – has been cruelly exposed to the light of day. The Soviet challenge has been met and routed; yet the means required for that end may portend the eclipse of the USA. Like Great Britain, the US may have won a war only at the cost of losing the ensuing peace – to the vanquished of 1945, with Germany at the centre of the EC trading bloc and Japan the nodal point of the Pacific Rim. There is no success like failure...

Thirdly, and finally, if this (or anything approximating to it) is the case, it throws into relief a possibility left unexplored by Fukuyama: that at the end of the twentieth century, the world – and not just Europe – may be reverting to something like the pre-1914 situation, when the antagonisms and rivalries mining the Belle époque issued in the 'war to end all wars'. The 'landmines laid by the past'⁴⁶ have been detonated in the East; those being laid the world over by the present may turn out to be no less explosive. 'The future lasts a long time,' de Gaulle once remarked. If so, it may be 'a very sad time' – prehistory all over again; or, alternatively, one in which, it having proved necessary to reinvent communism, an answer to barbarism may be discovered. 'In my end is by beginning'?'⁴⁷ Perhaps. Meanwhile, Spinoza's injunction obtains: the point is neither to rejoice nor to deplore, but to understand. Understanding achieved, there will be all the time in the world for celebration – or lamentation.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Frank Kermode, *The Sense of An Ending*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967.
- 2 'The critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and its future; holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative. Thus it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal': *One-Dimensional Man*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1964, p. 257.
- 3 Compare Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies* (two volumes, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1945) and *The Poverty of Historicism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957) with Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (Verso, London, 1990). There is an excellent discussion of Cold War liberalism in Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1984, chapter 18.
- 4 Cf., *inter alia*, Alex Callinicos, *Against Postmodernism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990.
- 5 Francis Mulhern Introduction to *idem.*, ed., *Contemporary Marxist Literary Criticism*, Longman, London, 1992, p. 36. Cf. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, Verso, London, 1992.

- 6 Mulhern, *op. cit.*, p. 17. The comments above should not be construed as a wholesale rejection of French philosophical modernism. There is a world of difference (for once) between the original meditations on anti-method of Foucault or Derrida, and the kind of deliquescent Derridaism or illegible Lacanglais spawned by their eclectic assimilation into the cultural studies departments of the Anglo-American academy. Nevertheless, some of the aporias of the former are reproduced, in exasperated form, in the latter. They might be summarized as follows: a discursive idealism, tributary to the linguistics of de Saussure, which, eliding epistemological and ontological categories, conflates the theory-dependence of knowledge of the world with the theory-dependence of the world; an epistemological relativism impaled on the traditional fork – viz., that if relativism in general is true, then no particular statement of it can claim to be; but if the particular statement of it is true, then that suffices to refute the generalization – and an ethical relativism subversive of the normative claims to which post-structuralism, despite itself, is prone; a perspectivism, of Nietzschean provenance, which fallaciously deduces the incommensurability of theories from their historical, social and cultural specificity; a hyperbolic anti-naturalism, which trades in biological essentialism for a nominalist culturalism. Of the many critiques of post-structuralism, see especially Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration*, Verso, London, 1987.
- 7 Originally published in *The National Interest* 16, Summer 1989; reprinted in Kenneth M. Jensen, ed., *A Look at the End of History*, Washington, D.C., 1990. Among the critical literature it has provoked, I have learned most from Joseph McCartney, 'History under the Hammer', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 1 December 1989, and 'Endgame', *Radical Philosophy* 62, Autumn 1992; Perry Anderson, 'The Ends of History', in *A Zone of Engagement*, Verso, London, 1992; and Fred Halliday, 'An Encounter with Fukuyama', *New Left Review* 193, May/June 1992. For (some of) Fukuyama's antecedents, see Lutz Niethammer, *Posthistoire: Has History Come to an End?*, trans. Patrick Camiller, Verso, London, 1992.
- 8 *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 'The Voice of the Devil', in William Blake, *The Complete Poems*, Penguin edition, Harmondsworth, 1977, p. 182.
