

Democracy in the "Center" and Global Democratic Critique¹

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In general, any reflection on democracy is situated on the horizon of thought of the "center" (Western Europe and the United States). Here I shall include post-colonial subject matter. In addition, reflections on democracy frequently deal with the possibility of democracy's normativity, the normativity of the rational and fraternal consensus.² Here I shall make room for the question of the normativity of struggles for the recognition of new actors, who appear on the horizon of the system like previously invisible ghosts. This invisibility is the most subtle repression that is inevitably fulfilled from the perspective of the legitimacy of a valid, positive, democratic order in power. Today Alterity,³ Difference, Exteriority -unintentional in the majority of cases; at other times conscious; though the most important is the first type -become the central theme in the future, popular, world democracy in the process of globalization, supposedly structured around a nonexistent "global citizen,"⁴ an apolitical world market of winners of competition, exclusive of the "losers.

¹ This exposition will be brief, like the thesis statement of the symposium discussion; a longer version may be considered in a book on which I am currently working. The title is *Política de liberación*, intended as a continuation of my previous book *Ética de la liberación en la edad de la globalización y de la exclusión* (Madrid: Trotta, 1998). There is a Portuguese translation (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2000), and the book is forthcoming in English at Duke University Press; there is a shorter version translated into German, and also forthcoming in French. For democracy, see the articles in Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit, eds., *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 411ff, and *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 78ff

² In *Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 1997), Derrida tries, I believe, to show a dimension of the drive of politics left behind by the discursive formal rationalism in politics. It is still possible to effect a Derridean deconstruction of brotherhood (of us) from the exteriority of the excluded: we would thus have a *politique de la solidarité* in the technical sense.

³ A philosophical category devised by Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990).

⁴ See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). I believe that the "global citizen" is still empirically nonexistent.

I. Rethinking the Concept of the Political A first level of discussion, although merely contextual and introductory for the proposal of this paper, would be on the "concept" of the political itself. In this sense, there are too many reductionist positions, since the part is taken for the whole, thereby reducing the political to one of its dimensions -certainly existent, but within a much greater architectonic complexity.

I shall use the word "principlism" to refer to those who only concern themselves with the "principles" of politics, but who neglect all the other levels, or at least they consider them secondary.

Foundationalists are those who believe that the task of political philosophy always begins with the "foundation" of principles, which are otherwise explicit. Political life may exist without an explicit awareness of the principles, which nevertheless always operate concretely, and without which there can be no political action.

Formalist proceduralists are those who believe that all politics is a question of "equitable," "reasonable," and practical procedures, free of normativity.

Extreme materialists are those who diminish the possibility of political action itself,⁵ defending the position that, given the existence of economic laws, history may well pass over politics since its inevitable course is by definition unavoidable.

Anti-institutionalists are those who, assuming the citizen to be an ethically perfect subject, always consider institutions to be repressive, unjust, or unnecessary. Certain anarchist positions affirm this thesis. There are left-wing anarchists, like Bakunin, who operate from the perspective of the utopia of an ethically perfect subject. There are also liberal anarchists, who greatly distrust and challenge the public institutions of the State (hence the "minimal State"⁶) on behalf of the subjective rights of individuals (in the first place, the right of private property).

There are also formalists of discursive reason who, in formulating a politics of legitimacy, forget the material, social, and economic aspects of political life.

The most influential theoreticians of the political in our day are those who believe that politics is played out exclusively on the strategic level. Some believe that the strategic reason of means-end is the practical political reason proper (Max Weber)⁷ -a position criticized by the first Frankfurt School under the name of "critique of instrumental reason." Whether because it delimits politics

⁵ See Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, trans. Jon Barnes (London: Verso, 1990).

⁶ See Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

⁷ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

to an opposition between enemies and friends as that which ultimately defines the political field (Carl Schmitt);⁸ or whether because the struggle for hegemony is the determining note of the political (Ernesto Laclau).⁹ All of these aspects are certainly moments of the political, but in no way are they either the only ones or the most important.

I believe that the concept of the political is complex and its architectonics is up for debate. Nearly everything indicated by the traditions is "necessary" but not "sufficient." "Sufficiency" is more all-embracing. Following the three levels proposed by John Rawls (principles, institutions, ends),¹⁰ or developing the two "parts" of Karl-Otto Apel¹¹ (*Teil A* and *Teil B*, although he would need a *Teil C*),¹² which could also be those of Hegel¹³ or Aristotle,¹⁴ we would have the following strata: (A) the implicit political principles (the universal); (B) the political institutions (the specific); and (C) the strategic political action on the concrete level (the singular).

(A) Synchronically, the political field (and time, diachronically) is "delimited," defined, "in-framed" by *implicit* "principles" that intrinsically exist in political action itself (whether or not they are discovered later in an explicit fashion through theoretical reflection). Obviously, this is questioned by those who believe, each in his own way -like Richard Rorty¹⁵ and Ernesto Laclau -that politics cannot have principles; a position that I would accept if the principles were defined in an explicit, dogmatic, or metaphysical way. The entire discussion centers, then, on "how" these principles are understood. If they are an explicit a priori of reason that must be understood in order to "apply" them, it would be a matter of something like an impossible universalist conscientialism,
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⁸ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). See Enrique Serrano, *Legitimación y racionalización. Weber y Habermas: la dimensión normativa de un orden secularizado* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1994).

