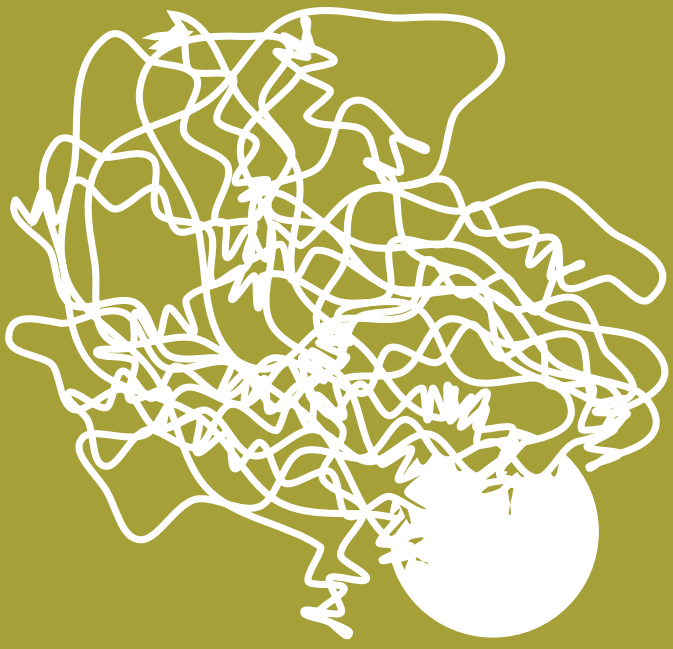
NR 2 /36/ 2020
ISSN 2081-8130

praktyka teoretyczna



IMAGES OF THE RABBLE

Assorodobraj/ Brzezicka/ Snochowska-Gonzales/ Moll/ Olesik/
Więckiewicz/ Zaremba/

praktyka teoretyczna

IMAGES OF THE RABBLE

Praktyka Teoretyczna
ISSN: 2081-8130
Nr 2(36)/2020 – *Images of the Rabble*

Wersją pierwotną (referencyjną) czasopisma jest wydanie on-line publikowane na stronie https://pressto.amu.edu.pl/index.php/prt/

Wydawca:
Instytut Filozofii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89, 60-568 Poznań
Tel. (061) 829 22 80
E-mail: filozof@amu.edu.pl

Adres Redakcji:
„Praktyka Teoretyczna" Instytut Filozofii
Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89, 60-568 Poznań
E-mail: praktyka.teoretyczna@gmail.com

Poznań 2020

Table of Contents

Spis treści

JĘDRZEJ BRZEŹIŃSKI, MICHAŁ POSPISZYL,
BARTOSZ WÓJCIK

Images of the Rabble

The notion of "rabble" is a marginal but recurring theme of political thought in the West. In its many variations (like "mob", "mass", "multitude" or "crowd") it has denominated the lowest social stratum since antiquity, and has been characterized as corrupted, unstable, passionate, spiteful, fickle, etc. In the classic representation of Polybius, the rule of the mob is compared to an unruly ship, on which some of the shipmates "want to continue the voyage, while others urge the helmsman to drop anchor; some of them let out the sheets, while others interfere and order the sails furled" (Polybius 2010, 403). Mob rule is a degenerate form of democracy, into which, according to the theory of the cyclical succession of regimes, the latter inevitably degenerates, being unable to tame the crowd. Similar metaphors had already been formulated by Plato, who also compared politics to the art of managing a ship. Here, again, the rowdy crew tries to dupe the captain so they can freely wine, dine and sail with the tide (incidentally, it is an odd picture of a ship that Plato paints, where the captain is clumsy and practically blind, and the sailors know nothing about the naval art). Plato's comparison of the rule of the people to a big and dangerous animal is equally familiar. Aristotle, Cicero and many others will come to depict it in similar ways. Modern political philosophy largely maintains this imaging. For Hobbes, the existence of the state depends on taming the multiplicity, which he compares to a sea monster. Francis Bacon likens the human masses to swarms, herds and packs. They remained outside of the distribution of

colonial profits, often outside any political visibility at all, but at the same time, as slaves, sailors, "hewers of wood and drawers of water" they enabled the functioning of the colonial world. Bacon – as Linebaugh and Rediker show in their "history of the revolutionary Atlantic" – christened this multitude a "many-headed hydra", and the myth of its monstrosity enabled him to legitimize terror and genocide. This zoological, often beastly imagery is a constant theme of both conservative and liberal portrayals of the poor. Burke called the French revolutionaries "swinish multitude", de Tocqueville – proponent of the extermination of Algeria – described the Arabs as "sinister beasts", Nietzsche used every occasion to emphasize his contempt for "asses", "blind moles", "herd morality", etc. – many similar examples could be enumerated.

Like animals, people of the mob are unpredictable, violent and dangerous, have to be tamed or caged. Rabbles, swarms, packs – they remain in motion and so do their definitions. Barbara Brzezicka, in her essay presented here, develops a broad analysis of the semantics of these terms. She is at the same time aware that this task cannot be completed. She rightly observes a certain "untranslatable rest" which resists all the attempts to neatly discern or identify "mobs" and "rabbles". This difficulty is twofold, at the very least. Firstly, in different languages the notions in question display different "family resemblances" – the English "mob", from *mobile vulgus*, will connote movement, the French *foule*, close to folly (*folie*), will suggest lack of reason, the Polish "*motłoch*" from "*mietlica*" – weed or wild grain; and the German *Pöbel* originating from the Latin *populus*, in Middle High German will become pejorative and begin to designate the non-civilized and unorganized part of the population. Secondly, "rabbles" will convey different meanings depending on their theorists' political interests, always implying a certain normativity, a tactical, moral or aesthetic prompting. We've proposed a cursory delineation of three possible reactions to historical mobs: conservative – prone to suppress if not exterminate them; liberal – aiming at educating and civilizing; and leftist – identifying rabbles as legitimate political subjects.

We've proposed a cursory delineation of three possible reactions to historical mobs: conservative – prone to suppress if not exterminate them; liberal – aiming at educating and civilizing; and leftist – identifying rabbles as legitimate political subjects.

These three perspectives become particularly pronounced in the seventeenth century, when colonial capital flourishes and the canon of modern political philosophy is formed. It is also the period of the "great confinement" described by Michel Foucault. The advent of the classical age orchestrates the "enforced fraternisation between the poor, the unemployed, the criminal and the insane" (Foucault 2006, 47), leading to more and more systematic solutions, aimed at their incarceration in various forms of prison. What connects these seemingly unrelated

subjectivities is, first and foremost, their refusal (or inability) to work. In the eyes of the moderns, this mortal sin deserved the most severe of punishments. Nina Assorodobraj describes a similar process of transformation of this dispersed and undisciplined multitude into a modern working class. Written in 1935 as doctoral thesis, this compelling work traces the venturous trajectories of vagabonds (*ludzie luźni*) in eighteenth-century Poland. The Polish historian gathers their traces from archives to depict a broad panorama of inventive ways of vagrant living. Sadly, it is also the story of their systematic eradication by subsequent legal dispositifs (passports, certificates, banishments, coercive labor), administered by the authorities in agreement with the lobby of nascent industry and public intellectuals across the board. Vagabonds, derided as useless idlers and the products of various processes of social degeneration, yet who at the same time are urgently needed as a workforce for the growing industry, exemplify perfectly the previously mentioned tension between the positive and negative images of the rabble. The progressivist myth – that it was a chance for a better life that brought people to the factories – is repudiated by the testimonies of these people themselves, as they wandered and took up odd jobs, but nevertheless enjoyed a life better than the one of toil, constraint and exploitation in the factories. Claudia Snochowska-Gonzales tells another story of the pauperized Polish masses. She describes a "Brazilian fever", which began in the 1890s, i.e. the mass emigration of peasants encouraged to settle and work in Brazil, which suffered labour shortages after slavery had been abolished in 1888. Fleeing hunger and the risk of freezing to death – constant threats in the underdeveloped region of Galicia, Polish peasants took off to cross the Atlantic, because they saw the work on plantations as a chance worth taking. At the same time, in the eyes of the nationalist ideology, these desperate, half-starved people were seen as the pioneers of Polish colonialism, providing yet another ambiguous, two-faced image of the pauper.

Still, assigning a place to the poor proves a difficult topic also on the left side of the spectrum, as can be seen from their ambivalent status in the social philosophy of Karl Marx. The mob, often referred to as the *Lumpenproletariat*, does not fit inside his theory, which is based on the neat division of classes, as the mob does not really constitute a class, being rather similar to a social sediment; resistant towards employment and proletarianization, but susceptible to politically suspicious alliances. Marx invokes the derogatory image when looking at the French *Lumpenproletariat*, this jumble of "vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley-slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*,

pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquereaus*, brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars-in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème*" (Marx 1963, 75). Lacking the discipline that workers learn in factories, *Lumpen* are never ready for revolution. But this is not the only fragment where author of the *Communist Manifesto* talks about rabble-like communities. When considering the Paris Commune, the processes of wood gleaners, the horrors of primitive accumulation, or non-European, pre-state societies based on shared ownership, Marx adopts a more favourable attitude towards mobs.

Łukasz Moll, in his essay *Gleaning on the shores of politics. Commoning as the new philosophy of praxis*, refers to this ambiguity in Marx's thought, spanning between negative (*Lumpen*) and positive theories of the rabble. Both in his earliest and late writings, Marx revaluates different forms of the praxis of the poor – gleaners of dead wood or members of stateless societies appear not so much as remnants of the bygone social life-worlds, but rather as active forces of resistance against regimes of closures, private property and capital accumulation. Bringing together the *glaneuses* from Agnes Varda's movies, urban *cartoneros*, Walter Benjamin's *chiffoniers*, clandestine diggers and recyclers of leftovers from industrial plants, Moll presents gleaning as a powerful set of practices based on commoning, reproductive labor and resistance.

This kind of "weak resistance" of the subordinated classes (to use the formulation of James C. Scott) is at the center of the text by Łukasz Zaremba, which is devoted to the anti-slavery revolts that flared up on the ships and plantations throughout the eighteen century. Zaremba, after Vincent Brown and his *Tacky's Revolt*, comprehensively deconstructs that vision of the history which focuses on the spectacular revolutions, like the one in Haiti. The goal is not just to critique the dominant historiography but also to try to reclaim the history of thousands of smaller rebellions, which raged in a permanent battle of black slaves against violence and exploitation. The theme of black slavery returns in the text of Agnieszka Więckiewicz, which compares the imagery of colonized Africans with that of European workers at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Germany. Analyzing the works of Hannah Höch and illustrations from the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, the author employs the category of "counter-imagination", aimed at a reversal of ideological similes. She reminds us that social change is possible only when we start to see things differently. This simple observation keeps on resonating. Images of police brutality and the mutilated bodies of its black victims which spread across the world after the

killing of George Floyd have sparked massive protest movements and reopened the much needed debate about today's more or less hidden forms of racism. Race based exclusions differ in their meaning and history from those based on class inequality. Still, they often prove to share mechanisms and coordinates.

The texts presented here, largely oriented towards historical analyses, seem to indicate that the notion of the rabble belongs to bygone political eras. The disappearance of the mob might be related to a certain general shift in political discourses, perhaps mitigated to overtly trace the lines of exclusion, or rather excelling in hedging them in such way as to make them look inclusive. In an interview from 1972, Foucault talks about the young "new plebeians" who, in the banlieues of Paris, violently regain their political consciousness (Foucault 1994, 303). Over the course of decades, the anger and frustration traditionally ascribed to looters and immigrants from the suburbs have encountered a growing understanding among the working people, who are undergoing similar processes of precarization. Refugees on the borders of Europe, like more than 10 million of Roma people within it, or prisoners in the USA, whose numbers have quadrupled since the 1980s, or the huge Muslim, Dalit, indigenous and immigrant populations in India facing the threat of being delegalized as a result of the attempted introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Act, all these rabbles of today make us wonder – the age of great confinement, is it really over?

The texts presented here, largely oriented towards historical analyses, seem to indicate that the notion of the rabble belongs to bygone political eras. The disappearance of the mob might be related to a certain general shift in political discourses, perhaps mitigated to overtly trace the lines of exclusion, or rather excelling in hedging them in such way as to make them look inclusive.

References

Brown, Vincent. 2020. *Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*. Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1994. *Dits et écrits II (1970-1975)*. Paris: Gallimard.

Foucault, Michel. 2004. *History of Madness*. Translated by J. Murphy and J. Khalfa. London and New York: Routledge.

Marx, Karl. 1963. *The Eighteen Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York: International Publishers.

Plato. 2004. *Republic*. Translated by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Polybius. 2010. *The Histories*. Translated by R. Waterfield. New York: Oxford Publishing Press.

Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Citation: Brzeziński, Jędrzej; Pospiszyl, Michał; Wójcik, Bartosz. 2020. "The Images of the Rabble". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 7–12.
DOI: 10.14746/prt2020.2.1

Autor: Brzeziński, Jędrzej; Pospiszyl, Michał i Wójcik, Bartosz
Tytuł: Obrazy motłochu

Images of the Rabble

BARBARA BRZEZICKA

The Rabbles, the Peoples and the Crowds: a Lexical Study

The rabble, considered as a possible threat to the rule of law or as a group unworthy of civil rights, is a concept present in many languages, yet every word conveys a slightly different meaning, The article is an attempt to present the conceptual plurality of the rabble, in a way inspired by Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables*. The term which may be considered as a starting point is Polish *motłoch*, which can be translated both as 'rabble' and as 'mob'. The content is organized according to some semantic patterns that can be observed in various languages and that can be used for further philosophical analysis. The article is neither an exhaustive presentation of the semantic variety related to the term *motłoch*, nor a philosophical analysis of social exclusion, but rather an attempt to show the plurality of meanings across languages and how it may affect and inspire philosophical inquiry.

Keywords: rabble, people, untranslatables, democracy, social exclusion

The rabble, understood as a possible threat to the rule of law or as a group unworthy of civil rights, is a concept present in most European languages, yet every word conveys a slightly different meaning, which may be called an untranslatable rest, as in Jacques Derrida's philosophy and most recently in Barbara Cassin's work. It is precisely the framework proposed by Cassin in her *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014) which will serve as reference for this study. Each term will be thus considered as an untranslatable and the representations of the rabble will be presented according to some patterns that can be observed among the analyzed terms. Of course, these constellations are just a part of the plurality of meanings and contexts and, just like with star constellations, the patterns proposed are by no means necessary connections. The study, like the *Intraduisibles* themselves, is not an *ergon*, a complete work, but rather an attempt to join the *energeiai*, energies of the languages (Cassin 2014), and follow their paths in order to discover the plurality of meanings. Each path leads to new constellations and could be continued in a "never-ending process" of untranslatability (Sigov 2014). Since the mother tongue of the author is Polish, it is the term *motłoch* that served as a starting point and could be used as the key untranslatable organizing the other words, much like French words in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* are used to present a variety of meanings to be found across different languages and philosophies.

The rabble is the people

Many of us view the rabble and civil society as opposed, and only consider the latter to be a valid subject of democracy. The rabble is not the people, or at least not its proper form. We owe the opposition between the rabble (*plêthos*) and the people (*dêmos*) to Xenophon (Cassin, Crépon and Moatti 2014, 760), or rather to the unknown author who wrote *The Constitution of the Athenians* in the late 5th century B.C (Mattingly 1997, 352). About a century later Aristotle uses the term *democratia* to describe a deviated form of the government "by the many." The proper form of this kind of government is called just *politeia*, without any special name. However, when describing the city, Aristotle (unlike Plato) sees it not as a necessarily hierarchical structure, but as a multitude "made up of many parts" and uses the word *plêthos* instead of *dêmos*. According to Cassin, one can say that in spite of calling it a "deviation," Aristotle subtly praises the rule of the "mass of citizens" in his *Politics* (Cassin, Crépon and Moatti 2014, 761).

A similar confusion applies to the Latin *populus* and *plebs*. First of all, *populus* could derive from the same Indo-European root as *plêthos*, but its original meaning was military – it designated the infantrymen. Therefore, *plebs* was initially used to describe the citizens "outside the legions" – also known as the *proletarii*. Gradually, the term started to designate "the common people" or "the poor" and became equivalent to *multitude*, *turba* or *vulgus*, often accompanied by adjectives like "uneducated" or "ignorant." So *plebs* becomes the equivalent of Greek *plêthos*, but sometimes the plebe is referred to as *populus*. As for the Greek vocabulary of the time, the rise of Roman Empire and the diminished role of the people prompted Dion Cassius to use the word *demos* for "crowd" or "rabble." Also the French word *peuple* and the English *people* could mean both "the body of citizens" and a "mass of outcasts" (Cassin, Crépon and Moatti 2014, 752, 762-763).

The rise of Roman Empire and the diminished role of the people prompted Dion Cassius to use the word *demos* for "crowd" or "rabble." Also the French word *peuple* and the English *people* could mean both "the body of citizens" and a "mass of outcasts".

Looking at this ancient vocabulary, one can easily observe that none of the words described above are terms in the strict sense. All of them refer to more or less the same designate. What changes is the political vision, not the social reality. All of the terms can be used to include or exclude from power, depending on the author's personal viewpoint or the dominant ideology. The rabble is the people as long as the author values democracy, and the people becomes the rabble when it is seen as a threat to those in power. The same dynamics can be observed even today. No matter how noble the term applied to describe the subject of democracy, it can always be easily used to deride the people in question. A blatant example is provided by today's Poland. The right-wing government started using the Schmittian term *suweren* (sovereign) to describe the people in its propaganda, thus emphasizing its own popular legitimacy. This is probably the most dignified and majestic way of speaking about the citizens in the Polish language, but it was nevertheless ridiculed by the opposition and, due to ironic usage, now very often appears as a synonym of "uneducated masses." In arguably the most important opposition newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, we can read that "the sovereign keeps away from books" (Smoleński 2019), that it is unlawful (Kuczok 2019) and that the protagonists of the book *Prymityw* (The Primitive), that is, hooligans, eager to fight and with questionable morals, are precisely *suwereni* (sovereigns) (Nogaś and Kołodziejczyk 2019). These are just three examples that appear in texts published only in September and October 2019. An even more pejorative view can be found in the comments sections. When it comes to depreciating the rabble, language can evolve in no time.

Pöbel and the "Luxury-Rabble"

One can see the same movement in the etymology of the German word *Pöbel*, which comes from the Latin *populus*, via the Old French *pueble*, *poblo* (Dudenredaktion 2019), but today is one of the equivalents of the 'rabble'. For example, the term appears in Hegel's philosophy of right as a consequence of income inequality within society:

"When the standard of living of a large mass of people falls below a certain subsistence level – a level regulated automatically as the one necessary for a member of the society – and when there is a consequent loss of the sense of right and wrong, of honesty and the self-respect which makes a man insist on maintaining himself by his own work and effort, the result is the creation of a rabble of paupers. At the same time this brings with it, at the other end of the social scale, conditions which greatly facilitate the concentration of disproportionate wealth in a few hands." (Hegel 2008, 221)

Stephen Houlgate translates *Pöbel* as "rabble of paupers," which stresses the economic aspect of the phenomenon. It is probably also worth mentioning that some authors quote this paragraph without the last sentence, as if the creation of the rabble did not have its counterpart in the excessive wealth of the most fortunate (Luther 2009, 351; Airaksinen 1985, 45).

That the rabble and the elites are two symptoms of the same phenomenon is one of the main hypotheses presented by Frank Ruda in his *Hegel's Rabble*. Apart from studying the above-mentioned paragraphs of the *Philosophy of Right*, Ruda turns to Hegel's lectures from 1821/1822, where we can read "Es gibt auch reichen Pöbel [There is also the rich rabble]" (Hegel 2005, 222). Just like the poor rabble, the rich or luxury-rabble, as Ruda later calls the wealthy elite, is excluded from a society based on estates and collective labor (Ruda 2011, 12-13). But unlike the poor rabble, which is a consequence of a structural lack in the society itself, the rich rabble starts with a subjective attitude and a decision to gamble in order to join the "happy few" that can benefit from wealth without the mediation of labor (Ruda 2011, 36, 40).

Just like Hegel, Arendt sees the mob as a "by-product of capitalist production," which creates both "superfluous wealth" and the "human debris eliminated permanently from producing society".

The connection between the rabble at one side of the social spectrum and the rich elite at the other side can be found in Hannah's Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism. The "*déclassés* of all classes" are called the 'mob' or 'masses' in the *Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt 1962, 10). Just like Hegel, Arendt sees the mob as a "by-product of capitalist production," which creates both "superfluous wealth" and the "human debris (…) eliminated permanently from producing society" (Arendt

1962, 150). However, unlike Hegel, for whom the two rabbles were just particularities excluded from the universal (Ruda 2011, 43-44), Arendt claims that there can be an alliance between the mob and capital. The "superfluous men" were used by "superfluous wealth" in order to establish imperialism, creating "superfluous goods" and dividing "mankind into master races and slave races." According to Arendt, "completely unprincipled power politics could not be played until a mass of people was available who were free of all principles and so large numerically that they surpassed the ability of state and society to take care of them" (Arendt 1962, 147, 151-152, 157). The two by-products of capitalist society can therefore become dangerous, because the rabble is prone to being manipulated and exploited by the elites.

More recently, the same observation can be found in Björn's Vedder's *Reicher Pöbel*. The author claims that the poor and the rich rabble (also called *die Superreiche*) acting together want to put an end to the "middle of society," which is his interpretation of the political success of today's populists (Vedder 2018, 18). The "middle" has also been fetishized by Polish liberals, whose main goal in the 1990s was to create a strong middle class in Poland. According to Tomasz Szkudlarek (2016) this goal has been accomplished and can be considered a success by the liberal elite. However, the experience of the Polish economic transformation has also produced the two "by-products" of capitalism.

From 'rabble' to *Meute*: between potency and act

The alliance between the capitalist elite, which in times of financial markets has even more in common with gamblers than in Hegel's times, highlights another aspect of the rabble. It is often considered a passive agent, although violence is always *in potentia*, in Aristotelean terms. Different words in different languages vary from a description of a social 'class without class' or simply an 'underclass' to a denomination of an angry crowd. When thinking about the Polish *motłoch* or English 'mob' we picture a street or another public space full of people *in actu*. *Plebs*, 'rabble' or the French *populace* are not that far from *petit people* – they are descriptive terms for the lower strata of the popular class.

In English, 'rabble' is usually used to describe a certain social status, so the violence is not *in actu*, Moreover, when looking at phraseology we can see the passive character of the rabble. First of all, there are expressions such as "rabble rousing" and "rabble rousers," which create an image of the rabble as being susceptible to manipulation and agitation

by populist leaders. Similar passivity can be found in Arendt, where the mob is not only prone to being (mis)led, but will actively "shout for the 'strong man' the 'great leader' (Arendt 1962, 107). Another English expression is only used in academic discourse, yet conveys the same passivity. "Rabble management" was first used by John Irwin in *The Jail*. According to this theory, the "incarceration of rabble in local jails has more to do with the threat that their presence and behavior pose to moral sensibilities than it does to public safety" (Fitzpatrick, Myrstol 2011, 273). So the penitentiary system in United States would endeavor to relocate the rabble from "respectable neighborhoods," where they are unwelcome and disturb the aesthetic taste of middle and upper class residents. In fact, the problem of homelessness is often presented not as a problem of the persons with nowhere to live, but as a nuisance in the urban landscape – an element disturbing "respectable citizens," who have to look at the rabble instead of enjoying the view. In Poland, one of the Cracow city councilors, Łukasz Wantuch, criticized volunteers who were distributing soup to the homeless in a park surrounding the old town, because "it should be a beautiful place" (Figurski, Grzesiczak 2017).

The problem of homelessness is often presented not as a problem of the persons with nowhere to live, but as a nuisance in the urban landscape – an element disturbing "respectable citizens," who have to look at the rabble instead of enjoying the view.

In romance languages many words for rabble are just augmentatives or diminutives of *peuple*, *povo* or *gente* – words referring to people in general or to the non-elites. In French there is *populace*, which Larousse defines as "popular strata considered with contempt" (Larousse 2019). In Portuguese there is a number of augmentatives, such as *povão*, meaning "a large quantity of persons" or in Brazil "the lowest social class," *populacho* and *populaça* which can also mean both 'crowd' and 'rabble', and *povaréu* or *povoleu* – depreciative terms for the underclass (Priberam 2019). The augmentatives are however less interesting than the diminutive *povinho*. Unlike the augmentatives, the term is not used to describe active crowds, but it is very present in Portuguese culture thanks to a caricature created in 1875 by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro: the famous *Zé Povinho*. Zé is a short form of the popular name José and the caricature depicts a bearded fat man representing the Portuguese popular classes, who soon became also a symbol of national identity. The motive was very present during and after the Carnation Revolution, when many images of *Zé Povinho* were published in Portuguese newspapers and then depicted in a short documentary by Lauro António (Cinept 2019). Up to this day many men will wear costumes representing *Zé Povinho*, for example to celebrate the anniversaries of the Carnation Revolution (Jornal de Nóticias 2018).

Perhaps the most active "crowd words" are those referring to the animal kingdom. One of them is German Meute in Elias Canetti's *Masse*

und Macht. The term is commonly used to describe a pack of wolves or dogs. For Canetti, a pack is an "older and more limited form of a crowd [*Masse*]" and the "most natural and authentic [*echteste*] pack" is the one that hunts. It is necessarily active, since there always has to be a direction [*Gerichtetheit*]. Moreover, even the etymology justifies the use of *Meute* in the sense of an active, primitive group of human beings: it comes from Latin *movita*, meaning movement (Canetti 2001, 63-64). The same origin can be found in French *émeute*, which used to mean "being moved emotionally" but is now used as an equivalent for riots. As for the English equivalent of *Meute*, the 'pack', the same form appears in German, but without the animal connotation. In fact, it can be translated precisely as 'rabble'. The word gained much media attention in 2015, when the SPD party leader called extreme right protesters "Pack und Mob" who should be locked up (Focus 2015). The term *Pack* was immediately "owned" by the rally that welcomed Angela Merkel in Heidenau. The placards with the slogan "Wir sind das Pack" could be seen next to "Wir sind das Volk" ones (Die Welt 2015).

Whether *in potentia* or *in actu*, violence is a necessary part of the definition, as it is the only means of expression of the rabble. It is not represented in the Parliament, not to mention the media. Unlike the financial or intellectual elite, the rabble cannot express themselves through any published material. That is why for Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt the French term *jacquerie* is a great example "of self-organized rebellion based on indignation" (Negri and Hardt 2009, 236). The violence of the *jacquerie* is usually presented as a purely destructive force, an expression of wrath without any constructive project. Being constructive is often perceived as a quality restricted to (preferably non-violent) groups sharing common interests, while the mob, for example in Arendt's writings, is a group lacking these interests and is therefore a negative phenomenon (Arendt 1962).

Foule: a contagious folly

When thinking about *motłoch* in its active form of a crowd, there is another important pattern which we have inherited from a 19th century French psychologist, Gustave Le Bon. In his *Psychologie des foules* we can find a description of a phenomenon that may be called the "dumbing down" of the members of a crowd as a consequence of their mere participation in it (Schwab 2011, 1). Although Le Bon's theses about "losing reason" have been refuted in the field of social psychology (Reicher, Haslam 2013), they are still present in the popular worldview. According

to Robert Nye, "collective psychology lent a certain conceptual bias to elite-mass theory that later theorists found particularly difficult to avoid" (Nye 1977, 12-13). It is certainly visible both in Arendt's and in Canetti's explanations of totalitarianism. In spite of the fact that *foule* is not etymologically related to *folie* (madness) and *fou* (crazy), it certainly bears resemblance to it, which may reinforce the intuition of a lack of reason produced by an aggregation of otherwise rational individuals.

Losing prestige through group-formation can be observed even in classical Greek literature. According to Justin Schwab, Penelope's suitors, despite their noble origin, are "reduced to the status of a mob by the fact of their aggregation" (Schwab 2011, 1). The word *ochlos* does not appear in Greek until Pindar, so Homer uses the word *homilos*, "together-group" to describe crowds and especially the suitors who, "in relation to Odysseus's family and estate, […] are a ravenous horde" (Schwab 2011, 40, 57). As for the term *ochlos*, it could be used both in the military context of armies and soldiers and in a more political sense, as "populace, mob" (De Vivo 2006, 278). In Allan Bloom's translation of Plato's *Republic* it is usually translated as 'mob' (Plato 1968, 397b, 494a, 565e, 607c) and in Władysław Witwicki's Polish translation it is rendered most frequently by *tłum*, which means simply 'crowd' (Plato 2001, 397b, 494a, 607c). The term *ochlocratie* was only coined later, in Middle French and then appeared as *oclocrazia* in modern Italian and *ochlocracy* in contemporary English (De Vivo 2006, 279).

In Latin, the crowd can be referred to as *vulgus*, a term having a class connotation, or as a more neutral *turba*. The latter word is associated with disorder, turmoil and therefore potential danger. According to Alexandra Sofroniew, in Rome "a large group or crowd of men was viewed as such an unpredictable and potentially hostile force that the Roman army was forbidden from marching into the city." In Cicero, we can find both terms used one after another in order indicate that "there were crowds of both high-class and low-class people." Thus, on one hand, the ideas of rabble and crowd are two different ideas, but on the other hand, any *turba*, or even "purely numerical" *multitudo* can become a mob threatening those in power, and "for the Roman elite […] the crowd was never orderly or passive" and was very often considered dangerous (Sofroniew 2006, 30-31). In other authors, both *turba* and *multitude* can become synonyms of *plebs* (Connolly 2006, 85), so one can say that the act of congregating is in itself becoming-rabble.

An important metaphor in Le Bon's writings is that of contagion. This "hypnotic" phenomenon makes any act or feeling spread through the crowd, making its participants ready to sacrifice their individual

interest in the name of the collective (Le Bon 1895, 18). Again, the contagious character of a crowd can be traced back to ancient Greece and the Plato's *Republic*:

> 'When', I said, 'many gathered together sit down in assemblies courts, theaters, army camps, or any other common meeting of a multitude [*plethos*], and, with a great deal of uproar, blame some of the things said or done, and praise others, both in excess, shouting and clapping; and besides, the rocks and the very place surrounding them echo and redouble the uproar of blame and praise. Now in such circumstances, as the saying goes, what do you suppose is the state of the young man's heart? Or what kind of private education will hold out for him and not be swept away by such blame and praise and go, borne by the flood, wherever it tends so that he'll say the same things are noble and base as they do, practice what they practice, and be such as they are?'.(Plato 1969, 492b-c)

Unlike determined social groups, such as classes, the mob can only act on the basis of "here and now." It is capable of erasing any prior education or attitude, but at the same time its interests, goals and any description are only valid in the particular moment and cannot be maintained beyond the actual gathering.

Unlike determined social groups, such as classes, the mob can only act on the basis of "here and now." It is capable of erasing any prior education or attitude, but at the same time its interests, goals and any description are only valid in the particular moment and cannot be maintained beyond the actual gathering.

On a political level, the expression of this contagion can be found in Arendt's vision of imperialism which tries to "unify the people on the basis of the mob." Mass society appears when it becomes atomized, composed of lonely individuals – precisely the characteristics that appear in both Hegel's and her own definition of *Pöbel* or the mob. Without referring to Le Bon explicitly, she writes that the psychology of the mob is "fairly well known" (Arendt 1962, 152, 316-317, 327). This transposition of crowd psychology onto a political level can be found in many analyses, as well as in the notion of "populism" which exists in many languages and expresses the same fear of unifying the people on the basis of the mob.[1]

Erev rav: the outside of the people

The violence of the rabble is perceived as non-constructive, because the rabble itself lacks the identity[2] that could be a starting point for a poli-

1 The problem is thoroughly analyzed by Enrnesto Laclau in his *On Populist Reason*.

2 Here I am using the term "identity" in a contemporary sense, as a psychological identification with a social group (Merriam-Webster 2020; Descombes

tical project. As in Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, the rabble is a mere aggregate of particular persons, a perfectly contingent and temporary mass of individuals whose only common denominator is being excluded from the estates. Belonging to an estate is what gives a person "substantial being" and makes them "something" (*etwas*) (Ruda 2011, 13). *Pöbel* (whether poor or rich) is defined only by negation, as an outside of the society. The same image can be found in the Hebrew *erev rav*, a biblical expression usually translated as "mixed multitude." In *Exodus* we can read: "A mixed multitude also went up with them [Israelites], along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock." (*Exodus* 12:38). One English translation, as well as the Polish ones, speak of "ethnically diverse crowd," *różnoplemienny lud* (people of different tribes) or *wieloplemienny tłum* (crowd of many tribes). David Lemler translates this literally into French as *mélange multiplié* (multiplied mixture) or *beaucoup de mélange* (a lot of mixture), but then gives equivalents of *populace* (rabble) and *masse non identifiée* (unidentified mass). In the Bible it denominates the people about whom we only know that they accompanied the Israelites, staying "at the margin" of their camp (Tamari 2014, 117).

Its liminary character can be compared to Hegel's *Pöbel* and to Rancières *part sans part*, as interpreted by Zachary Tavlin: "They have no firm place in society, they are formally excluded, though they subsist necessarily on the boundary between the inside and outside of the system" (Tavlin 2018, 13). In the late Midrashes, it is used retroactively to describe the Sin of the Calf: it was the *erev rav*, the strangers, who led the people of Israel to commit the idolatry (which the "chosen people" would not have committed otherwise). In the Middle Ages, especially in the Zohar, the activity of erev rav was extended to almost all human history, including Paradise (*erev rav* was in the snake's poison that infected Eve). The concept persisted among Jewish diaspora and according to Paweł Maciejko, "the dichotomy between the true Israel and the mixed multitude constituted the major conceptual axis of the theological controversies that tore apart eighteenth-century Judaism" (Maciejko 2011, 4-6). More recently the term has started to be used in explicitly racist discourse by religious Zionists (Tamari 2014, 117-118). In the imaginary of erev rav it is the metaphor of infiltration which gives the term its political, xenophobic dimension. It is a dangerous element coming from the outside, which is integrated in the society, but at the same time stays separate and will forever remain a foreign element: it is

2013, 20), which I understand as a common name and usually a set of characteristics.

sometimes called "the enemy within." Being *erev rav* is perceived as hereditary and it can be recognized by some distinctive features, which makes both the nation of Israel and the *erev rav* quasi-biological determinations (Tamari, 119-125). This is of course not new, since the differences between peoples have always been perceived not only in political terms, but also as a "natural reality" – *ethnos* and especially *genos* being perceived in terms of geography and extended family (Cassin, Crépon and Moatti 2014, 752, 758).

Another metaphor used in the context of *erev rav* is that of dirt that needs to be cleaned (Tamari 2014, 119-129). This discourse is obviously racist, especially in the Foucauldian sense of the other race that is "not the race that came from elsewhere or that was, for a time, triumphant and dominant, but that it is a race that is permanently, ceaselessly infiltrating the social body, or which is, rather, constantly being re-created in and by the social fabric" (Foucault 2003, 61), just like rabble is re-created in society. The same imaginary can be found in the English terms *scum* or *vermin* used against Polish immigrants (Rettman 2016). "Contorred, insectlike individuals who have fallen from grace and must be expunged" can also be found in Chinese propaganda posters, which according to Haun Saussy depict human characters in three possible ways: as "exalted individuality (the status of leaders), exalted generality (the personifications), and the debased individuality (the criminals)" (Saussy 2006, 262). Outcasts are often seen as potential criminals. For example the Dutch term *crapuul* in an article about the 19th century socialist Jacob Kats, has been translated as 'rabble' into English and as *canailles* (scoundrels) into French (Bussel and Van Oostveldt 2012). The last term refers explicitly to minor or potential criminals and is not far from *racaille*, an even more derogatory term notoriously used by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2005 to describe the protesters from the popular districts (Pulham 2005).

Slavoj Žižek sees today's rabble in "illegal immigrants, slum-dwellers, refugees etc.," since they are "denied even the right to be exploited through work" (Žižek 2012, 440). The category of immigrants shares the undetermined character of the rabble, since it applies to the liminary "part of no part" of the society and it denominates a "crowd of many tribes" that do not share any positive descriptor. At the same time, in spite of the definition, being an immigrant is considered to be hereditary, and just like *erev rav*, immigrants remain separated within the society. That is why we use the expression "second-generation immigrant" which is used to describe persons who are in no sense migrants, since at no point in their lifetime have they migrated to another country. In the

Polish context, since other "tribes" remain outside, the rabble understood as the strangers within can appear in the form of foreign agents (especially Jewish or German), or as descendants of peasants, who are seen as incompetent in terms of democracy, as in a recent interview with famous Polish actor Jerzy Stuhr, who called the ruling party supporters "descendants of feudal peasants" (Lis and Stuhr 2019). The rural origin of the rabble can also be observed in the above-described image of *Zé Povinho*.

Whether it is rural or foreign origin that makes a person an outsider and therefore a potential member of the rabble, an important trait is ignorance of the rules of what Italians call *civiltà*. The word means both "civilization" and "civility": neutral citizenship and so-called "good manners" (Pons 2014, 139-140). A newcomer to the city-state is someone who does not know its rules and this shows in their behavior and mannerisms. In Polish there is an expression describing someone of rural origin which can be translated as "there is hay sticking out of his shoes" and the adjective "vulgar," as well as its equivalents in many languages, is usually used to describe inappropriate and uncivil behavior. Being vulgar is often depicted as an act of voluntarily excluding oneself from being taken seriously in the public debate. Civility is considered a crucial feature of a good politician and often receives more media attention than actual political decisions, even as important as military interventions (Feinberg, Shirazi and Johnson 2018). Civility is supposed to be a common denominator of the elites and the common citizens, but it excludes the uncivil and the vulgar – the rabble. So there is an important difference between the terms "civil society" and "the people" (and their equivalents in other languages). Although both can refer to the totality of a society and include all its members, they can also exclude. And while "the people" tends to exclude the elites, but can include the rabble, "civil society" tends to exclude the rabble and include the elites. In fact, the latter can be even considered to have more *civiltà* than other members of society. Of course, any term can be used so as to exclude the rabble and the meanings change depending on policy and historical factors (Cassin, Crépon and Moatti 2014, 762-763; Agamben 2000, 34-35).

So there is an important difference between the terms "civil society" and "the people" (and their equivalents in other languages). Although both can refer to the totality of a society and include all its members, they can also exclude. And while "the people" tends to exclude the elites, but can include the rabble, "civil society" tends to exclude the rabble and include the elites.

Undetermined plurality

The vision of the rabble as a highly atomized group of individuals is one of two at first sight contradictory images which appear throughout different theories. Hannah Arendt, especially in the third part of her *Origins of Totalitarianism*, writes repeatedly that the mob and the masses

lack any common interest, or "that specific class articulateness which is expressed in determined, limited, and obtainable goals" (Arendt 1962, 311). We can find the same perspective in Hegel, for whom *vulgus* is a mere "aggregate of private persons" (Hegel 2008, 243) and the same applies both to the poor and the rich rabble (Ruda 2011, 39). The same image, but referring to a wider group called the "masses" can be found in Werner Sombart, for whom *Masse* is "the unrelated, amorphous agglomeration of population in the modern metropolises, which lacking all internal articulation and abandoned by the spirit, that is, by God, form an inert throng of pure units" (Sombart 1924, 99). So on one hand we have a distributive set of individuals about whom we know nothing, except perhaps for the fact that they come "from many different tribes" (but not ours).