- 9 Vices other than Communism could, of course, be deduced from the 'German ideology'. Thus in 1918 we find the 'New Liberal' philosopher, L. T. Hobhouse, having heard German aeroplanes overhead en route to their target, stating in the dedication to his *Metaphysical Theory of the State* that he had 'just witnessed the visible and tangible outcome of a false and wicked doctrine' pioneered by Hegel (quoted in Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978, p. 193). The salience of 'English Hegelianism' at Oxford in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries prompted the Fabian Graham Wallas to remark that 'All bad German philosophies, when they die, go to Oxford' (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 12). As Clarke points out, 'it is not a gibe that would have been current in Balliol', given the presence there of T. H. Green. By the 1950s, courtesy of the inoculations of 'Ordinary Language' philosophy, it is not a gibe that would have been current anywhere.
- 10 *The Making of the Second Cold War*, second edition, Verso, London, 1986, p. 243. For the vicissitudes of the 'great contest' in the 1980s, see also *idem.*, *Cold War, Third World*, Radius, London, 1989.
- 11 *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Volume 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 108.
- 12 'This social formation [capitalism] brings ... the prehistory of human society to a close': Marx, Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), in *Selected Works*, Volume 1, p. 504.
- 13 Edmund Wilson *To the Finland Station* (1940), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1991, p. 546. The category 'historical Communism' derives from Norberto Bobbio's obituary, 'The Upturned Utopia' (1989), reprinted in Robin Blackburn, ed., *After the Fall*, Verso, London, 1991.
- 14 Cf. Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, chapter 32 ('The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation'), Pelican edition, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 927-30.
- 15 'Thank God, in November [1929], the Wall Street crash was to reassure them: they welcomed it like news of a victory. Since they tended to confuse capitalism with important people, when they saw their fathers' faces they convinced themselves that they had been quite right to stake their lives on the cards of confusion, and that they could indubitably count upon a world destined for great metamorphoses.' (Paul Nizan, *The Conspiracy* (1938), trans. Quintin Hoare, Verso, London, 1988, p. 49.)
- 16 *The Philosophy of History*, Dover edition, New York, 1956, p. 19.
- 17 *Socialism and the Political Struggle* (1883), quoted in Adam Westoby, *The Evolution of Communism*, Polity, Cambridge, 1989, p. ii.
- 18 *The Communists and Peace* (1952), trans. Irene Clephane, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969, p. 118.
- 19 Such incipient 'cultural pessimism' is by no means restricted to Fukuyama, of course: for a brief but incisive communitarian diagnosis of the 'malaise of modernity', indicating its prevalence under left- and right-wing guises, see Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992.
- 20 Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
- 21 Marx, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-3.
- 22 See Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, Allen Lane, London, 1969 and (with Etienne Balibar) *Reading Capital*, New Left Books, London, 1970. Cf. the retrospective in Althusser's 'autobiography', *L'avenir dure longtemps*, Stock/IMEC, Paris, 1992.
- 23 Althusser and Balibar, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
- 24 See Yann Moulier Boutang, *Louis Althusser: Une biographie. Tome 1 – La formation du mythe (1918-1956)*, Grasset, Paris, 1992, pp. 314ff., for an account of Althusser's extraordinary 72-page letter of 25 December 1949 – 22 January 1950 to Jean Lacroix, explaining his adhesion to Marxism and the French Communist Party. A propos of the 'end of history', it concludes (p. 33): 'And I believe that we can close this chapter on the end of history, while celebrating the fact that history continues, that Marx was not Hegel, that Stalin and Thorez are not Hyppolite.' For Fukuyama, by contrast, 'The notion of the end of history is not an original one. Its best known propagator was Karl Marx, who believed that the direction of historical development was a purposeful one determined by the interplay of material forces and would come to an end only with the achievement of a communist utopia that would finally resolve all prior contradictions. But the concept of history as a dialectical process with a beginning, a middle, and an end was borrowed by Marx from his great German predecessor, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.' Althusser's relevance to the contemporary debate is further explored in my review article, 'Analysis Terminated, Analysis Interminable', *Economy and Society*, vol. 21, no. 2, May 1993.