⁹ See Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time, and Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996).

¹⁰ John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).

¹¹ Someone could find that the coincidence is practicable since both, in very different ways, are renovators of the Kantian tradition.

¹² Karl-Otto Apel, "Diskursethik als Verantwortungsethik," in *Ethik und Befreiung*, ed. Raúl Fornet-Betancourt (Aachen: Augustinus Buchhandlung, 1993), pp. 10-58.

¹³ Hegel is a necessary reference for this entire question. In the first place, his "civil society. (or "bourgeois [*bürgerliche*] society") is distinguished from the "State." But in the "civil society" he deals with three levels: the moment that I call "material," "the system of needs" (§§ 189-208), the formal level of the "application of justice" (§§ 209-229), and the instrumental or strategic level of political practicability proper (§§ 230-256). See G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), vol. 7, pp. 339-397.

¹⁴ Aristotle distinguished between "principle" (*arkhê*), "deliberation," and "practical choice" (*proairesis*).

¹⁵ See some of Richard Rorty's theses in "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson and Robert C. Vaughan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

because no politician has ever acted in that fashion. On the other hand, if the principle is understood as that which allows us to fix the horizon that concretely delimits the political field *as political*,¹⁶ in this case the principle is constitutive of the field and of the political action itself as political. The principle determines the limit; it is the "frame" within which the political continues to be possible as political. It thus marks a limit of possibility (of the political) and its impossibility (as political). Among the diverse political principles we must speak of a "democratic principle."

(B) In the second place, political action also remains -on another level - delimited or "in-framed" by political "institutions." The strategic struggle does not act within an "empty" field, but rather within a field that is *already occupied* by a network of relations where the nodes are citizens (of "flesh and bone") and their relationships are functional. "Functional" not only within the political community (or society), but also within many other practical systems that are ever present (in some cases as "the social") in the political functionality. The politician, the citizen, the representative, the leader, the political parties, the movements, etc., walk in a "mine field" -since the political field has limitations, delimitations, frames that comprise part of the exercise of power, a structure of forces that mutually support one another, as Foucault would say.¹⁷ Whoever does not take these institutional delimitations into account loses legitimacy, a loss that may produce unexpected political consequences. When Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon, or when Miguel Hidalgo rang the bell to convoke an army, the institutionality in force was broken. That is why the legitimacy in force is no longer considered and the political sense of this anti-institutionalist action must be evaluated (in the case of Caesar, it would be through assuming the dictatorship or the "empire"; in the case of Hidalgo, through confronting even death, but being later recognized as the founder of a new political order). In these cases, action is no longer justified by the foundation of legitimacy that makes up the institution.

(C) Finally, on the concrete level of action, political praxis is found in the construction of community life, of the common good, but also in the struggle for hegemony which, abstracting from the limitations and the "fullness" of the principles and institutions, may abstractly consider the political field as "empty" (metaphorically), in order to be "filled" by the strategic action that will define in

¹⁶ The "political field" is not the "military field" or the "sports field," to use just two examples. The rules (or principles) of the political force me (ethically, but in an intrinsic way, politically) not to eliminate the *political* enemy. In the "military field," on the other hand, it is legitimate to eliminate the opponent.

¹⁷ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

each case the objectives of action in light of the concrete position of the "end" (Weber), of the enemy (Schmitt), or of the antagonist (Laclau). The fact that the enemy/antagonist may be different on each occasion and that in each case he may emerge from another position, and therefore variously redefine the political field, does not mean that the implicit political principles are not in force. For example, the principles "you must not kill the antagonist" or "You must honestly allow the antagonist to have reasonable democratic freedom" are necessary, since their unfulfillment would annihilate the struggle for "hegemony" *as hegemony*, making it something else: an act of war, of totalitarianism, or of authoritarianism, which as such is not political and, furthermore, in the long run would self-destruct.

II. Democratic Normativity (Principles, Institutions, and Democratic Praxis) If we distinguish equivocally between ethics and politics, we observe the loss of political normativity -this is, to a certain degree, Kant's position, which distinguishes between morality and legality, the latter being properly political.¹⁸ This leads either to an empty proceduralism that cannot motivate the political will or, even worse, to immorality in politics, which is what is most common today: "Politics has nothing to do with morals!"

If ethics and politics are united as political ethics, this is filled with normativity, but it loses as politics. Politics no longer possesses the specificity characteristic of politics, which is not nor should be merely a collective part of ethics.¹⁹ If we propose that the political principle (which for Habermas is only the democratic principle) is a principle different from the moral principle, but that both are dependent on the discursive principle, some questions necessarily arise: Would this latter principle also be normative? And if it were normative, how would it be different from the moral principle? And if it were not normative, the Ethics of Discourse would have ceased to exist. This is why Apel proposes that the discursive principle is already the moral principle, but then the difference between the moral and the political (*Teil A*) principles should be thoroughly clarified, as should their differential application (*Teil B*), and above all the difference between moral and political action on the strategic concrete level (which is not clearly defined in Apel's architectonics).