On the other hand, there are images of the crowds acting as an irrational beast, which devours the reason of its members and is a threat to the "middle of society" (Reich 2018, 18). There is a common identity to this image even if the authors deny it: the crowds are homogenous and therefore dangerous, both physically and politically, since it is on the basis of the masses that totalitarianisms are formed. In this vision the lack of identity is attributed mostly to the members of the mob: they lose their individuality and identity to participate in the temporary movement of a crowd.

Not sharing a common identity, as well as losing one's own particular identity in a homogenous crowd is generally considered undesirable, if not dangerous. One of the answers can be found in the concept of "diversity." The term's particular career in American discourse has been traced by Jeff Chang in his book *We Gon' Be Alright*. It entered corporations and colleges, who would even appoint "chief diversity officers" and use diversity as a criterion in official rankings. It started to be treated as an end in itself and became "good business," especially since it removed equity or historical justice from the debate. Chang writes that "diversity allows whites to remove themselves while requiring the Other to continue performing for them" and that it led to new policies. For example, affirmative action has been replaced by a system which privileged the top ten per cent of every high school, which only worked when there was a significant resegregation on the school level. As a result, "most universities never returned to the level of diversity or equity they had attained before affirmative action programs were gutted" (Chang 2016, 17, 28-29).

In fact, the idea behind 'diversity' can be seen as the opposite of the potential of the rabble. Whether *erev rav*, *Pöbel* or *ochlos*, every rabble

is more or less undetermined. Being depicted mainly in negative terms, as an outside of the social order, the different rabbles usually lack positive characteristics, whereas the policies of diversity always rely on a closed catalogue of determined identities. The undetermined plurality of the rabble escapes diversity and that is why it can be seen as a revolutionary project, according to Negri's and Hardt definition, which is based on their interpretation of radical feminism, which "seeks an abolition of identity itself." The politics of "disidentification" bears a revolutionary potential illustrated by the term "queer" – an identity of non-identity. In this sense, the rabble is queer, since it disidentifies its members and escapes any stable group identification. The rabble is also not far from the "multitude of the poor" considered by the same authors a revolutionary agent (Negri and Hardt 2009, 3-40, 334-335). In an older text, Negri writes explicitly that the multitude needs to be considered not under a unifying concept (e.g. that of the people), which forms some transcendental identity, but on the plane of immanence, as "unrepresentable singularities" (Negri 2002). Here, identity can be understood in a broader sense surpassing the social group context mentioned above. The term "queer" can be understood as a refusal to answer the basic question "Who am I?" (Descombes 2013, 17) at all, since any possible answer is always determined by existing social order. Participating and "losing oneself" in the mob can be understood as going further and refusing to even ask the question, since any attempt to name a crowd or its participants is in itself transcendental.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the rabble and the people, as well as the rabble and the mob (or the crowd), are treated as one in many languages and this can be seen as a revolutionary potential of the rabble. The crowd is always in movement, in becoming. Both the crowd itself and its members, as part of the crowd, can only have an identity of here and now. It can be considered the "people-as-event" in Rosanvallon's terms (Jonsson 2006, 55-56). The rabble is considered dangerous by the conservative elite when it starts to "invade" their space. Ortega y Gasset and other elitists had nothing against the unprivileged as long as they could reduce them to *res extensae* (Resina 2006, 227) – docile and occupying their position (out of sight).

The attempts to transform revolutionary crowds, such as American *Occupy*, Spanish *Indignados* or Polish *Czarny Protest*, into traditional

political movements based on common identities are very often disappointing. Like after the Tennis Court Oath, "once the revolutionary event passes, the two bodies separate. The people as a principle of sovereignty no longer finds any correspondence in reality; and the people as a sociological reality recedes back into invisibility, into numbers." And then the reaction is to separate the rabble and the people: the elites, like Adolphe Thiers after the revolution of 1848, will want to exclude the masses (*la multitude*) of vagabonds and convince the public that they are something different from the people (Jonsson 2006, 56, 71). In such a discourse, the legitimate people becomes an abstract term referring to the invisible and obedient "civil society" and excluding the dangerous rabble who could start another uprising. So the mob is an event, a *jacquerie*, a rebellion which is not organized by a trade union or other pre-existing social movement. It is the social movement itself, "self-organizedm," happening spontaneously, not as a result of a project. And the rabble, an undetermined plurality without any stable identity apart of the fact of being excluded from the dominant mainstream "middle" of the society, is the basis of every revolutionary crowd. Perhaps it is the fact of distinguishing the rabble and the people is that leads to the constant alienation of those who were supposed to represent the latter.

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 2000. *Means without End. Notes on Politics*. Translated by Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.

Airaksinen, Timo. 1985. "Hegel on Poverty and Violence." In *Economic Justice: Private Rights and Public Responsibilities*. Edited by Kenneth Kipnis and Diana T. Meyers. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Arendt, Hannah. 1962. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland/New York: Meridian Books.

Canetti, Elias. 2001. *Masse und Macht*. Wesentliche Zusammenhänge zum Verständnis unseres Zeitalters. Berlin: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.

Cassin, Barbara, Crépon, Marc, Moatti Claudia 2014. "People/Race/Nation." In *Dictionary of Untranslatables. A Philosophical Lexicon*. Edited by Barbara Cassin. Translation edited by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Cassin, Barbara. 2014. "Énergie des intraduisibles – La traduction comme paradigme pour des sciences humaines." In *Philosopher en langues. Les intraduisibles en traduction*. Edited by Barbara Cassin. Paris : Éditions Rue d'Ulm.

Chang, Jeff. 2016. *We Gon' Be Alright*. New York: Picador.

Cinept. 2019. "O Zé-Povinho na Revolução (1978)." Cinema português. http://www.cinept.ubi.pt/pt/filme/3336/O+Z%C3%A9-Povinho-+na+Revolu%C3%A7%C3%A3o.

Connolly, Joy. 2006. "Crowd Politics: The Myth of the 'Populus Romanus'." In Crowds. Edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

De Vivo, Sebastian. 2006. "'Ochlos': Ancient Greek." In *Crowds*. Edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Descombes, Vincent. 2013. *Rozterki Tożsamości*.Translated by Michał Krzykawski. Warszawa: Kurhaus.

Die Welt. 2015. "'Wir sind das Pack' – Merkel wird ausgebuht". *Die Welt*, 26 August. https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article145659437/Wir-sind-das-Pack-Merkel-wird-ausgebuht.html.

Dudenredaktion (o. J.). 2019. "Pöbel." https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Poebel.

"Exodus." 2019. *New American Standard Bible*. https://www.bible.com/bible/100/EXO.12.38.NASB.

Feinberg, Ashley, Shirazi, Nima and Johnson, Adam. 2018. "The Civility Fetish." *Citations Needed*. Episode 40. https://citationsneeded.libsyn.com/episode-40-the-civility-fetish#.

Figurski, Paweł and Grzesiczak, Łukasz. 2017. *Radny Wantuch przeciw pomaganiu bezdomnym na Plantach*. "Chciałbym, by były piękne." Gazeta Wyborcza. 20 April. https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,21664885,radny-wantuch-przeciw-pomaganiu-bezdomnym-na-plantach-chcialbym.html.

Fitzpatrick, Kevin and Myrstol, Brad. 2011. "The Jailing of America's Homeless: Evaluating the Rabble Management Thesis." *Crime & Deliquency* 57(2).

Focus. 2015. "Gabriel attackiert Fremdenhasser: 'Pack, das eingesperrt werden muss" FOCUS online, 24 August. https://www.focus.de/politik/videos/spd-chef-spricht-klartext-gabriel-attackiert-rechte-fluechtlingshetzer-pack-und-mob-das-eingesperrt-werden-muss_id_4899288.html.

Foucault, Michel. 2003. "Society Must Be Defended". *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*. Translated by David Macey. New York: Picador.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 2005. *Die Philosophie des Recht*. Vorlesungen von 1821/22. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

——— 2008. *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by Thomas Malcolm Knox. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Jonsson, Stefan. 2006. "The Invention of the Masses: The Crowd in French Culture from the Revolution to the Commune." In *Crowds*. Edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Jornal de Nóticias. 2018. "O Zé Povinho saiu à rua com cravos em Lisboa e no Porto." *Jornal de Nóticias*. 25 April. https://www.jn.pt/nacionalgalerias/o-ze-povinho-e-outros-milhares-sairam-a-rua-com-cravos-em-lisboa-9285466.html.

Kuczok, Wojciech. 2019. "Oto nadchodzi polski październik." *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 29 September. http://wyborcza.pl/7,154903,25249829,wojciech-kuczok-oto-nadchodzi-polski-pazdzierznik.html.

Laclau, Ernesto. 2005. *On Populist Reason*. London/New York: Verso.

Larousse. 2019. "Populace." In *Dictionnaire de la langue française*. https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/populace/62609?q=populace#61905.

Le Bon, Gustave. 1895. *Psychologie des foules*. Paris: Félix Alcan.

Lis, Tomasz and Stuhr, Jerzy. 2019. "Jerzy Stuhr: Moje największe sympatie budzi odradzająca się lewica." https://www.youtube.com/wat-

ch?v=rvK6dlJzV68.
Luther, Timothy C. 2009. *Hegel's Critique of Modernity: Reconciling Individual Freedom and the Community*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
Maciejko, Paweł. 2011. *The Mixed Multitude*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Mattingly, Harold B. 1997. "The date and purpose of the pseudo-Xenophon constitution of Athens." *Classical Quarterly* 47.
Merriam-Webster. 2020. "Identity." In *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity.
Negri, Antonio. 2002. "Pour une définition ontologique de la multitude." *Multitudes* 9(2). English translation by Arianna Bove : https://www.multitudes.net/Towards-an-Ontological-Definition/.
Negri, Antonio and Hardt, Michael. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Nogaś, Michał and Kołodziejczyk, Marcin. 2019. "Kim są bohaterowie Prymitywu?" *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 16 Spetember. http://wyborcza.pl/7,75517,25186895,bohaterowie-prymitywu-to-kto-kolodziejczyk-to-sa-suwereni.html.
Nye, Robert A. 1977. *The anti-democratic sources of elite theory: Pareto, Mosca, Michels*. Beverly Hills: Sage Press.
Plato. 1969. *The Republic*. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Harper Collins.
——— 2001. *Państwo*. Translated by Władysław Witwicki. Kęty: Antyk.
Priberam. 2019. *Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa*. https://dicionario.priberam.org/.
Pons, Alain. 2014. "Civiltà." In *Dictionary of Untranslatables. A Philosophical Lexicon*. Edited by Barbara Cassin. Translation edited by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Pulham, Sheila. 2005. "Inflammatory Language." *The Guardian*. 8 November. https://www.theguardian.com/news/blog/2005/nov/08/inflammatoryla.
Resina, Joan Ramon. 2006. "From Crowd Psychology to Racial Hygiene: The Medicalization of Reaction and the New Spain." In *Crowds*. Edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Rettman, Andrew. 2016. "Poles and Muslims insulted after Brexit vote." *EUobserver*. 27 June. https://euobserver.com/justice/134044.
Ruda, Frank. 2011. *Hegel's Rabble. An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. London / New York: Continuum.
Saussy, Haun. 2006. "Crowds, Number, and Mass in China." In *Crowds*.

Edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Schwab, Justin Jon. 2011. *The Birth of the Mob: Representations of Crowds in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature* [PhD Thesis]. Berkeley: University of California. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7hf7312f.

Sigov, Konstantin. 2014. "Ukrainien – Nous adressant à l'autre, devenons nous-même: le défi du Vocabulaire européen en Ukraine." Translated by Pierre Defontaines. In *Philosopher en langues. Les intraduisibles en traduction*. Edited by Barbara Cassin. Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm.

Smoleński, Paweł. 2019. "Narody, które się mordowały. Prestiżowy laur za Naszą wojnę dla Włodzimierza Borodzieja i Macieja Górnego." *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 7 October. http://wyborcza.pl/alehistoria/7,121681,25265887,narody-ktore-sie-mordowaly-prestizowy-laur-za-nasza-wojne.html.

Sofroniew, Alexandra Katherina T. 2006. "'Turba': Latin." In *Crowds*. Edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Sombart, Werner. 1924. *Der proletarische Sozialismus ('Marxismus'):* 2 Bde. Jena: G. Fischer.

Szkudlarek, Tomasz et al. 2016. "Podziały klasowe i demokracja" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmYHk-ay4Yw

Tamari, Assaf. "Erev rav (erev-rav)." Adapted into French by David Lemler. In *Philosopher en langues. Les intraduisibles en traduction*. Edited by Barbara Cassin. Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm.

Tavlin, Zachary. 2018. "The real of the rabble: Žižek and the historical truth of the Hegelo-Lacanian dialectic." *Contemporary Philosophy Review* 51.

Vedder, Björn. 2018. *Reicher Pöbel. Über die Monster des Kapitalismus.* Marburg: Büchner Verlag.

Žižek, Slavoj. 2012. *Less than Nothing. Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*. London/New York: Verso.

BARBARA BRZEZICKA – graduated in Romance Philology and Philosophy at the University of Gdańsk, where she also did her PhD thesis on translation of philosophical texts. She is an assistant professor at the Institute of Romance Philology (UG) and a member of the editorial board in *Czas Kultury.* Her research focuses on translation studies, 20th century French philosophy and cultural linguistics. Full academic profile: https://repozytorium.bg.ug.edu.pl/info.seam?id=UOG2099124aff1b4bef97c53ea313fc7d79&affil=&lang=en

Address:
Instytut Filologii Romańskiej
Uniwersytet Gdański
Wita Stwosza 51
80-312 Gdańsk
email: barbara.brzezicka@ug.edu.pl

Citation: Brzezicka, Barbara. 2020. "The Rabbles, the Peoples and the Crowds: a Lexical Study." *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 15–35.
DOI:10.14746/prt2020.2.2

Autor: Barbara Brzezicka

Tytuł: Językowe obrazy motłochów, ludów i tłumów w filozofii i poza nią

Abstrakt: Motłoch, rozumiany jako możliwe zagrożenie na praworządności lub też jako grupa, której nie należą się prawa obywatelskie, jest pojęciem obecnym w wielu językach. Jednak każde słowo niesie ze sobą inne znaczenie, które można nazwać nieprzekładalną resztą. Niniejszy artykuł stanowi próbę przedstawienia konceptualnej mnogości motłochu w sposób inspirowany leksykonem nieprzekładalników filozoficznych pod redakcją Barbary Cassin (*Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*). W treści wyróżnione zostały pewne schematy, które można zaobserwować w różnych językach i które mogą stanowić punkt wyjścia do dalszej analizy filozoficznej. Artykuł ten nie jest ani wyczerpującą prezentacją wielojęzycznej semantyki motłochu, ani filozoficzną analizą wykluczenia społecznego, a raczej próbą ukazania wielości znaczeń i tego, jak mogą one kształtować i inspirować filozoficzną refleksję.

Słowa kluczowe: motłoch, lud, nieprzekładalniki, demokracja, wykluczenie społeczne

ŁUKASZ MOLL

Gleaning on the Shores of Politics. Commoning as the New Philosophy of *Praxis*

The article joins the recent discussion, led by theorists of the commons, on the meaning of "commoning". It proposes to recognize as the main feature of the practice of commoning the capacity to reproduce the autonomy of plebeian life-worlds that could possibly lead to a post-capitalist future. The identification of commoning as the activity of marginal subjectivities is presented here with the example of gleaning. This traditional activity of the poor is re-examined in the article as an ambiguous practice that escapes the binaries of activity and passivity, positivity and negativity, production and reproduction. Gleaning, with its reproductive capacities, serves as a model for commoning, understood as the new philosophy of *praxis*, which is much needed in the times of ecological catastrophe and the broken connection between labour and care. The history of struggles around gleaning and the commons, and the figures of the poor female harvester (*glaneuse*) and urban ragpicker (*chiffonier*) are recalled in the article in order to recognize the much devaluated potential of commoning to interrupt the history of blind productivism and, together with reclaiming the commons, to also reclaim our future.

Keywords: commoning, gleaning, *praxis*, the commons, the rabble

The term "commoning", once strange and obscure, in recent years appeared in many notable writings on the commons (Baldauf et al. 2016; Bollier and Hilfreich 2015; Bollier 2016; Bresnihan and Byrne 2015; Choi and Pai 2017; Esteva 2014; Federici 2014; Gibson-Graham et al. 2018; Kalb and Mollona 2018; Ruivenkamp and Hilton 2017). We may say that it has become part of the common sense of the new social theory of the commons, which Ugo Mattei and Mark Mancall (2019) gave the label "communology". But it seems that its recent spread came at a cost. Seeing commoning "in modern urban skyscrapers as well as in remote rural villages destroyed by earthquakes in Nepal; in artistic communities and educational and research settings; and in the community forests of India and the many self-organized communities of cyberspace" (Bollier and Hilfreich 2015), may lead to the banalization and the loss of meaning of the notion.

Here I would like to re-establish the connection between commoning and the common people (or commoners). Following Peter Linebaugh, the proponent of the verb "commoning", I argue that it is the capacity to reproduce the autonomy of plebeian life-worlds that constitute the essential feature of the practice of commoning. In what follows I wish to examine its character by concentrating on one form of commoning, which I selected because it re-appears time and time again in the historic discourse on the commons. I have in mind the customary right to gleaning, or the collecting aftermath after the harvest. As demonstrated further, the right to glean was historically acknowledged as the traditional right of the poor, especially needy women and widows.

The right to glean was historically acknowledged as the traditional right of the poor, especially needy women and widows.

I would like to specify – with the example on gleaning – the status of commoning. Is it just the collective way of managing resources? Or could we find in commoning also the political dimension of constituting common bonds in a novel way? My approach aims to establish both the economic and political roles of commoning. I argue that in commoning it is possible to uncover a plebeian alternative, in order to constitute political communality from the margins of society. Grasping this alternative is possible only if we examine commoning not just as a way to defend, reproduce and govern the commons, but also as a political practice. The proposed examination therefore belongs to the realm of the philosophy of *praxis*, with the reservation that here the notion of *praxis* as such will also come under *praxis*, or "theoretical practice" (Althusser, Balibar 1970, 41-43). As a result, the subject behind this practice would no longer be proletarian, understood as the living source of economic value, a bearer of labour-power to sell, or a collective sub-

ject responsible for applying science to materialist history. The proletariat would be replaced by the commoner, whose common sense with regard to the ecology of the commons and their embodied, habitual knowledge on cooperation and commoning should lead to stopping history before it reaches its final conclusion in ecological catastrophe. The guardians of the commons and their ability to common (a verb) are instrumental for emancipating the dialectics of capitalist history from its fulfilment and for opening the different horizons of the future.

The revolt of verbs against nouns: commoning as the *praxis* of powerlessness

Many theorists of the commons proposed, in one way or another, to highlight the activity of commoners as a crucial feature of their discourses. The commons should not be regarded mainly as a resource for maintaining the already-established right to defend, or as an idea to pursue, but as a form of practice. In short, it is not *a thing* to hold or even to make, but work to do. But this work is peculiar. It is not subjugated to making things, as a mean to an end. It is rather work to endure, to reproduce itself, to open collective possibilities for others to join. Its only destiny is to care for the commoners – "to common" or "to communize".

There are two basic reasons behind these proposals to start thinking about the commons from a processual level. The first, nicely captured by Linebaugh and Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval respectively, is the danger of the reification of the commons in the form of an external resource or system for the reproduction of goods. The second, grasped most completely by John Holloway, is the tendency to see the commons as some sort of solution ready for simple implementation. In both cases, the practice of constituting and sustaining the commons is seen as subordinate and instrumental to higher and external purposes or principles. This risk may be avoided, according to the aforementioned authors, if the activity of constituting the commons is rethought and liberated from top-down constraints.

Linebaugh is clear in explaining that his introduction of the term "commoning" designated for him the need to grasp the autonomy of the plebeian classes and the whole life-world of bottom-up practices, which opposed the enclosures of the commons and formed a basis for seeking alternatives to capitalism:

> To speak of the commons as if it were a natural resource is misleading at best and dangerous at worst – the commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb than a noun, a substantive (Linebaugh 2008, 279).

Linebaugh frequently observed that one of the strategies of enclosing and destroying the commons consists in denying their existence or – at best – seeing them only as an external resource, which reproduces itself independently from human practice. The commons stood in contradiction to the property regime and that's why – leaving economic reasons beside – they had to be annihilated. Without acknowledging different modes of commoning, the commons tended to be reified and regarded as a no man's land, ready for appropriation. They are not easy to notice, because their character is often marginal, hidden, informal, local and habitual. As Linebaugh (2008, 44-45) specifies, there are four main principles of commoning: 1) it is embedded in the local ecology of the commons; 2) it is embedded in the labour process, and the right to commoning is gained through collective work, it inheres in a particular praxis of a field, an upland, a forest, a marsh and so on; 3) it is a collective activity; 4) it is independent from the state and the law, it was recorded in the customs and habits of the everyday life of ordinary people. Linebaugh underlines the reproductive capacities of commoning not only in the relation to the sustainable managing of resources, but also to maintaining collective subsistence and solidarity: "the allure of commoning arises from the mutualism of shared resources. Everything is used, nothing is wasted. Reciprocity, sense of self, willingness to argue, long memory, collective celebration, and mutual aid are traits of the commoner" (2008, 103).

Dardot and Laval are even more determined to escape the charge that commoning cannot expand to new areas. According to these authors, what prevails in Linebaugh's approach is treating the commons as some lost paradise, which can be only recreated. When we conceptualize the commons as a state of equilibrium, then commoners are the guardians of the past and commoning is a practice of the reproduction of the same. Dardot and Laval are interested in a more expansive and generative kind of activity – of producing and not only defending the commons. "Common" for them is also a verb, not a noun, but it is clearly related to an offensive form of politics:

> We must, therefore, recognize that the common as custom was always an activity that produced and confirmed the law, and that its conflictual character was

> not contingent but *constitutive*. Instead of trying to establish an erroneous parallel between the commons of yesteryear and the commons of today, based on the positive characteristics of their respective contents, we must rather fully recognize the antagonistic dimension of the commons in our present situation: *the common is never simply a matter of "managing" a "good" or a "resource," but is grounded in an activity that constructs the common in and through conflict*. This is why we prefer the word "common" as a verb rather than a noun, or, if it cannot be avoided, to make the noun denote a *sui generis* form of activity (Dardot and Laval 2019, 217).

Leaving aside the differences between the authors, their shared concern is to reject the critique that the potential of developing the commons is limited either by natural restraints on the part of the common resource, or by the burden of tradition, habits and customs. They both oppose the tendency of the reification of the commons – in their natural or legal form. The reification is challenged by the emphasis put on the *praxis* of commoning.

The second danger that leads to the closure of commoning comes not from the past, but from the future. It is the danger of *praxis* that is subordinated to realizing the anticipated goals. Here the power of commoning becomes restricted by the foreseeable state. In Holloway's opinion, historical projects of building communism could be interpreted as totalizing attempts to utilize and steer human practice in order to realize the course of history. The noun – communism – starts to smother verbs – different forms of communizings. That's why the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* postulates "the revolt of verbs against nouns" (Holloway 2014, 213). The kind of *praxis* that Holloway pursues has to be antagonistic to any closed conception of history. But his theoretical proposition is opposed not only to a dogmatic, static and linear vision of progress, but also to dialectical approach in which *praxis* itself is open to its modifications because of encountered contradictions. The activities under Holloway's consideration never fully exhaust themselves. They rather pause the dialectics instead of propelling or transforming it:

> It has to be a verb, doesn't it? A noun cannot possibly express adequately the sort of society we want. A social organizing that is self-determining cannot possibly be contained inside a noun. The notion of communism is grossly, nonsensically, dangerously self-contradictory. A noun suggests some form of fixity that would be incompatible with a collective self-creating. A noun excludes the active subject, whereas the whole point of the world we want is that the active social subject would be at the center. Ours is the revolt of verbs against

> nouns. It is the revolt of being-able-to against Power, of poder against Poder, pouvoir against Pouvoir, potere against Potere, machen (and können) against Macht. The moving of self-determining (of communizing) against alien determination can hardly be otherwise (Holloway 2014, 213).

Further on in the text he proposes replacing the noun "communism" with the verb "to communize" in order to make clear that he is interested in questioning every totalizing form of identity by liberating practices and indetermination:

> The noun is closely tied to the closure of identity, whereas a verb suggests non-identity, an overflowing of identity, a bursting-beyond, a moving of anti-identity, an anti-identifying that can be understood only as a constant moving against the identity within which it is (and we are) entrapped, a subverting. (…) Communizing is the moving against that which stands in the way of our social determination of our own lives (Holloway 2014, 214).

Of course, as Holloway admits in the conclusion, anti-identitarian practice could occur only in plural forms – not as a communizing, but as many communizings (Holloway 2014, 220). His thinking thus heads in the same direction as Linebaugh's emphasis on the necessity of seeing various forms of commoning, which are dependent on multiple ecologies of the commons and the pluralist habits to which plebeian classes are accustomed. The same conclusion was reached in the realm of feminist social reproduction theory, with its emphasis on the necessity of reorganization of reproductive work (Federici 2012, 147-148), or in the indigenous philosophies which promote biodiversity, sustainability and the access to knowledge and other means of reproduction (Shiva 2020). Relational and socially rooted forms of co-belonging are once again being valued as fruitful responses to the crisis of the reproduction of common life.

After this recapitulation of the motives behind the proposals to re-model the theory of the commons by beginning with practice, we see that what animates them is the double concern of the underestimation and overestimation of commoning. Underestimation refers to the risk of ignoring the practices of commoners as unimportant, marginal and passive – without the potential to expand and go beyond capitalism. Overestimation denotes the symmetric danger of celebrating the "building of communism" and privileging transformative labour that would bring to life the structures of its own enslavement. Commoning, as a verb that refuses to reach the state of fulfilment, that rather stops at the stage

of doing without "being done", appears to be the ambiguous *praxis/non-praxis* or the practice of powerlessness.

In what follows I would like to examine this interesting feature of commoning a little closer by turning to a traditional, even stereotypical example: the gleaning of leftovers, traditionally associated with the figure of the poor and needy female. As this conventional example shows, the nature of commoning is trapped in between the aporetic tension between activity and passivity, resistance and submission, productivity and reproducibility. I claim that the key to liberating commoning as the plebeian power (Linera 2014) of autonomy from capital, and as a basis for post-capitalist politics, lies in the re-conceptualizing of these dichotomies in a novel way.

The instinct of the poor: Karl Marx and the gleaners

It is justified to regard commoning in general and gleaning in particular as practices of powerlessness, because in history they were treated as the ancient right of the paupers. Both the marginal subjectivities and the communal resources which were customarily ascribed to the poor and the destitute are relegated to the outskirts of society. Commoning is traditionally located outside property relations, beyond the law and in opposition to the sphere of production – under the forms of possession, habit and reproductive *usus* (Agamben 2013). The role of commoners in turn is played down as an idle and unproductive part of society, maybe even the waste, "the part of no part" (Rancière 2010) or is associated with the subalterns without the right to speak or the ability to represent themselves, or to be represented by something else (Spivak 1988).

Together with Michał Pospiszyl (Moll, Pospiszyl 2019a; 2019b) we have proposed studying the margins of community as the sites of various manifestations of commoning, and to search in the disdained lower classes for the forgotten or erased figures of commoners. Our approach was driven by the desire to avoid a double risk, which is widely encountered in the history of the philosophy of the marginal subjects. This double risk is directly related to the already mentioned tension in treating commoning as *praxis*: the tension between positivity and negativity, activity and passivity, the identity of stable nouns and the non-identity of processual verbs. I claim that the case of gleaning is exemplary for grasping the kind of practice that resists the temptation to appropriate, and promotes the bonds of sharing and mutuality. In order to demonstrate how difficult it is to conceptualize the gleaners and other figures

of commoners, and to avoid the simplified binary of activity and passivity, it is worth recapitulating Karl Marx's attempts to delineate the meaning of the proletariat.

The first documented encounter of Marx with proletarians and proletarization (i.e. the loss of direct sources of subsistence by labourers and their transformation into the free labour-power) – is directly connected with the activity of gleaners (Linebaugh 2014, 43-64). Interestingly, this episode was recently recalled in the biographic motion picture *The Young Karl Marx*, directed by Raoul Peck: in the first part of the film, rural gatherers in a Westphalian forest are attacked by the police, who are positioned to protect the private property from commoners. The first texts he ever wrote for publication – in *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842 – Marx (1842, 224-263) ws devoted to the issue of the theft of wood and the new law reform which criminalized the poor, who were accustomed to collecting dead wood and using it as a source of heating or for minor construction works. The motive behind the reform was the landowners' greedy attempt to commodify dead and fallen wood. In order to do so it was necessary to take away from the commoners their permit to usufruct. Dead wood had to be treated in the same way as "living" wood, and its collection – as mere theft. Many years later, in one of his letters – from 1859 (Löwy 2005, 25) – Marx admitted that this case of delegalization of commoning practices helped him to realize his ignorance in economic matters (Foster 2000, 66). In trying to defend the poor's access to dead wood, Marx was already aware that analogous customary laws had been lost in relation to gathering wild berries and gleaning (Marx 1842, 234). His rhetorical strategy to protest against the enclosures of the commons in Westphalian forests was twofold – as analysed in detail by Dardot and Laval (2019, 219-247). It is worth mentioning here because it contains the already discussed tensions between the negative and positive character of gathering waste.

On the one hand, Marx regarded the poor in purely negative terms: for him the structural role of paupers in the society was the same as the relation between dead wood and the forest. Both paupers and dead wood are nothing more than waste, a remnant or a margin of the system. Dead wood is formed in a spontaneous and contingent way – it is not a product of the human labour and has nothing to do with private property. In the same manner the poor are a necessary by-product of the society: "class (…) which has the same position in civil society as these objects have in nature" (Marx 1842, 233). Here Marx followed in Hegel's footsteps: the poor are synonymous with the Hegelian *Pöbel* – the rabble – forming itself as waste of industrial, capitalist society. The collective

property which the poor wanted to maintain was for Marx only the residue of pre-historical times – the commons were destined to perish with the advent of the class society and private property. It is this pre--historical human nature – stripped not only of wealth but of basic sources of subsistence – that manifests itself in the practices of the theft of wood. For Marx the poor cling to dead wood in a natural and instinctive mode of behaviour: "fallen (…) wood has as little organic connection with the growing tree as the cast-off skin has with the snake. (…) Human poverty senses this kinship and deduces the right to property from this feeling of kinship" (Marx 1842, 234). On the other hand, even if the relation of paupers to dead wood is pre-historical, natural, unconscious or habitual, Marx argued that their customary law should be defended and no violation of it should be allowed, without some satisfaction in the form of new benefits. The act of the enclosure of forests and the privatization of dead and fallen wood symbolized the partiality and arbitrariness of the law, which serves the needs of the propertied classes, who are inclined to own more than they are entitled to. They are even ready to violate nature to appropriate what results from the metabolic process and belongs to the oldest customs, being apart from the productive activity of the forest's owner. The written law fails to be universal not only because dominant classes try to use it for their particular interests. Marx also noted another reason for its false universality. The law is partial and particular because the poor are not included in it on equal terms. That means that as far as the privileges of those already privileged by law are simply unjustifiable, thus the benefits of the underprivileged are perfectly deserved by them, because there are the benefits of the excluded. Customary right is by its very nature "the right of this lowest, propertyless and elemental mass" (Marx 1842: 230). Those at the margins of society should have at least additional protection by customs – remnants of the past and remnants of living nature.

In gleaning the poor reveal an instinctive sense of law which waits for satisfaction in the form of a new model of society.

What is important for our purposes is the fact that despite his negative conception of the poor – as anomic, idle, stripped from wealth, being little more than the "dead wood" of society – Marx finds also the second argument for their defence. It is symmetrically opposite to the first one – the poor have the right to the commons, because of their activities as commoners: "it is by its activity, too, that poverty acquires its right. By its act of gathering, the elemental class of human society appoints itself to introduce order among the elemental power of nature" (Marx 1842, 234). Here Marx even directly noted, that in the practices of commoning – such as gleaning – the poor rise to the level of subjectivity. Marx regarded gleaning as collective *praxis*, as elementary effort

to arrange and rationalize nature. He wrote that in gleaning the poor reveal an instinctive sense of law which waits for satisfaction in the form of a new model of society – the customary right of poverty functions as an anticipation of the truly universal law.

Thus the poor, in the articles on the theft of wood, also appear as a class with some labour and productive potential. One should be careful, however, not to miss the specificity of their activity. It would be easy to conclude that through these acts of exercising their rights commoners simply appropriate dead wood, wild berries or leftovers. If we accept this line of thinking, the possibility to reproduce the commons is lost – the commoners become appropriators or petty-capitalists. That's where, again, it is crucial to recognize, like Dardot and Laval (2019, 241-243), the peculiar vision of activity that Marx had in mind when he presented his second argument to give commoners support. According to Dardot and Laval, Marx alluded to Fichte's conception of free activity, in which the right to property lies not in the object, but in the act of work. That means that, in this case, there is no right to own a resource. The practice of commoning leads not to accumulation, but defends the common right to use. In effect, appropriation is never final, exclusive and exhaustive – it should remain temporary, open for others and reproductive (Bensaïd 2010, 43-49). In this way it is possible to develop – through commoning – the idea of possession and use, instead of property and the enclosure of the commons. It has to be a verb, doesn't it?

The first justification of the right of the poor rested on a negative or destitute collective subject – the Hegelian rabble which Marx tried to re-cast as the universal class by pointing out that it stands out as "an estate which represents the dissolution of all estates" (Marx 1843, 186). The second argumentation – composed around the notion of free activity, of positivity which rejects itself and defends against appropriation – could be foundational for commonist philosophy of *praxis* that I seek. Sadly, this idea was not further developed, remaining only a kind of a glimpse in Marx's oeuvre. It was replaced by the third proposition which become dominant in Marxian legacy: that of the industrial proletariat, equipped with a transforming kind of *praxis* that should lead to the socialization of property, not to the dissolution of property into the commons. The trace of self-restraining labour was nowhere to be found in the progressive narration on the historical stages of development, in which the productive *praxis* of the proletariat was seen in its destined movement towards communism. From that point of view, the commons were nothing more than the residues of primitive communism and customs of the poor, which functioned rather as the obstacle to

progress than as its condition of possibility (Dardot and Laval 2019, 245-247).

The choice – both philosophical and political – of Marx to free the proletariat from connotations with passivity, idleness and dirt – and to equip it with positive qualities to bring about progress – resulted, in the long run, in privileging factory workers. Marx embraced all the activities and qualities which went along with a vision of the proletariat as a human demiurge, ready to initiate the new epoch of history. From that point of view, the practices of commoning – such as gleaning – have been looked down upon, as a non-productive or only reproductive labour. The importance of reproductive women's labour, of communal forms of property and cooperation, of pre-capitalist traditions of resistance and self-organization, of non-Western and non-Enlightenment modes of knowledge or of crucial value of sustainability of eco-systems was downgraded in Marxism for decades.

Elsewhere I argued that late in his life Marx undertook "the communal turn" in which he was much more sympathetic and reliant towards commoning (Moll 2019). He suddenly abandons the hierarchy, or even the very division between the labouring proletariat and the parasitical *lumpen* (Bussard 1987). We remember Marx's distrust towards the latter – easily corrupted and prone to ally with bigger classes, and historically reactionary forces. The only determinations of the lumpenproletariat were related to criminality, illegality, theft, vagrancy or prostitution. On the other side of class society Marx saw the same parasitical inclinations in the lifestyles of the elites, which he frequently called the luxury *Lumpens* (Ruda 2011; Sakai 2017). In the case of the lumpenproletariat, the earlier connection to the autonomous practices of commoning, heavily present in Marx's vision of the poor, was abandoned.

Here I would like to come back to the much more ambiguous framing of gleaning from the early articles on the theft of wood and to examine this binary opposition between negativity and positivity once again. To do so I have to problematize the alternative of production and reproduction – today in the times of the global ecological crisis and the mobilization of movements for recognizing the crucial role of reproductive labour for future well-being. What is to be sought here, therefore, could be perhaps called a more fortunate balance between production and reproduction. As I would like to show, the inspiration for accomplishing this may be found in plebeian practices, which remain close to the intermediate and marginal collective subject in Marx, the one that stands between the idle paupers and the industrious proletariat – namely, the commoners.

Gleaning on the outskirts of society

We know from historians of the poor about the vital role the commons played not only for material subsistence, but also for the reproduction of the autonomous life-worlds of lower classes. For Steven King and Alannah Tomkins, one of the strategies facilitating such autonomy is based on the "economy of makeshifts", which "summarizes patchy, desperate and sometimes failing strategies of the poor for material survival", based for example on "access to common land, mobilization of kinship support, resorting to crime, and other marginal resources" (King and Tomkins 2003, 1, 6). They estimate that in the case of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, gleaning constituted one of the most significant form of subsistence for poor households (King 2003, 240).

We know also from other historical accounts that gleaning indeed was regarded by the rural poor as an indispensable component of their survival, and as their customary right (King 1992). J.M. Neeson, historian of the enclosures of the English commons – i.e. the process crucial for the history of the primitive accumulation of capital – showed that gleaning was at stake in class struggles, and in the court disputes between the commoners and the nobles: "gleaning was a common practice, universally regard as the common right. Indefensible at common law after 1788, in most villages with some arable fields it survived and prospered none the less. (…) Gleaning persisted longer than any other right or custom" (Neeson 1996, 313-314). In fact this author of *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820* confirms, through the use of historical sources, its spread even in the second half of nineteenth century, and Peter King relates the longevity and persistence of the practices of gleaning to the failure of legal sanctions against commoners (King 1989). The even longer duration of gleaning in the life-worlds of the plebeian classes was sketched out by Stephen Hussey (1997), whose research in Essex allowed him to state that gleaning continued there well into the twentieth century. The specific function of gleaning significantly changed over time, but the right to acquire the basic means of subsistence was held by the ordinary people. In the years between two World Wars the main motivation to glean ceased to be collecting wheat to have the flour for the household bread baking. The demand for bread was generally provided by bakeries, but the villagers started to glean for their animals. The experience of gleaning in the fields, and the working of specific rituals and customs, were also confirmed in the recollections expressed in the oral testimonies cited by Hussey. The sources indicate that gleaning fell out of wider use in the

1950s. At the same time they confirm that it was capable of metamorphoses under new methods of production and new patterns of living.

That's why it is not surprising that historians of the lower classes managed to discover the converted forms of gleaning not only in rural economies, but also in urban ones in the wake of the industrial revolution. According to Linebaugh (2003) a powerful example of urban proletarian habit of gleaning can be found in the most advanced – in technical terms – enterprises of the late eighteenth-century. In the heart of the maritime empire, such as one of the ports by the river Thames, collection of chips (wood scraps and waste) and the practice of looting goods on a huge scale were two activities that gave the elites a shipload of worries.

