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HOW TO THINK UNITY WITHIN A WORLD OF MULTIPLICITY¹

There are two main goals that we can try to come closer at a conference of this type. The first is a better understanding of present day world in Marxist terms: the second is implied in the first, a step forward to develop a theoretical-political discourse enabling us to articulate our different visions of present day world and to discuss these visions in a coherent way. There is, however, an automatic tendency of such a conference, which is not in favor of these two goals. Things run automatically in reproducing trenches of what can be described as war of position. We had some examples in our discussion; comrade Anoushkin for instance if I understood him well, quasi denied every Marxist relevance to what comrade Mishra from India had said. This is a symptom of non-discussion, of disability to even listen to and to find a discursive level on which one can at least articulate the difference of views. In this case no difference became clear; it was an expulsion without an answer. We should, therefore, direct our attention towards the elaboration of a discourse which makes it possible, like a neutral territory for different currents of the international socialist movement, to meet on it as in a field of differences.

One of the methodological fundamentals of the problem is how we conceptualize totality. Yesterday it was said that Marxists should articulate their views describing totality of the present day world, and the name of Lukács was mentioned. I think that the Lukács model of thinking totality is just a model how it can no longer work. This would be a discourse which would try to articulate totality in a way leading to fragmentation. The Lukács totality knows one essence, one center, and this center manifests itself in peripheral manifestations or phenomena. This inner logic of a world vision corresponded to a political structure with one center and peripheries, relating the center to peripheries in a way of directives given within the framework of one strategy to peripheral tactics. I think that this is no longer valid. Every attempt to revitalize it consciously or unconsciously must lead to a deeper and deeper fragmentation of socialist discourses. It would be worthwhile to exchange our opinions if there is a new type of thinking totality which can escape the old post-Hegelian way of thinking, which would be adequate to describe a world which, without return, is a multcentred world. More and

¹ Contribution to the debate on the crisis of Marxism in the Round Table Socialism in the World, Cavtat/Yougoslavia 1983 (published in: *Socialism in the World – International Journal of Marxist and Socialist Thought*, vol. 8, Belgrade 1984, pp. 156-58.

more it will even become manifest that the different centers have also their multicentricity within their own societies.

We need such an understanding in order to define the context and the links between our very different and distant actions within today's world. Can there be a common score in which we could locate ourselves as particular voices? Can there be a unity that we could take into account for practical purposes, that is for development of one universal strategy with particular tactics? Comrade Pablo González Casanova stressed very much that we should not divide or separate what in reality is linked. Yes, but there is a real difficulty. I don't think there will be once more one worldwide score, called Marxism, Marxist theory or Marxist strategy, which ascribes to the particular positions their tactical steps. Therefore, it is necessary to come to an understanding of a new dialectical position. There is no one subject to master dialectics of the world, though there may well be one dialectical game, which interrelates all the contradictions and positions of this world. But I don't think there will be any comprehensive subject for this. So we must learn to be particular subjects within one dialectical world, making their particular positions possibly interrelated with other positions. I fully agree with comrade Boffa, that it was very well expressed in the remarkable opening speech, given by Aleksandar Grlićkov, pleading for an open (I would say dialectical, because this is in my opinion the same) Marxism. He expressed his doubts in relation to the idea that there could be a multiplication of Marxisms. He was well aware of the multiplicity in Marxism. and his problem was how to think unity within this world of multiplicity. His answer is that of an open Marxism, that is of concrete formations which in their logic have the possibility to be linked with other similar or different formations. I think this is an important thought to develop. We are in no very strong positions if we try to develop it, because there are a hundred years of thought more or less against it. The old logics are still strong, because they are developed; there is a terminology, there are the old ways, and we constantly and spontaneously fall back into the old cast. There is an innovative task, to develop a new thinking of totality, no longer within the structure of one subject; which ascribes peripheral positions to other elements.

To understand our world and our problems in it we must be able to deal with the existing overdeterminations of different contradictions and crises. If I understood well, comrade Papageorgiou said that there is only *one* crisis and that is the crisis of capitalism. If I understood well the Polish speaker, he told us, to my great astonishment, that there is no such thing as a crisis of Marxism. Isn't this a very problematic assertion? Isn't it even an element of crisis, like throwing fuel in the fire, for example to deny that there is a crisis in Poland, where Marxism has lost almost all its hegemonial force? Only to say

that such a crisis doesn't exist must add to a crisis. I think that we must come to think the whole conjuncture. To do this we must also develop the ability (and the Soviets should do it too) of selfcriticism. Without these elements we are not able to relate with other positions in the world. Nobody does miracles. We all are boiling with water and should show it. We should make ourselves compatible with other positions without aspiring to an impossible type of unity.