¹⁸ See this theme in Immanuel Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Werke*, vol. 7 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 336ff.

¹⁹ Vittorio Hoesle has written a *Moral und Politik*, but I am precisely trying to overcome this position with the proposal that follows. See Vittorio Hoesle, *Moral und Politik. Grundlagen einer politischen Ethik für das 21. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 1997).

If we recognize the fact that the realm of the ethical (and also the moral)²⁰ never has a concrete specific field as such, since the abstract ethical subject is always somehow a concrete "actor" of a role or "function" within some "system" (and even the daily *Lebenswelt* does not cease to be an existential system in which the "role" of mother or father, son or daughter, etc., is played out), we conclude that the ethical performs in the actions that are fulfilled in these concrete practical fields, of which politics is one (others could be the family field, the field of gender or the erotic, the sports field, the military field, the economic field, the educational or pedagogical field, etc.). Each one of these fields "subsumes" the ethical principles and transforms them into the specific principle. Thus the political (or family, gender, sports, economic, etc.) principles are strictly political: they subsume the ethical principles *as political*. For example, if producing and reproducing human life is a material ethical principle, the ethical enunciation "you shall not kill another human being!" becomes political: "You shall not kill the political antagonist in the struggle for hegemony in which you are involved!" This political imperative is not equal to the one that commands: "you shall not kill your market competitor!" -which would be economic.²¹

Among the principles of politics we find the formal principle of legitimacy of politics as such, which we could call the "Democratic Principle," and which could be enunciated approximately as follows: There is legitimacy in every political institution or action that has been resolved based on the recognition of all members of the political community as equal, free, autonomous, with brotherly will,²² and whose practical resolutions have been the fruit of consensus (and of common will) as a conclusion of rational arguments and honest tolerance, and not through domination or violence; that is, having carried out all procedures and keeping in mind the criterion of symmetric participation of those affected. The political subject, the citizen in the final analysis, by having taken part in all of the decisions, is obliged by them (normativity characteristic of sovereignty as the origin of the dictate and as the consignee of the obligation), not only toward the performance of what was reconciled, but also to assume the responsibility of the consequences of such decisions (as institutions or actions).

This Democratic Principle, briefly indicated thus, generates "legitimate" institutions, since "legitimacy" is nothing more than the fulfillment of said prin-

²⁰ In my book *Ética de la Liberación*, I have distinguished between "the ethical" in a material sense (ch. 1) and "the moral" in a formal sense (ch. 2). There is still a third level, that of the "principle of practicability" that becomes essential in politics, as we shall see.

²¹ I explain this question in the aforementioned *Política de Liberación* (ch. 1), on which I am currently working (this holds for all of the statements in this paper).

²² I am thinking about the "material" or "emotional" moment of the democracy of "brotherhood," a concept elaborated, as indicated above, by Derrida in *Politics of Friendship*.

principle or, in other words, the institutions or actions generated within the political field that respect the very sense of the political as political, that attain legitimacy by having allowed (or oriented) those affected toward a symmetrical rational (and voluntary) participation. This principle that subsumes the ethical moment, though it is not abstractly ethical but strictly political, is found in the origin of all legitimate institutions and political actions whose goal is justice.

Since direct democracy had to be implemented as "representative" democracy, the Democratic Principle is the necessary mediation between the individual will of each elector and the elected as representative. This principle makes possible and legitimizes "representation" without leaving the members of the political community unarmed before the elected representatives, but rather always as the last sovereign instance exerted in the new elections, or in corrective actions throughout the process of representation (plebiscites, lawsuits, public demonstrations, critical consensus of public opinion, acts of passive disobedience, and even justified rebellion, etc.).

In effect, political institutions are considered legitimate or democratic if in their constitution or reforms they have carried out this Democratic Principle. The democracy of a constituent assembly consists of having observed this Democratic Principle in its convocation and election of members, and in having allowed and developed the symmetrical participation of those affected in the very dictation of the constitution. This principle must also figure in the constitution itself of the State as the universal procedure on all institutional and procedural levels of the State, as a first definition of the political order that is being established by the political constitution. The entire system of institutions based on the constitution, and the human rights dictated in its preamble, must have as a condition of possibility the fulfillment of this Democratic Principle. The separation of powers, their mutual fiscalization, the federative structure of the State, the organization of political parties, the free and secret elections, the type of representation, etc., must be procedures that allow for the fulfillment of the Democratic Principle. The institutions are democratic because they perform, structure, and functionally define the actions with a claim to political legitimacy. These institutions are not purely procedural structures; they are likewise normative instances (they force their fulfillment practically and intersubjectively).

In the same way, the political order is completed in the permanent actualization of all its relations of power, of force (Foucault), within the political field, through the political actions that are like the nodes of the networks (Castells) that pass through that field of tensions -in principle, of brotherhood, of service, of shared life -but also as a field that is mined by always possible enemies. In the field of the struggle for hegemony (Gramsci) of the historical block in power, the Democratic Principle remains overdetermined by the Principle of

Political Practicability, which reveals "the possible" and distinguishes it from "the impossible." It was rightly said that politics is "the art of the possible" -it is in this intersection between the Democratic Principle and the Principle of Political Practicability.