In *The London Hanged*, Linebaugh showed that the amount of wood looted in the form of chips from shipyards and commercial goods (especially sugar) stolen from port warehouses was unprecedented. The level of "waste" was harming the economic profitability and organizational order, but for the urban plebs (not only workers, but also porters, itinerant sellers, coopers, chimney sweeps, servants, mule pokers, rat-catchers and wives and children of the proletariat), access to the products of their labour was a fair custom. The struggle to maintain the rights to the commons in urban, industrializing surroundings was as tough as in the villages. What's more, the right to chips was regarded as legitimate both by capitalists and by judges, who had the task of normalizing this practice in law. At stake was not the right to chips itself, but rather the specific modes of its application: the amount of material for plebeians, the forms and periods of its collecting, the subjectivities with legal access, or even the permitted ways of taking the goods out and the admissible dress-code. When entrance was forbidden, the plebeians used direct methods of pressure to get their portion of chips.

Thus the practice of gleaning and the struggle to retain it reappeared in a new context. The counter-offensive taken by the dominant classes was analogous to that undertaken in the countryside: the enclosure of the commons and the eradication of commoning. Ideas used by the reformers dated back to the famous Bentham brothers. The authors of different types of panopticons in their conceptions were of the opinion that the insubordination of the working class had to be halted. The autonomy of plebeian life-worlds constituted a danger for the development of the modern organization of work. We know that Samuel Bentham personally followed shipyard workers after their shift in order to find out why they wanted to have chips and why they preferred it to wages in money (Nahirny 2018, 159-161). He learned that besides

a preference for informal and private ways to sell or exchange woods in plebeian surroundings, the workers were interested in using the material to construct their environment, to build and renovate houses or to make furniture. The autonomy of plebeian form of life, protected by direct access to the means of subsistence, was crushed by a mix of technological, organizational and infrastructural changes, inspired by policing techniques of Jeremy and Samuel Bentham. Linebaugh showed that the enclosure was accomplished through the establishment of "wage slavery" (payments in cash), the appointment of police, the improvement of inspection at the entry to shipyards and ports, the introduction of norms of productivity, the uniformization of production processes, the standardization of working day, the mechanization of work, the hierarchization of workforce, replacing wood with metal, the erection of walls around docks, guarding the dress-code, and fighting the informal economy (Linebaugh 2003; Nahirny 2018, 178-182). The programme of changes was intended to unlearn plebeians to rely on income in product and networks of solidarity from the bottom up. It also reinforced the division between workers and idlers, productive workers and the reproductive or non-productive lumpenproletariat.

The proletarization of the urban plebeians was thus possible with the annulation of the right to chips and the material conditions of commoners' autonomy.

The proletarization of the urban plebeians was thus possible with the annulation of the right to chips and the material conditions of commoners' autonomy. The first typical forms of employment and organization of work in the history of capitalism were introduced as a response to plebeian self-organization and because of the fear of its power. In its heart was the reproductive capacity of the autonomous life-world of lower classes. Seen from this point of view the practice of gleaning seem to be much more than collecting waste, a side-effect of production of goods: it is *praxis* to constitute the margins of society on their own terms.

That's why we shouldn't be surprised that gleaning as a common right, from which Marx's oeuvre starts, re-appears in his late correspondence. Engels wrote to Marx from Manchester on 10 November 1868 about his partner Lizzie Burns: "Lizzie was in Lincolnshire, visiting a patriarchal variety of agricultural labourers who do well – they have gardens and potato land, the right to gleaning, which brings in a lot and, in addition, passable wages" (Engels 1868, 156). Isn't it symptomatic that "passable wages" are presented by Engels as an addition to "the right of gleaning", which "brings a lot", and not the other way around?

The gleaners and other flaneurs

But what remains of gleaning today? It seems that it will remain with us as long as there is something that remains. In the era of abundance for the few and scarcity for the many, gleaning is still alive, and it finds new uses in consumerist society. One of the most inspiring effort to re-conceptualize the nature of gleaning can be found not in the realm of social theory or history, but in film-making. Agnes Varda's documentary movie *The Gleaners and I* (2000) is an impressing undertaking in representing the margins – in multiple senses of the term – in such a way that their visibility is reached without reaching their essence, identity or permanent and stabilized position in society. The French female filmmaker skilfully oscillates between negative and political representations of the margins and creates new modes of representation of underrepresented or unrepresented subjectivities and activities. She is able to present both material waste – broken equipment, old furniture, discarded food and leftovers from harvests of grapes, tomatoes or potatoes – and "human" or "social" waste – gatherers in cities and in villages, tinkerers, oysters fishermen, gypsies or proponents of freeganism, not only as the remnants of society, but also as fully-fledged life-worlds with their own characteristics. Gleaning is here this peculiar, even if hard to grasp, clandestine and shady, kind of *praxis*, which works on the reverse side of the system and helps to resurrect "dead" objects with commoners.

In fact, Varda suggests that these marginal subjectivities, items and practices around them are vital for the reproduction of society as a whole. In everyday life – and in the ideology of capitalism – they are hidden, underestimated and even stigmatized, as theorists of commoning such as Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis often stressed in their undertaking, to recognize the importance of reproductive sphere (Barbagallo, Beuret and Harvie 2019). But in Varda's empathic and sensitive lens, those who seem to be unproductive, idle or useless appear to be the guardians of reciprocal reproduction. In their practices we find social and ecological responsibility, the readiness to share social wealth equally, or the indignation felt with regard to excessive waste and other – human or non-human – costs of capitalism.

I refer to Varda's film not only because of its subject and the subtle and caring way in which she represented it. Her movie is an important point of reference for my own remarks also because the practice of gleaning is typically and traditionally ascribed to commoners as their ancient fate and right. Varda's ingenuity in showing the practice of gleaning beyond its literal meaning and original context enable her to

locate in it the social pattern of the reproduction of the common in its diversity. This is nowhere so clearly visible as in the closing scene of *The Gleaners and I*, in which Varda asks two female museum staff to bring from the archive the painting of gleaners who gather gleanings during a storm. The painting is taken outside the museum where another storm blows the clothes of Varda's collaborators just as in the picture. Gleaning starts to seem omnipresent. We've got rural gleaners gleaning in the field during a tempest, art-gleaners gleaning the painting from the archive also in windy conditions, and Varda recognizes herself as a gleaner--filmmaker – a gleaner who gleans images around herself. Finally, it is we, the viewers who are the gleaners – gleaners of Varda's patchwork montage and the multi-layered and unfinished meanings it creates.

Il. 1. Artistic gleaning of two gleaners carrying a picture of gleaners. A still from the movie *Gleaners and I*.

Varda is successful in showing that gleaning is not limited to gathering waste in a field or next to trash containers. It is not some pre-historical or pre-capitalist activity. It is not limited to agriculture, to some specific products, trades or societal strata. Gleaning is the practice of reproduction, but it is never the reproduction of the same – it is always ready to find new meanings, new uses, new objects and new subjects. Varda – deliberately or not – exposes the point of similarity between the gleaner and the *flâneur* (Chrostowska 2007, 119). The resemblance between two terms is not only phonetic – it is also conceptual. As we know, the

figure of *flâneur* – the urban lounger so important for Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin or Georg Simmel – provoked similarly divergent interpretations as the *glaneur* – or *glaneuse* . Some interpreters thought of the *flâneur* as an idler who simply squanders his time during metropolitan wanderings or falls prey to the capitalist consumerism. Others acknowledged the flaneur's ability to capture and transform reality. In the words of Baudelaire, quoted by Benjamin:

> we might liken him to a mirror as vast as crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of the elements of life (Baudelaire 2010).

As subject of reproductive cognition, Varda herself is a *flâneur* who captures the gleaners. In the words of Nadia Bozak:

> Transformed by the Varda's camera and the insight of her narration, the gleaners of the film function as analogs for Varda herself; indeed the process of employing images "gleaned" or harvested from the universe at large, scavenged and infused with new meaning once taken home, cleaned up, and edited, together confirms this equation (Bozak 2012, 164).

We may add to this observation that Varda's artistic practice blurs the difference between the excluded (demonized as "human trash") and the waste, the outskirts of society and the outskirts of nature, the city and the village, the flaneurs and the gleaners. The work of the idler un-works every division of work. This ambiguous practice remains a modern reminiscence of the "moral economy of the poor" (Thompson 1971), in which human needs and dignity were opposed to prodigality and excessive consumption of the wealthy and the privileged. Here Varda refrains from the problematic, even shocking portrayal of the dispossessed, known for instance from her *Vagabond* (1985). The main protagonist of this film, a female traveller who lives outside of society only to die from frostbite as a homeless person, turns out to be a purely destitute and passive subject. While Mona from *Vagabond* serves as the embodiment of the Marxian poor, almost animalistically seeking for survival and refuge, the characters from *The Gleaners and I* undertake a *praxis* of commoners without becoming proletarians – never leaving the margins, they know how to reproduce them and sketch them anew.

The characters from *The Gleaners and I* undertake a *praxis* of commoners without becoming proletarians – never leaving the margins, they know how to reproduce them and sketch them anew.

Woman is the gleaner of the world: the *passante* and the *chiffonier*

There is one more specificity that has to be commented on here: traditionally, and significantly, gleaner is rather a "she", a *glaneuse*, more likely than a *glaneur*. The biblical Ruth, who was a widow and an orphan – but also a stranger, a foreigner (Moabite among the Jews) – receives the right to glean after the harvest, for herself and her mother-in-law, who is also widowed. In her afterlife, Ruth became the most famous gleaner in history and the symbol of the traditional right of the poor, especially destitute women, widows and orphans, to gain direct access to subsistence (Koosed 2011). Her case serves both religious authorities and the poor in legitimizing the right to the commons, in particular during harvests. There are also different passages in the Bible which helped to establish protection for commoners. The Book of Levicitus 19:9-10 mentions this very clearly: "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner". The same commandment is repeated in Levicitus 23:22. The link between the entitlement to leftovers and the figures of the stranger, the orphan and the widow also appears in Deuteronomy 24:19-21: "When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow".

What's more, the right to glean is in no way restricted to the Judeo-Christian world. James C. Scott (1985), in his research on rural resistance and class conflict in Malaysian villages, recognized gleaning as one of the "weapons of the weak", especially poor females. The right to glean is a part of the moral economy of the community, sanctioned by the Islamic principle of *Zakat* – the redistribution of the portion of wealth for the needy after the harvest.

In Europe the traditional right was supported by a biblical sanction. Chapter seven of the modified version of the *Magna Carta* (from 1517) proves a good example. It grants a widow, in the time of mourning after her late husband, the right to "have her reasonable estovers of the com-

mon" (Linebaugh 2008, 39). The much forgotten supplement to *Magna Carta, the Charter of the Forest* (1517) secured in turn broad access to the commons: "every freeman, in his wood or on his land that he has in the forest, may with impunity make a mill, fish-preserve, pond, marl--pit, ditch, or arable in cultivated land outside coverts, provided that no injury is thereby given to any neighbour". Thus the story of Ruth and ancient rights of widows may be regarded as foundational in some way for contemporary eco-feminism, with its revaluation of reproductive female labour, embodied knowledge of nature and ethics of care (Federici 2015).

From the opposite point of view, it is claimed that the ancient right to glean is nothing more than a myth – one that was useful for the dominant classes. Researching the history of gleaning in France, Liana Vardi (1993) concluded that this myth was a novel invention, a by--product of the rise of the modern fiscal state. Contrary to the historians cited above, who treat gleaning as the customary law of the rural poor dating back to antiquity, Vardi claims that its origin is modern. In the Late Middle Ages, gleaning in France was nothing more than an integral part of the harvest. Regulations on its conduct were mainly practical and said nothing about the subjects entitled to glean. The situation changed in the sixteenth century, when the state – for fiscal purposes – deprived the holders of farms of the right to gleaning and saved it for the poor, old, infirmed and widowed. This could be done because the legislators perceived gleaning as a marginal activity, which generated no profit and thus couldn't serve as an important source of taxation. In the eighteen century, further warrants for the gleaning poor were introduced. These regulations were directed both against greedy landowners and illegal commoners. It was then that biblical arguments – mainly the story of Ruth – helped the state to legitimize a charitable vision of gleaning and the figure of the poor female gleaner. Indeed, the access to gleaning for the poor was then ensured, but often at the price of stigmatization or victimization of the very poor and the criminalization of other indigent commoners.

I am not competent to solve the dispute between Vardi and British historians (Thompson, Linebaugh, King, Hussey). Maybe their controversy could be explained by pointing out a difference between the trajectories of gleaning in France and England. What interests me in those opposing accounts is – once again – the re-appearance of two philosophies of commoning: the positive one (of the rebellious commoners defending the right to the commons) and the negative one (product of the state, a marginalized group living on the outskirts of society). The

striking difference between two points of view culminated in changing interpretations of another famous representation of gleaners – Jean-François Millet's painting *The Gleaners* (1857).

The painting from which Agnes Varda started her narrative in *The Gleaners and I* lead to extremely confused political evaluations. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the image of three poor female gleaners bent over in a field was regarded rather as a powerful social critique and a call to revolution.

Il. 2. J.-F. Millet, *The Gleaners.*

But for Vardi (1993, 1447) it "embodied three centuries of official propaganda concerning the poor and the nature of gleaning. Like the state, Millet created an image distinct from the realities of the harvest. In the nineteenth century, farmers and village communities still refused to conform to these representations". According to Vardi, on Millet's picture a section of the marginal and the poor is granted access to the harvest, all the while excluding from it the wider sections of the labouring classes. Again then, Millet's *Glaneuses*, just like the story of Ruth can be seen through the lenses of these two opposing traditions at once: staged either with a subversive pauper, a foreigner, or a marginalized and passive recipient of mercy. The most suitable figure to express these conflicting forces – without subjugating one to the other – is to be found once again in writings of Walter Benjamin.

Besides the already mentioned and much discussed *flâneur*, we encounter there two more marginal figures which are strikingly similar to

the one of the *glaneuse*. Both characters serve as antitypes for Benjamin's lonely urban lounger, that male who wanders through the streets and among the shop windows and assemblages of commodities contemplating the forces of modernity. His first counterpart is the female *passante*, the second is the ragpicker (*chiffonier*, or der *Lumpensammler*). The contemplative gaze of the *flâneur* is an ambiguous one – he is in public, but detached from it; he is attracted by modern life, but also becomes a victim of its development, urban renovation, the liquidation of passages, the cult of automobility; his desires are expanded by consumerist capitalism, but cannot find satisfaction in the eternal return of the same, materialized in fashion trends, novelties and innovations, actually deprived of anything authentically new. With the development of productive forces and the expansion of commodity relations, capitalism annihilates the *flâneur* in its strict historical sense, but it universalizes *flânerie* for the whole of consumerist society (Buck-Morss 2006, 37). Hence the *flâneur* proves ultimately unable to liberate utopian dreams from the realm of capitalist spectacle. He also tends to believe that technological progress could fulfill the promises of modernity, had it been used differently. Even if the *flâneur* remains the collector of experiences and the constructor of constellations, I tend to agree with Susan Buck-Morss (2006, 44), who sketches the affinities between him and the freelance journalists, trendsetters and members of the today's creative class. His mode of gleaning, too dependent on the capitalist production, doesn't allow him to become a commoner. His idleness is too leisured to be subversive, and his addiction to commodities too strong to permit his detachment from the bourgeoisie.

As the female counterpart of the *flâneur* who shares his attachment to loitering, but at the same time is forbidden the right to freely appear in public places, there appears the *passante*, or passer-by (Solnit 2006). As in famous poem by Baudelaire with this title, and typically for heroines from Marcel Proust's novels, the female pedestrian escapes cognition. She is the object of the male gaze, that of the *flâneur*. He is active, she is passive (a passer-by); he is allowed to wander, while her public presence is under constant suspicion and threat; he is a type of dandy who liberates and stylizes his personality through fashion, she hides herself behind make-up. As commented on by Buck-Morss (2006, 49-50), in Benjamin the exclusion of women from *flânerie* is expressed in prostitution. The prostitute participates in urban life only negatively, as an intruder or living commodity, paid to satisfy the male desire.

Thus the prostitute and the *glaneuse* share a similar condition of negativity, of being foreclosed from sight and enclosed in the sphere of

reproduction. This is a different type of detachment: while the *flâneur's* disengagement was deliberate and public – she is detached by force and pressured to live on the real margins of the city.

However, as Benjamin teaches, a way to envision something positive, or even question the division between negativity and positivity, may often lead through the juxtaposition of negativities:

> it is decisively important to apply to this, at first excluded, negative part a new division so that with a shift of the visual angle (but not the standards!) there emerges in it as well something else positive, new, compared with the earlier description. And so on [ad] infinitum, until the entire past is brought into the present in a historical apokatastasis (Benjamin 2002, 459).

His method would be helpful here to grasp "positivity in negativity", in the case of the female urban – and rural – loiterer, the *glaneuse*. In her essay on Varda's *The Gleaners and I*, S.D. Chrostowska (2007) disassociates the *glaneuse* and the *flâneur*, to compare her rather to another of Benjamin's minoritarian figures: the ragpicker. According to this author, the subjectivity of the *chiffonier* should be treated as a key to interpreting not only the figure of the *glaneuse*, but also Varda's filmmaking, her own aesthetic *glaneage*.

There are many reasons to agree with Chrostowska's proposition. Both the *chiffonier* and Varda as *glaneuse* are simultaneously located on the margins – as the rest of the political body – and in the center of the public life, as uninvited guests who question the legitimate distribution of the sensible; their activities of gathering, collecting, reproducing resembles work and non-work at the same time; in some ways their labour minimalizes capitalist waste, but also acts as an indictment of blind productivism. Human lives patched together with waste, as their clothes, workarounds, equipment – even the whole movie – are montaged from garbage. Varda is a woman, a *glaneuse* and the heroes of her film are almost exclusively men, but the gender division is challenged, they both belong to the common process of reproduction. The reproductive character of their praxis seems to revoke the divisions, like these between the *flâneur* and the *passante*, or differences between males and females, between urban and rural, material and immaterial labour, or labour and art.

The *Chiffonier* and the *glaneuse* participate – as commoners – in the second circuit of capitalist circulation. *Flâneurs* and prostitutes live in the world of commodities and themselves become commodities, living advertisements – as in the case of the sandwich board man, also present

in Benjamin (Buck-Morss 2006). In contrast to them, the *chiffonier* and the *glaneuse* approach commodities in their afterlife – as waste – giving them second lives, a chance for redemption from forgetfulness. This weak messianic power of preservation through change is crucial for Benjamin's conceptions of temporality and liberation (Löwy 2017, 204-208). Highly distrustful of every promise of progress and accelerationist hopes for the full realization of human potentialities with technology and science. They rather try to pull the bourgeois history to a halt, before it ends in a final crash.

The richness of meanings implicit in the *chiffonier's* figure has been unveiled by Irving Wohlfarth. His remarks are of great importance for our attempt to conceptualize gleaning as the prototype for commoners' *praxis*. For Wohlfarth the practice of the *chiffonier* and that of materialist historian (to whom Benjamin aspires) are practically identical. Both are an "expert cameraman" and expert collectors, skilled in the art of montage. It bestows them with a duplex role: "while he has only a small walk-on part within the whole, he can thus also be considered a miniature version of the whole" (Wohlfarth 1986, 144). The *chiffonier*, being himself an element of a constellation, at the same time possess (or maybe makes use of) its entirety – as its custodian. The German term *der Lumpensammler* expresses after all a similar duality, as the prefix *lumpen* refers not only to rags (*Lumpen*) that the *Lumpensammler* collects, but also to his own being as *Lump*, someone composed from rags (Wohlfarth 1986, 147).

The task to detect positivity in negativity in the case of the social margins was openly postulated by Benjamin in his commentary to Werner Hegemann's work on slums in Berlin (Wohlfarth 1986, 164-165). Benjamin was critical of Hegemann's one-sidedness in portraying slums only in shades of gray, with the inability to see any flash of positivity. The shift that Benjamin demanded, he made by himself in commenting on the ragpickers.

The crucial thing to understand is that the role of the *chiffonier* as collector is not to arrange a new better whole or to reduce waste and thus improve the efficiency of capitalist economy, but to liberate things from the overwhelming and tragic course of history – to let them speak freely: "the historian [as *chiffonier*] is the herald who invites the dead to the table" (Benjamin 2002, 481). Wohlfarth stresses that the *chiffonier* is not meant to help to realize the potentiality of history better or faster. The recourse to the forgotten, defeated and oppressed ones should occur not in order to develop perfect zero-waste recycling (capitalist commoning):

The role of the chiffonier as collector is not to arrange a new better whole or to reduce waste and thus improve the efficiency of capitalist economy, but to liberate things from the overwhelming and tragic course of history.

> there are, however, decisive differences between a metaphorical and an actual *chiffonnier*. The latter is so abjectly dependent on the laws of exchange-value that he can reproduce his own existence only by directly serving the reproductive needs of the capitalist economy. (…) his literary counterpart seeks, by contrast, to save his „treasure" from the capitalist order of things in order to construct objects that will help upset its digestive system (Wohlfarth 1986, 152).

The *chiffonier* appears, firstly, to accuse with his presence alone, to uncover the fact that capitalist history creates waste, amounting to the size of ruins (Wohlfarth 1986, 155) – it stages its negative doing in the landscape of garbage. Secondly, and more crucially, the *chiffonier* is the one who liberates lost time, who recovers things not in order to bring them back to capitalist circulation, but to withhold them. Thus the *praxis* of the *chiffonier* is compatible with that of the materialist historian: it discovers positivity in negativity and his activity forever holds out against the dialectics of potency and act (Wohlfarth 1986, 157).

Just like Linebaugh's collectors of chips who carry out wood to re-compose their life-worlds in autonomous ways, just like Varda's gleaners who build shelters and furniture from garbage, just like Varda-*glaneuse* herself, who builds cinematic constellations from ready-made, or rather ready-enliven scraps, what the *chiffonier* creates are not fancy post-modern bricolages, but rather dialectical images, which open possibilities for a different history entirely. The only work that the *chiffonier* may finish is the one of barricading himself from the dominant history with a barricade made from lumber (Wohlfarth 1986, 150). It serves not as a monument to the victors, but as shelter of the defeated.

Gleaning on the shores of politics

In his book *Hunters, Gatherers and Practitioners of Powerlessness*, the ethnologist Tomasz Rakowski (2016) describes many of such popular barricades constructed during the harshest period of the economic transformation in Poland. The informal ways of acquiring goods – "metal salvaging and the demolition of old buildings (infrastructures): scrap metal, brickwork, digging coal in poverty-bogs, collecting mushrooms and berries, wild herbs, obtaining timber and fir branches, the use of industrial dumps (scrap, non-ferrous metals, plastics, clothing, chemistry – anything that can be useful), poaching" – functioned during that time as modern incarnations of gleaning. The ex-miners, working as diggers

of coal from the poor shafts and pickers of metal from former industrial plants; the field and forest gatherers in the countryside in which state--owned farms ceased to exist; or collectors of leftovers from power plants – they are all contemporary heirs of the *chiffonier*. Not only do they begin to glean in order to survive in a period of the rapid depletion and destruction of the old life-worlds organized by socialist structures. Their "practices of powerlessness" were the acts of salvation of the lost time which restored the dead to life – they deliver new meanings, senses and modes of orientation.

Every philosophy of *praxis* must be confronted with one obvious question: what is to be done? What are the concrete political conclusions to be drawn? What kind of practices could we promote or defend? Our first reply is also obvious: through the example of gleaning we clearly see that commoning provides the weak and the excluded with a weapon, a custom, and with a means of subsistence. Thus where it exists, it deserves to be decidedly defended, and promoted where it is prohibited. The idea of commoning – understood as a process of collective work opened for everyone willing to participate – and the subject of commoner – as the poor who deserves the right to the commons – must be recognized as legitimate. Today we start to become conscious of the rich and hard to measure varieties and impacts that shadow commoning plays in the reproduction of society. To give one striking example: the informal urban recyclers, called *catadores*, *cartoneros* or binners, who perform an outstanding job in recovering rare, non-renewable resources in metropolises around the world, face criminalization and violence from the authorities (Bardi 2014).

This is still a modest, defensive postulate. It rests on the negative conception of commoners as the destitute, and of commoning as mere correction to the systemic imbalance of capitalism. The second postulate is more offensive and revolutionary. Our examination of commoners and commoning, whom we followed in the fields, forests, streets and behind camera, and especially in the figures of the *chiffonier* and the *glaneuse*, should encourage us to re-consider the role of reproductive labour. Of course, it would be all too easy to base the society purely on gathering and the simple reproduction of nature and waste – there is no return to the garden of Eden. But in the times of ecological crisis and various mobilizations of reproductive labourers, it is high time to change the outdated hierarchy between production and reproduction. To this day it is the reproductive labourer that has to prove that his activity is valuable, that it creates "value" or meets the conditions of "real work". But the efforts to recognize and re-evaluate the potentiality of

reproductive labour too often goes hand in hand with an anti-workerist stance towards the industrial proletariat. It is as if working people – coal miners, truck drivers or woodcutters – were responsible for the ecological crisis. The appreciation of reproductive labour must not be confused with degradation or attacks on productive labourers. Instead of swapping places between productive and reproductive workers, our challenge is to notice and build on the reproductive dimension which is also included in productive labour. The industrial proletariat has its role to play in developing the autonomy of commoners. Once liberated from the capitalist order, industrial workers could serve new purposes – that of the reproduction of plebeian life-worlds. Their activities would be subordinated not to capitalist accumulation, but to a sustainable future, organized by principles of inclusive and caring reproduction.

Just as the *chiffonier* in Benjamin is not a dustman hired to solve problems with garbage, and the *glaneuse* is not a wage-worker for the landlord, so reproductive labour – understood as commoning – cannot be reduced to one form of work among many. Reproduction serves as a condition of the possibility of every form of work and even more – of life itself. As I prepare my article, humanity struggles with the global pandemic of COVID-19. The social role played during the economic lockdowns by reproductive workers – doctors, nurses, cashiers, truck-drivers etc. – should make us more aware of the crucial role that reproduction plays for our joint welfare and survival.

The great question for today is the possibility of the autonomization of commoning. Is it feasible to organize our reproduction outside the structures of capital and the state? James C. Scott (2009), in his daring book *The Art of Not Being Governed*, uncovered the neglected histories of fugitives, people on the run, who create and maintain non-state institutions. Scott managed to prove that these marooned societies are not the remains of the past. Far from that, their fate is defined by a constant struggle with the states and their linear history. Although the author sowed skepticism about contemporary possibilities to create the non-capitalist outside in common, there are many glimpses – some more trackable, others rather clandestine – of cracks in today's capitalism (Holloway 2010). If we cease to regard the common as a thing – as a resource, territory, geographical or political entity – and re-define it as the multiplied practice – as commoning – then we will note many *chiffoniers* and *glaneuses* around the world, undermining the capitalist course of history and opening the alternatives: in communal organizations in Rojava or in Chiapas; in liberated districts, and social centers; in the informal economy and migrant networks.

The serious, huge and truly historical task of the *chiffonier* and the *glaneuse* is to re-arrange the constellation of the world in order to maintain the life of the planet. Here comes the historical materialist who, as Benjamin demanded, must himself become a *chiffonier* or a *glaneuse*, before the pile of debris he is facing grows skyward. It is the fate of commoners to sort it out. The ragpicker or the despised idler can become the heroes of our day.

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 2013. *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Althusser, Louis, and Étienne Balibar. 1970. *Reading Capital*. London and New York: New Left Books.

Baldauf, Anette et al. (eds.). 2016. *Spaces of Commoning: Artistic Research and the Utopia of Everyday*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Barbagallo, Camille, Beuret, Nicholas, and David Harvie (eds.). 2019. *Commoning with George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici*. London: Pluto Press.

Bardi, Ugo. 2014. *Extracted: How the Quest for Mineral Wealth Is Plundering the Planet*. Chelsea: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Baudelaire, Charles. 2010. *The Painter of the Modern Life*. London, New York, Toronto, Dublin, Camberwell, New Delhi, Rosedale, Johannesburg: Penguin Group.

Benjamin, Walter. 2002. *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Bensaïd, Daniel. 2010. *Wywłaszczeni: Marks, własność i komunizm*. Trans. Zbigniew Marcin Kowalewski. Warszawa: Książka i Prasa.

Bollier, David. 2016. "Commoning as a Transformative Social Paradigm". http://www.operationkindness.net/wp-content/uploads/David-Bollier.pdf

Bollier, David, and Silke Hilfreich (eds.). 2015. *Patterns of Commoning*. Commons Strategies Group.

Bozak, Nadia. 2012. *The Cinematic Footprint: Lights, Camera, Natural Resources*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press.

Bresnihan, Patrick and Michael Byrne. 2015. "Escape in the City: Everyday Practices of Commoning and the Production of Urban Space

in Dublin". *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, volume 47, issue 1.

Buck-Morss, Susan. 2006. "The Flâneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering". In *Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project*, ed. Hansen, Beatrice. London and New York: Continuum.

Bussard, Robert L. 1987. "The 'dangerous class' of Marx and Engels: The rise of the idea of Lumpenproletariat". *History of European Ideas*, 8:6.

Chrostowska, S.D. 2007. "Vis-à-vis the Glaneuse". *Angelaki. Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, volume 12, number 2.

Dardot, Pierre, and Christian Laval. 2019. *Common. On the Revolution in the 21st Century.* London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic.

Engels, Friedrich. 1868. "Engels to Marx. 10 November 1868". In *Marx & Engels Collected Works. Volume 43. Letters 1868-1870*. Lawrence & Wishart.

Esteva, Gustavo. 2014. "Commoning in the New Society". *Community Development Journal*, Volume 49, Issue 1.

Federici, Silvia. 2012. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Brooklyn and Oakland: PM Press.

———. 2014. "From Commoning to Debt: Financialization, Microcredit, and the Changing Architecture of Capital Accumulation". *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113 (2).

———. 2015. "Feminism and the Politics of the Commons". In *Patterns of Commoning,* (eds.). Bollier, David, and Silke Hilfreich. Commons Strategies Group.

Foster, John Bellamy. 2000. *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. et al. 2018. "Commoning as a Postcapitalist Politics". In *Releasing the Commons. Rethinking the Futures of the Commons*, (eds.). Amin, Ash, and Philip Howell, London and New York: Routledge.

Holloway, John. 2010. *Crack Capitalism*. London and New York: Pluto Press.

———. 2014. "Communize". In *Communism in the 21st Century*, volume 3, ed. Shannon Brincat. Cremona and Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

Hussey, Stephen. 1997. "'The Last Survivor of an Ancient Race': The Changing Face of Essex Gleaning'. *The Agricultural History Review*, vol. 45, no. 1.

Kalb, Don, and Massimiliano Mollona (eds.). 2018. *Worldwide Mobi-*

lizations: Class Struggles and Urban Commoning. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
King, Peter. 1989. "Gleaners, Farmers and the Failure of Legal Sanctions in England, 1750-1850". *Past and Present* 125.
———. 1991. "Customary Rights and Women's Earnings: The Importance of Gleaning to the Rural Labouring Poor, 1750-1850". *The Economic History Review* vol. 44, no. 3.
———. 1992. "Legal Change, Customary Right, and Social Conflict in Late Eighteenth-Century England: The Origins of the Great Gleaning Case of 1788". *Law and History Review*, no. 1.
King, Steven. 2003. "Making the most of opportunity: the economy of makeshifts in the early modern north". In *The Poor in England 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*, (eds.). S. King and A. Tomkins. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
King, Steven, and Alannah Tomkins (eds.). 2003. *The Poor in England 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
Koosed, Jennifer L. 2011. *The Gleaning Ruth: A Biblical Heroine and Her Afterlives*. Columbia: The University of South Carolina.
Linebaugh, Peter. 2003. *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Allen Lane.
———. 2008. *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
———. 2014. *Stop, Thief! The Commons, Enclosures, and Resistance*. Oakland: PM Press.
Linera, Álvaro García. 2014. *Plebeian Power: Collective Action and Indigenous, Working-Class and Popular Identities in Bolivia*. Brill: Leiden.
Löwy, Michael. 2005. *The Theory of Revolution in Young Marx*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
———. 2017. *Redemption and Utopia. Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe*. London and New York: Verso.
Marx, Karl. 1842. "Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly. Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood". In *Marx & Engels Collected Works. Volume 1. Karl Marx 1835-1843*. Lawrence & Wishart.
———. "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction". In *Marx & Engels Collected Works. Volume 3. Karl Marx. March 1843-August 1844*. Lawrence & Wishart.
Mattei, Ugo and Mark Mancall. 2019. "Communology: The Emergence of a Social Theory of the Commons". *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118 (4).
Moll, Łukasz. 2019. "Komunalny zwrot późnego Marksa i kommonizm

dóbr wspólnych". *Studia Socjologiczne* 4 (235).
Moll, Łukasz and Michał Pospiszyl. 2019a. "Filozofia polityczna motłochu". *Le Monde Diplomatique-edycja polska*, nr 1(155).
———. 2019b. "Odzyskać motłoch!". https://nowyobywatel.pl/2019/02/27/odzyskac-motloch-rozmowa-z-dr-lukaszem-mollem-i-dr-michalem-pospiszylem/
Nahirny, Rafał. 2018. *Granice kontroli: Maszyneria władzy Jeremy Benthama*. Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN.
Neeson, J.M. 1996. *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820*. Cambridge, Melbourne and New York: Cambridge University Press.
Pai, Hyugmin, and Hejung Choi. 2017. *Imminent Commons: Commoning Cities*. Barcelona: Actar Publishers.
Rakowski, Tomasz. 2016. *Hunters, Gatherers, and Practitioners of Powerlessness: An Ethnography of the Degraded in Postsocialist Poland*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.
Rancière, Jacques. 2010. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Ruda, Frank. 2011. *Hegel's Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Ruivenkamp, Guido, and Andy Hilton (eds.). 2017. *Perspectives on Commoning: Autonomist Principles and Practices*. London: Zed Books.
Sakai, J. 2017. *The "Dangerous Class" and Revolutionary Theory: Thoughts on the Making of the Lumpen/proletariat*. Montreal: Kersplebedeb Publishing and Distribution.
Shiva, Vandana. 2020. *Reclaiming the Commons: Biodiversity, Traditional Knowledge and the Rights of Mother Earth*. Synergetic Press.
Solnit, Rebecca. 2006. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London and New York: Verso.
Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
———. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (eds.). C. Nelson, L. Grossberg. Urbana.
Thoburn, Nicholas. 2002. "Difference in Marx: the lumpenproletariat and the proletariat unnameable". *Economy and Society*, volume 31, number 3.
Thompson, Edward Palmer. 1971. "The Moral Economy of the English

Crowd in the Eighteenth Century". *Past & Present*, No. 50.
Wohlfarth, Irving. 1986. "Et Cetera? The Historian as Chiffonier". *New German Critique*, no. 39, Second Special Issue on Walter Benjamin.
Vardi, Liana. 1993. "Construing the Harvests: Gleaners, Farmers, and Officials in Early Modern France". *The American Historical Review*, vol. 98, no. 5.

ŁUKASZ MOLL – philosopher, sociologist. The faculty member in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Wrocław. The principal investigator in the "The Idea of Europe in the context of migration crisis" project at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. The member of the editorial board of the journal *Praktyka Teoretyczna*.

Address:
The Institute of Sociology
University of Wrocław
Koszarowa 3, 52-007 Wrocław
email: lukasz.moll@uwr.edu.pl

Citation: Moll, Łukasz. 2020. "Gleaning on the Shores of Politics. Commoning as the New Philosophy of *Praxis*". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 35–66.
DOI:10.14746/prt2020.2.3
Funding: The work on the publication was financed from the National Science's Centre funds (project number 2018/29/N/HS1/00853).

Autor: Łukasz Moll

Tytuł: Zbierając na brzegach politycznego. Uwspólnianie jako nowa filozofia *praxis*

Abstrakt: Artykuł włącza się w prowadzoną ostatnio przez teoretyków dóbr wspólnych dyskusję nad znaczeniem pojęcia uwspólniania (*commoning*). Proponuje uznać za podstawową cechę wyróżniającą praktyki uwspólniania zdolność do reprodukcji autonomii plebejskich światów życia, które potencjalnie wykraczać mogą ku post-kapitalistycznej przyszłości. Rozumienie uwspólniania jako aktywności podejmowanych przez zmarginalizowane podmiotowości zostało zaprezentowane na przykładzie zbieractwa. Ta tradycyjna czynność biedoty została w artykule poddana analizie jako dwuznaczna praktyka, która wymyka się dychotomiom działania i pasywności, pozytywności i negatywności, produkcji i reprodukcji. Zbieractwo, wraz ze swoimi reprodukcyjnymi cechami, potraktowane zostało jako modelowy fenomen dla uwspólniania, rozumianego jako nowa filozofia *praxis*, która pozostaje tak pożądana w dobie katastrofy ekologicznej i w obliczu zerwanych połączeń między pracą a opieką. Historia walk społecznych wokół zbieractwa i dóbr wspólnych, a także podmiotowości biednej pokłośnicy (*glaneuse*) i miejskiego szmaciarza (*chiffonier*), zostają przywołane w artykule, by rozpoznać niedoceniany potencjał uwspólniania do zakłócenia dziejów ślepego produktywizmu i – poprzez dążenie do odzyskania dóbr wspólnych – także do odzyskania naszej przyszłości.

Słowa kluczowe: uwspólnianie, zbieractwo, *praxis*, dobra wspólne, motłoch

NINA ASSORODOBRAJ
Translated by JĘDRZEJ BRZEZIŃSKI

The Beginnings of the Working Class. The problem of the working hands in Polish industry in the epoch of Stanisław August (fragments)

Fragments of the book *Początki klasy robotniczej* published in 1946 (on the base of author's PhD thesis, *Les débuts de la classe ouvrière* published originally in 1936) give insight to history of Polish vagabonds in eighteen century. Text based on archival documents, ordinances and fragments from the press depicts the problem from multiple points of view, showing the complex history of this social group and how it was systematically delegalized and assimilated by consequent legal and administrative decisions. Motley population of vagabonds, entertaining miscellaneous ways of living and working was on one hand viewed as a bunch villains or idlers, but on the other constituted a reservoir of workforce, much in need for the nascent industry.