- 25 See the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, Fontana/Collins, London, 1982, especially pp. 262-63. 'Nothing,' Benjamin wrote, 'has corrupted the German working class so much as the notion that it was moving with the current' (p. 260). And not just the German working class: compare the desperate optimism of Jean Jaurès on the eve of his assassination and the outbreak of the First World War – 'Les choses ne peuvent pas ne pas s'arranger' ('Things are bound to turn out all right') (quoted in James Joll, *The Second International 1889-1914*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1974, p. 169).
- 26 Quoted in Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 506.
- 27 Hayek's unfashionable anticipation of this, as of so many other, trends is noteworthy: see especially his 1944 Philippic, *The*

- Road to Serfdom*, dedicated 'To the Socialists of All Parties'.
- 28 For the requisite historical contextualization of the exterminism of Operation Barbarossa, see Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?*, Verso, London, 1990, chapter 1.
- 29 As Willie Thompson has written: 'The communist parties have constituted the first (and to date only) world movement which has treated with deadly seriousness the project of transforming social relations on a planetary scale for the benefit of the world's masses – as well as appearing to achieve stunning success in terms of that objective' (*The Good Old Cause: British Communism 1920-1991*, Pluto Press, London, 1992, p. 212).
- 30 Semprun is quoted from *Le Monde*, 15 October 1991, by Emmanuel Terray in *Le troisième jour du communisme*, Actes Sud, Arles, 1992, p. 92, where the echo of Sartre's Preface to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) (New Left Books, London, 1976, p. 822) is noted.
- 31 Cf. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Verso, London, 1985.
- 32 See, for example, Francis Mulhern, 'Towards 2000, or News from You-Know-Where', *New Left Review*, 148, November/December 1984, and the book of which it is a review: Raymond Williams, *Towards 2000*, Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press, London, 1983.
- 33 *The End of History and the Last Man*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1992, p. 137.
- 34 Alan Carling, 'Rational Choice Marxism', *New Left Review* 160, November/December 1986, p. 26.
- 35 'The European Left Between Crisis and Refoundation', *New Left Review* 189, September/October 1991, pp. 6-7.
- 36 Quoted in David Caute, *The Fellow-Travelers*, London, 1977, pp. 113-14.
- 37 The following quasi-Deutscherite (and crypto-Pabloite?) line of analysis variously draws upon Isaac Deutscher, *The Great Contest*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1960; Perry Anderson, 'Trotsky's Interpretation of Stalinism', in Tariq Ali, ed., *The Stalinist Legacy*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984; and Fred Halliday, 'The Ends of Cold War', in Blackburn, ed., *op. cit.* See also Eric Hobsbawm, 'Goodbye to All That', in *ibid.*
- 38 Moreover, had the Hammer and Sickle not flown over the Reichstag, it is unlikely that the Red Flag would – metaphorically speaking – have been accorded a subaltern station, alongside the Union Jack, over the Royal Palace of Westminster. On 1 December 1942, when the Beveridge Report was being published in London, the Red Army was otherwise engaged at Stalingrad.
- 39 *Deterring Democracy*, Verso, London, 1991, p. 60.
- 40 In addition to Sartre, *op. cit.*, see idem, 'Merleau-Ponty' (1961), in *Situations IV*, Gallimard, Paris, 1980, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Humanism and Terror* (1947), Beacon Press, Boston, 1969. For Merleau-Ponty's subsequent (auto-)critique, see *Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955), Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1979 (especially chapter 5).
- 41 Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
- 42 'The Ex-Communist's Conscience', in idem, *Russia in Transition*, revised edition, Grove Press, New York, 1960, p. 234.
- 43 For some intriguing (if semi-detached) reflections on the future prospects for socialism, see the concluding pages of Anderson's essay, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-75.
- 44 Sellar and Yeatman, *1066 and All That*, Macmillan, London, 1930, p. 113.
- 45 American eclipse as a consequence of geo-political 'over-extension' is the concluding scenario of Paul Kennedy's influential *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Fontana, London, 1989. The British precedent is memorably analysed in Correlli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power*, Allan Sutton, Gloucester, 1987 and *The Audit of War*, Macmillan, London, 1987.
- 46 Quoted from *Pravda* in Patrick Cockburn, *Getting Russia Wrong*, Verso, London, 1989, p. 42.
- 47 T. S. Eliot, 'East Coker', in *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, Faber and Faber, London, 1985, p. 204.

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