Therefore, a valid political order is the totality of the institutions and strategic actions that the members of a political community perform in a territory, in a given time.

III. The Crisis of Democratic Legitimacy from the Exteriority of the Victims For me, as a Latin American philosopher at the beginning of the 21st century, the most urgent theme of political philosophy is not simply to study how to give stability to a legitimate political order, consensually resolving possible conflicts, at least in appearance. For me, the most urgent theme is not the stability of the Totality (as Emmanuel Levinas would say) of the political order, but rather the Exteriority of this order, the invisibility of its victims, of the majorities. Indeed, using Karl Popper's argument against perfect planning,²³ it is categorical that no valid political order could be perfect. For that, it would need an infinite intelligence, at an infinite speed, and, I might add, a general, pure, and infinite will in the functional generosity of its motivations. Since this is impossible, we may categorically express that, as every political order is imperfect, it is inevitable that it will produce negative effects, even though these may be unintended (unintentional). Those who suffer the negative effects of the political order with pretensions to justice we shall call "victims."²⁴ The victims of every political order suffer some type of exclusion, unless they are considered political subjects, and therefore they are not actors taken into account in political institutions (or they are repressed to the extent that they cannot overcome a merely "passive," perfectly manipulable, citizenship).

It is interesting to note that the intellectuals who suffered European fascism (Antonio Gramsci²⁵ in Mussolini's Italy and Hannah Arendt in Nazi Ger-

²³ Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1997).

²⁴ See this theme in my *Ética de la Liberación*, ch. 4.

²⁵ Gramsci was the inventor of the current concept of «civil society." See Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). Cohen and Arato partially recognize this; see Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), ch. 3, pp. 142ff. Gramsci thus distinguishes the «civil society" of both the State and the strictly economic level (which appears as the physiognomy of the «social"), giving special importance to the level of political, social, and cultural practices. In addition, Gramsci, long before Habermas, made of the consensus an essential moment of the process of hegemony of the «historical block of power," but he showed (against Habermas and Laclau) that the social factor (and, indirectly, the economic factor) requires that the political society (the State) begin to use coercion (losing the legitimacy of hegemony as consensus) when the «social block of the oppressed" (the

many²⁶) were the first to distinguish, in the current sense, between state (political society) and civil society.²⁷ And intellectuals experienced the total invasion of the political and civil field by the (totalitarian) State. The Exteriority of political society (of the State) thus struggled for the recognition of its rights within a nascent "civil society" which, although "public," nevertheless does not have the use of the legitimate coercive apparatus of the State (it does not exert state "politicity"). Along with "public opinion," these are realms that carry out critical functions of the State, broadening the space of civic subjectivation, a democratic complement of political consensus and of the formation of the democratic will. In this civil society, differential forces are thus born that are organized in the Exteriority of the established order, effecting struggles for the recognition of new political (and, obviously, social, economic, cultural, etc.) rights. These collective actors of the most diverse appearances have been called the "New Social Movements."²⁸ These movements, from a political point of view, turn many excluded or "passive" members, who inhabited the territory controlled by the European states at the end of the 18th century, into political subjects of an "active" citizenship. Indeed, at the very heart of the French Revolution, the "revolution of equals" (let us recall Babeuf in 1794) had already confronted the triumphant bourgeoisie. The social, workers', and peasants' movements (the labor and trade unions of the 19th and 20th centuries) extended citizenship to the wage laborers of the capital, who were neither property owners nor sufficiently literate at the beginning. The women's suffrage movement subjectivized a second immense sector of the population who, when excluded, became "semi-active" citizens (because they were nevertheless far from being able to enjoy the full use of the psychological, cultural, and material conditions from which they were excluded by patriarchalism). In recent times, senior citizens have begun to make themselves present.

people) begins its "movements. in a political struggle, which many current theoreticians forget. See Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996). Paradoxically, it is more complex and interesting for us than for Cohen and Arato, Habermas, and Laclau.

²⁶ Hannah Arendt doubts that the social can be considered political. Her particular blindness before the material aspect of politics explains the use of Arendt's work against the contentious social movements within the central societies or those dependent on capitalism during the "Cold War." Her partial comprehension of Marx's thought led her to misunderstandings. See the following: Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves, *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (London: Routledge, 1994); Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996); Enrique Serrano, *Consenso y conflicto* (Mexico City: Interlinea, 1996).

²⁷ A distinction that previously had another meaning; for example, in Hegel.

²⁸ See, among others, Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity*, trans. David Macey (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995), and Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1982).

But, in a more decisive fashion -and one that will certainly become even more important in the short and long terms -the ecological movements (which simultaneously struggle for the survival of humanity in the long run and, for this very reason, for future generations) increasingly gain not only a social sense, but also a strictly political one. It is the clamor, and challenge, of the material aspect (the reproduction of human life, in the final analysis) par excellence which moves those organizations that are being called "green" in different parts of the world (between the "red" of the left and the "black" of fascism and death). The Meadows Report in 1972²⁹ opened awareness to this previously invisible aspect of politics.³⁰

The same could be said of the movements against racial discrimination in both the us and South Africa, as well as other countries of the contemporary world.