Keywords: vagabonds, working class, industrialization, history of eighteen-century Poland

The social origin of vagabonds

The composition of the population of vagabonds varied in terms of their belonging to social strata. The vast majority of them were of peasant origin, landless or smallholding, or runaway serfs who had left their lord and borough, whether in the recent or distant past, in order to engage in domestic service or daily wage labor. Similarly, free townspeople, especially from small and poor towns; frequently Jews, roaming around or trading; as well as degraded nobility, whose way of life had become similar to the one of servants: wandering in search of earnings, erring, and begging.[1] A noblewoman, Franciszka Grygolewska, for example, accused colonel Jarzmowski, whom she served as a domestic servant, of "harm and beating" before the court of Civil-Military Commission (KCW. Książ and Lelów, 174; 5, 13). Within the jurisdiction of Czersk a nobleman who committed theft was detained, without a passport or certificate, as he was passing from one job in domestic service to another: "He spent a night in Wielgolas at an inn, where he haled out and stole a horse, with the horse he ran away, but was apprehended" (KCW. Czersk, 7; 214). Another man, also of noble origin, "took up wage labor in Warsaw" (KCW. Czersk, 7; 215). Jan Osiński, a nobleman whose father served in the National Cavalry, found a job as an assistant to a lacquerer in Warsaw. Having terminated, he took the certificate and returned to Końskie – his hometown, "but behind Góra three gentlemen in a horse-drawn carriage ordered him to give them his certificate to read and having said that it was swinishly written, they ripped it" (KCW. Czersk, 7; 203). Deprived of the certificate, he was arrested and detained in Warka. Katarzyna Rapacka, a maid "of noble birth," confessed to the Court Commission of Radom, that "during her service she had experienced a lot of ill-treatment and beating and moreover, seeing herself beslaved" she had to resort to flight (KCW. Radomsko 1792, 38).

Nobles could also be found among the vagabonds in the proper sense. For example, the Civil-Military Commission of Lelów appealed to the relatives of a detained nobleman-vagabond to take care of him and to "urge him to work decently, and from disgraceful vainness and drunkenness, for the sake of their own honor, they forbid him by all means" (KCW. Książ and Lelów 166; 63).[2]

1 *Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny* (Historical-Political Diary), states that "many are these noblemen in decline, stoking or digging graves... half-naked, wearing but shoddy togs, they fruster their lives on idling and drinking" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1790, 1304).

2 We encounter a lot of examples of errant noblemen seeking work. Example

From these examples one can see that the poor nobility pervaded this category of people, which is referred to as "loose, unbound" or "vagabond," finding earnings in domestic service or craft, interspersed with periods of vagrancy, wage labor, and sometimes also begging and theft.

Mostly, however, it was from villages and small towns that men, women, children, Christians, and Jews alike were cast out to wander in search of work. Rural populations, having fled from serfdom under these or other circumstances, filled the roads, towns, and villages. Let's have a look at the specific cases of this detachment from the group and the ways in which peasants, servants, and free people found themselves among the population of vagrants.

Rural populations, having fled from serfdom under these or other circumstances, filled the roads, towns, and villages.

Rutkowski's research on the economic condition of villages and manor farms during the eighteenth century allows us to conclude that in Poland at that time there was only a negligible number of larger peasant households, and the number of households without any land was also relatively small – most prevalent were those on the verge of economic independence (Rutkowski 1921, 50). From the mid-eighteenth century, rural populations underwent a process of glaring proletarianization – hence the increase in the number of low-income and landless peasants (Rutkowski 1923, 141-142).[3] This stratification of the rural population must be taken into account as one condition undoubtedly conducive to internal migrations. For the biggest part of the unbonded people, vagabonds and beggars, it was the need for additional earnings through seasonal wage labor or domestic service that would send them packing.

from the Commission of Radom: "a noble Andrzej Górski from Łęczyca voivodeship with his wife... was apprehended for walking without a passport. After being interrogated by the Commission, which learned that he had no secured ways to sustain himself, and was spending his time begging, although his age showed ability to take up some work, he received therefore no passport, and indeed was told to set there, in Radomsko, and earn for his food" (KCW. Radomsko no. 22, fol. 42). The same Commission issued a passport for another nobleman, "in search of servants post," based on certificates from previous places of his domestic service (KCW. Radomsko, no. 22, fol. 257).

3 The census of the city of Poznań from September 15, 1789 provides a telling example, showing the village structure in terms of wealth. The rural proletariat: i.e. renters of both genders, servants, and unbonded hired laborers constitute 48% of the village population; the economically independent villagers accounted for 52%. The numbers indicate, according to Rutkowski, "that even under conditions of the rent based system, which for the gentry was undoubtedly much more favorable than the system based on corvée, the percentage of the rural proletariat remained very big" (Rutkowski 1925, 60-61).

The phenomenon of the mass exodus of people in search of income was bemoaned by the Civil-Military Commission of Wieluń and Wizna. Because of their poverty, people from the Ostrzeszów poviat "in the summer go to earn their living in the Wielkopolskie or Kujawskie voivodships and as gravediggers and ploughers they earn for their rent" (KCW. Wieluń 16; 55). "In this poviat – complains the Commission – many are huts where Silesians settle, only with a wheelbarrow to earn their piece of bread, they pay, for example, little rent of 16 zlotys per year, have neither a farm, nor a garden, only with spinstry they survive winter, and in summer they go with their wheelbarrow to work, earn rent and pay their lord" (KCW. Wieluń 16; 22).

The commission of Wizna complained about the migration for wage work as well. It issued universals[4] aimed at "putting an end to the rogueries of the vagrants of both sexes, seemingly free but indeed avoiding permanent residency and dominion, who without household nor job as servants idle around for various pretexts and earnings," and who "during the summer flee to wetlands and factories" (KCW. Wizna 5; fol. 18).

The complaints of the Commissions just explored provide a generalization of the phenomena that we find in the questionnaires from investigations of passportless detainees. Seasonal wage labor in agriculture or construction more and more frequently would set a path of a complete exit from the village. We will see that often a man would never come back, even after only having gone to work in a nearby fair, let alone due to employment or labor in areas distant from home.

Here are some examples: a man detained for wandering without a passport, a native of Szczarków village, claims "that there is no place in the village and that is why he goes searching for odd jobs and that is why he spent four weeks chopping wood for the Jewish innkeeper in Szulmierzyce" (KCW. Radomsko, February 3, 1792, 35). Another said that "his father from Sokołów, in the region of Podlasie, is no longer alive and so he has no seat of being there anymore." So he goes to "Przygań by Vistula, where he wants to live" (KCW. Radomsko, February 3, 1792, fol. 120). He received a passport to the said town; however, whether he arrived and actually settled there and for how long he stayed – remains unknown. A certain Pietrzak, after being stopped, testified that "he is from Chylice. His mother and stepfather are in Jeziorna, behind the river. He says that having nothing to do by his father, he left..." (KCW. Czersk, 7; 149).

4 Legal proclamations issued in Poland or Ukraine – transl.

Among the detained people we meet many who have wandered for years in search of labor, often having left the village and the family already as children. "Wojciech Rutkowski, handed over (to Radomsko) from the village of Wadlowa, a vagrant without a passport, testified during the exam that he was a native of Mogiła near Kraków, from where as a little boy he left, and served in various places and worked once with carpenters, once with gravediggers..." (KCW. Radomsko, 35; fol. 196). A 20-year-old boy detained in the territory of the Commission of Lelów, who worked in many places as a farmhand and herd boy, testified that he had been walking around the world for nine years. "I began to go from a village to village. Sometimes people gave me something, sometimes I would take things on my own secretly. I was feeding myself with groats, flour, peas which I begged from people" (KCW. Książ and Lelów, May 5, 1790, 176). Another man, wandering together with his wife, without certificates, "says that he came from the village of Gorczyc near Opatów… from where he left twelve years ago and wandered from job to job and now wanted to go pick the work in saw mills" (KCW. Czersk, 7; 102).

The census of the city of Krakow, administered by the city Commission in order to get rid of vagabonds and beggars, registered a lot of people coming from villages for labor or in search of jobs in domestic service (KCW. Kraków i Proszów 165, 10; 159; 80). "Four years I'm in Krakow, I had left my village for there was nothing to do there" (KCW. Kraków and Proszów 159; 81; 16). Next to many of the names we find an annotation of the inspector: "a menial without a post" or "subsisting with odd labor." Many of the arrested testify to the Commission: "I do menial jobs for people and from that I feed myself" (KCW. Kraków and Proszów 159; 81; 15).[5]

As daily wage workers, these people were in constant motion, travelling from one place to another. The detained Paweł Nagórny "as a young boy had left Głaszów, nearby Sandomierz… spent some time in Tuszyn, little town… he has his wife there and two sons, the eldest works in a farm. He was renting a plot there, his wife was doing the statute labor, and when he told her that they should go and look for some other place, she wouldn't listen. So a year ago he himself went. He would go from village to village and search for work" (KCW. Kraków and Proszów 159; 81; 22). The commission of Czersk found a man,

5 Testifies a certain Józef Szymanek, arrested for the second time for lack of passport: "I'm over 30 years old, I have a wife in Zagorzyce, she rents there." Being asked: "how do you work and how you sustain yourself?" – he answers: "people hire me and that's how I eat."

"born in the region of Cracow, gone for 15 years: he would always serve, and now also he was searching for work as a servant" (KCW. Kraków and Proszów 159; 7, 11).[6]

Often such departures were only for seasonal work, after which laborers would come back to their countryside with earnings. However, many of the examples we have cited point to the fact of detachment from permanent residence while wandering in search of work. After a few years, such laborers had roamed quite far from their starting point, lost contact with the family village and truly become "unbonded men," moving from one job to the next, in their way of life reminiscent of vagabonds.

But it was not only villages that provided candidates for labor and domestic service. The supply also came from small towns, similar to villages in terms of demographic structure, whose poverty and deplorable economic conditions were often addressed in journalism during Stanisław August's epoch.[7] An anonymous author of the *Głos obywatela prywatnego* (Private citizen's voice) describes smaller towns as "yet more rigid prisons for the ruled, in which, having barely any land at their disposal, they struggle with hunger and misery." (AGAD, Zbiór Popielów, 205, fol. 186-187)

As an illustration of economic emigration from towns, the example of a memorandum from Kępno can be quoted, sent to the Commission of Wieluń with a request for a greater number of of passports, because: "the people of this town are many, but they are not able to feed themselves from its land, and so the town has to urge them to search for bread and earning through trade and industry, so that almost every day they have to leave and travel through the country" (KCW. Wieluń, 18; 206). There is no reason to suppose that Kępno was in a special situation here; it provides rather a typical example. Among the arrested many are costermongers and itinerant laborers coming from small and larger cities. (…)

6 Another runaway subject from vicinities of Radom, for a year "wandered from a labor to labor, recently he labored in Piaseczno and from there he went farther away" (KCW. Czersk, no. 7, 160). The Commission of Radom had detained two subjects who testified that they had "left two weeks ago to earn their living; they stayed in the village of Przyborów, threshing for the peasants there for seven days, after which they arrived at the village of Wola," where they were arrested (KCW. Radomsko, January 31, 1792, 35).

7 "Historical and Political Diary" writes: "cities... bringing disgrace to the Polish nation in the eyes of the world, these terrible dumps and seats of laziness, idleness, drunkenness, and the most base misery" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1789, 328). *Dziennik Handlowy* (The Journal of Commerce) also raises the question of the poverty of the cities and of the lack of correlation between the taxes and the wealth of the townsmen (Dziennik Handlowy 1787, 426).

Coercion. Workhouses. Orphanages

The problem of the industrial worker is to be observed most vividly and clearly in Warsaw and Cracow - the latter being in rather a dire state at the time, while still retaining the demographic structure of a big city. We do not need to focus again on the presence in these cities of a large number of poor people, living from daily hire, the frequent changing of place of domestic service, occasional work, peddlery or begging. We devoted the first part of this paper to the formation and characteristics of this pauperized population and pointed out that the cities were particularly attractive in these respects, because they offered easier and higher earnings and alms given generously. Many of the protocols that came from investigations of the loose people, detained by this or that Civil-Military Commission, depict their journey to Warsaw or Cracow as motivated by the search for some income in the city. Ordinances of municipal and central authorities, results of the roundups and so-called "revisions," i.e. inspections, carried out by census officers, to detect hiding people "without secure means of living" – this sparse but telling statistical data allow us to decisively establish the presence of a relatively large population of poor and day laborers in the cities, living off occasional earnings and wage labor.

It is a momentous statement, because the existence of a reservoir of free, unemployed workforce, in simultaneous juxtaposition with the difficulties in finding workers, or even the lack of working hands for urban industrial enterprises, reveals the essence of the issue under investigation.

Again, what turns out to be most interesting in this respect are the textile factories in the cities, constantly in need of larger numbers of unskilled workers who could guarantee stability and the possibility for the entrepreneur to use technical skills, learned only in the factory.

The phenomena accompanying the acquisition and retention of the industrial worker in non-agricultural cities are all the more telling, because the candidates, considered to be a reservoir of labor, consist in large part of unbound, loose people *par excellence*, almost independent of the company owner, which was almost never the case for the poor and wage-earning people in villages and small towns. The example of big cities fully demonstrates that the industrial labor market was dependent on the social character of the wage-earning population, that is, on their traditional ways of working and living. Our work in establishing these relations is made easier, thanks to the testimonies of the inhabitants of these larger cities, for whom these dependencies often implied weighty practical problems.

The example of big cities fully demonstrates that the industrial labor market was dependent on the social character of the wage-earning population, that is, on their traditional ways of working and living.

Here are some significant facts:

In Cracow, merchant Frysztacki, a professional who "honed his youth in factories abroad," can only produce cloths on a small scale, because he lacks not only funds, but also, notably, "people for doing yarn" (Korzon 1897, II, 305-306).[8] It is true that Cracow was at that time in a dilapidated condition. Still, it is conspicuous, that candidates for spinners were lacking in exactly this town, where in 1790 a third of the total population consisted of servants, wage-workers, loose people, and beggars, and which, according to the files of the Cracow's Civil-Military Commission, constituted a center through which waves of migrating people in search of work were flowing. Hence, we can consider it no accident that the same merchant Frysztacki, in 1787, became a partner of the priest Sierakowski, who set up a cloth factory based on the forced labor of prisoners, vagabonds, and beggars captured in Kraków (Dziennik Handlowy 1787, 505). Not neglecting the significance of financial considerations, which could have been an important motivation for Frysztacki in joining Sierakowski's factory, we must notice also a certain nexus between this fact and the experience of the merchant, prevented from enlarging his enterprise due to a lack of "people for doing yarn."

Another fact: the same priest Sierakowski, who had been directing cloth manufactures for many years, formulated a demand to the authorities to strictly forbid everyone, especially the youth, from selling rye soups, pastries, and fruits around the city, except street vendors who paid for their stalls in magistrates. Such customs "do harm to the factory, for it cannot keep the spinners at work" (Sierakowski 1797, 32). It shows that occasional earnings, such as itinerant trading around the city, were proving to be more attractive than wage-earning in industrial enterprises. Implementing the basic organizational postulate – that of the permanence of workers' team in the factories – entailed serious difficulties, if it was even possible to achieve at all. It provides an illustration of the state of affairs in which the poor, favoring casual incomes over permanent work in the factory, did not want to adopt a new system of work and life, until they were forced to do so by hunger, i.e. until they had no other ways to earn and survive. Candidates *in potentia* for spinners in factories used to walk around Cracow and Warsaw with baskets of pears or sweets and would not apply for work in manufacturing, and it was only through coercion by the police that they were taken "to wool."

Let us pair this with two other symptomatic facts. The Great Marshal

8 Korzon refers to a report on Cracow factories (AS, XXX, File 34, unfortunately lost in the archives).

of the Crown, Mniszech, issued harsh ordinances against beggars, vagrants, and people without "assured means of living," justifying it by reference to the difficulty in hiring workers. Although "wanderers" flow into Warsaw from all over the country, and there are plenty of physically-fit beggars and people able to work, the "industrialists of this city are unable to hire workers despite paying them very well" (Biblioteka Ordynacji Krasińskich., MS 751, fol.159. Ann. from June 3, 1786). "Historical and Political Diary" in one of the articles typical of its agenda, justified the need to ban begging with the fact that the ease of subsisting only on alms made it difficult for the factories to attract workers uninterested in applying for work (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1791, 692).

Manufacturing was in need of a permanent, cheap, and obedient work force and found in the cities a pauperized element, subsisting on odd hirings, that could possibly provide this workforce. These people however, remained loyal to their traditional living conditions, which protected them from situations of coercion, despite strikingly low living standards. They rejected the advantage that income from manufacturing offered, because of the cost of losing their freedom.

It suffices to see how unbonded, vagabond people worked and lived traditionally, and to compare it with the proposals offered to workers by manufacturers, to see that the most convenient, if not the only practical solution to the problem of working hands in the cities involved forced labor. We will see that a number of reforms and new social policies, recommended by public opinion and implemented by the authorities, were aimed at transforming the current living conditions of the day-laborer population, so that they would be willing to look for incomes in factories.

However, the first Polish industrialists had to organize their enterprises precisely in conditions unfavorable to the emergence of a market for cheap industrial labor. The transformation processes that had only just begun required time for a real transformation in the arrangement of social relations. Hence interested parties realized that they needed to apply certain measures, which undoubtedly played their part in accelerating these changes, but above all led to provisional and individual resolutions on the issue of working hands, in line with the postulates of the manufacturers.

Among such *ad hoc* measures that the entrepreneurs applied variously in cities were means of making use of forced labor for industrial production.

Thus, in October 1791, Franciszek Rehan, a cloth manufacturer from Warsaw, addressed a memorandum to the Police Commission,

which was at the time only just being organized, with a plea to "provide him with the help of the prisoners for his manufacture" (Komisja Policji, II, 39). Although the memorandum did not survive, it can be inferred from the protocol of the Police Commission meeting that it contained an exact draft aimed at obtaining the workforce with the help of police and administrative authorities, in order to significantly expand the enterprise, of which Rehan was one of the partners, along with a certain Jan Bogucki, and others. The Commission's answer to his memorandum was very supportive. Announcing the same positive response towards "similar projects of all the others," it promised "to take the most effective measures as soon as the Police are organized" (Komisja Policji, I, 62-63). Meanwhile, Rehan received the permission to "make use of" fourteen already trained prisoners. On November 2, 1791, the Police Commission arranged a roundup of vagabonds and beggars in Warsaw. It was decided that from the 633 people detained, 410 were "suitable for the country manufacturing" (AGAD, Akta Starej Warszawy, 1208, December 23, 1791). Already on November 4 the Police Commission and Rehan agreed on certain points, "having the power of contract," which allowed the latter to select among the people detained during raids those that were able to work and to place the selected ones in his manufacturing, feed, and clothe them, and in exchange "demand from them the work necessary for the manufacturing of cloth" (Komisja Policji, 125). However, because of the size of the rooms, he was able to accommodate only a few detainees. Only on December 15 was Rehan able to place 200 of the poor in his factory when large factory premises were rented in the palace of Castellan Jezierski on Dobra Street (Komisja Policji, 2814, 24) due to a contract with the Police Commission (AGAD, 1208). On March 19, 1792, the Commission approved the final form of the contract with Franciszek Rehan, Jan Bogucki and Co., specifying the conditions for the use of forced labor from people delivered as workers by the Police Commission (Komisja Policji, I, 501-502; AGAD, 1208).

This agreement created an institution with a dual character. From the point of view of the Police Commission, which was responsible for combating vagrancy and begging, it constituted a site of forced labor by making those who "entertained idleness" into productive people. As such it did not entail expenses, for which the Commission had no special funds. At the same time, the workhouse was actually a factory, based on the forced labor of workers delivered by the police authorities – a private factory governed by the principles of an industrial enterprise, aimed at profit. That is why the site of forced labor is referred to in the contract

as a "factory" and the people caught and imprisoned there – as "workers." The Commission had placed there 200 people of both sexes that were arrested on the streets of Warsaw and continued to direct those accused of begging and vagrancy there, in order to improve their customs and make them useful for society. In addition to the one-off expenditure of 150 red zlotys for renting spacious premises from Castellan Jezierski,[9] the only public service allocated for this private reformatory house was the provision of soldiers to guard the prisoners; a prison guard in the service of the Police Commission was an on-site representative of the public authority, empowered to observe if contractual conditions were being met and authorized to punish offenders.

The contract precisely defined the enterprise's obligations in relation to the people directed to work: thus, food and drink issues are discussed in detail in terms of quantity and quality; it is stipulated that the clothing was to be provided to workers once per year; bedding was specified; and hygiene conditions in general were also listed in the contract. In return for taking over the costs of the residence and subsistence of people caught in the streets of Warsaw, Rehan received workers for a fixed duration of seven years in the factory. This period could be extended, because every day a worker committed any offense it would not count towards the seven years due. When this time ended he would be released as a journeyman; as a liberated person he could remain in the factory or look for a job elsewhere.[10] The first three years of work were treated as a period of training in which the worker received no remuneration, apart from sustenance and clothing. Over the next four years, each man, except for the increased annual ration of underwear and footwear, was to receive 32 zlotys per year, paid quarterly. Women were to be paid in cash only for work performed "above duty," according to the tariff to be established and approved by the Police Commission. The regulations written in the contract set the length of the working day at 13 hours, determined the mealtimes and days of rest. Without the entrepreneur's permission they were not allowed to leave work and go out to the city, under pain of punishment. It was forbidden to enter the factory without the permission of Rehan or the guard. In the event of escape, the worker was to be sought by the Commission and brought back to work (AGAD, 1208)

9 Franciszek Rehan & Co., not the Police Commission, signed the contract with the castellan Jezierski.

10 With the consent of the manufacturer, the release could occur earlier as a reward for good conduct.

The factory of Rehan, Bogucki & Co., organized in the manner of a private workhouse, using the hand of forced laborers provided by the police authorities of the state, is a clear example of a provisional solution to the problem of working hands in a large-scale enterprise. We have seen above that the insistent plea for forced labor came from the entrepreneurs as soon as an authority with the sufficient competences was established. It can be assumed, in view of the facts discussed above, that this urgency came about because of the difficulties in recruiting the desired number of free, yet reliable workers. It is significant that industrialists, having enough people supplied by the Commission, also still accepted those who voluntarily applied for work in their factory. Contracts were drawn up with them for "one year and six Sundays." We unfortunately do not know under what conditions they worked in these enterprises. However, the proportion of volunteering laborers to forced laborers is interesting. For example, in 1793, when the number of workers varied from two hundred to two hundred and twenty people, only ten of them had applied to work in the factory themselves (Komisja Policji, 34).

As can be seen from the terms of the contract, the forced workhouse made it possible to implement the most important requirements for a factory to function properly: it allowed entrepreneurs to obtain an adequate number of workers and secured their stability, which was difficult to achieve in the case of free workers. It ensured profitability despite the costs put into technical and organizational training; it also provided the basis for determining the worker's efficiency, established discipline and guaranteed the legal implementation of the detailed regulations which the billeted prisoner-worker had to strictly obey; finally, it enabled industrial production to proceed, based on a relatively cheap workforce,[11] which, as we have seen, the free labor market in Warsaw was unable to supply.

We do not possess any evidence that allows us to describe the internal workings of the Rehan factory. Nevertheless, what we know from the files of the Police Commission and its branch – the Hospital Deputation – is sufficient to emphasize the private and capitalist nature of these enterprises. It also sheds some light on the human element that was subjected to coercive work.

11 It is impossible to determine the cost of lodging and feeding of a worker in Rehan's factory. For approximation, Police Commission was paying the workhouse administrator, Herman, 25 groszy per day per each person detained, which were to cover all expenses, i.e. wood, light, clothing, food. (Komisja Policji, 24, file 1)

It is characteristic that the manufacturers strongly insisted on, above all, the point in the contract which specified the duration of the worker's forced labor in the factory, as directed by the police. It seems that many of the poor, locked up in the workhouses, made attempts to regain their freedom and obtained resolutions from the Hospital Deputation, freeing them from staying and working in the textile factory.[12] Entrepreneurs submitted a note related to this, which contained an obstinate protest against such verdicts of the Deputation, asserting that they in effect breached the terms of the contract. Contractors demanded rigorous compliance with the seven-year period of stay in the factory for every poor person directed there. While describing the postulates of the industrial enterprise from that time, we cited above some passages from the note in question. Nevertheless, it is worth quoting it in its entirety, since it constitutes a valuable resource for understanding the functioning of coercion and the benefits for bringing the factory and the workhouse together:

> A poor named Górski, having settled down in the factory of the undersigned, obtained from the Splendid Deputation a resolution, through which he had freedom to leave this factory forever. Such orders, adverse to the workings of the factory, yet put into effect recurrently, which have already resulted in the factory's terrible losses, cannot lead anywhere else than to its final demolition. According to the contract concluded in this respect with the Police, a poor person, that is a vagrant, once delivered to the factory of the undersigned, should neither leave nor be freed from there, until passes the intended time, that is of seven years. Within this time, with the knowledge of the Police and of the undersigned, such release cannot occur. Only by this can the existence of this factory be maintained because people that are frequently replaced and newly arriving are fed gratuitously for a very long time before they learn the work to which they are destined, and the enterprise not only does not obtain any benefit from their work, but also incurs losses, with the damage of the wool used in their training, for such wool cannot be then used by weaver for any work. Therefore, only such period of time, during which people can be properly instructed, could at least in part amount to a reward for losses incurred for these reasons and other reasons alike. Otherwise, this company can in no way persist. Therefore, the undersigned pleads to the Splendid Deputy to take his petition into consideration and withdraw its resolution concerning the aforementioned Górski, who as an incurable invalid, after leaving the factory, has no other way

12 This can be deduced also from the table of "coming and leaving" of the factory people. For nearly every period the release of a few people is mentioned.

> of life except for turning into a permanent vagabond and beggar, which he already was before, and becoming harmful to himself and the public. Besides, the undersigned pleads to the Splendid Deputation not to resort to similar pronouncements, which do harm to the factories, and to adjure people once appointed to stay as long as it was intended. Additionally, the undersigned asks humbly, as a lesson for others, to punish the said Górski, who albeit recently turned somewhat more able for work in the factory, but as the most insolent of all, and practically the leader of the revolts, stirred several times already, which can be testified by the supervisor Loga himself, should be relegated for some time to the Powder Magazine, while the undersigned will provide for his subsistence. [Jan Bogucki (Komisja Policji, 34, October 31, 1793)]

Two facts can be inferred from this note: the long-term stability of the workers' employment was postulated by the entrepreneurs themselves and seen as a condition for the profitability of the enterprise, which however could only be met by means of coercion. Secondly, what from the Commission's point of view was a workhouse, here resembles rather a private factory, organized according to the principles of a centralized enterprise. According to its owners' intention, the interference of the state and police authorities was limited to ensuring the provision of the cheap workforce, who were bound to the place for years, i.e. the creation of the conditions for fusing the worker with the living organism of the factory. It was also a matter of endowing the disciplinary rules with executive force by providing them with public sanction.

When the manufacturer obtained the sufficient number of workers, the poor that were sent by the Police Commission would no longer be accommodated by the factory owner, hence losing the opportunity to "mend their customs" through forced industrial work. We can read the complaints of the workhouse's administrator: "Honorable Mr. Rehan, cloth manufacturer, did not accept two women and one man capable of working, who were sent to his factory on All Soul's Day, and declared that he would not accept any more." The factory was in need of a certain number of people, and until it found them, it benefitted from the role of the workhouse based on forced labor; but after satisfying this quantitative need, it no longer wanted to fulfill this role because it would be in opposition to the company's organizational principles and calculations. Therefore, the Police Commission again faced the same issue: "Where to send those beggars caught on the streets and able to work" (Komisja Policji, 34, November 5, 1793).[13]

13 The same complaint in April 1794, when the factory owner refused to accept another 14 people sent to him; when under pressure he finally receives

We have seen that the manufacturers diligently complied with the conditions of the contract, which allowed them to solve all the difficulties that were involved in using the labor of a free worker. All the while, in order to make the enterprise even more profitable through reducing labor costs, Rehan did not always respect other aspects of the contract which determined the quantity and quality of the entrepreneur's services to the forced laborer (Komisja Policji, 34).

The case of Michał Szczepanowski, a permanently employed administrator of the Hospital Deputation in the cloth factory, reveals not only the executives' negligence of the contract made with the Police Commission, but also the tendencies to remove public interference in the internal life and functioning of private enterprise. In October 1793, the Hospital Deputy received a request from Jan Bogucki to remove the administrator Szczepanowski, who caused the factory an "undefrayed harm," allegedly by provoking the revolts of factory people "practiced repeatedly and always by dint of that janitor." Bogucki proposes replacing him with a certain Kozłowski, who "will certainly try to perform better the duties conjoint with the function in question" (Komisja Policji, 34, October 25, 1793). It is not difficult to determine the background of the conflict. Szczepanowski, defending his case before the Hospital Deputation, explains that the manufacturers Rehan and Bogucki wanted to dismiss him, because he demanded the fulfillment of the terms of the contract and defended the workers who complain to him, "for neither their aliment, nor clothes, nor shoes, nor bedding, nor the pay for the pieces done in surplus comes to them as it should, and to put it plainly, these factory people have to suffer the highest misery and abuse" (Komisja Policji 34, November 4, 1793). Indeed, in the factories there were frequent altercations, called "rebellions" by the owners, and the administrator was usually seen as their accomplice, as he was the one to point out the violations of contract and to acknowledge the discontent of the rebel workers. (…)

Let us look at one more interesting example of the coupling of a private industrial enterprise with a charity institution and the overlapping of industrial interests regarding laboring hands with educational and penal campaigns aimed at "making the idlers productive."

In 1786, Fr. Wacław Sierakowski, cathedral canon, "entertaining, for noble reasons, the craftsmanship of cloth making," inaugurates the establishment of a cloth manufacture in Cracow. It is a private enterprise.

---

them, "he sends them to chop trees in the yard, without any guard, thus granting them way to flee…" (Komisja Policji, 44).

A certain Świerczkowski, who previously ran a cloth factory in Racibórz with his father, becomes a foreman and technical instructor; Jan Frysztacki, who, as mentioned above, could not develop his own factory due to the lack of capital and spinners, is one of the partners (Dembowski 1791, 72-73). The factory of Fr. Sierakowski was organized with a considerable capital outlay "for tools and machines" and for the recruitment of a qualified brigade, chiefly of Germans. Production was started with might and main and soon it became necessary to move to a larger hall. Successful conditions for the enterprise's prosperity were supposed to be achieved in the rooms of the former reformatory house, now empty and ruined, obtained from the Cracow magistrate and renovated and adapted to the needs of the factory at the expense of the entrepreneurs. "In the presence of the large Audience and with the assistance of the Honorable Magistrate...," a cloth factory, installed in the reformatory house, was officially opened (Dembowski 1791, 74). But it was not only the building that was obtained by Fr. Sierakowski from the municipality. This transfer of the factory to the reformatory house was connected with the question of procuring a workforce through coercion. We learned that Fr. Sierakowski "having taken over the empty house, commonly called the Zeughaus, repaired everything and, along with the merchant Mr. Jan Frysztacki, installed cloth manufacturing there, where vagabonds, as well as those punished with decrees for imprisonment, were put to work, provided with decent victuals, and were taught spinstry, which at the same time cleaned the city of vagrants and gave them a further way of life" (Dembowski 1791, 74). Also "children wandering in the streets," were caught and given to entrepreneurs and were eagerly admitted to the factory. The conditions of using their labor were set out in a separate agreement with the magistrate (Dembowski 1791, 74).

The figure of a priest-industrialist, as well as the reactions of the public opinion to his enterprise, depict perfectly the ideological atmosphere of the era, extending a helping hand to the manufacturers and readily providing them with provisional solutions to the problem of the workforce. Sierakowski's attempts to run his own industrial enterprise and simultaneously advocate for efforts to combat begging and vagrancy by forced industrial labor were very symptomatic. The resonance that his cloth factory found in the public opinion of Cracow society and the level of the interest in both the industrialization of the country and the development of pauperized elements into industrial workers became evident in the further exploits of that enterprise.

Sierakowski had to give up running the factory on his own account, most probably due to financial difficulties, which, on the basis of the

sources available, cannot be determined precisely. But the enterprise was not dissolved. A company of "voivods," composed of the most prominent members of the local society, was established to take over the factory with the aspiration of combatting begging in Cracow, in accordance with the royal Universals against beggars and vagabonds. According to the intention of their campaign, "these crowds of beggars, who for the most part mump not only out of misery, but out of idleness and debauchery, when reduced in numbers can be turned into laborious inhabitants useful for the country..." (Archiwum Czartoryskich, MS 901). Such effects were to be achieved in a manner characteristic of the era, by restoring the cloth factory taken over from Sierakowski,[14] and gathering the beggars captured on the streets of Cracow and teaching them industrial work. The company created the "Beggars' Fund," which was to collect the capital for the enterprise. The initiative to combat begging by establishing an industrial enterprise to employ idlers was explained in the following manner:

> In order to bring to this cloth factory all the beggars, overtly making their living of alms only, and to make them useful there, regardless of their ailments and infirmities, for this factory, being in need of manifold virtues, can accommodate even the most infirm ones, according to their capacities and powers, bringing nourishment for the sincere poor, repairing the disgraceful habit of those, who despite their health and ability recourse to begging, and so that everyone, avoiding the harmful idling, could find their sustenance in honest earnings and, proportionally to their powers, add to the manufacturing needed in the country, and to production of raw fabrics, hitherto exported abroad, and to bring food to so many people, and to diminish the amounts of cloth imported. (Archiwum Czartoryskich, MS 901)

(…) In May of the year 1791, after three years had passed from when the factory had been taken over by the company, the latter, unable to cope with the difficulties, turned to the Civil-Military Commission of Cracow, requesting it to "take this beggars' fund and the cloth factory under its supervision and complete disposal" (Dembowski 1791, 57). Dembowski, delegated by the Commission for a thorough examination of the state of the enterprise, "having reckoned its state, calculations,

14 Dembowski considers it to be Sierakowski's great merit that he handed over the manufacture to the newly created company and rejected the tempting offer of a certain Tycjusz, a Moravian merchant, who "wanting to have a company with Rd Count Wacław Sierakowski, offered him 90,000 zlotys (…)" (Dembowski 1791, 74).

expenses, and revenues, decided, that the factory can no longer be maintained" (Archiwum Krakowa, 194, December 29, 1786). After paying off the debts, selling the remaining cloth, wool, and tools that were purchased during the three-year administration by the company, what remained in the coffers of the Commission from the factory capital was a sum of 2592 zlotys and 3 groszy only, which obviously did not offer any prospect for the continuation of the enterprise (Archiwum Krakowa, 194, December 29, 1786). Therefore, the Commission answered favorably to the request of Fr. Sierakowski, who wanted to take back the enterprise that he had given up three years ago and promised that the factory "will bear fruits more beautiful," if he receives it "for his private avail, as it was from the first beginnings" (Archiwum Krakowa, 194, December 21, 1791).

Adopted and managed by Sierakowski, the cloth factory remained active for at least the next few years (Sierakowski 1797).[15] In addition to the permanent workers, it still used the work of detainees. It also did not lose its charitable and educational character. It was popularizing industrial work and fulfilling the functions of a kind of vocational school, serving the needs of the factory. Thus, announces Sierakowski, "children and orphans with mothers are to be admitted to this factory, or those without parents, or having parents such which are unable to provide them with appropriate upbringing." "Converts not finding any place can be admitted there," as well as the poor ashamed to beg. Having learned by experience, the factory avoided paying the costs of workers' training, adopting the principle that "incurring enough losses by dispensing the wool for the training of the workers, the factory will not pay for their sustenance, so the Sir or Madam who sent them should pay for their victuals, as does the magistrate for each of the detainees." The plan for supporting the factory with the cottage industry of spinning in the surrounding villages is also of interest. (…) Disabled people, whom the factory did not want to keep permanently, were also trained for cottage work. They were taught spinning "in various ways," combing and carding, such that they could leave the workshop "with talent" and open the learning opportunity to others. In this way, through its charity and educational activities, the factory formed a reservoir of working hands, bound to the enterprise, and tried, within certain area, to accustom and train the population for industrial work.

Still, despite several years of existence, the factory continued to encounter difficulties in maintaining the workforce. Sierakowski, claiming,

15 Hence, in 1797 the cloth factory must have been still running.

in line with the spirit of the times, that running a factory "is a work of public service," asked the national government to provide the company with the best conditions for its functioning, "which no private citizen, even if conjoint together in a company, can achieve without the authority." Among other things, he wanted the government to ban the itinerary sale of sour rye soups, bread rolls, cakes, and fruits, "for the factory cannot maintain spinners at work," and to assign a "public guard, that is soldiers' guard, to maintain order, to maintain all the people in subordination and obedience" (Sierakowski 1797, 32). The complaint of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit about the behavior of the billeted factory workers and about the devastation of the premises, explains this appeal for military guard, as a condition for maintaining discipline among workers. (…)

Among charity and penal institutions, orphanages played a distinct and important role as they were used in various ways by industrial entrepreneurs as a reservoir of labor force. We emphasized above that children and adolescents were considered the most useful element for factories due to both their greater physical fitness, and the ease with which the desired psychological traits could be developed in them. It was also connected with the significance of how inexpensive their workforce was and the difficulty of recruiting apprentices for manufacturing by way of free hiring. Therefore, in all the institutions similar to workhouses, but also in normally functioning factories, we find a larger or smaller percentage of children who were forced into and trained for industrial work. Many of the children and young people in the Rehan factory, the Institute of the Poor, and the factory of Fr. Sierakowski in Krakow were under the age of twenty. The merchant and industrialist Paschalis Jakubowicz employed about 300 orphans in his factory of belts and silk fabrics in Zielonka near Warsaw, as well as in the capital itself, as was mentioned by Jezierski, castellan of Łukow, at a parliamentary session (Korzon 1897, 32). The Wool Manufactory Company, starting production in 1768, took into its possession a "Cuchthauz" and an orphanage and established a wool manufacture there (Volumina Legum, VII, 751, 350). The children from the shelter were kept busy with the industrial work in accordance with the instructions given to the director "to save two hours a day for learning how to read and write, and use the rest of the time diligently for various work at the factory" (Archiwum Skarbowe , XXX, 31). A shelter for the abandoned and poor children at the Infant Jesus Hospital in Warsaw also functioned as a reservoir of children's labor force. In 1785, priest Jaszewski, head of the hospital, declared that "of the boys who were taught craftsmanship, 20 could be

sent to the factory in spring" (Biblioteka Ordynacji Krasińskich, MS. 750, fol. 262).[16] Hence, shelters for abandoned children and orphanages played the same role in providing the industry with a desirable young labor force, just as reformatory houses, houses for the poor, and workhouses supplied it with the adult workers.

Hence, shelters for abandoned children and orphanages played the same role in providing the industry with a desirable young labor force, just as reformatory houses, houses for the poor, and workhouses supplied it with the adult workers.

Social policy

Charity, understood as a process of making people productive, voluntarily or otherwise, constitutes only a part of the practical system of the social policy, as it was intended and partially executed. Its ideological assumptions have been discussed above; its positive side – involving in the employment in regular work in agriculture, industry or service – was supplemented with a set of measures aimed at such a change in the personal and material conditions of the poor men's life which would make them take up work, stay there and obey the employer's commands, regardless of their own will and even without a direct, personal coercion. Poor vagabonds were made compliant with the requirements set for them, answerable to the call for their working hands, forced to stop living the way they have lived, which is described in part one.