All of the New Social Movements transversely penetrate political and civil society and overdetermine one another. Thus feminism determines the movements that struggle against racial discrimination and environmental degradation, showing that, in the final analysis, exclusion is "feminized" in a preponderant way, racism is exerted firstly against women of color, who also suffer the worst ecological and urban conditions.

The democratizing process, upon transforming and broadening the horizon of "active" citizenship to new political subjects previously excluded (political subjectivation), signifies a radicalization, universalization, and greater symmetrical participation of the formerly affected (the formerly affected who we discover today as "new" victims). Critico-democratic awareness can never claim to have finished the task of broadening that qualitative horizon of the active, participatory, symmetrical citizenship in exercising political power. It is an always open task, historical par excellence, and novel because each new civilizing or human advance inevitably creates new exclusions due to its own systematicity (as we would say with Niklas Luhmann³¹).

IV. Democracy in the Postcolonial World {Global Victims) In the postcolonial world, there is technically no liberalism, republicanism, Bonapartism, fascism, etc., in the sense that these sorts of regimes acquired in Europe or the United

²⁹ See Donella H. Meadows, *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*, 2d ed. (New York: Universe Books, 1974).

³⁰ Hans Jonas shows this convincingly. See *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

³¹ See Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

States. All of these political and ideological expressions are configured in another way on the postcolonial periphery.

Modern Europe's process of globalization, when it had yet to become the "center" of the world system,³² began with the invasion of Latin America in 1492, thereby giving birth to the colonial world, a constitutive component of Modernity.

Paradoxically, and considering Latin America as part of the world periphery, dependent liberalism, which emerged in the struggles of anticolonial emancipation (from 1810 in Mexico and the Southern Cone; 1804 in the case of Haiti), does not face a powerful monarchical or republican State, but rather an external metropolitan State (the Spanish, French, English, etc., State), and internally will have the responsibility, precisely contrary to classical liberalism, of founding the State. Therefore, 19th-century Latin American liberalism had many of the traits of republicanism (affirming the denied colonial identity, remembering traditions, defining itself in the face of the old metropolises). At the same time, it had to affirm the public rights of the State in order to extend the institution of private property, which had no prior tradition among the poor (until very recently peasants, and even the indigenous in certain countries, held community ownership of the land), with the goal of creating the conditions of a preindustrial capitalism dependent on exports in the face of the only institution that had survived since colonialism: the Catholic Church (before which French anticlerical Jacobinism and the secularism of Littré would be of great use for the new State, and therefore the institutions would take certain forms, unknown in the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic world). Since it is the landowning oligarchy (politically, a federal oligarchy that is economically linked to the internal market) or the liberal minorities (unitarian minorities linked to the external market) who found the State, they will be more concerned with preserving their own privileges (subjective rights, such as property in the hands of the oligarchy) before those of indigenous Afro-Latin Americans, impoverished peasants, or postcolonial marginals, whose customary community rights (which the colonizers had respected) would be diminished, thus reducing them to misery in a regime of exclusive property (exercised only by landowners of the inner areas with the goal of autonomy, or merchants and liberals in relation to capitalist powers, which formerly were the metropolises located in port cities).

The process of creating the conditions that make a formal democracy possible in the Latin American postcolonial world, as one may imagine, travels a long

³² See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. I (New York: Academic Press, 1974), and Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

temporal road: the entire 19th century and the first part of the 20th. Against the backdrop of what could be assumed will be the phenomenon of so-called populism -which is not exactly French Bonapartism nor German or Italian fascism -emerges the first manifestation of a democratic regime.

Between the two World Wars, between 1914 and 1945, conditions were ripe for the effective extension of citizenship and voting rights to the great popular majorities. The populist project of capitalist industrialization, headed by a particular national bourgeoisie, allowed the nascent bourgeoisie to lose its fear of the political participation of the masses, which were thus constituted as the support for a national project of industrial development based on import substitution, competitive with the "central" capitalism called "imperialist." Irigoyen (1918) and Perón (1946) in Argentina, Vargas (1930) in Brazil, Cárdenas (1934) in Mexico, and gradually throughout the Latin American subcontinent, popular governments were elected thanks to nonfraudulent elections by the large majorities. This is the most important democratic process of the 20th century. The charismatic leaders of these democratic movements must be distinguished from the European fascist leaders, and even from the Stalinist type. The latter attempted world, or at least European, domination. The former, on the other hand, sought national emancipation from the neocolonialism into which they had fallen. However, around 1954-55, beginning with the coups d'état against the democratic governments of Arbenz in Guatemala organized by the CIA,³³ Nasser in Egypt, and Sukarno in Indonesia, events that coincide with the end of "European" colonialism in Africa and Asia, the United States launched its project of expansion and control of the postcolonial periphery in the years of the Cold War. We must inquire into the conditions of democracy in this global situation.

To be sure, in Latin America it is the United States that, from this moment onward (1954), would have total hegemony in the implantation of diverse political models (at least, none were imposed without the explicit complicity of the US embassies, the State Department, and the leadership of all the armies of the area under the command of the Pentagon, which had provided an excellent

³³ The fruit (plantain or banana) that the United Fruit Company extracted from Guatemala was called "bitter fruit" by the journalist Stephen Schlesinger (*Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982]). Jacobo Arbenz had an industrial development plan, but the conservative groups of the US (with their bourgeois representatives in Congress) aborted that autonomous capitalist development and turned it into a guerrilla war that the State Department organized for thirty years. Resulting in thousands of deaths, these acts should be judged by future International Tribunals as genocidal violence against humanity. All of the Central American wars of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s have no other origin. What is certain is that today, at the beginning of the 21st century, Central America cries out in its misery, in its exploitation, in its illiteracy, in a situation that is worse now than in the 1950s.

education in its military schools to the best of the Latin American army). The period of developmentalism (1954-68, from the fall of Vargas and Perón to the worsening of the Brazilian dictatorship under the intellectual leadership of General Golbery) proposed a model of democracy that, in a way, imitates the one applied in Europe. Thus, some Christian democracies (in Chile, Venezuela, and other countries) were able to win elections. But formal democracy (Frondizi in Argentina, Kubitschek in Brazil, Frei in Chile, etc.) concealed Latin America's deepening state of dependence after the failure (helped along by the penetration of the continent by those entities called "transnational corporations") of populism (the most recent peripheral capitalist project aimed at national autonomy).

In the face of developmentalism's failure, due in part to social pressure from below and in part to the unscrupulousness of the United States in its application of the exploitation model (the US never planned to organize a symmetrical "common market" like the Europeans, but simply to extract wealth from its so-called backyard), the bitter pill of military totalitarianism was dispensed (in order to make viable a capitalism dependent on exports).³⁴ When the "National Security" dictatorships failed, they left the Latin American people with substantial debt at exorbitant interest rates. It was necessary to restore the legitimacy of the State in order to pay off the debts that had been invented, inflated, contracted by antidemocratic (and therefore illegitimate) governments behind the back of the people, and deposited by corrupt elites (who were also perverted by the double standard of the US) into the banking houses of the "center." When the recent phase of "democratization" began -since 1984, first in Argentina and Brazil -all the Latin American governments, now legitimate, were so burdened by debt that it was economically impossible to lead their respective countries in an honest fashion. Moreover, the neoliberal monetary policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund demanded that measures be undertaken that further impoverished all the countries in the region. As I write these lines, Argentina, which in the early 20th century competed with the United States and had a currency stronger than those of Canada and Australia, has reached a crisis that is leading the majority of its population

³⁴ The responsibilities of the United States in that entire project have yet to be judged. The massiveness, universality, and similarity of all the Latin American military governments from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s does not indicate a plan that any Latin American national army had within its capabilities. The State Department was definitely the origin and point of control of the entire model justified, obviously, by the ideology of the Cold War. As US Secretary of State who encouraged the decisions taken by Augusto Pinochet. Henry Kissinger was directly responsible for the coup d'état in Chile, and therefore indirectly responsible for the death of Salvador Allende. Pinochet has now been justly tried for these crimes.

into total immiseration, while funds for the education system, the universities, and even the state-run bureaucracy have evaporated. In Mexico, 40 percent of the population lives below Amartya Sen's poverty line; in Brazil, the situation is worse -and these are the three major countries that in the 1930s successfully drove the populist project, until they were targeted as opponents in the process of competition in the world market, and destroyed.

In this context, we can see that political philosophy must take into account the material aspect of the reproduction of the life of the citizen (food, clothing, housing, education, etc.), levels that for the United States and Europe may be considered "the social," which for Hannah Arendt does not comprise a determining aspect of the political field. Even for Ernesto Laclau, on account of his partial critique of Marxism -which is sound in other ways -it has fallen into an anti-economicist reductionism, which makes the discovery of the political within the economic aspect impossible. And if this is valid for Latin America, how much more so for postcolonial Asia (if we think about the misery of Bangladesh, of India, or of Afghanistan), and in an even more acute way, for Africa (which Europe irresponsibly destroyed in its colonial period, abandoning it at the moment of organizing its respective postcolonial states, where the political life of ethnic groups still had great significance).³⁵

All of this is exacerbated by the so-called globalization of financial and transnational capital. Competing for the opening of markets in postcolonial states, with no reasonable stipulations for mutual benefit, what is being produced is simply a genocide of the poor part of humanity located in the Global South. The democracy of so-called rich countries is sustained by the transfer of value, of wealth, from poor countries -a fact proven by the "dependence theory," which was never refuted,³⁶ and it is therefore explicable that political philosophers (Bobbio, Habermas, Rawls, Laclau, etc.) exclude its material

³⁵ I would like to emphasize that the savage colonialism of Belgium, England, France, etc., played out its politics of dominance by pitting one ethnic group against another. With postwar emancipation, the populations whose African territories were assigned to them by the metropolises (a result of the Congress of Berlin in 1885, and of later modifications) should have organized their new states. In the postcolonial context, the homogeneity of the European-modern citizen was impossible. The cultural heterogeneity of the ethnic groups demanded a new political system. But not only did Europe not help to consolidate it in the colonial period, but it also destroyed any such possibility (using interethnic confrontation instead of constituting interethnic parliaments that could have educated the different ethnic groups on tolerance and governability). Indeed, each African state today should comprise something like a Chamber with representation of the ethnic groups (with veto power in essential questions: a Senate), and another with proportional representation (of national parties that would slowly organize: a House of Congress). African democracy demands new solutions since the European-US models (and their respective political philosophies) are not very useful. Theoretical Eurocentrism is harmful, but universally extended.