Alms, access to ecclesiastic funds, occasional earnings, door-to-door sales, personal services, often generously paid, frequent changes of the type and place of work – we know already what role they played in the system of life and labor of the fellows we have met. Their contemporaries denounce, as we have seen, the power of attraction of larger cities, luring with the "hope for easy bread, without any work or with occasional labors only" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1792, 247). They point to the fact that this push of the poor people towards the cities, and mainly Warsaw, found its direct reflection in the growing wages for agricultural hire and in the supply of wage labor for agricultural and industrial production. They state that by these opportunities for easy earnings and survival even without work "great harm is done to the highly more stable work in agriculture and in factories" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1792, 247).

Public opinion therefore attacks alms in general, particularly those given to people able to work, and demands their unconditional prohi-

16 Annotated with an interesting comment, that "parents may perhaps wish to be assured that they will not lose their right to their children and they will not be sent to far away from Warsaw" (BKr. MS 750, fol. 262).

bition and punishment to both giver and beggar (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1784, 520-521).[17] Both the press and the universals make the general public aware that one should not tolerate beggars if they are capable of working, and should not contribute to their laziness. Besides the elderly and the disabled, "to other people of both sexes, of the noble, urban and peasant state, and all the more to foreigners, who are fit for work and serve, alms should not be given" (Biblioteka Ordynacji Krasińskich, MS 749, fol. 218) – as it was written in a universal of the Hospital Commission and repeated in later universals of the Police Commission, of Civil-Military Commissions and in the royal universals. Those who nevertheless persisted in begging were threatened to be commissioned to the public works, and following the founding of the Police Commission and the Civil-Military Commission they also risked arrest, placement in a workhouse or forced referral to public works or to private domestic service. Also the clergy, who have "in their hands the hearts of the majority," are asked to oppose the medieval tradition of almsgiving, to dissuade the devotees from "giving alms to stray idlers" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1784, 520), to teach that charity towards a person able to work is by no means a merit (Biblioteka Ordynacji Krasińskich, MS 751, fol. 132-135).[18] On the other hand, the role of alms as an insurance against unemployment and, in a sense, as a wage regulator and a factor protecting working men from situations of duress, impelled the reformers of social life to remove this glaring obstacle from the way of transformation of the idlers into productive people and the creation of a cheap labor force at entrepreneurial disposal.

The connection between the supply of working hands, in this case for industry, and the prospects of begging is noticed by a journalist, who lists some reasons why almsgiving should be prohibited:

17 The Netherlands is set as a model here, where the penalty of 60 thalers was due for giving alms. And even if it were allowed, despite the tendency to abolish begging entirely, to give alms to the cripples and the elderly, the prohibition of begging was applied with all force for the people who were able to work. "Only the old are allowed to live of alms, or those who are not fit for work" – writes Kołłątaj (Kołłątaj 1790, ch. 10, par. 5).

18 General Brühl, who dealt with the matters of the Institute of the Poor and hence was interested in the question of fighting begging, in the article "On the need, motives and measures for the abolition of begging in Poland" indicates that clergy should enlighten people about the proper purpose of alms and instruct that giving it "*à des fainéants n'est pas s'acquérir un mérite vis-à-vis de l'humanité, mais au contraire c'est autoriser la débauche et la méchanceté*" ("...to lazy people is not to acquire merit towards the humanity, but on the contrary it is to authorize debauchery and wickedness") (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1791, 692).

> in a country where whoever wants can resort to begging, factories and handicrafts shall never flourish, because these, in order to survive, need hands to work to be enough and that these hands come to manufacturers cheaply. By what means will the simple folk undertake the ceaseless work in the factories, if from everyday experience they know, that through begging, a sure, but easy and comfortable living can be achieved. (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1791, 692)

The effort to combat begging is not only a matter for the administrative and police authorities; politicians should be no less interested in it, as they have to "know how to estimate the hands of the hard-working" (Archiwum Czartoryskich, MS 807, 829). Hence also such tendencies as those expressed in the *Monitor* according to which wage workers during their wanderings in search of employment should rather be given a dole of one silver grosz, but forbidden to beg under the penalty of two weeks in prison, seem understandable (Monitor 1777, 87). The same applies to odd jobs and "light earnings." They are considered a form of "idling in disguise," if they provide subsistence for young people capable of another job, since, according to the postulate of the maximal economic productivity of all individuals relative to their capacities; they should be rather working regularly in industry, agriculture or domestic service.

Thus, the "Historical and Political Diary" points out that it will be easy to remedy the lack of rural servants in the vicinity of Warsaw, had the police decided "to spare some wicked ways of life in the capital and in other cities for the old, disadvantaged, the decrepit, and not let the healthy and hale youth to entertain with these, as they could usefully work in the villages" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1791, 638-640).[19] Therefore, walking around with baskets and the intention to sell fruits, cakes and powders should not be allowed for them, but should remain a privilege of the elderly. For the young – "it must be forbidden, otherwise they should be made into soldiers or given to some public works." It is also called to limit the number of rural youth "huddling for hewing timber" in Warsaw (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1791, 638-640). The author of the cited article is primarily concerned with the interests of agriculture; very similar however, as we have seen, are demands made on the authorities by the priest Sierakowski in Cracow, driven by the concern for an industrial labor force. In a similar manner,

19 In the article entitled "Thoughts addressed to Police concerning the organization of domestic service and servants", important for understanding of the public opinion's leanings regarding social policy.

Marshal Bieliński, wishing to prevent a shortage of workers for construction works in Warsaw, considers it beneficial to restrict the number of "litter-bearers and errand boys" and to tally them, "and all the others, standing wherever on the streets, waiting for some light earnings, who should be readily usable for daily work" (Biblioteka Ordynacji Krasińskich, MS 749, fol. 218).

These attempts to increase the reservoir of workforce for industrial and agricultural production, and for regular domestic service by placing a poor man who is able to work in a forced situation by taking away his odd earnings, which played such a significant role in the organization of his life, went hand in glove with projects and regulatory orders that aimed to classify and socially subjugate him, so he ceases to resemble elusive human dust, always escaping control.

Therefore, all ideas and ordinances are considered that were aimed at exerting control over laborers and servants, and which enabled the regulation of working conditions and pay. The intent was to create such conditions which would force a vagabond to be in some specific service, have a specific place of residence, to ensure that he would not wander without the permission of a lord or an administrative authority, that he would not break the terms of contract under pain of punishment and detainment, that he could not give up a worse labor for a better one, or defend himself from harm and exploitation, and even freely combine earnings from domestic service with wage labor and begging, or work with periods of voluntary unemployment.

It seems that we are dealing here with the application of the same legal principles which in earlier times had governed the attitude towards the unbonded, that is, the unowned and unsettled men, which we discussed above. In fact however, this relationship has changed fundamentally. It became determined by the postulate of productive diligence in a new understanding of the term. Public authorities not only capture vagabonds, but also administer them, dictate how and what they earn, regulate their freedom of movement, bind them by force to work or service. What this entails is the most rigorous record and the strictest control of the irregular life and work of the hired population, and the restraint of their mobility by means of regulatory ordinances, carried out by administrative bodies, equipped with appropriate competences and implementing measures.

Therefore, it is necessary, as an entry point to population survey, to list all the servants, wage laborers and people without an "assured means of living." And so in the Universal of 1787, issued against vagabonds and aimed at combating that "species of men" whose "idling" and

vagrancy was "clearly crippling the country with the lack of hands for farming, maintaining workshops and craftsmanship, to the whole brings the most detrimental of results." The King ordered: "in our cities and towns settled and non-settled people shall be registered, as will daily--hirelings, servants and laborers, and this list is to be annually renewed and sent to the Police Department of our Council" (Stanisław August 1787).

The principle of not only recording the poor, but also organizing them in a controlled reservoir of labor forces finds the fullest expression in the project of the former Royal Universal[20] regarding beggars and the poor, whose two points are particularly interesting. The King's orders:

> 1. In all the cities and the township... lords, starostes, owners of any rights to lands, and the magistrates, shall make a distinction between all the unsettled and non-occupied persons of both sexes, entertaining only with a daily hire or domestic service, and the poor begging for alms. Distinction shall be made by the examination of their means of subsistence, and those, who live by earning, in number and manner proportional to the need of every city and township, shall be regimented into a guild. Elders of the same profession shall be appointed overseers and to those overseers both those in search of people for hire and those in need of earning should go. Those simple laborers should carry a certificate of acceptance to such guild from the local authority in writing, so that none of the disorderly or wandering persons should be entering any simple hire or domestic service, under the punishment of public whipping and banishment from the town. Endowment of such certificate and acceptance should without a grave cause never be refused, moreover, without any extortion should it be always given. Guild's laborers of both sexes and their children, liable to the mentioned punishments, should never be publicly asking for alms and to prevent guild's overseers from causing any extortion and harm to others, an apprehensive control of all the authorities is recommended.
>
> 2. All the aforementioned poor persons capable of doing any work, lest they be prevented from indulgence, should as first be taken for military recruitment and for public and private works. Henceforth all the aforementioned offices and authorities in every township or place shall make the number, sex, age and capacity of the poor persons capable of work known publicly every three calendar months.

20 The draft is not annotated, however, on the basis of a paragraph referring to the "Constitution of the last rally of Sejm regarding the appointment of the Commission over Hospitals in the Polish Crown and Grand Duchy of Lithuania" it can be dated for 1775 or 1776 (1775 – adoption of the said Constitution, 1776 – new parliamentary session).

It seems unnecessary to emphasize that any similarities between such an intended organization of laborers and the guilds in proper sense are only external. The association thus designed differed in its character from guilds, that is, from closed and monopolistic production corporations. The purpose of these "laborers' guilds," as can be seen clearly from the cited points, was to subject the unbonded laborers to control, to bind them by dint of organization, to put an end to their free changing of the place and character of work, and thus to disable their characteristic mobility. Such "guilds" were expected to effectively prevent the influx of people from the countryside to larger cities, to stop the unregulated internal migration, along with the seasonal increase in wages. In its essence the project aimed at the stabilization of population of laborers and beggars, the separation of the former from the latter, and bestowing the authorities and employers with the means to control the lives and moves of that population. (…)

The aforementioned ordinances to enumerate the laboring and servant populations were creating conditions for the implementation of similar wishes. Censuses – which, as we know, in the era of Stanisław August are commonly exercised by and recommended to local and municipal authorities – undoubtedly display, as one of their reasons, these tendencies to record the number and location of available labor forces. They provide, in a way, an inventorization of these forces in order to properly dispose and control them.

Such control enabling inventory was based on the process of the stabilization of the population within the boundaries of the city, parish, and poviat. By law, unbonded laborers, servants or beggars should not move freely from one place to another; internal migrations should be subjected to specific regulations and control aimed at curbing this independence, which had hitherto been the privilege of vagabonds. From 1789 on, the injunction of passports, whose implementation was entrusted to Civil-Military Commissions,[21] became one of the means of

Internal migrations should be subjected to specific regulations and control aimed at curbing this independence, which had hitherto been the privilege of vagabonds.

21 "To prevent such a soldier's dissent, as well as villainies of the idle vagabonds, The Commission of Order shall establish the most effective ways of issuing legitimate passports and drafting the stamp to be marked on these passports so that each city, manor, village, inn, mill or hamlet, will detain those without permit for leave or a poviat passport formally issued either by heir or landlord, and will bring them to The Commission of Order, which commissions having interrogated them and proved that they were deserters or vagabonds idling for more than a quarter of a year without occupation in any service, will escort them to police office, and will rightfully demand payment for bringing and holding them. Concerning the vagabonds unfit for soldiering, The Commission will follow separate legal rules. Craftsmen wandering around the country with passport, and

achieving such results.

The main idea, inspiring both the creators and the enforcers of this ordinance, was to combat vagrancy and desertion, along with the crimes accompanying these phenomena. However, we have seen, how liquid was at that time the threshold between the vagabond in today's sense of the term, and a man just wandering freely, often in an honest search of a living – be it by work or domestic service. We have seen that every wandering poor person, having exceeded three months since his last regular employment, was regarded as a vagabond by law, and that in practice every poor stranger, temporarily unemployed, was considered a vagabond and idler as well. Hence the implementation of the passport ordinance against vagabonds, deserters and villains had become a means of containing the population of poor people, be it those who worked or begged, and, above all, those that kept on changing their place of residence and work. Due to the application of this Act, Civil-Military Commissions, in addition to their other functions, became the organs of control and regulation of the movement of the working population, and agencies of organization of the relationships of labor within their jurisdiction.

The passport decree, had it been possible to apply unconditionally and strictly, would not have allowed poor people to move around the territory of the Republic of Poland without a passport or a lordly certificate (often actually replacing a passport), under the sanctions of corporal punishment, detention or designation to the military service. Moreover, the workings of the Commissions in controlling wanderers were to be supported by cooperation of the entire population. Everyone who let pass, hosted or gave work to people without passports, would face severe punishments.

The essential meaning of these passport ordinances was manifested in concrete terms in the files of each of the Commissions.

The wandering man becomes completely subjected to inventorization. When applying for a passport, he must explain the purpose of the journey, provide a certificate proving that he is not a fugitive serf or a runaway servant who has not kept his end of the contract; he needs to find a reliable guarantor and induce general trust. He must tell what he is

---

their servants are not to be considered vagabonds. And who would let pass consciously or deliberately lodge those of such kind, without permit or passport, provided a just proof, shall be punished by the courts of The Commission of Order with a fine of 200 zloty for each knowingly held or overlooked evader, to be paid to the treasury of The Commission for sakes of recompense for the harmed. Had it, *per plebeium*, been impossible, he ought to be subjected to personal punishment" (Volumina Legum, IX, 146, CXIII).

going to do, where and why. In each case, the competence of the Civil-Military Commission, town hall or patrimonial authority is to decide whether the purpose of the applicant's journey is true and justified sufficiently to give him or her a passport. Examples of the refusal to grant passports and their justifications convincingly prove that powerful tools for the control and subjection of the poor populations were clothed in the form of the passport decree.

Once a passport had been issued to the applicant, he obtained along with it a strict specification of the journey destination, as well as its date and purpose.[22] It is true that those able to present evidence of a recently completed contract or a warrant from their lord or employer were able to obtain passports for periods as long as three months, but always with a recommendation to look for their next post urgently, to settle, to comply with the time-limit and route specified in the passport. If they made a detour or exceeded the time frame, they were treated as suspicious, as vagabonds in the formal sense of the word, who could be halted at the crossroads, in taverns, in the villages or in the cities, be it by the Commission guards or by anyone, thus obliged by that fact to notify the local Commission. But free movement turned out to be the most difficult for the unbonded laborer, and only because of the difficulties in the efficient application of the passport rule was it at all possible for such man or woman to freely wander, to work here and there, and lead a way of life overtly incompatible with passport restrictions.[23] Men and women living from wages paid daily in areas remote from their hometown did not have a certificate or a warrant. Forced to apply for a passport and adhere to a specified route and date, they ceased to be who they were, ceased to be freely wandering people, with no strings attached. Among the other things, such was the purpose of the passport decree. Multiple are the examples of how these people were detained, punished with arrest and forced public works, sent to the army or pro-

22 All this is mentioned in the passport. Here is an example: "I give the passport to honest Paweł Dunikowski, of tanner's craft, who goes to Radom where he, for the case he has in the courts and to persuade people to employ him, will stay for a week from now. This certificate with my own hand by pressing the seal, I affirm." (…) (AGAD, KCW. Czersk).

23 There were a couple of reasons why the passport regulation was often bypassed or unfeasible and that therefore a vagabond could freely wander without it. Without the cooperation of the local populations with the Commissions, the passport injunction was merely a fiction. Therefore, each of the Commissions, in the frequently issued universals, reminds repeatedly of the penalties for neglecting the obligation to ask every stranger for a passport or certificate, not to let those who don't have them through villages, not to host them and not to give them work (…).

vided with a passport in which their route was defined precisely, day by day, traced along the main routes back to their place of birth or residence, no matter how long ago had they left it. Reading them, we realize the extent to which passport regulation paralyzed freedom of movement, how it restricted the life of the vagabonds, how it submitted him or her to control and forced stabilization. Civil-Military Commissions adhered strictly to the rules of territorial affiliation, that is, of the stabilization of the poor, both workers and beggars, within their family poviats and even parishes. (…)

However, in the hands of a Civil-Military Commission, the application of the passport decree was more than just a means of regulating and controlling the movements of the wage earning population across the country. It was also a tool for regulating labor relations, and above all the relationship between employer and employee.

In what ways? Employers quite rightly considered passports to provide the means to "ensure the loyalty of their once employed idler" (KCW. Czersk, 3; 161). Both the mechanism of issuing the passports (which could not be obtained without a certificate of departure from work to the satisfaction of the employer), as well as the organized capturing of every traveler without a certificate, contributed to the impediment, if not to the prevention, of escape from service or abandoning the work before its scheduled end. Sooner or later, every fugitive had to fall into the hands of the Commission, and our files show that many of them were indeed caught, punished and forced to finish the remaining time or task.[24] On the other hand, the Commissions strictly observed

24 "Michałowski, without completing the begun year, withheld from the service indecently and precipitately... therefore the commission, wanting to prevent such obscenities of servants towards their masters, orders him to return and complete his services". (KCW. Kalisz, Varia I, 36; 369); "having escaped from service twice, Bartłomiej, punished with 30 whips on the naked body, at the market square in Radomsko, was adjured to finish the year as he was ordered". (KCW. Radomsko, 22, fol. 224); "They admitted that they had escaped from the aforementioned peasants for whom they labored"… The commission, after punishing them with the whips, "adjourned them to return to the household where they served and finish the labor undertaken there", (KCW. Radomsko, 22, fol. 192). Notifying employers about the capturing of the fugitive servants is common, documented by multiple examples, especially in the files of the Commissions of Czersk and Kalisz. For example: "Józef Went served a pharmacian in Radom and for his displeasure fled from there" (…) The Commissions are so strict in observing the terms of the contract, that even in cases of the confirmed abuse of a servant by the employer, Commissions would still order that the term should be finished, and only admonish the cruel master; for a telling example see: (KCW. Rawa, 5, fol. 82-83). A worker or servant could find help from the Commission only in

the prohibition on hiring for work or domestic service, on hosting and letting pass those without passports, and within poviats those without certificates. There are many references to financial penalties and flagellation of the peasants and innkeepers for disregarding these bans.[25] In this way, attempts were made to deprive our vagabonds of their ease of movement and the support that they used to find in the prevailing custom – that of accepting these "throughfarers" whenever they were needed, without inquiring about their past, of shelter being provided by innkeepers and peasants, and of donating of alms or food. It was also clear that the circumstances of the freedom of movement and ease of getting work on sight allowed liquidity and neglect of the obligations assumed by the worker, which rendered the certainty and steadiness of working hands, so in demand from the employers, completely illusory. For "how this or that plebe is to refrain from disloyalty, laziness and scandal – wrote the 'Historical and Political Diary' – once he knows that they will accept him wherever he turns?" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 570). The activities of the Civil-Military Commissions to guarantee compliance with contracts and against hiring without a certificate from a former employer, and finally severe punishments for refusing to allocate workers and their services among the employers, were undoubtedly aimed at fundamental changes being made to the living conditions of the worker and servant. Held under the sway of regulations, threatened with penalties for not complying with them, subjected to control, the wage worker was meant to play the role that was given to him or her by the ideology of work: the role of a "hard-working" man, fully subordinated to the demands of employers.

But the department of Civil-Military Commissions goes even further. Entitled to combat laziness, which each detained person is blamed of, Commissions readily create work, organize it, force people to work and arrest the obstinate. Arrests become reservoirs of working hands for employers looking for people for labor or domestic service.

However, the fact of detained people being gathered under the

a case where, despite fulfilling their obligations to the employer, they were refused the certificate. In such cases, if the person concerned could prove it, she would receive a certificate from the Commission, "so she was not confused with a vagrant" and allowed to look for a new job. However, we did not find any mention of penalties for employers, while an employee terminating a contract was always penalized with flagellation. Examples in the files of all Commissions.

25 Examples: Starzewski was fined 200 zlotys for accepting Dziechciński "without a passport"; the mayor of Mieszków was sentenced for employing a fugitive servant to a week of arrest and 50 zlotys fine. (KCW. Kalisz, Varia I, 36; 264-265) (…).

custody of the Commission led to questions of what to do with them. On the one hand, both the municipalities and the Commissions lacked the resources to sustain such a large number of idle people,[26] while on the other hand it would stand in contradiction with the principle of industriousness and upbringing focused on work, had the voluntary idling been punished only with a forced otiosity. All three of these considerations – financial, penal and educational – combine in stimulating the Commissions to foster the forced employment of prisoners in public works.[27] The prevailing dictum is to "eradicate these well-off rascals and force them to naturally feed themselves from the work of their hands," as it is formulated by Tadeusz Kościuszko in his memorandum to the Commission of Radziejów. He indicates ways of "using the caught rascals": "There is a need – he writes – that the Rd. Commissions in every province of their voivodeship or poviat, imploy such people and take use of them, be it for the pavements in the city, where there are such funds, or for the dykes, to make roads, ditches, bridges..." (KCW. Radziejów, 2, fol. 260-261). Indeed, all the Commissions we know often directed detained people to the local authorities for works like cleaning the city, paving works, etc.[28] In the case of the Civil-Mili-

26 All the commissions encounter problems with feeding the arrested, for which no funds were legally granted. Hence notes with queries about how to steer clear of this trouble with the sudden increase in the number of detained vagabonds. The Civil-Military Commission of Sandomierz and Wiślica poviats writes in the report to Police Commission: "that having those vagabonds brought about, for which no fund is established by any law, asks The Rd Police Commission to resolve this doubt and indicate who shall guard and who shall feed these vagabonds? How should be the prison for them and who shall build it?" (AGAD, Metryka Litewska, IX, 44, fol. 333). See also: KCW. Kalisz, Varia I, 36; 48: The Commission states that there are no funds to keep the prisoners detained because of a lack of passports.

27 Grodzkie Kaliskie, Varia I, 36;. 68, June 31, 1790: "When, under the law, people not bestowed with a passport from any higher authority, as vagabonds get apprehended and numerously brought to the placement of their Commission, they are left without any fund for their sustenance, therefore such Commissions should make these vagabonds be useful for the community and devise a sure way for them to maintain their living. The Commission recommends to the magistrate of Kalisz to adjourn that for all the works for which a worker could be hired, rather these vagrants should henceforth be taken, with payment for one man of 15 groszy per day, of which one half should be kept for victuals for the employed, and the other for the sustenance of other prisoners, of ill-health or unfit for work."

28 E.g. The C-M. Commission of Kalisz often gives prisoners to the magistrate in order for them to "besom the pavements" or "to the factory had by that town" (see: KCW. Kalisz, Varia I, 36; 32, 38, 61, 169; KCW. Czersk, 7, 186, 31; numerous examples of sending the detainees "for pavement" in: KCW. Radomsko, 22.

tary Commission of Sandomierz, we encounter an extremely interesting project to organize and finance big public works, in order to employ arrested "vagabonds," and, no more no less, rebuild the entire city with their hands: "Szydłów, once a great city," is now in ruins, its houses destroyed, walls decayed. The Commission has devised measures to "from materials at hand erect on the prior foundations" walls for tenement houses "suit to the lineament proper for the needs of dwelling." Houses were then meant to be sold to citizens, for the amount "equal to the cost of making them, in order to not only provision houses, but also to give work to the idlers" (AGAD, Metryka Litewska, IX, 44, fol. 332, 1791). There are documents about the commissioning of tools – shovels and wheelbarrows – so that the arrested did not "turn useless" and if a "rascal" would come across, "he had implements for his labor and where to use them" (KCW. Radziejów, 2, fol. 389, October 1790). It is common to punish the caught with two or three weeks of "labor on wheelbarrow" (Kaliskie Grodzkie, Varia I, 36; 36). After having earned for their subsistence (Kaliskie Grodzkie, Varia I, 36; 36, 48)[29] – which was meant as a deterrence from idleness – prisoners were released, but with a clear order to find a job or a regular post in domestic service.

Moreover, Commissions encouraged the citizens in need of a laborer to take them from the Commissions' arrests. Archives provide numerous examples of detainees being employed by third parties. The Commission of Lublin issued an announcement that townspeople and Jews were encouraged to use prisoners "for Works," such as: "digging pits for foundations, tidying streets, working in gardens, chopping and cutting trees, and for painting factories alike" (Kermisz). (…)

"Industriousness" as the aim of upbringing. Wishes and hopes

> Our good rulers and statisticians complain ceaselessly at the widespread deficiency of the able subjects. Not without a cause this deficiency is observed. Yet what till now has been done to remedy this? Laws have been issued and people have been encouraged to lace the old ways of earning money with new ones; here and there they were promised help, even prize: all this is good and remarkable; and only a pity that idleness more has power over people than all the encouragement to diligence; and only a pity that old habit of life unstable and of lazy doing cannot be expunged except by better habits and effective and long

in the files of all of the Commissions, especially in Kalisz.

29 The city's treasury was supposed to pay in advance for the subsistence of the prisoners and subsequently deduce the paid money from their earnings.

> exercises. Thus let us not be mocked by vain hopes! This generation of adults and old people, in this respect as in any other, except for rare ones in rare circumstances, cannot be improved. Had someone wanted to nurture the people, educate the nation, form people rational, prudent, aware, diligent and steady, he should leave in peace the old and the adults, and turn their intendance toward that matter, which can still be moulded, for it has not aged yet. The nation can be conformed to industry, and to any other moral virtue, in schools only, and nowhere else. (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 1071-1072)

The public opinion of the time believed that an appropriate upbringing and early introduction of children and young people into the new system and new working conditions, primarily in industry, could pave the way to similar results, which in the case of the older generation were achieved only by coercion, if at all. This evoked a great interest of the press, with elementary education, provided by parish schools, clearly in the spirit of Enlightenment. Such schools, by means of their curriculum and educational principles, were to keep pace with and foster the social changes and economic exigencies of the day (Kot 1934, 31-38). It is exactly along these lines that the Commission of National Education and its operatives understand the functions of the parish schools, attaching great importance to them. The Commission of National Education attempts at their establishment, against all the difficulties, against the resistance of the masses of conservative gentry, and even despite the fact that the Sejm had authorized it to organize schooling exclusively for the youth of noble origin. The Commission ordered the parish schools not only to "instruct people about the religion and about the duties of their estate," but also "about labors and industry" (Smoleński 1891, 424-425). A project of Popławski regarding the parish school curricula is interesting here, as it puts a special emphasis on the preparation of children to work in industry and production (Kot 1934, 70). Hugo Kołłątaj calls for such education of young people, "which would endow them with an assured craft of such a kind, that provides the means for living in all the life's plights" (Kołłątaj 1790, 193).

The enlightened public opinion kept up to date with the processes of establishing the popular schools abroad, especially those set up with a view to meeting the needs of industry and following the direction of the industrial schools. "Pamiętnik" discusses in detail the new type of parish school in the Czech Republic, where children were taught spinning and industrial work. It writes, that "this invention of combining education with work and instilling the Industry in the popular schools" is worth attention of all the countries and all their legislators (Pamiętnik

Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 1067). Children, apart from the theoretical studies, are also assigned practical works; they visit industrial enterprises, are instructed about the meaning of "industry," learn to admire diligence and industriousness. The main purpose of these parish schools is to "uproot the vagrancy, idleness, and poverty that arises from it, along with begging and moral decay and in their place ingrain diligence, industriousness and all the civil virtues, and make them be identical to innate leanings" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 1076). These educational efforts were supposed to create a "generation of people eager to display their diligence, attention, hard work and industry, in a manner alike to how most of the lower-class people parade with their sluggishness, laziness, ineptitude and even some kind of animal indifference and carelessness" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 1076). "Pamiętnik" enthuses over these schools, calls for them to be established in Poland, expecting great economic benefits. "What affluence would it bring to the country, if millions of Children were to be taught in such schools for different industries and profits! And what prosperity for the homeland and the next generations could be awaited, if they had a chance to draw their customs and habits from the schools of such kind" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 1134).

The previously mentioned text – *Project of establishment of the factories* demonstrates clearly the extent to which the interest in parish schools was coupled with the economic needs of the moment, with this "economic" upbringing of the young generations aimed at providing the working hands to the industry. We find here a paragraph obliging teachers to steer children towards factory work, and providing special rewards for fruitful efforts in this direction:

> Parish school teachers who within one voivodeship would have encouraged the largest number of children, be it of Christian or Jewish faith, to bring help to the factories, and by so doing fulfilled the wish not only ours, but also of the king and the estates, will be granted award by the treasury comission (PEF, III, 10).

Independently of the parish schools, another issue addressed was the necessity to establish "industrial schools" which would give young people qualifications for industrial work (Dembowski 1791).

If, as we have seen, parish schools were given generally economically oriented tasks, the upbringing of orphans and poor children led by the charity institutions was subordinated both principally and practically to the needs of the industry. The press addressed the need to teach

The press addressed the need to teach children crafts and prepare them for industrial work.

children crafts and prepare them for industrial work. One of the authors calls for directing the children and orphans from hospitals "to various manufacturers for learning" (Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny 1787, 204). Wybicki envisages setting up hospitals for orphans, in which "for various crafts and arts they shall be trained... for the factories most needed in our country, and once they've learned they should leave and go in the country, or rather be apprehended by the manufactory companies" (Wybicki 1778, 40-41). The Police Commission, which, as we have seen, in its policing and order activities constantly aimed at satisfying the needs of the factories, had announced in one of the universals that "by an imminent arrangement, a school for orphans will be organized, as it is the most necessary for the state, the factories and the workshops" (AGAD, Akta Ekonomiczne m. st. Warszawy, 857). We have mentioned already the idea of establishing orphanages in factories themselves, for their use and needs.

Work in production from an early age, according to the opinion of the time, was supposed to prevent children from adopting bad habits and from them getting used to generally depreciated "idleness." This attitude was adopted with regard to children in villages, as well as the poor children in the cities and towns, Christian and Jewish alike. Moszyński, formulating the postulate to *appliquer de bonne heure la jeunesse au travail qui lui est propre* ("early application of youth to work suitable for them") (Biblioteka Ordynacji Krasińskich, MS. 748, fol. 207), expresses a generally accepted view. Moreover, the public opinion of the time is clearly focused on industrial productivity and work in factories. The press held up England as an example here, where eight-year-old children worked in industrial enterprises. Parents are urged to "send their children, if they're unable to work in agriculture, to earn money in factories" (PEF, III, paragraph 10).

This raising of children for industry and involving them in wage labor in factories was considered to be such a momentous measure for the cause of creating a new man, and such a revolution in the management of human energies, that even enlightened "men of feeling" in the late eighteenth century were earnestly moved by the productive work of children. Father Sierakowski, the industrial entrepreneur and enthusiast of making the poor "idlers" productive, so typical of his time, writes with affectation about nine-year-old children employed in spinning at his factory: "to see them working together was the most pleasant sight and anyone looking at them would be touched most deeply" (Sierakowski 1797, 2-3).

References

In AGAD (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych) [*The Central Archive of Old Files*]
Files of:
– KCW. (Komisja Cywilino-Wojskowa) [*Civil-Military Commision of*] Czersk
– KCW. Radomsko 22, 35, 38
– KCW. Wieluń, 16, 18
– KCW. Wizna, 5
– KCW. Kalisz, Kaliskie Grodzkie Varia: I, 36
– Metryka Litewska [*Lithuanian Metrics*], IX
– Komisja Policji [*Police Commission*] 24, 44
– Zbiór Popielów [*Popielów Collection*] 205
– Akta Ekonomiczne m. st. Warszawy [*Economical Files of the Capital City of Warsaw*]
In Archiwum Krakowa [*Archives of Cracow*]:
– Files of KCW. Książ and Lelów, 166, 174, 176
– Files of KCW. Cracow and Proszów, 165
– Manuscript 194 – „Urządzenie wewnętrzne fabryki sukiennej" (*On internal organization of cloth factory*)
In Archiwum Czartoryskich [*Czartoryski's Archive*]:
– Manuscript 807, 901
In Archiwum Skarbowe [*Treasury's Archive*]:
– File XXX, 31, 34
In Bibiloteka Ordynacji Krasińskich w Warszawie:
− Manuscript 748, 749, 751
In Collegium Warszawskie Scholarum Piarum [*Warsaw Collegium Scholarum Piarum*]:
– *Volumina Legum*. vol. VII, IX
Dembowski, Sebastyan. 1791. *J. S. Dembowskiego, komisarza cywilno-wojskowego Rzecz krótka o fabryce Sukiennej Krakowskiej. Dla wiadomości publicznej do druku podana w Krakowie roku 1791*. Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności.
"Dziennik Handlowy" [*Journal of Commerce*]. 1787.
Kermisz, Józef. *Lublin i Lubelskie w dobie Sejmu Czteroletniego* (typescript of doctoral thesis).
Kołłątaj, Hugon. 1790. *Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego*. Warszawa: Drukarnia Gröllowska Nadworna
Korzon, Tadeusz. 1897. *Wewnętrzne dzieje Polski za Stanisława Augusta (1764 - 1794) badania historyczne ze stanowiska ekonomicznego i admi-*

nistracyjnego. vol. 2. Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności

Kot, Stanisław. 1934. *Historia wychowania*. vol. 2. Lwów: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Książek Szkolnych

„Monitor". 1777.

PEF – *Projekt od Deputacji do egzaminu Komisji Skarbu Koronnego wyznaczonej urządzenia fabryk w państwach Rzeczypospolitej* (n.d.)

„Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny" [*Historical-Political Diary*]. 1790.

„Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny". 1791.

„Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny". 1792.

Sierakowski, Wacław. 1797. *Rękodzieło Fabryki Sukienney które w Krakowie 1786 dla wielu pożytków i zatrudnienia ubogich pracą iest ustanowione przez WJX. Wacława hrabię Sierakowskiego proboszcza katedralnego krakowskiego, iako fabryki sukienney protektora, w trzech częściach zawarte pracą i kosztem Autora*. Cz. 1–3. Krakowie: Drukarnia Szkoły Główney

Smoleński, Władysław. 1891. *Przewrót umysłowy w Polsce wieku XVIII. Studya historyczne,*

Rutkowski, Jan. 1921. *Poddaństwo włościan w XVIII wieku w Polsce i niektórych innych krajach Europy*. Poznań: Gebethner i Wolff.

———. 1925. *Zagadnienie reform rolnej w Polsce XVIII w.* Poznań.

Stanisław, August. 1787. „Uniwersał z 25 maja 1787". *Gazeta Warszawska* 46.

Wybicki, Józef. 1778. *Listy Patryotyczne Do Jasnie Wielmoznego Ex Kanclerza Zamoyskiego Prawa Układaiącego Pisane*. Warszawa: Drukarnia Gröllowska Nadworna.

NINA ASSORODOBRAJ (1908-1999) – polish Marxist historian and sociologist. She was professor of the history social thought at Warsaw University. From 1963 to 1968 she was a chairman of Polish Sociological Association. She was an author of several books, including *Początki klasy robotniczej: problem rąk roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki stanisławowskiej* [The Beginnings of the Working Class. The problem of the working hands in Polish industry in the epoch of Stanisław August] (Warszawa 1946); *Założenie teoretyczne historiografii Lelewela* [Theory of Lelewel's historiography] (Warszawa 1955); *Les conditions sociales de la formation des théories de l'évolution et du progrès*, (Paris 1956).

Citation: Assorodobraj, Nina. 2020. "The Beginnings of the Working Class. The problem of the working hands in Polish industry in the epoch of Stanisław August (fragments)". Translated by Jędrzej Brzeziński. *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 67−103.
DOI: 10.14746/prt2020.2.4

Autor: Nina Assorodobraj
Tytuł: Początki klasy robotniczej. Problem rąk roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki stanisławowskiej (fragmenty)
Abstrakt: Fragmenty książki *Początki klasy robotniczej* (na podstawie pracy doktorskiej *Les débuts de la classe ouvrière* z 1936 r.) opublikowanej po polsku w roku 1946 dają wgląd w historię „ludzi luźnych" w osiemnastowiecznej Polsce. Tekst pisany w oparciu o archiwalne dokumenty, zarządzenia i fragmenty z prasy ujmuje problem z wielu punktów widzenia, pokazując złożoną historię tej grupy społecznej i tego, jak za pomocą kolejnych decyzji prawnych i administracyjnych była ona systematycznie delegalizowana i asymilowana. Niejednorodna populacja ludzi luźnych, podejmujących się najróżniejszych zajęć i prac, z jednej strony widziana jest jako zbiorowisko przestępców i próżniaków, z drugiej strony stanowi zasób siły roboczej, którego rodzący się przemysł bardzo potrzebuje.
Słowa kluczowe: ludzie luźni, klasa robotnicza, industrializacja, historia Polski osiemnastego wieku

CLAUDIA SNOCHOWSKA-GONZALEZ

Exercises in expansion. Colonial threads in the National Democracy's turn toward discipline

1895 was the first year of the "Brazilian fever" in Galicia, i.e. a migration wave of peasant masses from Galicia to Brazil. In my article, I analyze the content of the 1895 "transitional" volume of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* ("All-Polish Review"), previously called *Przegląd Emigracyjny* (Migration Review), when the Lviv journal passed into the hands of the National League. I shall discuss the ways in which folk masses were presented in particular articles, and reflect on the meaning of the concept of colonization used there. In the articles of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, the idea of Polish colonization (i.e. the settlement in Brazil and the United States of the peasant masses expelled by poverty from their home villages in partitioned Poland) began to intertwine with the idea of the colonization of these masses – attempts to ensure that they would remain Polish and Catholic, and with the idea of the expansion of Polish national body, so that it takes its proper place in the global capitalist economy. I argue that dealing with Polish colonisation played significant role in the National Democracy's "turn toward discipline," usually associated with another example of spontaneous mobilization of the masses – the 1905 revolution.

Keywords: National Democracy, the peasant masses, Brazilian fever, migration, Polish colonization, *Przegląd Wszechpolski* ("All-Polish Review")

In the mid-1890s, Galicia, like the Congress Kingdom a few years before, was overwhelmed by "Brazilian fever."[1] Villagers sold all their belongings and set off for Hamburg, Bremen, Genoa or Trieste, to cross the Atlantic and reach the promised land – Brazil. Their hopes were quite obvious. After the abolition of slavery in 1888, the Brazilian government tried to make up for labour shortages by inviting migrants from Europe to settle or to find employment on coffee plantations. Those interested were offered free tickets for a ship to São Paulo and assistance at the beginning of their life on the new continent. Peasants from Galicia, troubled by poverty and constantly threatened by hunger in their home villages, did not have much to lose. They went away with their whole families, and later wrote letters to their neighbours and relatives, encouraging them to follow suit.[2]

Of course, the "Brazilian fever," though spectacular, was but one element of the vast diversity of nineteenth-century peasant migration. By World War I, a total of 110,000 Polish[3] peasants had left for South America, compared to nearly 2 million who had relocated to the United States (Mazurek 2006, 30–31). However, in the years 1895–1896, the unprecedented total of 17-25 thousand people migrated from Galicia to Brazil. This meant that migration to Brazil temporarily exceeded that

1 The research for this article was supported financially by the Polish National Science Centre, research grant Opus 16, 2018/31/B/HS3/00915, project "The nation's body and soul. Volkist motifs in Polish early national-democratic thought (1895–1918)" conducted at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences. The draft of this paper was presented at the conference "Wokół historii społecznej: Nacjonalizm i autorytaryzm" in 2019 at the University of Warsaw, Poland. I would like to express my gratitude to Karolina Grzegorczyk, Katarzyna Nowakowska, Wiktor Marzec and two anonymous reviewers for insightful remarks and helpful comments on various stages of my work on this paper.

2 On the size of peasant labour migration to South America at the end of the 19th century, and on the experiences of migrants from the moment they decided to leave to the moment they settled on another continent, see, among others: Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973; Groniowski 1972; 1984; Kula 1983; 2012; Mazurek 2006; Pilch 1984. The collection of letters sent in the years 1890/1891 by peasants who left for Brazil and the United States, mainly from three villages of the Congress Kingdom, is particularly noteworthy. These letters, written in Polish, Russian or Yiddish, were requisitioned by tsarist censorship office and thus survived in the archives (Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973). Although they relate to the first wave of "Brazilian fever," i.e. 1890–1891 and to peasants from the Congress Kingdom, not Galicia, they can be treated as a valuable source also for the phenomenon analyzed in this paper.

3 I use the term "Poland" and "Polish" to refer to the former lands of the Polish Commonwealth and its inhabitants. Until 1918, Poland was under the Partitions and did not exist as an independent state.

to the United States (Pilch 1984, 267). It was the "fever" that became the subject of several literary works (authored by writers such as Maria Konopnicka or Adolf Dygasiński) and contributed to the discussion about the significance of the migration of peasant masses from partitioned Poland and – more broadly – the significance of these masses themselves.

In this article, I want to focus on the importance attributed to the migration to Brazil by the National Democratic movement (Narodowa Demokracja – Endecja), and on the function the discussion about Polish migration to South America played in the development of the Endecja and its ideology. The shaping of the ideology of the National Democracy can be seen as an attempt to give a new explanation for and reaction to Poland's dependence (because earlier proposals of such answers had failed). The most important feature of the National Democracy as a modern political formation is its "turn toward discipline," toward a vision of a hierarchical, disciplined community organized in accordance with the principles of integral nationalism (Krzywiec 2009; Marzec 2014; 2016; Porter 1999; 2011). The authors dealing with this topic, however, argue that the combination of factors that led to this turn became most evident in 1905–1907, and that these factors included, above all, the massive, revolutionary mobilisation of workers, which required a response in the form of the Endecja's new way of thinking. In my article I propose that, when constructing the genealogy of the "turn toward discipline," we should also refer to the events that had taken place ten years earlier. It was in response to the "Brazilian fever" that the "global" ambitions in the Endecja's discourse began to show: the attempts to recognize Poland's position in the global capitalist economy and to test the possibility to compete for influence in overseas lands. Even if these ambitions were not a big "colonial" success, even if they were finally rejected as fantasies by the Endeks themselves, they should, in my opinion, be regarded as an expression of the emerging Endecja's ideology that, ten years before the 1905 revolution, showed not only a tendency to discipline the spontaneous actions of the peasant masses, but also a puzzling (and paradoxical) closeness with the essential features of the colonial discourse, thus presenting reality as a zero-sum game and as a domain of subordination and forcing submission.

To prove this, I will analyze articles from the initial year of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* ("All-Polish Review") – the founding periodical of the Endeks. This journal was surprisingly strongly connected with the circles of the organisers of the folk migration to Brazil – Lviv lawyers, economists and activists trying to place it within a rational framework.

Even if these ambitions were not a big "colonial" success, even if they were finally rejected as fantasies by the Endeks themselves, they should, in my opinion, be regarded as an expression of the emerging Endecja's ideology that, ten years before the 1905 revolution, showed not only a tendency to discipline the spontaneous actions of the peasant masses, but also a puzzling (and paradoxical) closeness with the essential features of the colonial discourse, thus presenting reality as a zero-sum game and as a domain of subordination and forcing submission.

I shall examine how this migration was described, the ways in which the editors understood the term "colonization," and what handy applications they found for it. I shall demonstrate the place the peasant masses began to occupy in the Endecja's emerging worldview – of the predicted subject and, as it turned out, also the object of colonization. This will allow me to capture the key concept of the National-Democratic ideology: the concept of the nation as a living body, a natural element that deserves its proper place among other living bodies – other elements participating in the struggle for existence. I shall consider the many dissonances, inconsistencies and shear clumsiness of the writing about the living body and soul of the nation, which were typical of the language of the initial issues of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, in order to observe the forging of such political imagination.

The Misery of Galicia

First, however, I would like to take a look at Galicia in the second half of the 19th century. The demographic transformation here took place late, and initially it did not reduce human fertility. The birth rate remained at a level typical for the societies of the old demographic order, while the number of deaths gradually stabilised (Zamorski 1991, 145–146). The poorly developed industry was not able to absorb the growing surplus population, while the productivity of agriculture remained very low. The prevailing expulsive economic model (Pilch 1984, 9) manifested itself in a series of crises and natural disasters, and the subsequent waves of migration. Towards the end of the century, the grain market experienced a particularly acute crisis (Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973). Stanisław Szczepanowski[4] presented a picture of the Galician rural population's living conditions in his famous work *Nędza Galicji w cyfrach* ("The Misery of Galicia in figures"; Szczepanowski 1888). Based on data from 1883, he described an exhausted social body whose primary cells,

4 Stanisław Szczepanowski (1846–1900) – economist, liberal, supporter of the idea of organic work and an entrepreneur developing the Polish oil industry, his career also included work in the Great British Ministry of India. Among many ideas for changing the situation in Galicia, such as, for example, supporting industrialization, he pointed to the need to dismantle the myths which maintained the country's "economic anaemia" and destroyed its productivity. Interestingly, among the false economic views supporting the poor state of affairs, he pointed to the scourge of anti-Semitism and the practice of exaggerating the "destructive influences" of socialism.

the bodies of the working peasants, were inefficient due to malnutrition, and were malnourished because their work was inefficient. "Each Galician works for a quarter of a man, and eats for a half" – wrote Szczepanowski (1888, 22). "Peasants do produce cereal, beans, eggs, butter and other products here, but most of that is sold to pay taxes" (Szczepanowski 1888, 48). Szczepanowski's findings were confirmed by Napoleon Cybulski in his work on the nutrition of the rural people of Galicia (Cybulski 1894). Cybulski concluded that a significant proportion of the population remained permanently half-starved (Cybulski 1894, 176): "In Złotniki, Podhajce county, they usually survive on borscht and potatoes alternately, rarely using any dairy, and on nettle and goosefoot as well. In winter they have the same dishes, whether on an ordinary day or when fasting" (Cybulski 1894, 52). The obvious effect of this status quo was a mortality rate higher than in other countries (Szczepanowski wrote about the average life expectancy in Galicia of 27 years for men and 28.5 for women, while in England it was 40 years for men and 42 years for women; to Szczepankowski's shock, as he reported, the figures were higher even than in Bengal[5]). Other effects of malnutrition included susceptibility to epidemics, low suitability for military service, as well as general apathy, lack of the initiative and energy needed to improve one's fate. Therefore, peasant migration, although in this context it resembled pulling oneself out of the mire by one's own hair, seemed a natural way out of this vicious circle and towards a better life.[6]

5 Comparing the situation in Galicia with the situation in countries considered to be at the lowest level of civilization is a frequent and significant rhetorical device. Also Napoleon Cybulski (Cybulski 1894, 177) wrote that the inhabitants of Galicia ate worse than the inhabitants of Central Africa. The aim of such comparisons was to cause shock, based on a belief that Polish lands were at a higher civilizational level than Russia, let alone Bengal or Central Africa.

6 In his work, Szczepanowski constructed a long-lasting image of Galicia as a land of backwardness and deviation from the norms of civilization set by the West. According to this image, Galicia was juxtaposed (also by other authors) with Western European countries, but also with all Austria-Hungary and with the Russian and Prussian partitions, as a land of misery. Tomasz Kargol (Kargol 2009) discusses the thesis of the alleged unusual economic and industrial backwardness of Galicia in relation to the Kingdom, and Michał Krajkowski (Krajkowski 2015) describes the diversity of images of Galician backwardness in 19th century literature. Szczepanowski's rhetorical exaggeration and putting Galicia in a hierarchically arranged sequence of regions and states served his ideological goals; however, it remains an indisputable fact that the migrating peasants escaped the real threat of hunger (contemporary studies on this topic: see e.g. Franaszek 2016; in more popular form – Kopczyński 2018). The most painful fragments of the previously mentioned letters of the peasants – migrants from the Congress King-

What is interesting for us, however, is the manner in which Szczepanowski combines the issues of the nation's existence, the condition of the domestic economy, and the condition of the masses of starving peasants. They are one and the same, which allows Szczepanowski to conclude that the development of the entire national economy will make it possible "to obtain a reliable basis for political and social activity and to create a nation, where at the moment only material for a nation can be found" (Szczepanowski 1888, XIX). This "material for a nation" was, of course, the emaciated peasants. They would not become conscious citizens, participants of social, political and, above all, economic life, the ideal entrepreneurial individuals, without leaving the vicious circle of inefficiency and the misery that perpetuates it. At the same time, in Szczepanowski's visions, society is beginning to resemble not only a body, with its basic cells – working human individuals, but a large enterprise, getting rich by saving and work, benefiting from the strength and energy of individuals, rather than wasting it irrationally. The masses of starving Galician peasants are still but material for a nation. The transformation, identified with a prosperous economy, will only materialize if we stop accepting the neglect of the basic existential needs of the lower classes. Szczepanowski proposes moving away from the tradition of treating these classes as inexhaustible, eternal natural resources. In accordance with this disastrous tradition, we have become accustomed to thinking that, as he sarcastically writes, "Providence has destined frogs for the stork, hay for the ox, thistle for the donkey, and leftovers and scraps for the peasant" (Szczepanowski 1888, 48). He suggests taking care of each individual, so that he or she can fully develop his or her productivity. Until this goal is achieved, migration will be the obvious choice for those who want to improve their fate. Abroad, in favourable circumstances, "the valuable assets and hidden qualities of [the Polish worker and peasant] that we have not recognised" will be properly appreciated. "An American, an Englishman or a German can discover, appreciate and use them. Only we see him as useless" (Szczepanowski 1888, 13).

Szczepanowski's book made a huge impression on his contempora-

dom (Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973) included those in which they encouraged their relatives to go to Brazil or the United States with the promise that in the new country they would eat like landed gentry, and the most common expression of concern about the fate of those who stayed at home were the questions about how they had made it through the winter. Therefore, regardless of the publicistic nature of Szczepanowski's theses, it should be assumed that the fear of hunger and freezing was a constant component of the peasant life in Poland, regardless of whether they came from Galicia or the Kingdom.

ries. However, his proposed reactions to the misery of the peasant masses, rooted in the ethos of organic work and in the liberal paradigm equating social life to economic life, were not the only ones. They were also not the only proposals aimed at finding a new utility for these masses. As the "Brazilian fever" began to consume Galician villages, and as the peasants' movement began to gain importance, giving political subjectivity to the ones who stayed in Galicia, the newly crystallising National-Democratic movement put forward its own proposal. The proposal constituted an innovative transformation of liberal organicism, and at the same time an answer to the question that preoccupied people: is mass peasant migration a danger for Poland? Who loses by it, and who can profit from it?

Rational colonization in the national spirit

The migration of peasant masses to Brazil surprised Polish society. It seemed to be taking place spontaneously, without the participation of any institutions other than migration agents (Michał Starczewski [Starczewski 2012b] proves that the sinister role of the latter was greatly exaggerated). At the same time, few people in partitioned Poland knew anything about the situation in Brazil. A small group of such people gathered in Galicia. In 1889, at the Second Congress of Polish Lawyers and Economists in Lviv, Stanisław Kłobukowski, a traveller, economist and member of the Polish (later National) League, demanded protection for the people migrating across the ocean. His aim was not so much to support their material improvement, but to "transplant our nationality to the other hemisphere" (*Drugi Zjazd*... 1891, 239). The way to achieve this goal would be to establish a colony, i.e. clusters of Polish emigrants. Avoiding dispersion would facilitate the cultivation of Polish nationality. The congress decided to set up a commission (Stanisław Kłobukowski, Józef Kleczyński, Stanisław Szczepanowski, Józef Mączewski and Alfons Parczewski were elected [*Drugi Zjazd*... 1891, 252]) to examine the Polish migration, and to present the conclusions during the following meeting of lawyers and economists. At the third Congress, in Poznań in 1893, the commission could present not only the conclusions from the questionnaires completed in the villages from which and to which the peasantry migrated, but also the news of the establishment in Lviv in 1892 of the journal: *Przegląd Emigracyjny* (Migration Review). The purpose of this journal was to promote economic connections with migrants from Poland, and to disseminate the information needed to make a rational decision to leave.

A Lviv lawyer, Wiktor Ungar, who was also a member of the National League and editor of *Przegląd Emigracyjny*, made a speech about such connections, describing them as a defence against denationalisation. Such a defence would be possible when "we connect our colonies to the metropolis with material ties, and the public opinion notices that mutual communication can bring not only spiritual benefits" (Ungar 1894, 191). In the same speech, Ungar presented the ideal of "Greater Poland, i.e. the cultural union of all Polish societies regardless of nationality" (Ungar 1894, 191), which was to be a prefiguration of the all-Polish idea (*idea wszechpolska*) and an equivalent of the imperial idea of Greater Britain (sic!). Kłobukowski and Ungar also announced the establishment of the Trade and Geographic Association that would take care of maintaining economic connections with the Diaspora. The organization was indeed established in 1894, and *Przegląd Emigracyjny* became its official press outlet (Skrzypek 1966, 105; *Przegląd Emigracyjny* nr 8 of 15 April 1894). In January 1895, the biweekly was renamed *Przegląd Wszechpolski* to emphasize the association between the idea of connection with the Diaspora and the all-Polish idea. On March 15, 1895, Roman Dmowski,[7] who at that time settled in Lviv, published his first article in *Przegląd Wszechpolski*. On July 15, Dmowski took upon him not only the task of editing the magazine (although Ungar still formally signed himself as editor), but also writing (under different pen names) most of its articles. In July, *Przewodnik Handlowo-Geograficzny* (Commercial and Geographical Guide) began to be published as a supplement to *Przegląd Wszechpolski*. The *Guide* took on the more mundane topic of establishing economic relations, while *Przegląd* focused on the all-Polish idea and unifying all parts of the Polish body and soul, whether under the Partitions or in exile. The chronicle of events in the "Polish colonies" could be found in both magazines, even though they highlighted slightly different aspects of them (see Garlicki 1966; Skrzypek 1966; Jakubowska 1988).[8]

7 Roman Dmowski (1864–1939) – the main ideologist of Polish nationalism, co-founder of the National League (1893), National Democratic Party (1897), Camp of Great Poland (1926), and National Party (1928). Polish delegate to the Paris conference in 1919, supporter of the incorporation concept of the nation state and opponent to the Minority Rights Treaty forced on Poland by the Allies. Although after regaining independence he did not hold any major state functions, he exerted a huge influence on the shape of the political scene and the ideological profile of Polish nationalism, giving it an authoritarian, anti-Semitic, and totalitarian face.

8 This peculiar connection seems to be an accidental, and at the same time a non-accidental event. Dmowski, whose leadership in the structures of the Ende-

The content of the transitional (1895) volume of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* can be interesting for many reasons. Its analysis allows the crystallisation of the early Endecja's ideological profile to be reconstructed. Also, it enables the researcher to follow the history of concepts important for the movement, such as colonization, *żywioł* (living element), the body of the nation, and extermination. Of course, all these concepts are a work in progress: they are clearly influenced by various paradigms, including ones losing their significance, such as romanticist messianism. Dmowski's arrival at the editorial office was certainly a significant turning point. He reorganized the periodical, gave it a uniform ideological character and professionalized it. However, it was not him (or at least not directly) who stood behind the renaming of the journal as *All-Polish Review* and making the all-Polish idea the crucial notion defining the mission of the biweekly. Moving to Lviv, Dmowski joined a community that had already proposed a new approach to the issue of making the folk masses useful. Having joined it, he began to shape it. Although the paths of the mainstream Endecja diverged from the notions of this milieu, the National Democracy drew important conclusions regarding the masses and colonization from the Lviv encounter.

The dictionary of colonization

According to the authors of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, colonization was synonymous with the resettling of surplus population, for whom there was no sufficient room or resources in the country of origin, into remote, unpopulated areas. In its basic application, this concept had little to do with expansion, and nothing at all with military missions and imperial dreams. *Przegląd* described the expeditions of families moving in tranches from Lviv under the Aegis of the Society of St. Rafael and the Trade and Geographic Association, and published correspondence sent by the

cja was not so obvious in 1895, came to Lviv with the intention of founding a journal – the press outlet of the National League. However, he had no money for it, and it would be difficult for him to obtain a license for a new title. The proposal to hand over *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, put forward by Kłobukowski and Ungar (Garlicki 1966), turned out to be an unusual twist of fate. Still, the current editors themselves were members of the National League, and the ideological profile of their magazine was so close to Dmowski that – at least at the beginning of the magazine's existence – their connection could give an impression of an obvious and unavoidable turn of things. This favourable conjuncture of factors could be retrospectively seen as a "historical necessity", but other scenarios were also possible.

migrants themselves. Readers could imagine crowds of desolate people, with their children and their bundles, setting out in search of bread and freedom. The travellers then transformed themselves in the new country, becoming farmers or artisans, earning a modest living, finally rid of the spectre of hunger. The settlers strived to organize their social, religious and cultural life abroad (see Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973; Groniowski 1972; Pilch 1984). However, as the descriptions of Polish colonies were accompanied by attempts to interpret the phenomenon, Polish colonization acquired more far-reaching meanings, and helping migrants became a specific mission – a plan of "rational colonization in the national spirit" (see Starczewski 2010).[9] Dmowski wrote about it in one of his first articles:

> having understood that a certain amount of annual migration is a necessity caused by economic conditions, one began planning to save for the nation this population leaving their home, so that emigration was not a loss of national forces, but their multiplication by acquiring new territories for Polish culture and thought. The society is faced with the task of concentrating the migration in certain territories, in dense colonies, since the element (*żywioł*) scattered among strangers is doomed to destruction (Skr. [Dmowski][10], 1895/8, 114).

The practical challenges involved in creating compact clusters of population were the subject of numerous disputes. Is it better for the migrants to settle in Santa Catarina or near Curitiba in Paraná? Is it better for them to work the land, find employment in cities, or set up "vendas" (God forbid they should work on plantations!)? One thing was obvious to everyone: the migrants should form clusters, i.e. Polish colonies.

This was rooted in the conviction of the inevitability and natural character of both capitalism and colonization, which was defined as "the principle of civilizational development of nations" (n.d. [Dębicki], 1895/22-23, 344). In the struggle for existence, which takes place not only in nature and economic life, but in the relations between nations as well, it is obvious that nations try to expand, be it in accordance with the "population law" (i.e. the law of Malthus, pertaining to "the reproductive power of our tribe exceeding the country's capacity to support

9 According to the terminology proposed by Jürgen Osterhammel and Jan Jansen (Osterhammel and Jansen 1995, 20–21), we would be dealing with a transition from a description of colonization without colonialism to a description of colonization combined with colonialism.

10 Dmowski signs his articles with several aliases: Skr., Skrzycki, Żagiewski.

it" [Oksza, 1895/9, 130]), or with the desire to conquer new lands to increase the nations' power. If a nation is alive, expansion is its natural behaviour, a sort of self-preservation instinct. Nations that lack such an instinct will perish, as they will succumb to the expansionary tendencies of those who do have it, in the struggle for territories, influence, resources and strength in numbers. Therefore, if the Polish nation wants to exist (and, in the future, also regain its state), it must join this struggle, whether by trying to "win back the borderland [i.e. Silesia] for the idea of Polish nationality" (Skr. [Dmowski], 1895/8, 114), by resisting Germanisation and Russification, by strengthening the Polishness of the former Polish territories, or by dealing with the issue of migration and colonization – e.g. in Brazil.

The articles of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* clearly focus on the vitality of tribes, peoples and nations. It is the vitality, understood as the ability to expand in its own name and for own benefit, that is the most important feature of every individual – an organism, a human or a nation. Vitality is more important than the level of civilization, culture, military or economic strength. It is even more important than having a state. This is clearly visible in the article in which Dmowski argues with Max Weber (sic!). The German sociologist stated during a lecture in Freiburg that Poles reproduce more quickly than Germans because they are at a lower mental and cultural level. Though agreeing with him on the facts, Dmowski interprets this phenomenon quite differently, claiming that this is exactly where the strength of the Polish people stems from.

> Our people are culturally inferior to the Germans and, in some respect, in the context of our harsh living conditions, this inferiority is their social strength. They can work hard, live and reproduce on any food. To this we owe the population density in Galicia, which is unheard of in other countries, especially in the West, in spite of the domestic production being limited to only one thing: agriculture. Hence the faster reproduction of Poles compared to the Germans in the Prussian partition, as well as the unprecedented abundance of children in Polish families in the United States of North America. How else to explain that somewhere in the eternal Brazilian forests, in the midst of wild nature towards which the Germans, Italians or Portuguese are powerless, our Mazur settles, slowly cuts and conquers the forest, gaining more and more land for sowing, to ultimately develop a flourishing colony. The incredible modesty of needs, and the ability to work, the perseverance, and finally the overall vitality of his organism, this is the force with which the Polish peasant makes his conquests. He is like common grass, which thrives on the poorest of soils, rises back when trampled on, and cannot be uprooted... Our inferiority to the Ger-

> mans is only relative. It is the inferiority of culture, and many facts indicate that it is not associated with racial inferiority. With the growth of culture, our people will not only match the Germans, but in many respects surpass them (Żagiewski [Dmowski], 1895/16, 251–252).

Vitality is not only the stubborn growth, it's also the fight. This belief allowed *Przegląd* to comment on the discussion between the German journal *Gegenwart* and Polish *Dziennik Poznański*. The German magazine argued that it is natural to look for a new place for your population surplus, whether by taking land, or by sending people away and peacefully colonizing less populated areas – this is the law of nature, and an indicator of internal health. *Dziennik Poznański* was outraged, claiming that to make such a case is to advocate for the survival of the stronger, while nature cares for balance. Just to be on the safe side, the journal added that we ourselves need not fear, because the Polish nation is vital and fertile. The comment of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* was symptomatic: peace and faith in natural balance, vitality and fertility are not enough for us. "Depending on what our behaviour towards our enemies will be, in the future we will be a nation or ... 'a little nation-like group'. It is not enough for us to survive – we have to fight, so that we do not lose anyone of our number to our enemies" ("Przegląd prasy polskiej", 1895/14, 227).

Vitality was becoming the most important sign, the cause and the effect of patriotism. According to Dmowski,

> the keepers of patriotic feelings and of the idea of ruthless resistance against external enemies are always the social strata with the greatest vitality, who play the most important role in society and feel strong inside. The classes that lose meaning in society, that are forced to watch their influence dwindle daily, that feel weaker and weaker inside, these classes seek support outside, ready to ally themselves even with the enemy of the nation to maintain their falling significance (Żagiewski [Dmowski], 1895/15, 234).

Patriotism is therefore only the attribute of the most vital, and only those animated by the national spirit are vital. Patriotism is synonymous with vitality, with caring for the life and body of the nation and with the fight for its rightful place.

It is typical of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* to use the term "element" (*żywioł*) with exceptional frequency. The word is used to describe the masses: the "Polish element," "Ruthenian element," "foreign element" etc.. It serves to describe the masses, but the association with the forces of nature (*żywiołowy* meaning "vehement") emphasises the most impor-

tant aspect of the described thing, i.e. the fact that it is alive (*żywy*). It is a living body among other living bodies; relations between them are relations from the world of nature perceived as the domain of struggle and clashes between organisms.

The element (*żywioł*), however, is human mass not necessarily aware of its own spirit. Such awareness can only be acquired by a nation, which connects its national body with the national soul. Such an understanding of the (Polish) nation was visible right from the first issues of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*. In issue 5 (i.e. before Dmowski joined the editorial board) the magazine quoted selected entries from the commemorative book in the Polish-American pavilion during the great Lviv exhibition of Polish economic achievements. Perhaps by mistake, the journal quoted twice the same entry with wishes for the Polish Diaspora: "Save money – and do not lose your soul. You shall create a powerful body for the future of the nation" ("Z księgi pamiątkowej" 1895/5, 74-75). Clearly, the function of providing nutrients to the nation's body belongs to the economy and economic life. After Dmowski took over, such direct and explicit comparisons became increasingly rare. He spoke of the nation as an organism which had its specific aspirations and which developed as a living being, but which depended largely on the condition of its soul:

> Our nation lost what was most valuable for it – its freedom. Having lost it, it was pushed off the path of the natural development of its powers, and of the autonomous progress of civilisation. But in the face of the collapse of the Polish Commonwealth, the healthy, unspoiled nation, which was full of vital strength, produced the idea that became its soul and the goal of its noblest citizens – the idea of independence (n.d. 1895/19, 293).

Thus, the condition of the soul of this national body, which in itself is healthy and full of vitality, turns out to be more important than the more mundane, bodily needs, the fulfilment of which has been delegated to the Trade and Geographic Guide. It is the soul that determines the state of the whole – for which the Partitions of Poland can be the best example:

> We have been dismembered ...
> We must beat our chest and admit and accept a great part of the guilt ... Our nation did not lack creative ability in many directions, it did not lack bravery and willingness to sacrifice, it did not lack vehement forces, which must be the basis of every plan of action. But we have always suffered from a lack of political thought, and the more difficult the moment, the more complicated the conditions of our lives, the more this lack has become apparent... And we have

probably never been so submerged in chaos as we are today. It partly excuses our chaotic actions (Żagiewski [Dmowski], 1895/19, 299–300).

The articles of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, especially after Dmowski started to edit it, go beyond organicist visions, in which presenting society as an organism was simply a metaphor. What stands out is the belief in the actual, bodily existence of the nation as a whole. Feeding the Galician peasant, and his resulting performance, is no longer an issue. Individual bodies are not commented upon. The main theme becomes the living body[11] transcending the bodies of individual members of the society, a body whose most important attribute is constant movement, vitality, expansion, or, in contrast, a body which is attacked by parasites, a dead mass that is no longer animated by the national spirit. This Polish body fights for its place among other bodies, because such are the laws of nature, economics and politics. The Partitions are an abomination, because they dismember the geographical location of this body; intensifying internal antagonisms among Poles, e.g. class antagonisms, is also abominable – it violates the integrity of the Polish body.

The main theme becomes the living body transcending the bodies of individual members of the society, a body whose most important attribute is constant movement, vitality, expansion, or, in contrast, a body which is attacked by parasites, a dead mass that is no longer animated by the national spirit.

The Polish living body should be strong and immune, like a healthy organism that is able to resist parasites. The best indicator of such immunity is the condition (in a given place, e.g. under a particular partition) of the Jewish community, which is also treated as a collective body – one parasitizing the Polish body. In an article on demographic relations in Lithuania and the unique growth of the Jewish population there, Dmowski argues that:

> Jews, living off the local population, must exploit it more and more to exist in increasing numbers. The Jewish population is undeniably a parasite on the social body of the country it inhabits. But it is in this character that one should look for an explanation of the phenomenon in question. A healthy, strong body, all of whose activities are carried out normally according to the order indicated by the laws of nature, is the least suitable soil for the development of parasites. For example, in the Grand Duchy of Poznań the cultural development of the lower classes and their subsequent economic independence went further than in any other part of Poland. The percentage of the Jewish population there has been decreasing steadily from year to year. Where the local population is free to move, where they develop independent economic and social activity, where they associate for economic purposes, where the industry and trade are rationally orga-

11 Of course, I mean a living body in the phenomenological sense, as the body that someone can be, not the body that someone has (see Neumann 2009).

> nized, the parasitic Jewish mass has little to gain, and must slowly give way (Skrzycki [Dmowski], 1895/10, 147).

In Congress Poland, the number of Jews does not change, because a state of equilibrium has been achieved – "society develops life activities sufficient to halt the faster development of the parasite, but not strong enough to force him to retreat" (Skrzycki [Dmowski], 1895/10, 147). Meanwhile, in Lithuania, as a result of Russian actions against the Poles,

> the only socially active element in the country, the Polish element, which had brought education and progress to the local population, became restrained and inert... The society, flourishing until recently, turned into a motionless mass, arrested in its development, because those who had enough destructive power to incapacitate the Polish element, did not have enough encouraging power to replace it in social work. The mould grew over a once healthy, strong body, the parasite grew in force – the beautiful Lithuania turned into a Jewish kingdom!... For the element thriving on exploitation, which finds the most abundant sustenance where misery and ignorance reign, for the element which does not need any freedom, because it can carry on destroying and robbing without it, there is hardly a greater paradise than this unhappy Lithuania (Skrzycki [Dmowski], 1895/10, 147).

The concept of the national body does not refer to the bodies of individual people. It is best demonstrated by the specific way the journal uses the word "extermination." It does not mean, for example, the deaths of millions of people in planned and organized death machinery. In an extermination, according to *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, no one may ever die. It is the body of the nation that will be attacked. That's what Russification and Germanization are all about. This is what *Przegląd* writes about the plans to classify "ethnographic Poles" (i.e. Polish speakers), Orthodox ex-Uniates from the Chełm Governorate, as Russians, and then to separate this governorate from the Congress Kingdom: "Separation of these lands [...] will also be [...] a great step on the road to the extermination of the Polish element" („Z zaboru rosyjskiego", 1895/13, 205). Zdzisław Dębicki explains what exactly such extermination comprises: "the entire Russian policy towards us, conducted with the constant reinforcement of means, aims at impoverishing us as much as possible, in terms of numbers, in a material and spiritual sense, and at the same time at enriching them at our expense" (n.d. [Dębicki], 1895/22-23, 343). "Russia seeks to kill us in the national sense" (n.d. [Dębicki], 1895/22-23, 344). Similarly, in the case of Germanization: "the Prussian government [...] treats the lands of the Prussian partition

in the same way it treats the German provinces [i.e. less important, less central]. The only difference being that it pursues a policy of extermination towards the Polish element" ("Łączność wychodztwa z ojczyzną", 1895/21, 328).

Importantly, it was not only about numbers, but also about the quality of the masses – those migrating and those remaining in place, confessing one religion or another, occupying a particular class position – masses in various ways significant for the survival of the nation. In the articles of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, all these factors became elements of a complex strategy that would increase or decrease Polish chances for a place among rival nations. Therefore, for example, the editors of *Przegląd* had different views about Polish migration, depending on its destination. Migrants to the East, i.e. deep into Russia, were mainly representatives of the intelligentsia who could not find a satisfactory job in the Kingdom. Their departure was considered a loss to their homeland, a depletion of valuable resources, while in exile such migrants "waste and degenerate under the influence of the environment and are lost, once and for all, to the national cause" (Zd. Wł. [Dębicki], 1895/20, 310). However, the editors never expressed the opinion that the departure from Galicia (or other Polish territories) of the masses that migrated westward was any loss: whether economic (because of the possible labour shortages – a popular view among manufacturers and landlords), or demographic (due to a change in the ethnic structure of a given territory, which would be unfavourable for the Poles). It is as if these masses were an inexhaustible, infinitely vital, ever-renewing resource, or as if getting rid of their surplus from Galicia constituted a double benefit: firstly, it removed crowds of "unnecessary", and thus potentially dangerous, people, and secondly, it opened a perspective for Polish overseas colonization.

Not once in 1895 did the journal call for modelling the ethnic composition of the groups participating in the "Brazilian fever." Jews, too, left Galicia – both Galician and Russian ones, whose way westward led via the border crossing in Brody and further on, towards the Southwest.[12] Their migration, however, was not noted by the *Przegląd Wszech-*

12 Jewish migration from Galicia before World War I was more intense in relative numbers than the Polish and Ruthenian ones. In the years 1881–1910, more than 230,000 Jews left Galicia (Wróbel 1994, 101; about Jewish migrants from Tsarist Russia passing through Galicia: Buchen 2012, 112–116). They went to the cities of the Habsburg Empire or overseas: primarily to the United States (in the years 1880–1914 two million Jews from Russia and Austria-Hungary arrived there; it is estimated that 27% of Eastern European Jews moved there in

polski as important, as far as competition for a leading role in Poland was concerned. The competition was supposed to be won by increasing the "quality" of the Poles: their vitality, national awareness and – last but not least – economic entrepreneurship (hence e.g. the appeals to support Polish merchants and landowners, or to establish "Christian" shops at agricultural cooperatives – it is here that *Przegląd* saw the most urgent need to compete with the Jews, but also with the Germans). In the opinion of the editors of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, it was not the numbers of the Polish masses that mattered for economic competition, but the vitality and condition of the Polish collective body.

What nourishes the nation's body? In the first issues of *Przegląd*, edited by members of the Polish Trade and Geographic Association, it was obvious: the nation's body is sustained by efficient industry, a strong economy, trade ties between "our own" – the Poles in the old country and those scattered across America – buying products from "their own". Obviously, as it was no longer about individuals, the body of the nation could not be fed with products manufactured by institutions, but with the institutions themselves. It was them that caused the body of the nation to "grow" and occupy a more important place in the global economic circulation. So there was no talk of eggs, beans, and cereals that could be eaten by migrants from Galicia, but about wheat, yerba mate, and maize which they began to grow and sell in their "vendas" in Brazil; and about linen, soap and devotional articles (sic!) which entrepreneurs from Galicia could export there. The texts on this topic, however, were full of clumsiness and inconsistencies. In one sentence, attempts were made to combine the sacred – striving for the survival of the national spirit, and the profane – efforts to make economic profits. After sublime tirades about the fight for the Polishness of Cieszyn and about the efforts to establish a Polish gymnasium in this town to create local intelligentsia, Stanisław Kłobukowski added:

> *Przegląd Wszechpolski* will try to acquaint its readers with the internal affairs of this land. At the moment, it draws attention to the usefulness of Polish correspondence with local companies exporting a lot of articles to Galicia. They should be forced to use Polish, if only by the threat that the goods will be imported from elsewhere. By doing so, we create jobs for the Poles in German

those years; Morawska 1999, 26), Argentina and Brazil. However, Jewish migration remained a phenomenon separate from Polish and Ruthenian migration, because it was based on its own social networks and organising institutions (Praszałowicz 2003) – the offices of the Trade and Geographical Association were besieged by Polish and Ruthenian peasants, not by Jews.

> factories, and we strengthen the intelligent Polish element, which is greatly lacking in there! (Kłobukowski, 1895/1, 11).

After discussions about Poles in Eastern Siberia, about the threat of their possible denationalization and the difficulties related to expansion beyond the geographical limits of the Polish element, the author of the article makes this point: "However, even those ephemeral colonies could fulfil a very important and useful role in expanding our industry and trade" (C., 1895/5, 71).

After Dmowski had taken over the editorial board, all such clumsy inconsistencies disappeared. This was not only due to the greater rhetorical efficiency of the leader of the National Democracy (though it did matter, of course). Arguing for the need to maintain ties with the Polish community in the Americas, *Przegląd* wrote about the obligations of American colonies towards their homeland. However, the specific, mundane aspects of fulfilling these duties were left to others. When reporting on the cooperation of the Polish Emigration Union (*Związek Wychodźstwa Polskiego*) in Rapperswill with the Polish National Union (*Związek Narodowy Polski*) in the United States, the journal mentioned "practical Americans" (i.e. Polish emigrants in North America) who voluntarily paid contributions to The National Treasury (*Skarb Narodowy*). *Przegląd Wszechpolski* only reported on this, it did not need to agitate on this matter. Further on, the journal also casually mentioned that the Trade and Geographical Association and Stanisław Kłobukowski, who had just set out on a trip to Brazil, would deal with establishing trade contacts with South America ("Łączność wychodztwa z ojczyzną", 1895 (21), 329). We can see that the matter of feeding the body of the nation has already entered a different, more sophisticated and refined level. Dmowski himself dealt with other type of sustenance: the spiritual one. As the most important product feeding the national body and circulating in its economic and spiritual system, he mentioned the press and literature (see Skrzycki [Dmowski], 1895/11, 161–163; I.Ż. [Dmowski], 1895/11, 262–264; I.Ż. [Dmowski], 1895/20, 311–312). He defined the purchase and consumption of Polish books and magazines as a civic duty, the fulfilment of which was directly related to the existence of the Polish element: "When a Pole is removed from a [professional] position, the Polish newspaper, the Polish book is removed with him; as a Russian takes his place, the Russian printed word is introduced" (Skrzycki [Dmowski], 1895/11, 162). This feedback relationship works at the level of the whole society and its individual elements. On the one hand, the nature of the press published in a given place shows which

social group is most vital, and in which group education is improving the most. On the other hand, it is the press which enlightens and breathes life into all classes, filling them with the national spirit. The all-Polish press, written from the perspective of the entire country, rather than individual partitions and colonies or individual groups / classes, unites the spirit of the nation and gives it a universal, non-provincial character.

From poor masses to a nation ready to colonize

As we can see, *Przegląd Wszechpolski* came a long way during the first year of its existence. It started by describing attempts to organize the poor Galician masses gathering in German and Italian ports without any deliberate plan, and awaiting a ship to the promised land: hungry, lost and unenlightened poor people compared, with horror, to the inhabitants of the most backward and colonized corners of the world. The paper moved on to praising the masses whose very existence proved Polish vitality, masses constituting one of the parts of the economically and nationally expanding body of the nation which is ready to colonize others. How did this happen? How was this rhetorical u-turn possible?

The paper moved on to praising the masses whose very existence proved Polish vitality, masses constituting one of the parts of the economically and nationally expanding body of the nation which is ready to colonize others.