³⁶ See my book *Towards an Unknown Marx: A Commentary on the Manuscripts of 1861-63* (London: Routledge, 2001), ch. 14.

aspect (the economic, the globalized capitalism, which shows itself in the political field of postcolonial states, like the *social* "discomfort" of the popular masses, which will continue to grow in the near future, and which need a new and more critical political philosophy).

V. Democratic Struggle5 of the New Political Actors in the Periphery of the Current Globalization Process

The «passive" citizenship of Latin America (more integrated into the world system), southern and eastern Asia, and especially Africa (nearly excluded from this system), which makes up 85 percent of today's humanity,³⁷ is quite diverse. The symmetrical participation of those institutionally affected in the political field will take on very different dimensions in each cultural, economic region, in each country, in each area, in each social sector, in each distinguishing type of excluded person, of victims of the colonial, capitalist, sexist-patriarchal, racist, etc., system. In each sector, a New Social Movement undertakes the necessary organization of the struggle for democracy, for differential symmetrical political participation, initially legitimate and against the old legitimacy that slowly becomes illegitimate, thanks to the fight for recognition of the Movement. These new actors, previously "passive" citizens, subjectivate their position and become active in a renewed, broadened, and qualitatively deepened democratic political field.

Moreover, on these cultural, economic, and political continents (Africa, Asia, Latin America), the New Social Movements of civil society, though also the critical political parties in the political society or the State, are *overdetermined* by differentiated histories that are completely different from those of Europe or the United States. North American feminism cannot propose the same objectives as Latin American or African feminism. Spivak describes feminist actions in India that must begin from another point of affirmation than feminism of the "center." The same could be said of the countries within the horizon of cultures oriented by the Muslim religion. What in one case (for example in a Muslim country) is a *transformation* in the arena of women's liberation, does not mean that it is so in the United States or Europe (where it might be interpreted as an action overcome long ago on that cultural horizon). But the difference does not lie in the fact that the countries of the center of the process of female democratization are increasingly more advanced, and that we must wait for postcolonial countries to catch up to that point, but rather that each one in its own horiwn has positive qualities from which the others can learn.

³⁷ See the *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Postcolonial feminism certainly has a more critical economic (anticapitalist) and political (in terms of the critical participation of women) awareness -let us recall the women commanders of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) -than the often purely antisexist or antipatriarchal feminism of the "center." Both movements can learn from others, and frequently the new social movements of the "center" learn more than those of the postcolonial world on account of the complexity and overdetermination into which the latter has been plunged. The feminism of the center, inevitably, has the usufruct of the economic exploitation of women at the periphery. The latter are indirectly the victims of the former. It is not extraordinary that they are more critical with respect to the economic and political aspects of the process of democratization.

Finally, I should like to call attention to the fact that in the struggle for global democracy, there is a macro-structure that is being questioned. Indeed, many agree with the notion that the State³⁸ is no longer important:³⁹ for instance, economists who advocate the opening of national markets and neoliberals who distrust the State, because the market is global; and much of what remains of the Left, because the State has served precisely to become the instrument of a globalization that has been so destructive to the great majorities of the South. Therefore, the argument goes, the democratic struggle is in the hands of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), solidarity groups (as in Seattle), and other intermediate organizations pitted against the private transnational structure controlled by global bureaucracies (financial, transnational corporations) and backed by NATO (and, in the final analysis, by the US military, as seen in the Gulf War and Kosovo). In sum, the *Empire* (Hardt-Negri) before the anonymous "global citizen," ultimately defined as a "consumer" in a total global market. This economist understanding of subjectivity must be opposed by a *repoliticization as democratic participation* of actors in the intersubjectivity of the political community on its different levels of participation and representation: direct participation in the base political communities (local meetings; consumption, production, self-defense groups, etc.), and indirect participation through democratic representation on all levels (the municipality or county, the state or province, etc.).

³⁸ I never write "national» state because there have almost never been "national» states. Spain, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy have not organized states of "one" nation, but rather states controlled by a nation (Castille, Île-de-France, the Prussians, England, the industrial North, etc.) dominating other nations (Basques, Galicians, Midi, Scotland, Mezzogiorno, etc.). Perhaps only the United States is a state with one nation, but actually this nation of many cultural origins has been slowly establishing itself since 1620 in a process as yet incomplete. In reality, the modern European states were plurinational, but did not recognize themselves as such (hence today's attempts to construct a Europe of "nations» and not of "states").