It was possible, because it was based on a belief that the masses can be nationalized and, paradoxically, that "nationalizing" happens to them overseas. Peasants from Galicia, who had hitherto not reflected on their nationality, and aware only of their religious identity, learned that they were Polish after having arrived in Brazil or the United States.[13] Certa-

13 However, the question arises about how the ethnic / national identity of Galician migrants was understood by the *All-Polish Review* itself. The inadequacy of the categories used during censuses, kept both in Poland (where e.g. Masurian Protestants were counted as Germans) and in migration countries (where for a long time peasants from Galicia were classified as subjects of the Habsburg Empire, and therefore Austrians, peasants from the Russian partition – as Russians, etc.), was a constant topic raised by the magazine. At the same time, its attitude towards the internal diversity of Galician peasants was quite interesting. It is known that not only Poles migrated from Galicia, but also Jews, mentioned earlier, and Ruthenians / Ukrainians (according to Andrzej Pilch, the latter constituted 3/4 migrants from Galicia during the Brazilian fever; see Pilch 1984, 267). (I use these categories in a religious and linguistic sense). However, Jews have never appeared in the magazine as potential members of the group of refugees that *Przegląd* wanted to look after – they started appearing in other contexts, as parasites, especially in economic terms, only after Dmowski joined the editorial office. In contrast, the national identity of the Ruthenians was noticed, but it was treated either favourably, as a variant of Polishness, or with disapproval, as a product of the forces hostile to Polishness. An independent Ukrainian identity, enta-

inly, this was due to the circumstances of migration: while trying to name and understand the world overseas, they could not ignore the issue of ethnic and national differences, because they defined their own otherness and strangeness in the new country (Starczewski 2012a). But the peasants experienced something more. From the very beginning, while still in Galicia, as they gathered to form a consistent group under the protection of the Society of Saint Rafael and the activists of the Trade and Geographic Association, as they prepared to set out, they had to listen to a whole series of speeches and sermons in Polish and Ruthenian, calling on them to keep their fathers' faith, nationality and liaison with the country. They were assured that they would be supported in faith and nationality by their caregivers: priests and activists (see „Polacy w Ameryce. Z Ossolineum", 1895/9, 135–136). It was during this journey and during their settling abroad that they became Poles. In the "Polish colonies" they learned to celebrate Polish holidays, e.g. the anniversary of the May Constitution, they learned the history of Poland and got to know the various determinants of being Polish. Together with other migrants, they collected money to build Polish churches, schools and reading rooms (on migrants from the Congress Kingdom in the early 1890s see Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973 – the information in this work pertains also to Galician peasants from the mid-1890s; on the life of Polish migrants in Brazil at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries see Groniowski 1972). This "nationalization" took place partly at the initiative of the migrants themselves, and partly thanks to the efforts of activists and priests. And it was probably successful. *Przegląd Wszechpolski* wrote about the Poles in America:

> That this multitude of people, until recently colourful, are organized and disciplined, full of trust in their strength and sense of dignity; [...] that their numerous children, accompanied by a priest and a nun, faced with the threat of denationalization cultivate their native language with love and reverence, at home and school; this is the work of the people sent there by providence. [...] So, honour and glory to them! Glory to the righteous sons of Poland who, on the other hemisphere, walk straight and calm, always and everywhere faithfully serving their Fatherland. Glory to the tireless sowers in the barren and wild field, to whom the Galician peasant, upon his return from America, sometimes owes that he felt and learned to be Polish (Pawłowicz, 1895/9, 133).

---

iling claims for the existence of an independent state, was not taken seriously at all. Of course, the same was the attitude of the magazine towards the Lithuanians, Silesians and Masurians, whose recognition and acceptance was conditioned by their potential assimilation to Polishness. Jews were seen as unassimilable.

The success in becoming a Pole probably depended on the efficiency of Polish organizations in a particular country. The aforementioned Polish National Union was active in the United States. Zygmunt Balicki, one of the leaders of the National Democracy, established cooperation with it when he came to North America as a delegate of the Polish Emigration Union. (The most important topic raised by Balicki was the Polish Diaspora's support of the National Treasury). *Przegląd Wszechpolski* described the effectiveness of the Polish National Union: "Sometimes, while working in Poland, you meet a man who has returned from America and who, under the influence of the Union, became a thinking, active citizen. You can see the beneficial influence this man exerts on his environment" („Ruch narodowy w koloniach amerykańskich", 1895/15, 230). In the same year, 1895, Stanisław Kłobukowski went to Brazil, where the activity of Polish associations was just being initiated (see Groniowski 1972), so Kłobukowski did not act as a delegate of the Polish Emigration Union.

It falls outside the scope of this article to determine whether the "nationalization" of the peasant masses in Brasil turned out to be a fact, or merely the wishful thinking of the activists associated with *Przegląd Wszechpolski*. However, it is undeniable that a very clear picture of a plastic, colonizable people appeared in the political imagination of the early Endecja. There is no doubt that the real subject of colonization carried out in the Western hemisphere was the peasants – not yet Polish, but giving hope to become Polish "in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Macaulay 1835). Therefore, whether the "nationalisation" was a fact or wishful thinking, an inseparable attribute of such a dreamed people was their discipline and readiness to join ranks. One example of an image of such susceptible people is provided by the description of peasants who took part in a rally organized on the occasion of the founding of the folk society in Lalkowice in West Prussia:

> All souls were excited, minds were feverish, the whole assembly was inflamed; each of us felt that it was enough to drop a spark onto this gunpowder, and there would be a violent and unpredictable explosion against the Germans. With every speech, a thunder of applause erupted like a noise of nearby artillery. In the voice of the people you could hear a murmur preceding the storm, and the mass was silent "like a weapon before a shot". You could often read the joy of victory on their faces, and when we mentioned the harm done to us by the Germans, many a hand clenched, teeth gnawed, and faces grew cynical. – When we remembered our victory, a smile of unrestrained joy and hate appeared on

There is no doubt that the real subject of colonization carried out in the Western hemisphere was the peasants – not yet Polish, but giving hope to become Polish "in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Macaulay 1835).

> our faces. We thought of what our nation of 20 million could do, had it felt, in its entirety, the thrill of this gathering (B., 1895/8, 121).

Endecja's development as a reaction to the Brazilian fever

What conclusions can we draw from the history of early Endecja's Brazilian adventure? First of all, it proves that the colonial mental maps (Białas Z. 2005) provided coordinates also to national democrats, and that their thinking was organized in accordance with these maps regardless of the real possibilities of conducting imperial conquest. Colonial mental maps present the world as a place of competition for influence in near and distant lands and for the political, cultural and economic subordination of others. They justify the division into the colonizers and the colonized with a hierarchy of races, cultures and civilizations. They treat colonising as an indicator of occupying the highest levels in these hierarchies. They provide a discourse that justifies military actions (Said 1994), but can also be reproduced regardless of realising them, also by countries that are not colonial empires (see Naum and Nordin 2013; Grzechnik 2017). The inhabitants of the Polish lands themselves felt the Partitions as a situation of colonial subordination – and certainly this was how the editors of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* perceived it. Still, colonial aspirations were in no way rejected by them, but were rather seen as the way to overcome the subordination and to confirm that the Poles were a nation, and not "a little nation-like group". Instead of being a country subordinated to the "obsolete", feudal colonialism of tsarist Russia or the Habsburg empire (both empires were seen by *Przegląd* as anachronistic formations), Poland, with colonial aspirations, was to step onto the path of modern and capitalist colonialism (where the British Empire was soon to become the model to imitate).

Colonization, understood as the expansion of Polish economic influence in South America, did not work particularly well. The organizations of Polish emigrants were, as usual, quarrelsome and dispersed (see Groniowski 1972). It was also rather difficult to establish economic cooperation. Most importantly, migration organizers from the Trade and Geographic Association fell out of favour with mainstream National Democracy activists.[14] The peasant migrants themselves fell out of favour

14 In the most spectacular way this happened to Józef Siemiradzki (1858–1933), a geologist, traveller and devoted correspondent of *Przegląd Emigracyjny*, several times an emissary (in the footsteps of Polish emigrants) of the Trade and Geographic Association to Italy and Brazil. As early as 1900, *Przegląd Wszechpol-*

along with them – or rather, *Przegląd Wszechpolski* ceased to have any hopes for them. The plan to create New Poland, i.e. an autonomous Polish province in Brazil, promoted by Kłobukowski and Józef Siemiradzki (Kania 2004b), was considered a fantasy by Dmowski, who confirmed this view during his trip to Brazil in 1899. It turned out that the Polish population living in Brazil was so poorly organized, so little modernized, advanced or nationally mobilized, and had such an unfavourable social structure, that it was not able to put together a mere substitute for a state (Starczewski 2010; 2015; on the economic performance of migrants to Brazil see: Mazurek 2006).[15]

And yet, the "Brazilian fever" turned out to be an important experience, not only for the Galician migrants. In 1902, in his most famous book, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*, Roman Dmowski saw its significance as follows:

> Even if the creation of the New Poland society somewhere on the shores of the South Atlantic, in the Brazilian forests, were to turn out to be an impossible fantasy, dealing with such a topic in itself would give us a new and wide field for exercising some of our listless forces, thus greatly contributing to the revival of our rotting spirit (Skrzycki [Dmowski], 1902 (11), 832; Dmowski 1933, 139).

Colonial thinking became an element of Endecja's thinking, a disposition that manifested itself in different ways, depending on the specific conjuncture. Polish colonialism did not have the chance to be realized in the "classic" form as a result of an empire's actions (its military, economic and cultural mission conducted in a distant country at the expense of its inhabitants) and therefore it manifested itself in a paradoxical way

ski wrote about him as "a person not known to anyone" ("Z wychodztwa i kolonii" 1900 (5), 317; see also Kania 2004a; 2004b), not only discrediting his actions, but also repeating rumours about him.

15 This does not mean, however, that he completely stopped thinking about Brazil . In 1902, he joined the initiative of the all-Polish activist Kazimierz Warchałowski, who founded Dom Handlowy – a bank-like institution established to make Poles in Brazil independent of German wholesalers; other shareholders were, among others, Władysław Reymont, count Dzieduszycki, Lubomirski, and Zamoyski (Groniowski 1972, 246). After regaining independence, colonizing ideas appeared in various forms in the thoughts of activists and politicians not only from Endecja, but also from Sanacja circles (the history of the Maritime and Colonial League deserves special attention here [see Grzechnik 2019; Białas T. 1983]), and migration policy, understood as a tool to get rid of "unnecessary people," fell within the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mazurek 2006). It was not very successful, however.

as an aspiration (Grzechnik 2019), a fantasy (Ureña Valerio 2019), or an exercise in which the white man's burden was to be taken up by the Endeks and brought to the masses of people, "half-devils and half-children" (Kipling 1903, 79) fleeing hunger across the ocean. The most important result of this colonial situation was the manufacturing of the Endecja's subject as the subject of the colonizer (Memmi 1965, 56), a dynamic, masculine subject proudly entering the world of modernity, expansion and capitalism.

Just as the Endecja did during the 1905–1907 revolution in relation to workers entering the political scene, so they did it at the end of the nineteenth century, in relation to the migrating peasant masses, who tried by themselves to find their place on the economic scene of the global capitalist system.

Therefore, trying to retrospectively determine the benefits that the Endecja could have derived from the attempts to make rational use of migration, and trying to establish its role in the development of the National Democracy, one may treat it as the first stage of the change later reinforced in the aftermath of the 1905 revolution. Then, the political mobilization of urban masses and their dramatic entry into the political scene took place in a way that was unforeseen and undesired by the Endecja. New ideas appeared in the political discourse of the nationalist movement: the idea to tame the new actors on the political stage by disciplining them (Porter 1999) and replacing them with an image of the body of the nation understood in a biological and social-Darwinian way. "To make a modern political project (a state or a politically empowered nation) possible, the masses must enter the historical scene. However, for this project to become sustainable, they must also be persuaded to leave it" (Marzec 2014, 123). Just as the Endecja did during the 1905–1907 revolution in relation to workers entering the political scene, so they did it at the end of the nineteenth century, in relation to the migrating peasant masses, who tried by themselves to find their place on the economic scene of the global capitalist system. Having discovered the plasticity, susceptibility and colonizability of peasant migrants, the Endeks no longer needed New Poland in Brazil. All they sought was space for expansion on the Old Continent.

References

Articles in *Przegląd Wszechpolski* (chronologically):

Kłobukowski Stanisław. 1895. „Kresy nasze zachodnie". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 1: 11.

C. 1895. „Korespondencye ze Wschodniej Syberyi". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 5: 70--71.

n.d. 1895. „Z księgi pamiątkowej". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 5: 72-75.

Skr. [Dmowski]. 1895. „Jedność narodowa". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 8: 113-115.
B. 1895. „Korespondencye. Z Prus Zachodnich, w marcu 1895". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 8: 121.
Oksza Stanisław. 1895. „Znaczenie polityczne wychodztwa". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 9: 129-130.
Pawłowicz Edward. 1895. „Polacy w Ameryce. Z Ossolineum". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 9: 130-133.
n.d. 1895. „Opieka nad wychodztwem". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 9: 135-136.
Skrzycki R. [Dmowski Roman]. 1895. „Wymowne cyfry". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 10: 145-147.
R. Skrzycki [Dmowski Roman]. 1895. „Kupujcie książki!". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 11: 161-163.
n.d. 1895. „Z zaboru rosyjskiego". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 13: 204-207.
n.d. 1895. „Przegląd prasy polskiej". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 14: 226-227.
n.d. 1895. „Ruch narodowy w koloniach amerykańskich". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 15: 229-230.
Żagiewski I. [Dmowski Roman]. 1895. „Z całej Polski". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 15: 234-236.
Żagiewski I. [Dmowski Roman]. „Z całej Polski". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 16: 250-252.
I.Ż. [Dmowski Roman]. 1895. „Dziennikarstwo polskie. II. Zabór pruski". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 17: 262-264.
n.d. 1895. n.d.. *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 19: 293.
Żagiewski J. [Dmowski Roman]. 1895. „Z całej Polski". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 19: 299-301.
Zd. Wł. [Dębicki Zdzisław]. 1895. „Wychodztwo do Rosyi". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 20: 309-311.
I.Ż. [Dmowski Roman]. 1895. „Dziennikarstwo polskie". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 20: 311-312.
n.d. 1895. „Stosunki polityczne na Górnym Śląsku". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 21: 325-328.
n.d. 1895. „Łączność wychodztwa z ojczyzną". *Przegląd Wszechpolski*vol. 21: 328-330.
n.d. [Dębicki Zdzisław]. 1895. „Ruszczenie i dyplomacya". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 22/23: 341-346.
n.d. 1900. „Z wychodztwa i kolonii". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 5: 314-317.
R. Skrzycki [Dmowski Roman]. 1902. „Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka VIII". *Przegląd Wszechpolski* vol. 11: 825-833.

Other references

Assorodobraj-Kula Nina, Witold Kula, and Marcin Kula, (eds.). 1973. *Listy emigrantów z Brazylii i Stanów Zjednoczonych, 1890–1891*. Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Robotnicza.

Białas, Tadeusz. 1983. *Liga Morska i Kolonialna 1930–1939*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie.

Białas, Zbigniew. 2005. "Mniej niż ćwierć? O pilnej potrzebie rewizjonizmu w studiach postkolonialnych". *ER(R)GO. Teoria–Literatura–Kultura* 1 (10).

Buchen, Tim. 2019. *Antisemitismus in Galizien. Agitation, Gewalt und Politik gegen Juden in der Habsburgermonarchie um 1900*. Berlin: Metropol Verlag.

Cybulski, Napoleon. 1894. *Próba badań nad żywieniem się ludu wiejskiego w Galicji*. Kraków.

Dmowski, Roman. 1933. *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*. Warszawa: Skład Główny "Gazeta Warszawska".

Drugi Zjazd Prawników i Ekonomistów polskich. 1891. Lwów, nakładem uczestników zjazdu.

Franaszek, Piotr. 2016. "Dieta chłopów galicyjskich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku". *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, Vol. LXXVI. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/RDSG.2016.10.

Garlicki, Andrzej. 1966. "Relacja Romana Dmowskiego o Lidze Narodowej". *Przegląd Historyczny* 57 (3).

Groniowski, Krzysztof. 1972. *Polska emigracja zarobkowa w Brazylii (1871–1914)*. Wrocław Warszawa Kraków Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Grzechnik Marta. 2017. "Background Characters? The Nordic Region and European Colonialism". *Studia Scandinavica* 2017/1(21). DOI: https://doi.org/10.26881/ss.2017.21.08.

———. 2019. "Aspirations of an imperial space. The colonial project of the Maritime and Colonial League in interwar Poland." *CES Open Forum Series*. Harvard: Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies.

Jakubowska, Urszula. 1988. *Prasa Narodowej Demokracji w dobie zaborów.* Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Kania, Marta. 2004a. "Józef Siemiradzki (1858–1933) – Działacz polonijny i emigracyjny". *Przegląd Polonijny* Rok XXX – 2004 – z. 1, (111).

———. 2004b. "Nowa Polska. Plany kolonizacji polskiej w Brazylii". *Przegląd Polonijny* Rok XXX – 2004 – z. 4, (114).

Kargol, Tomasz. 2009. "Zieleniewscy, Baczewscy, Grossowie... Galicyjscy przedsiębiorcy w drugiej połowie XIX w. (do 1914 r.) – kierunki badań i postulaty badawcze". *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, Vol. CXVI, no. 2.

Kipling, Rudyard. 1903. "The White Man's Burden". In: *The Five* Nations. London: Methuen and Co.

Kopczyński, Michał. 2018. *Historia gospodarcza ciała. Studia z dziejów biologicznego standardu życia na ziemiach polskich*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza "Mówią Wieki".

Krajkowski, Michał. 2015. "Chasing Europe. The diagnosis of backwardness in Polish writings on Galicia during the second half of the 19th century". *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch*, Vol. 3.

Krzywiec, Grzegorz. 2009. *Szowinizm po polsku: przypadek Romana Dmowskiego (1886–1905)*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton.

Kula, Marcin. 2012. *Polono-Brazylijczycy i parę kwestii im bliskich.* Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, Instytut Studiów Iberyjskich i Iberoamerykańskich UW.

Kula, Marcin. (ed.). 1983. *Dzieje Polonii w Ameryce Łacińskiej*. Wrocław: Biblioteka Polonijna.

Macaulay, Thomas B. 1835. *Minute Upon Indian Education by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay*, dated the 2nd February 1835. http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html.

Marzec, Wiktor. 2014. "Modernizacja mas. Moment polityczny i dyskurs endecji w okresie rewolucji 1905–1907". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 3(13)/2014. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14746/pt.2014.3.5

———. 2016. *Rebelia i reakcja. Rewolucja 1905 roku i plebejskie doświadczenie polityczne*. Kraków: Universitas.

Mazurek, Jerzy. 2006. K*raj a emigracja. Ruch ludowy wobec wychodźstwa chłopskiego do krajów Ameryki Łacińskiej (do 1939 roku).* Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Iberyjskich i Iberoamerykańskich Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego w Warszawie.

Memmi, Albert. 1965. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Transl. Howard Greenfeld. New York: Onion Press.

Morawska, Ewa. 1999. *Insecure Prosperity – Small-Town Jews in Industrial America, 1890–1940*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Naum, Magdalena, and Nordin, Jonas (eds.). 2013. *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity. Contributions To Global Historical Archaeology*, vol 37. Springer, New York, NY.

Neumann, Boaz. 2009. "The Phenomenology of the German People's Body (Volkskörper) and the Extermination of the Jewish Body". *New German Critique*, No. 106 (Winter, 2009). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1215/0094033X-2008-025.

Osterhammel, Jürgen, and Jansen, Jan. 1995. *Kolonialismus. Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*. München: C.H.Beck.

Pamiętnik trzeciego zjazdu prawników i ekonomistów polskich w Poznaniu w dniach 11–13 września 1893 roku. 1894. Poznań, wydany staraniem Komitetu III Zjazdu.

Pilch, Andrzej (ed.). 1984. *Emigracja z ziem polskich w czasach nowożytnych i najnowszych (XVIII–XX w.)*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Porter, Brian. 1999. "Democracy and discipline in late Nineteenth-Century Poland". *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 71, No. 2. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/235250.

Porter-Szűcs, Brian. 2011. *Gdy nacjonalizm zaczął nienawidzić. Wyobrażenia nowoczesnej polityki w dziewiętnastowiecznej Polsce.* Sejny: Pogranicze.

Praszałowicz, Dorota. 2003. "Overseas Migration from Partitioned Poland: Poznania and Eastern Galicia as Case Studies". *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (Autumn, 2003).

Said, Edward W. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage.

Skrzypek, Józef. 1966. "Przegląd Emigracyjny 1892–1894". *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 5/1.

Starczewski, Michał. 2010. "Idea 'Nowej Polski' w środowisku lwowskich narodowych demokratów. Racjonalna kolonizacja w duchu narodowym". In: V. Dzianisava, P. Juszkiewicz, J. Staśkowiak (ed.), *Polskie Kresy Wschodnie i ludzie stamtąd*. Materiały konferencyjne. Warszawa.

———. 2012a. "Elementy tożsamości polskich chłopów emigrujących do Brazylii przed I wojną światową w świetle listów i pamiętników". In: J. Gmitruk, A. Indraszczyk (eds.), *Wieś i ruch ludowy w Polsce i Europie. T. 1, W kręgu historii i tradycji*. Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego.

———. 2012b. "Z dziejów emigracji zarobkowej: agenci emigracyjni na ziemiach polskich przed 1914 r.". *Przegląd Historyczny*, CIII, 1/2012.

———. 2015. "Mrzonki racjonalnej kolonizacji w duchu narodowym. Roman Dmowski i polska emigracja do Brazylii". *Przegląd Humanistyczny* nr 2.

Szczepanowski, Stanisław. 1888. *Nędza Galicyi w cyfrach i program energicznego rozwoju gospodarstwa krajowego*. Lwów: Skład Nut Gubry-

nowicza i Schmidta.
Ungar, Wiktor. 1894. "Łączność ekonomiczna z wychodźtwem". In: *Pamiętnik trzeciego zjazdu prawników i ekonomistów polskich w Poznaniu w dniach 11–13 września 1893 roku*, wydany staraniem Komitetu III Zjazdu. Poznań.
Ureña Valerio, Lenny. 2019. *Colonial Fantasies, Imperial Realities: Race Science and the Making of Polishness on the Fringes of the German Empire, 1840–1920*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
Wróbel, Piotr. 1994. "The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1869–1918". *Austrian History Yearbook*, 25. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237800006330.

CLAUDIA SNOCHOWSKA-GONZALEZ – sociologist and culture scientist at the Institute of Slavic Studies (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw). She studied at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and obtained her PhD at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences of the University of Warsaw. She published a book *Wolność i pisanie. Dorota Masłowska i Andrzej Stasiuk w postkolonialnej Polsce* on the functioning of Polish postcolonialism in contemporary Polish literature. She also edited the book *A jak hipokryzja. Antologia tekstów o aborcji, władzy, pieniądzach i sprawiedliwości* and was a co-director of a documentary film on abortion underground in Poland (*Underground Women's State*). Recently she co-edited the book *Bunt Kobiet. Czarne protesty i strajki kobiet* (*Female Revolt. Black Protests and Women Strikes*), Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Gdańsk. In her current research she focuses on volkist inspirations in Polish public life.

Address:
Instytut Slawistyki PAN
Juliana Bartoszewicza 1B,
00-337 Warszawa
email: claudia.snochowska-gonzalez@ispan.waw.pl

Citation: Snochowska-Gonzalez, Claudia 2020. "Exercises in expansion. Colonial threads in the National Democracy's turn toward discipline". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 105–135.
DOI:10.14746/prt2020.2.5

Autor: Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez
Tytuł: Ćwiczenia z ekspansji. Kolonialne wątki endeckiego zwrotu ku dyscyplinie
Abstrakt: Rok 1895 był w Galicji pierwszym rokiem „brazylijskiej gorączki", czyli fali migracji mas chłopskich z Galicji do Brazylii. W moim artykule chcę się skupić na analizie treści „przejściowego" rocznika lwowskiego pisma *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, wydawanego wcześniej jako *Przegląd Emigracyjny*, które w 1895 roku przeszło w ręce Ligi Narodowej. Zamierzam omówić sposoby, w jakie w poszczególnych tekstach były przedstawiane ludowe masy, oraz zastanowić się nad znaczeniem stosowanego tam pojęcia kolonizacji. Idea polskiej kolonizacji, to znaczy osadnictwa prowadzonego w Brazylii i Stanach Zjednoczonych przez masy chłopskie wygnane przez biedę z ziem polskich, na łamach pisma zaczęła się przenikać z ideą kolonizacji tych mas – dbałością, by się nie wynarodowiły i nie porzuciły religii katolickiej, a także z ideą ekspansji polskiego ciała narodu, które miało zająć odpowiednie miejsce w globalnej

gospodarce kapitalistycznej. W artykule dowodzę, że zajmowanie się polską kolonizacją odegrało ważną rolę w endeckim „zwrocie ku dyscyplinie", który zwykł być kojarzony z innym przykładem spontanicznej mobilizacji mas – rewolucją 1905 roku.

Słowa kluczowe: Narodowa Demokracja, masy chłopskie, gorączka brazylijska, migracja, polska kolonizacja, *Przegląd Wszechpolski*

AGNIESZKA WIĘCKIEWICZ

The Images of Blackness: Savages, Workers and the Emergence of the Counterimagination in Germany (1884-1925)

The author interprets the figures of European workers and colonized Africans presented as slaves of capitalism and imperialism, the image that circulated in the social and cultural imagination in Germany after the Berlin Conference (1884-1885). The aim of the article is to introduce the concept of "counterimagination" and show how the image of the rabble became juxtaposed with a visualization of the black slave. The author argues that both figures were considered to be a real threat to the German social order and to German Kultur, and concentrates on the popular images of the "other" circulating in the German visual culture after 1880. The first part of the article is devoted to the aesthetics of the weekly satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* founded in April 1896. In the second part, the aggressive propaganda campaign against the Occupation of the Rhineland by French colonial troops is discussed. The author describes the mechanisms of envisioning black soldiers and points out the anticolonial reactions to the "Black Shame" campaign.

Keywords: countervisuality, visuality, colonialism, race, propaganda, racism

Although the question of imperial politics and pro-colonial propaganda after 1871 became a subject of many analyses in the past twenty years, the history of German colonialism still remains marginal in the works devoted to Western imperialism (Blackshire-Belay 1996; Friedrichsmeyer et al. 2011; Naranch et al. 2014; Gründer et al. 2017). The question of the colonial imagination, as well as the images of blackness in German culture are often treated as unimportant (Campt 2013; 2008, 1-9). The popular view that colonial rule in Africa and China did not leave its mark on German society became one of the main arguments used to prove that the period 1884-1914 had no further impact on German history (Friedrichsmeyer et al. 2011, 3-7). Thus, I propose to look at German colonialism through political and colonial aesthetic discourses, where the (anti)colonial imagination emerges for the first time.

By the concept of "colonial imagination," I understand the capacity to create stereotypical images that reflect social experiences, anxieties, and expectations related to colonialism. Deeply rooted in the socio-political context of Germany between the 19th and 20th centuries, they reveal authority's attempt to gain colonial territories and, at the same time, to strengthen the symbolic disjunction between "self" and "other." The colonial imagination has become a powerful source of pictures and illustrations that used the "savage" figure to fix racist optics. My aim is to show that the visual and discursive practices of German imperial imagination elicited counterimages that questioned the established meanings of the "other." The stereotypes circulating in German culture gained public support, but the acts of explicit critique formed a model of counter-attitude towards colonialism and racism. To understand how the colonial and anticolonial imaginations functioned in German culture in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century, I propose an analysis of selected illustrations published in the German weekly satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*.

Most issues either criticized Bismarckian politics or articulated a strong anticolonial voice. The fourth issue from 1904, entitled *Die afrikanische Gefahr* ("The African Danger"), will be closely examined. It was published only a few months after the breakout of the colonial war in today's Namibia. The illustration of the solidarity between black slaves and "white slaves" presented on the front cover will be treated as an example of an attempt to change the way of perceiving not only colonial subjects but also lower-class workers in the German cultural imagination before WWI. In the second part of the article, I raise the issue of the "colonial complex," emerging after 1919, which evoked an aggressive campaign against the occupation of the Rhineland. The black

soldiers were envisioned as depraved animals seeking to destroy German morality (Wigger 2017, 12-23). Though the campaign had great success and provoked innumerable racist illustrations, posters, articles, novels, and plays, it also met with resistance — above all in the works of the German Dada artist Hannah Höch (Van Hoesen 2011, 320-324; Burmeister 2007, 26-31). Her photomontages problematized women's emancipation, as well as the image of the black body.

Images and imagination — the German empire visualized

The question of "race" becomes central for any attempt to theorize the colonial imagination. Nevertheless, the category itself seems to be problematic. Is it possible to totalize the concept of race as a product of racist discourses and race-thinking? What we miss, in this case, is that a critical response to the reality of racism and the racist imagination engages with the "race" category. As W.J.T. Mitchell argued:

> My solution is to understand race as a concept that is traversed by four different moments of force […]. Two of these we have already identified in the dialectic of bodies and bloodlines, bodily "schematism," to use Fanon's terms, and historical genealogies. But these terms operate within a conceptual force field defined by the intersection of two axes, the biopolitical and the sociopolitical, or what Donna Haraway calls "nature-culture." On the nature axis, we find the biopolitical tendency to naturalize human relations as elaborate forms of animal behavior defined by categories of culture (including language, religion, and customs) and class (including the power relations of colonialisms and slavery). Race, then, instead of being regarded as a univocal or essential concept with a fixed definition, becomes a complex or (to recall the premodern language of race) a complexion of these forces (Mitchell 2012, 33).

According to Mitchell race has no fixed definition, but is considered a complex concept that enables a more profound reflection on how we perceive ourselves and others. The "complexion" of different forces (biopolitical and sociopolitical), evoked by Mitchell, orients us towards the force of the visual in social images of "race."

In Charles Taylor's social theory, individuals, brought together in order to form a political entity, are responsible for the formation of the visual projection of society (Taylor 2004, 5-11). The late 19th-century notion of imperialism, developed in close relation to the nationalist discourse, formed the image of germane as representing a white, male

and not-Jewish community. German colonialism took place not only in real activities in colonies but was also important for shaping a national imaginary homeland. As Taylor remarked, the analysis of imaginaries reveals a broad semantic field, not limited to the intellectual schemes examined in a "disengaged mode," as a reflection of social reality. In the German context, imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism emerged together, determining the image of race, class, and gender (Bowersox 2014, 170-184). I argue that it is possible to reconstruct the notion of Germanness from the analysis of cultural imaginary, defined by Taylor as:

> The ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations. […] the term imaginary […] is the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms but is carried in images, stories, and legends (Taylor 2004: 10).

Using Taylor's theory, we can examine German imperialism through a social imaginary, as well as through heterogeneous reactions to actual colonialism, which functioned as a platform for the emergence of contradictory images.

The German claim to imperial power can be understood as constant visualization of the history of European civilization distinguished from other cultures, treated as primitive. In this case, visuality is not the visible or the "social fact of the visible," as Nicholas Mirzoeff would say, but a discursive practice used by the authority to create a meaning. Therefore, it has material effects — it structures the reality determining what can and what cannot be perceived. In *The Right to Look*, Mirzoeff proposed thinking about visuality as:

> an old word for an old project. It is not a trendy theory word meaning the totality of visual images and devices but is, in fact, an early-nineteenth-century term meaning the visualization of history. This practice must be imaginary, rather than perceptual, because what is being visualized is too substantial for any one person to see and is created from information, images and ideas. This ability to assemble a visualization manifests the authority of the visualizer. In turn, the authorizing of authority requires permanent renewal in order to win consent as the "normal" […]. The autonomy claimed by the right to look is thus opposed by the authority of visuality (Mirzoeff 2011, 2-3).

The structure of German colonial visuality corresponds with the visualization of the slave plantation, which succeeded the image of the battlefield as a "hallmark of the modern general" (Mirzoeff 2011, 3-5). What Michel Foucault called the process of the "nomination of the visible," Mirzoeff has named the "complex of visuality," formed as a result of classifying (imposing a hierarchy), separating (the segregation of all the visualized, to make becoming a political subject impossible) and aestheticizing (authority seen as a natural power and not the changeable status quo) decreed by authority (Mirzoeff 2011, 5-10). He distinguished visual complexes typical for different periods of European imperialism. The first stage was formed in the plantation practice. For Mirzoeff slavery was an essential part of the "plantation complex," defined as a removal of the right to look and the total subordination of the colonized (Mirzoeff 2011, 7). The others were the "imperial complex" (from 1860 to 1945) and the "military-industrial complex" (1945 — present) which marked the end of the 19th century and developed in the 20th century (Mirzoeff 2011, 35). It should be noted that the role models for his analysis were French and British imperialism, thus he does not mention the German case. In the Bismarck's colonies at the end of the 19th century, the "plantation complex" interfered with the "imperial complex," although slavery at that time had been formally abolished.

The domination of visualization was not immutable but, in fact, constantly undermined. Whereas visuality articulates itself in imperial, colonial and capitalistic politics and practices, the claim to the right to look becomes a field of potential subversion, expressed by social movements or articulated in the criticism of authoritarian domination. In this case, seeing is understood as the "right to the real" that is equivalent to an act of disobedience to authority (Mirzoeff 2011, 24-26). The idea of democracy emerges from the opposition to capitalist exploitation, as well as from criticism of imperial discourses concerning not only non-European subjects but also European workers or women, as well as other excluded groups. Mirzoeff emphasizes that the authority manifests power as indisputable, and hence naturalizes class, race and gender classifications (Mirzoeff 2011, 4). After Jacques Rancière, he highlights the close relationship between politics and aesthetics, arguing that the first function of visuality is to aestheticize, that is to say, to show the reality as an unchangeable *status quo*. While in imperial Germany visuality acts through colonial and capitalist politics, emancipation became a claim to the right to look and to be seen — not through categories such as class or race, which are constructed and projected by authority — but precisely against them. In this light, disobedience to authority

The domination of visualization was not immutable but, in fact, constantly undermined. Whereas visuality articulates itself in imperial, colonial and capitalistic politics and practices, the claim to the right to look becomes a field of potential subversion, expressed by social movements or articulated in the criticism of authoritarian domination.

is a politically radical attempt to reconfigure visuality as a whole, in order to form a "countervisuality." Mirzoeff defines it as:

> the claim for the right to look. It is the dissensus with visuality […]. The performative claim of a right to look where none exists puts a counter visuality into play. […] The "right" in the right to look contests the first the "right" to property in another person by insisting on the irreducible autonomy of all citizens (Mirzoeff 2011, 25).

In the colonial context, countervisuality is a refusal to segregate, it creates its own "grammar of nonviolence" (Mirzoeff 2011, 26). If the battlefield was a domain of visuality, then the revolution and its visual archive manifest the "other" way of perceiving the self and other, countering imperial visuality. For Mirzoeff the breaking point of the "plantation complex," was the "abolition realism" — the visuality of the Haitian Revolution — the anarchy at Saint-Domingue, as Thomas Carlyle put it. (Mirzoeff 2011, 13; 24-26). Thus countervisuality becomes a collective activism that attempts to change the system as a whole.

In the German context, the imperial complex linked centralized authority to the hierarchy of the German culture (Kultur), while countervisuality outlined a subversive strategy of seeing the social and political contemporary situation experienced from the perspective of the "other" — woman, Jew, homosexual, lower-class worker or colonized subject.

Paraphrasing the author of *The Right to Look*, we can say that the countervisuality resignifies phantasms and beliefs rooted in the social imaginary. In the German context, the imperial complex linked centralized authority to the hierarchy of the German culture (*Kultur*), while countervisuality outlined a subversive strategy of seeing the social and political contemporary situation experienced from the perspective of the "other" — woman, Jew, homosexual, lower-class worker or colonized subject. The authority of colonialism always engages with the racist imagination (animated by different mediums, such as literature, historical discourses, art, advertisement) and forms visual complexes. In this context the author emphasizes:

> The authority of coloniality has consistently required visuality to supplement its deployment of force. Visuality sutures authority to power and renders this association "natural." […] In order to challenge the claimed inevitability of this history and its hegemonic means to frame the present, any engagements with visuality in the present or the past requires establishing its counterhistory. In fact, I suggest that one of the very constitutive forms of visuality is the knowledge that it is always already opposed and in struggle. To coin a phrase, visuality is not war by other means: it is war (Mirzoeff 2010, 6).

By defining visuality as always in a struggle, captured in a conflict zone, Mirzoeff suggests that the potentiality of resistance comes with authority. In the plantation experience, visuality constitutes "the foundational

moment of visuality and the right to look" (Mirzoeff 2010, 6) and, at the same time, provokes an emergence of different counterhistories. Thus, the necessity and inevitability of subversive acts create a space where countervisuality emerges as a response to oppressive visual complexes. They are "divided against themselves first as configurations of visuality against countervisuality and then as material systems of administering authority interfaced with mental means of authorizing" (Mirzoeff 2010, 8).

For Mirzoeff the three complexes: the "plantation complex," the "imperial complex", and the "military-industrial complex" co-exist in reality, where race, class, gender, sexuality all together orientate social imagination and influence social relations. In this context the author adds: "The clash of visuality and countervisuality produced not just imagined relations but materialized visualizations as images of all kinds, like natural history, law, politics, and so on" (Mirzoeff 2010, 8). Although Mirzoeff's understanding of the struggle between visuality and countervisuality is helpful for theorizing collective acts of resistance towards colonial authority, the very concept of countervisuality — as the imaginative space of potential revolution, as well as a reality of revolutionary events — seems to be problematic. I suggest thinking about (counter)visuality as related to a community, rather than to individuals. Mirzoeff's countervisuality is already "collective," which seems to be too general for any attempt to interpret individual acts of rebellion. I propose, thus, to understand them as examples of counterimagination, in other words, as isolated attempts to reimagine and reorganize the socio-political order. As we will see in the case of the satirical paper "Simplicissimus" or in Hannah Höch's photo-montages, the critique of colonialism does not always take the form of countervisuality, although it creates a possibility to counterimagine — to project a non-authoritarian social order.

I propose, thus, to understand them as examples of counterimagination, in other words, as isolated attempts to reimagine and reorganize the socio-political order.

The "colonial question"

At the Berlin/Congo Conference (1884-1885) Germany emerged as a newly established colonial power. *Kongokonferenz* was convened on November 1884 in Berlin. As a result of the new arrangements, known as the "Scramble for Africa," Germany gained territories in Africa (German South West Africa, German East Africa, Togo, and Cameroon) and thereby created the third largest colonial empire, after Great Britain and France (Friedrichsmeyer et al. 2011, 10). Although the German explo-

itation of Africa begun in the late 19th century, the history of the imperialistic and colonial imagination dates back to 17th and 18th century literature. It became a platform for the emergence of an image of a "good" German and his peaceful relations with the indigenous peoples (Gründer et al. 2017, 12). Works such as *Die Insel Felsenburg*, written by Johann Gottfried Schnabel (1745), *Robinson der Jungere* by Joachim Heinrich Campe (1779), or *Die Kolonie* by Johann Friedrich Albrecht (1792), created an idealistic vision of a pure and almost inhabited colonial territory. The late18th century also brought another phantasy: the image of two different — and hitherto separate — cultures peacefully brought together. However, after the anti-slavery Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) it was transfigured into the image of an intransgressible separation, as described in *Wiliam der Neger* by Caroline Auguste Fischer. In the 19th century, colonial literature proper, such as Frieda von Bülow's novels, fueled the colonial imagination in Germany.