³⁹ See, for example, Hardt and Negri, *Empire*.

But *the repoliticization of citizen' intersubjectivity as community actors* is impossible without the existence of the State, which is not only an instrument of globalization (and this is possible through citizens' demobilization that becomes "passive"), but also the only site for regulating those financial, industrial, and military structures that are in a pure "state of nature." And the United States, the *home state* of the large corporations and the final reference of world financial capital, is the state that opposes moving from the "state of nature" to a true "civil state" or cosmopolitan political state.⁴⁰

Paradoxically, George Soros⁴¹ speaks of the need for an "Alliance of democratic States," showing that the State is, in the final analysis, currently necessary in order to establish certain rules for the governance of global financial capital, just as the Lisbon Group had asserted. The concept of a "global citizen" is a dangerous mirage. There is no citizen of the world without real mediations from a political society (the State). Democracy cannot be exercised on a world level, at least today, and for some time to come (perhaps centuries). It requires a political community that has organized a political society (the State), and which is energized by the perspectives of civil society, within one territory with its own culture, language, traditions, identity. Globalization must help to deepen this identity rather than erase it, or the supposed global democracy will be one more mechanism of cultural and political (and, in the final analysis, economic) annihilation and alignment of the identity of the concrete community subject, of the intersubjectivity that has taken millennia to construct. The post-traditional situation is not postcultural. It is still not possible to think about a global culture (which perversely must speak one language, would impose one hierarchy of values, one religion, one traditional ethic, one literature. ..). It would simply be a totalitarian culture. It is necessary to fight for a healthy polyphonic development of the great human experiences expressed in the rich linguistic, cultural, religious diversity of different worldviews that, much more than the vegetable and animal species, speak to us of the splendor of Life, since its supreme realization is a fully developed human life. And just as the vegetable and animal

⁴⁰ See Peter Spiro, «The New Sovereignists," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no.6 (November-December 2000), pp. 9-15. This article deals with US opposition to participation in the United Nations (e.g., not paying its dues), an International Tribunal, ecological protocols, and an international monetary and banking policy. The United States prefers to sabotage all the institutions that in the long run could organize a legitimate cosmopolitan structure in order to privilege a unilateral policy (of the United States with each potential negotiator), which allows that country not to depend on any «outside" judge. The Empire does not wish to be judged by anyone. Only it can judge all. The *Pax Americana* is grounded in the strongest army on the global level. The insignificant *Mare nostrum* of the Romans seems like a military political pygmy compared to this structure, which is the result of the end of the Cold War in 1989. This is the dark horizon of democracy in the postcolonial world.

⁴¹ See George Soros, *Open Society: Reforming Global Capitalism* (New York: Public Affairs, 2000).

species are becoming extinct, so too are the languages, cultures, and ethnic groups being genocidally exterminated in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Finally, and from a point of view of the political, which subsumes implicit ethical principles as constitutive of political principles themselves, a political philosophy must be developed that justifies the legitimacy, normativity, of the movements of *transformation* of the institutions and the rules of political hegemony from the perspective of the victims (intra-statal or global). In the first place, there are critico-political principles⁴² that authorize the *transformation* of all political instances based on the victims of said instances. In the second place, it is not a question of *including* (many people talk about "inclusion," but it is necessary to indicate that "to include" without *transforming* the entire structure is like "pouring new wine into old wineskins," and therefore to relapse into the old in which Difference is retrapped by Identity). It is a matter of *transforming* the given order with creativity, novelty. That is, a second level of critical politics is to study the criteria of legitimacy of the transformation of the institutions themselves. Finally, a third level is the justification of the legitimacy of the praxis of liberation that transforms the given order, with partial reforms, but also, on very few occasions of human history, with revolutionary change (a revolution that today would be practically impossible, but which could not be declared categorically, *a priori*, impossible in the future). The democratization process of the postcolonial world demands theoretical and practical novelties to which we philosophers of politics are frequently unfaithful.

In Mexico, after a political order that was certainly democratic from 1934 to 1940 with Lázaro Cárdenas, but which later fell into bureaucratism and antidemocratic corporative corruption, the EZLN is not asking for indigenous autonomy to be "included" in the same constitution that excluded it, but rather it is asking for a *transformation*⁴³ of the very "spirit" of the constitution. It is not a question of a process of "inclusion," but rather of a novel, analogical, and transforming "creation." It is not simply a matter of creating a new room for those excluded from the old house. It is necessary to build a new house, with a new layout. Otherwise, the indigenous, the women, and the Afro-Americans will be assigned to the "servants" quarters ...as before, as always.

Translated from the Spanish by Vincent Martin

⁴² There are political principles that make up all "political order" in force. But there are also critical political principles that justify (he critique and transformation of all political order. This is (he theme of the second part of my *Política de Liberación*, in preparation.

⁴³ See my *Ética de la Liberación*, § 6.3, dedicated to showing what transformation (*Veraenderung*) means in Karl Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in different(ways; what we need (0 do is to transform [veraendern] it." See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Die(z, 1956). p. 7.