Even before 1884, Brandenburg-Prussia had created a colony in overseas territories, known as the Groß Friedrichsburg in West Africa, a part of today's Ghana (Gründer et al. 2017, 20-25). With its formation Frederick William joined the international transatlantic slave trade. As Horst Gründer pointed out, the Elector of Brandenburg became the "spiritual father" of German colonialism, which developed years later (Gründer et al. 2017, 21). The Berlin Conference legitimized the Bismarckian imperial project, although the German rule in Africa started a few months earlier, with the acquisition of territories in South-West Africa by Adolf Lüderitz. He was, similarly to the famous Carl Peters and Bernhard Förster (Friedrich Nietzsche's brother-in-law), one of the first self-fashioned colonialists. German imperialism, interposed by Wilhelm II, formed a new model of perceiving non-European territories and their inhabitants. Procolonial propaganda in Germany formed a visual sphere for the constant projection of phantasies, which strengthened the division between self (white) and other (black). While the population of Africa became a symbolic object of the German cultural mission — understood as a duty to bring Western civilization to the "savages," the occupation of land became a manifestation of economic conquest. Lands and people needed to be constantly monitored in order to exploit them as raw material and cheap labor. It created a particular and sustainable way of perceiving reality in the colonies.

The principal method of governance in the colonies consisted of collecting lands from Africans and creating profitable plantations (Gründer et al. 2017, 28-35). Yet the "Scramble for Africa" turned out to be less efficient than predicted, and thus disturbed the idealistic phantasy

of imperial success. The territories in the German South West and German East Africa were hostile to inhabit and therefore to exploit. Nevertheless, the colonizers' efforts to subjugate lands and peoples persisted. The formation of South and West German Africa, similarly to efforts in Togo and Cameroon, brought up the question of how to rule effectively (Mühlhahn 2014, Denzel 2017, 144-158). However, it is striking that between 1884 and 1918 there were less than twenty thousand German men in Africa (Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, Zantop 2011, 13). In other words, the German presence in the colonies was not so visible, as we are apt to think. Nevertheless, the authority's claim to have imposed total subordination met with resistance from the colonized. The tensions in German East Africa were caused by Carl Peters' authoritarian politics. The colonized did not have a right to possess the land, so they could only work on settlers' plantations. Rebellions among Africans arose, above all the Maji Maji Rebellion in German East Africa (Tanzania) between 1905 and 1907. It should be noted that after 1907 the legal system was changed: black farmers were encouraged to work on plantations without the strict observation of the colonizers.

German Southwest Africa, on the other hand, encouraged more German settlers than today's Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenia, or Burundi. In 1911 more than sixteen thousand colonizers lived in these territories. Their politics of governance consisted mainly of two significant, conflicting communities — Herero and Nama. The Herero Revolt in 1904-1907 resulted in the first genocide in the history of the 20th century (Friedrichsmeyer et al. 2011, 7-25; Schneider-Waterberg 2005,164-247). Only six years later, with the outbreak of the First World War, the German colonial empire became a target for western rivals, and lost all overseas territories in 1918 to Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal. WWI did not end the German colonial project but opened a possibility to imaginary recolonization.

Shortly after the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), German political thought, as well as art, literature, and cinema became strongly influenced by colonial fantasies. The image of an "uncivilized other" was used in order to strengthen German imperialist propaganda. In the Bismarckian era, conservatives and liberals became united in a strong pro-colonial voice, which resulted both in the growth of negrophobia and also in the emergence of anticolonial discourse (Eley 2014, 19-25). First, it found its articulations in leftist critical thought, then in the German Dada movement. While the image of the "savage" was often considered a threat to German culture and to Western civilization, the figure of the worker became interlinked with a possible subversion of the established

social order in pre-war Germany. European workers and colonized Africans started to be perceived as an uncontrolled mass that was about to start a revolution. The suppression of potential subversion became possible by enforcing the image of the internal "enemy." The image of rubble (in this case a result of the association of two figures — the African and the worker) was visualized as an uneducated and dangerous mass, thus became a collective "other" in the German social and cultural imaginary after 1885.

The legacy of German colonialism has been long overlooked in historical and theoretical debates. Whereas British and French imperialism quickly became role models for postcolonial theory, the history of the German presence in Africa and China has been treated as less significant. This situation resulted in the almost complete ignorance of colonial images in German culture. It is important to note that not only racial stereotypes, but also image of class, nation, and gender reinforced one another and created a complex image of the "Black worker." As Iris Wigger remarked:

> The degree to which race, class, national and gender stereotypes combine to reinforce one another is a subject of controversial theoretical debate in the contemporary social sciences, where a growing body of research emphasizes structural links between these categories (Wigger 2010, 34).

We need to ask, however, in what ways those "structural links" formed themselves. How could categories such as class, race, and gender create "interlinked discriminations"? The visual sphere seems to be an adequate platform for the formation of complex images that structure collective understandings of what is "national," "foreign," "civilized" or "indigenous." Addressing the issue of 20th-century nationalism, Benedict Anderson correctly pointed out that national and patriotic discourses, which arise from a binary division between self and other, were strengthened by the incorporation of images affecting the lives of a community, even before the rise of the nation (Anderson 1996, 7-20). In the German context, the imperial imagination and colonial conquest started as early as in the 17th century — long before the Unification of Germany in 1871 (Gründer et al. 2017, 9-24). Later, in the Bismarckian era, the figure of the colonizer who brings his culture (*Kultur*) to all the "uncivilized" circulated enhanced, as Anderson would say, the German "imagined community" (Baumgart 2017, 45-52).

Simplicissimus and politics of aesthetic

Albert Langen and Thomas Theodor, who founded the German satirical weekly magazine *Simplicissimus* in 1896, must have known that the questioning of visual hegemony is possible through aesthetics. The magazine was a product of left-leaning intellectuals, strongly influenced by the emerging aesthetic style of the Jugendstil movement (closely related to the French Art Nouveau movement) and was published from 1896 until 1967, although with considerable breaks (Garsha 2014, 190-192). The first issues appeared between 1944-1946, and were continued from 1950 until 1954. Langen and Theodor decided to name the magazine after the 17th-century novel entitled *Der abenteuerlich Simplicissimius Teutsch* ("Adventures of German *Simplicissimus*") written by Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. The novel, published in 1669, became a satire on the corrupt higher social classes, where lower-class workers were depicted as victims of a depraved society. As Jeremiah Garsha points out:

> With its allusion to Grimmelhausen, Langen and Heine's magazine underscore its direct connection to a Germanic legacy of satirical social commentary. In naming the publication after a working-class hero, the title *Simplicissimus* implies […] the authors and artists were in favor, theoretically, of the lower-class masses and directly opposed to the traditional oligarchy of right-wing conservatism (Garsha 2014, 191).

The main idea of the magazine's editors was to create a critical discourse comprehensible to the lower-class masses. Most issues either mocked Bismarckian internal policy or discredited colonialism. The criticism in *Simplicissimus* usually took the form of caricatures, and an essential part of every issue was the cover illustration, reflecting the current political and social situation. *Simplicissimus* thereby traced the colonial progress in Africa, giving one of the earliest critical responses to The South African War (1899-1902), as well as later to the German genocide of the Herero and Nama in South West Africa (1904-1908) (*Simplicissimus* 1900, no. 15, 25, 41; 1904, no. 4, 6). After 1900, almost every issue of *Simplicissimus* demystified the weakness of colonialism. Bismarckian Germany was presented as entangled in inner conflicts and ruined by colonial expansion.

On the front cover of issue no. 38 from 1900 (**il. 1**) we can see a famished dog pulling a heavy wagon — a symbol of imperial Germany. Inside the car, there are: Germany's flag, busts of Wilhelm II and his

Il. 1. *Simplicissimus* 1900, no. 38.

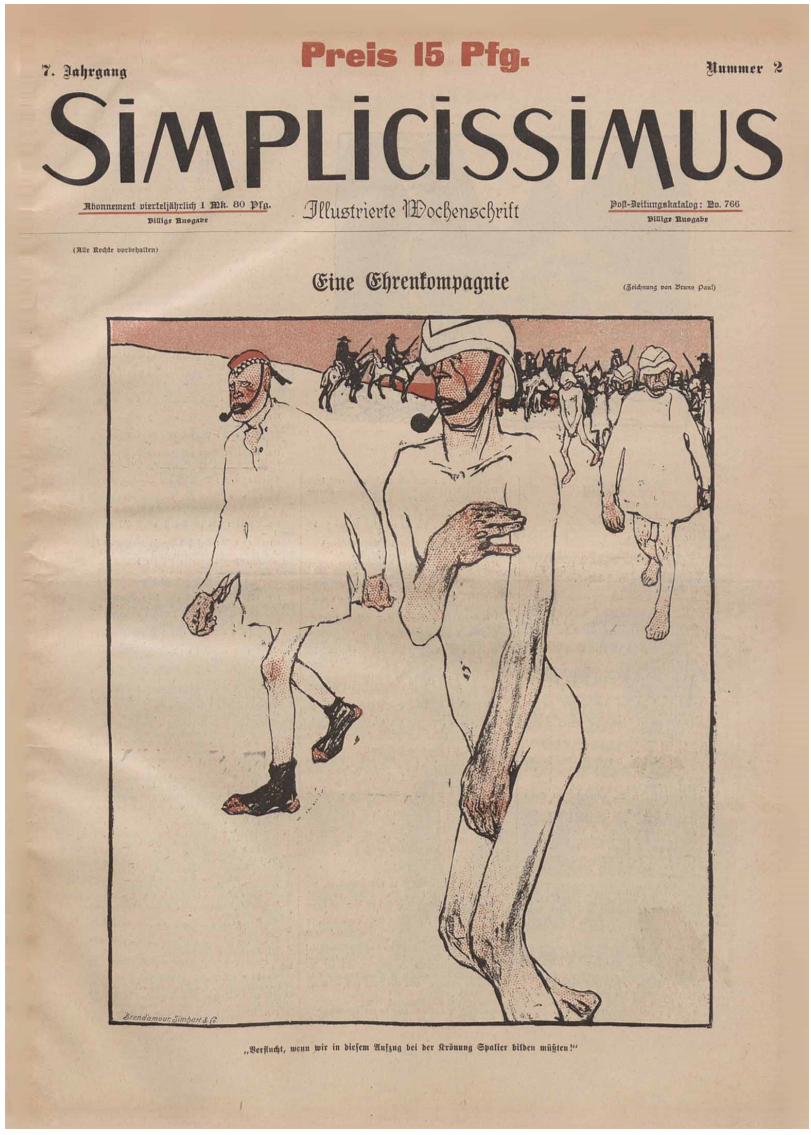
wife, cannon and guns, as well as the corpses of two Chinese children. The illustration points to the impracticability of the colonial project, in a great part responsible for the economic instability of the empire, and to the cruelty brought about by colonial expansion. By juxtaposing objects related to authority and imperial power with massacred bodies, the editors depict Bismarckian policy as resulting in a reification of

Il. 2. *Simplicissimus* 1900, no. 41.

colonized peoples treated as objects, and not as humans. Only a few months later, in issue no. 41 (**il. 2**), the animal metaphor is used again.

On the front-cover illustration, one finds an exhausted lion — a symbol of royalty — in this case, a sign of a dying empire. The editors underline the financial difficulties resulting from Wilhelm's colonial dream. Both covers reveal the imagined and wishful character of the

German Empire to be in fact without real economic or military power. This particular problem becomes the main topic two years later. The 8 April 1902 copy (**il. 3**) greeted readers with the caption: *Eine Ehrenkompagnie* ("The real Compagnie"). The cover-illustration was a typical mockery of Prussian militarism and Wilhelmine conservatism, where the German Empire is compared to the naked and scared soldiers.



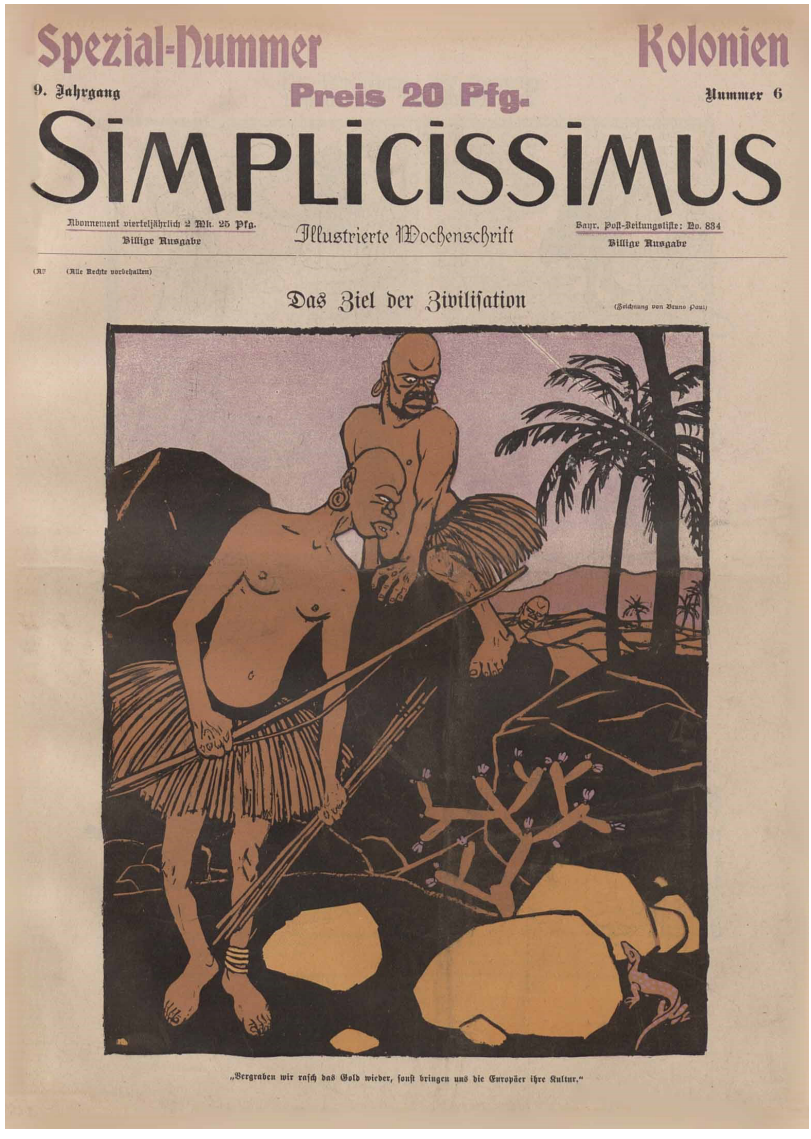
Il. 3. *Simplicissimus* 1902, no. 2.

The so-called "*Ehrencompagnie*" appears to be frightened and insecure. The naked, twisted bodies echoed a lost colonial battle in Africa. The bodily expression of the first soldier indicates a lack of power. As in Egon Schiele's expressive paintings, his body is feminized in order to reveal the instability of authority on the one hand, and the dread of individual soldiers sent to colonial territories on the other. This way the editors used the front-covers to mock the German colonial dream, arguing that the reality is becoming a pure caricature of the African fantasy.

In the editor's view, the economic progress did not entail a wider change, especially regarding social awareness — the evidence for this was, for instance, the success of German colonial propaganda in the 1880s and 1890s, as well as the imperialism rooted in Prussian militarism. While the aim of German colonialism was often presented as the inevitable part of civilization, the very concept of "civilization" became an issue discussed in *Simplicissimus*. As Norbert Elias pointed out, the idea of German supremacy was propped up by the supposed preponderance of its culture, constituted on language (Elias 1969, 12-24). The division *Kultur/Zivilization* was the first problem addressed by Elias in *The Civilizing Process*. Taking French culture as a role model for the history of western civilization, he criticized Germany. Elias reminded readers that as late as the first decades of the 18th-century the German language had been regarded as "uncivilized." Although he deconstructed concepts of Germanness — by showing its rather late development — the civilization as a process of exploration was not addressed. For intellectuals related to *Simplicissimus*, the colonial propaganda needed to be discussed together with the rising internal conflicts.

During the time of German colonialism, the images of Africans appear regularly in *Simplicissimus*. In 1904 the editors prepared a special issue devoted to the colonial project in Africa (**il. 4**). The title — *Der Ziel der Civilization* ("The aim of civilization") — appears to be crucial and orients our perception of the front-cover illustration. Africans, depicted in bamboo skirts, are considered "uncivilized" and, like their "savage" soil, they wait for European cultivation. What is striking is the notion of "civilization" used by the editors. In the picture, three Africans observe blocks of gold not only with a concern, but also with a bit of surprise; they appear to find the treasure only now. In other words, before the process of colonization they had ignored all the gold. Under the illustration there is a caption: "*Bergraben wir rasch das Gold wieder, sonst bringen und die Europäer ihre Kultur*" ("We will take the gold in a hurry, otherwise the Europeans will bring us their culture"). The aim of colonization is thus to enrich the empire's budget. The German *Kultur* appe-

ars to be a part of a desire to govern and grow wealthy. "Civilization" thereby becomes a negative of colonization, where both were understood as the exploitation of the "savages" and of German lower-class workers, who were building the imperial Germany with their own hands.


Spezial-Nummer Kolonien

9. Jahrgang Preis 20 Pfg. Nummer 6

SIMPLICISSIMUS

Abonnement vierteljährlich 2 Mk. 25 Pfg. Illustrierte Wochenschrift Bayr. Post-Zeitungsliste: No. 884

Billige Ausgabe Billige Ausgabe

(Alle Rechte vorbehalten)

Das Ziel der Zivilisation

(Zeichnung von Bruno Paul)

„Vergraben wir rasch das Gold wieder, sonst bringen uns die Europäer ihre Kultur."

Il. 4. *Simplicissimus* 1904, no. 6.

The rise and fall of Great Germany

The front-page illustration of the 2 April 1898 copy of *Simplicissimus* (**il. 5**) showed a caricature of Germania standing on the line on her way to China. Her posture is unstable, her leg twisted. Nevertheless,

Il. 5. *Simplicissimus* 1898, no. 1.

her longing for the overseas territories is stronger than the risk of falling down. After 1900, the caricatures in the magazine focused on the weakness and instability of imperial Germany. The cover illustrations linked economic crises with the excessive costs incurred for the sake of colonial progress. Two issues, from 17th and 31st December 1900, were entirely devoted to internal financial difficulties, where the colonization of China was discussed as a cause of imbalances. From the very beginning, the editors openly criticized colonial expeditions in China. Two arguments emerge from the mentioned issues: the financial instability caused by overinvestment and the cruelty of colonizers. The images of massacred bodies interweave with the figure of the defeated soldier. Issue no. 13 from 1901 (**il. 6**) depicts a colonizer returning from the colonies. He is frightened and in despair. Behind his back, we are able to see three Chinese men laughing and mocking the colonizer, who sails away in a hurry. His misfortune strongly contrasts with the amusement of the colonized. In the end, it is they who triumph. Their celebratory behavior points to the failure of the German colonial project in China. On the front cover of the special issue from 1901 entirely devoted to the "Chinese problem" (**il. 7**) one finds *Der chinesische Automat* ("the Chinese machine") — a human-like dispenser with a big caption: "*Ziehen*" ("pull"). The machine appears to be a sort of coin bank which is full of German money. The tight posture of the man depicted induces his aim to open the apparently unopenable dispenser. This illustration is a perfect example of the editor's use of satire as a critical tool in the reflection on the colonial expansion. The machine is stuck with the invested money, which is a clear sign of the colonies' insolvency.

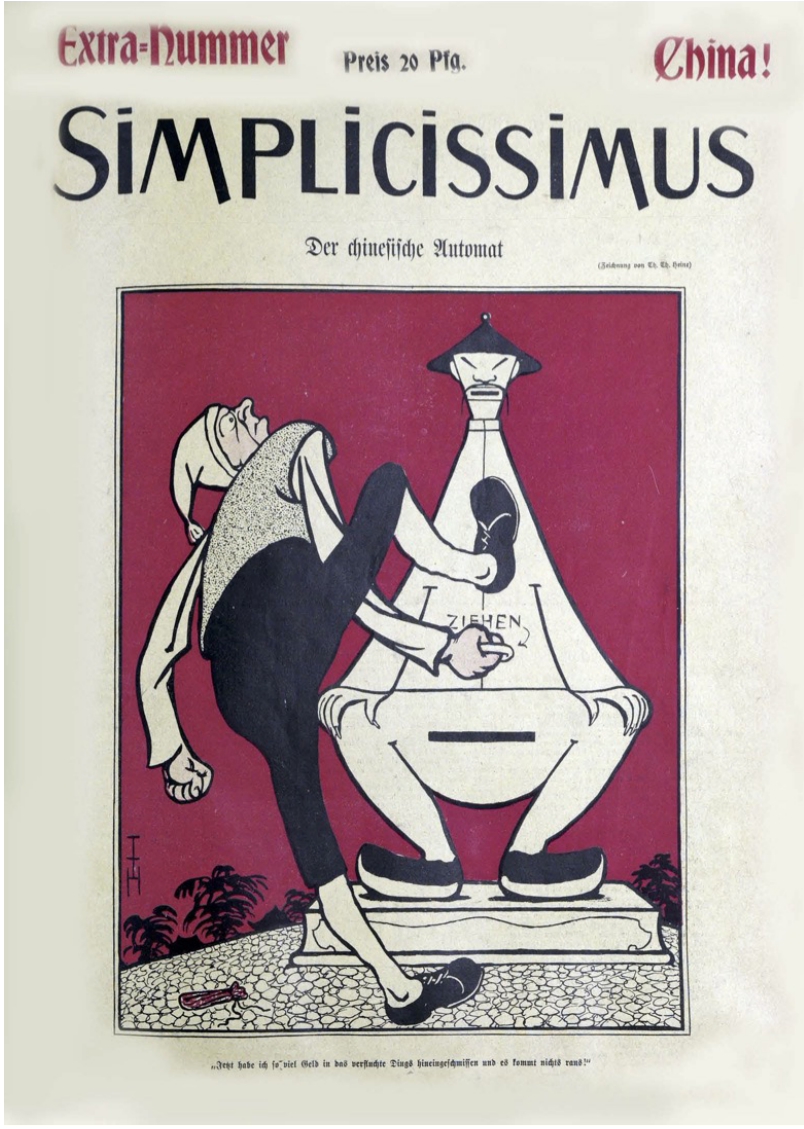
Shortly after the foundation of *Simplicissimus*, Germany took over Kiaochow (1897) and Jiao'ao Bay (1898), in the eastern part of Shandong province (Mühlhahn 2019, 178). The magazine's illustrators, focused mostly on financial costs, did not tackle the question of various colonial formations in the German overseas empire. Klaus Mühlhahn pointed out that: "Differentiation, particular forms and blurred categories resulted from efforts of active realignment and attempts of continuous reformation and adaptation" (Mühlhahn 2014, 129). The case of Kiaochow demonstrates, for instance, that modern empires were nonstable state formations, which were constantly susceptible to variation and flexible adaptation. The colonial process was:

> based on ongoing transfers of ideas, practices, and technologies between the metropolitan regions and their far-flung colonies across fixed boundaries and political forms. Colonies were terrains where projects of power and concept of

Il. 6. *Simplicissimus* 1901, no. 13.

superiority were not only imposed but also engaged and contested in the colonies and at home (Mühlhahn 2014, 129-130).

The colonies in China turned out to be the most expensive in the history of German imperial conquest. Additionally, the magazine criticized the brutality of the colonizers in China. The violent conflicts emerging in Kiaochow (1898-1901) became a subject of the front-page illustration



Il. 7. *Simplicissimus* 1901.

of the 17 April 1900 issue. It depicted the immoral conduct of German soldiers who had been sent to the colony to keep order. The newly established colonial relations in China were seen in Germany as a "clash of civilizations." It is important that, after 1898, the colonized constantly resisted German occupation, for example around Gaomi — the wealthy city where the local magistrate was located — the peasants

decided to destroy the surveyors' roads. The partisans regularly repeated the act of removal over a few months (Mühlhahn 2014, 142-143).

Nevertheless, after 1901 the illustrations depicting the colonization of China appeared rarely. Because of a conflict escalation in Africa, the question of German rule in Kiaochow and Qingdao became less and less interesting for the magazine's editors. In order to create an anticolonial voice that would be heard, *Simplicissimus* did not offer more sophisticated analysis of Bismarckian imperialism. The mechanisms of colonial rule in China were far more complex than in Africa and they created multiple colonial formations, which Mühlhahn calls "semicolonial conditions." He argues that:

> challenged German authorities to rethink and reform imperial policies. A more flexible form of empire emerged that was more efficient, more dynamic, and less violent. Despite the fact that this colony was small and short-lived, it marks a significant conceptual change in the history of empire. Kiaochow signaled a far-reaching transition in imperial forms, from direct control over territory to a flexible deterritorialized form of domination that cultivates imperial connections to noncitizen subjects in ambivalent and opaque circumstances (Mühlhahn 2014, 143).

For *Simplicissimus*, the colonial presence in China resulted in internal economic crises and in the general demoralization of German society. The question of brutality, which characterized the colonizers, was far more important for left-leaning intellectuals than the analysis of subtle variations of German imperialism. The picture of the German global empire created in *Simplicissimus* between 1898 and 1907 — even if simplified — grasped the connection between colonialism and capitalism.

The question of brutality, which characterized the colonizers, was far more important for left-leaning intellectuals than the analysis of subtle variations of German imperialism. The picture of the German global empire created in Simplicissimus between 1898 and 1907 — even if simplified — grasped the connection between colonialism and capitalism.

The failure of capitalists? Towards a revolution of "savages" and workers

Simplicissimus argued that Wilhelmine Germany was not a real world power, but an imagined empire. The illustrators concentrated on the feeble army and poverty, both of which were hurting the lower-classes. The unrealistic colonial project functioned as an idealized image of German supremacy and as a phantasm of imperial hegemony over the "uncivilized." For the magazine's editors, German colonialism interwove capitalism with 19th-century racist ideology. They argued that the mechanism of exploitation in colonies was, in fact, parallel to the forms

of capitalism in Germany. From that perspective, the situation of white workers was compared with the living conditions of the colonized, especially in Africa. They were both the slaves of Western capitalism, affecting the appearance of the colonial conquest in Germany in the first place. The editors sought to create a strong anti-government voice, where the critique of capitalism and colonialism would be seen as a chance for a dialogue between different social classes.

Although in the 1880s and 1890s colonial propaganda was implemented under the name of "civilization," as a part of Bismarckian *Weltpolitik*, the beginning of the 20th century was marked by a noticeable change in visuality concerning the German "mission" in Africa. The image of the black "other" started to be used in order to emphasize the racial difference between Jews and (white) Germans (Davis 2014, 230-232). After the beginning of the colonial war in today's Namibia, Africans were depicted as the uncivilized with no possibility of assimilating with European culture. The same argument was also used to exclude Jews from political, social, and cultural activity (Short 2014, 210-216). For folkish ideologues, both Jews and Africans were foreign elements for the German "race." Although the magazine's editors were concerned by virulent antisemitism, they did not explicitly connect the stereotypical image of a Jew with the visualization of the colonized in *Simplicissimus*. The 26th copy of the journal from 1902 (**il. 8**) is a good example of how the editors used the stereotypical image of Jew to reveal the irrationality of the collective fear of the "Jewish plot." On the front-cover illustration, we can see three arguing men drowning in a sea of white rabbits. Their appearance — long beards, side curls, black gabardines and overdrawn "Jewish noses," that is, the racial stereotypical visualization of a hooked nose. The three men represent the idea of possible Jewish supremacy over the world. The rabbits indicate the uncontrolled expansion of Jews from the East (so-called *Ostjude*) in Germany. In the illustration, they are compared to colonizers, in this case of the Western world. Thus, like the Africans, they are foreign and alienated from the very idea of *Kultur*. *Simplicissimus* played with the stereotypical image of a Jew, which makes the contemporary reading of these illustrations more demanding. It is important to ask how can we understand the editor's strategy, which is based on repeating the racial imaginary? Does repetition allow a reinterpretation? How to make repetition fertile and critical? In the case of *Simplicissimus*, while the image usually reenacts stereotypical picturing of socially excluded groups, the descriptions of the images introduce an important change in our understanding of the front-cover illustrations. I would argue that in this

Il. 8. *Simplicissimus* 1902, no. 26.

case it is a written word — not the picture — that orients and constitutes the critical gaze of the actual viewer. The ironic description, which accompanies every issue's front-cover picture, grasps our attention and determines the interpretation of the visual.

As the cover of the fourth copy of the journal from 1904 issue (**il. 9**) shows, the editors decided to emphasize the relation between


9. Jahrgang

Preis 20 Pfg.

Nummer 4

SIMPLICISSIMUS

Abonnement vierteljährlich 2 Mk. 25 Pfg.
Billige Ausgabe

Illustrierte Wochenschrift

Bayr. Post-Zeitungsliste: Nr. 834
Billige Ausgabe

(Alle Rechte vorbehalten)

Die afrikanische Gefahr

(Zeichnung von Th. Heine)

Es ist höchste Zeit, daß die Regierung mit aller Macht gegen die Hereros vorgeht, sonst kommen die schwarzen Bestien schließlich noch nach Deutschland und heben bei uns die Sklaverei auf.

Il. 9. *Simplicissimus* 1904, no. 4.

workers and Africans, rather than between antisemitic and negrophobic discourses. Racial difference is, according to the editors, a product of heterogeneous mechanisms of exploitation. The illustration showed workers' protests as an aftereffect of the Herero's rebellion in Namibia. Thus not discursive form or racism, but the social mechanisms of exclusion became the focal point, because they caused and acted on the

racial differentiation. The 19 April 1904 copy cover-illustration presents a remarkable scene — the Herero have come to Germany in order to liberate white workers from the factory. The black slaves did not join the ongoing workers' rebellion, but in fact, invoked it. The uprising of Herero and Nama in German Southwest Africa is presented as a part of a revolution and a subversive change of the established order. The title of this particular issue was *Die afrikanische Gefahr* ("The African Danger") and the caption on the front-page illustration claimed: "*Es ist höchste Zeit, dass die Regierung mit aller Macht gegen die Hereros vorgeht, sonst kommen die schwarzen Bestien schließlich noch nach Deutschland und heben bei uns die Sklaverei auf*" ("It is about time for the government to react with all its force to Herero, otherwise the black beasts will come to Germany and liberate our slaves"). For leftleaning intellectuals, Herero and Nama's rebellion was an understandable reaction to the colonizer's exploitation and violence. Both the black slaves and the white workers had a common enemy, namely capitalism. They were treated as cheap labor and became alienated from the products of their work. That way *Simplicissimus* introduces a new order of seeing and understanding the condition of a white worker in Europe through colonial exploitation. The illustration focuses on the condition of the workers, rather than on the actual condition of the Hereros who were massacred by the German colonizers. Nevertheless, the image of a revolution bears the mask of a black colonized subject, rather than that of white workers. It is striking that Africans not only invoke revolution but they also aim to fight capitalism under the red flag (Sobich 2006, 108-110). The front-cover illustration's message echoes the anti-colonial attitude inscribed in socialist politics.

Between 1904 and 1907 the German colonial policy made headlines, there were articles in the newspapers and public meetings. As John Phillip Short suggested, the sudden visibility of colonialism in the everyday life in Germany "pulled thousands of new working-class voters into the electoral process" (Short 2014, 213). The SPD, like *Simplicissimus*, created a broadly based critique of an imperial project (Weir 2010, 143-166). Short argued:

> Working-class responses to the war in Southwest Africa evolved out of this older, broader discourse on imperialist violence and exploitation, provoked especially at the turn of the century by the Boer War and the Boxer Rebellion. In the multiple forms of working-class engagement in early 1907 — through local party institutions and in the language of local party organs — we observe the fruition of this strong countervailing force (Short 2014, 213).

The emergence of anticolonial discourse in 1907 had in fact been prepared earlier with the outbreak of Maji Maji Rebellion and the Morocco Crisis. The press reported about corruption, brutality and sexual assaults in the colonies (Short 2014, 213-214; Sobich 2006, 273-298).

Using the image of the colonized, *Simplicissimus* related not only to the visual archive of colonization but also to revolution. In the western imaginary, revolution was related to the figure of the Black. Blackness was the sign of anarchy, especially after the revolt in Haiti. Considering the enunciation "black beasts," it constituted a legible reference to the political discourse and discussions in Parliament after the breakout of the colonial war in Namibia (Short 2014, 210-214). The conservationist Ernst Graf Ludwig zu Reventlow (1869-1943) expressed the voice of the majority when he called the Herero "wild beasts," to whom the humanitarian codex should not be applied. His antagonist, the socialist August Bebel (1840-1913), although he suggested that the Herero were "lower in culture," located their revolt in the long history of European revolutions, going back to 1789 (Short 2014, 223). Thus, the reaction of Africans in colonies should be considered as part of a long and non-linear process of becoming a political subject — a view that was close to the meaning of the copy of *Simplicissimus* from 4 April 1904. The question remains, however, of whether the "aesthetic activism" practiced by *Simplicissimus* can be understood as countervisual? If the previous issues formed a critique of German *Weltpolitik*, the image of Blackness used on the 4 April 1904 copy not only recalled the popular perception of Africans in German culture but created a counterintuitive meaning. The editors argued that although they were half-naked and "uncivilized," the mechanism of their submission was in fact similar to the situation of the German workers.

The educational strategy of the magazine consisted of playing with the images circulating in mass media. After the 1890s, Africa and its population became a subject of virulent pro-colonial propaganda. However, this was not the only platform where the imperialistic imagination acted. Blackness started to be used as a persuasion tactic in advertisements, where the image of the "savage" and the ideology of the German cultural "mission" were juxtaposed. Although the image of blackness used in advertisements must be considered as "racist," the relation between imperial ideology and advertisements, in general, seems to be much more complex. While in the imperialist imagination Germany was visualized as an established colonial empire, colonial politics was a "great improvisation," rather than the accomplishment of a well-thought out colonial strategy. Blackness occupied a counterintuitive place

in the visuality of the Bismarckian era. As David Ciarlo pointed out:

> At first glance, the congruence of this visual commercial motif with those ideological constructions of the civilizing mission or of ineluctable racial difference found in colonialist writings appears to offer a compelling argument that colonialism — and those who advocated it — had begun to penetrate the world business. The history of visuality follows a trajectory different from the history of ideology, and they cannot be so casually coupled together. In fact, the deeper look into the intersections of colonialist advocacy and the broader world of advertising suggests a different relationship: not an established political ideology ultimately penetrating the commercial world but rather the new practices of commerce reconfiguring a traditional sphere of political ideology (Ciarlo 2014, 188).

The cover-illustrations of *Simplicissimus* followed the popular image of Blackness in order to give a different meaning to the figure of the "savage." Using aesthetics as an anticolonial message to the wider German public, the editors aimed to destabilize the hegemonic visuality. Although they understood the resignification of racist and stereotypic images as a contestation of the established social, political, and cultural order, their anticolonial aesthetic activism did not create a platform for a dialogue between left-leaning intellectuals, such as the editors, and lower--classes workers. If the strategies of *Simplicissimus* cannot be considered as countervisual, they can be understood as an attempt to counterimagine — to design new possibilities for social relations and solidarity. The edi-tors accurately recognized the racist and nationalist inclinations of German colonial propaganda, although they did not create an alternative visuality which would change a system as a whole. Furthermore, the articulation of criticism remained limited to their own social class. In other words, they gave no voice to the groups they wanted to represent, such as workers. The countervisuality is a claim to the right to look, thus to act countervisually does not mean resigning from seeing, but seeing differently — not with, but against visuality. In its criticism, *Simplicissimus* looked through racial visuality, thereby contesting and resignifying it. Therefore, by using stereotypical images and juxtaposing them with a radical anti-authoritarian policy, the magazine created a space for counterimaginative practices.

"Schwarze Schmach" — black bodies and white bodies

If the second half of the 19th century in the history of Germany was marked by a spectacular technological and scientific progress, the years following the end of the First World War brought economic and moral crises. In 1919, the German colonial empire ceased to exist and the presence of German colonizers in Africa came to the end. Nevertheless, racial difference was crucial to the cultural imagination of the Weimar Republic, which gave an ambivalent postcolonial character to the interwar period. Although the outbreak of the First World War started the process of taking over German overseas territories, the imperialist imagination survived, as did colonial phantasies. Between 1919 and 1921, the most influential figure of the "Other" that emerged was the black male soldier (Wigger 2010). Racialized and sexualized images of French colonial troops became known in Germany via the "Black Shame" (*Schwarze Schmach*) campaign. Shortly after 1918, the first French colonial troops were sent to the Rhineland. In this way, in 1919, as a consequence of the Treaty of Versaille, between 25,000 and 40,000 black soldiers occupied German territories (Wigger 2010, 34-35).

While the after-war political situation reinforced the anti-French and the anti-Versailles sentiment, the most significant propaganda campaign of that time was concentrated on the stationing of the colonial troops. The "Black Shame" campaign reenacted the 19th-century German colonial archive, that is to say, a particular vision of Blackness as evidence of a racial difference. The Black soldiers were depicted as morally depraved and were defined by animalistic sexual instincts (Wigger 2017, 10-33). Their presence on German soil needed to be seen as a threat to the social order. The most popular images created in the propaganda campaign juxtaposed the black solder and the white German woman (Wigger 2017, 45-61). While Blackness became visually connected with the alleged cultural inferiority of colonial troops, women were supposed to be seen as victims. The bodies of soldiers and women were racialized and sexualized in visual discourse. Iris Wigger correctly pointed out that the campaign aimed to create a national panic over the Rheinland occupation (Wigger 2010, 35-36). The images of the white female body and black male body, when presented together, actualized racial and gender stereotypes, and strengthened social and cultural imaginaries, long before the actual stationing of colonial troops.

The "Black Shame" campaign played on the convergence of different categories and formed "interlinked discriminations." It is important to note that not only race and gender were used in the anti-occupation

campaign analyzed by Wigger. Class became the third medium of racial and sexual projections in German post-war propaganda. The image of the German woman as a victim of sexual assault operated in two different directions. Firstly, the white female body was a symbol of the national body, threatened by the "uncivilized" (Wigger 2010, 42-44). Secondly, the body of the woman — because it was white and female — was alleged to act in favor of moral disorder. If the campaign emphasized the depraved sexuality of French colonial soldiers, it also underlined the importance of women's behavior towards black men. In other words, women who had relationships with black men, or were alleged to do so, were symbolically excluded from German society and treated as dishonorable. It was not a coincidence that most of them were working-class women and that their morals were seen as particularly dubious. In contrast to upper-class German women, they were presented as easy to seduce by black soldiers, precisely due to their supposed "primitivity" (Wigger 2017, 42).

At that time, we can observe two contradictory images of German women circulating in Germany and in France. The first presents the black soldier as a danger to an innocent and weak woman (**il. 10**). Her

Il. 10. *Die Schwarze Schmach: Franzosen im Ruhrgebiet. 10 Sketches by A.M. Cay*, Berlin 1923.

Il. 11. *Le Rire*, 1920, no. 75.

posture indicates fear and hostility towards the man who had attacked her. In this case, blackness becomes a synonym of aggressiveness and rapacity, while whiteness represents innocence and vulnerability. The second — popular in the French press — inverts the latter and shows German women as greedy and sexually aggressive towards the black soldier. If the "Black Shame" campaign aimed to present Germany as a victim of aggressive and "uncivilized" French politics, the French press counter this with a stereotypical visualization of the occupation in Rhineland. In issue no. 75 of *Le Rire* ("Laughter") from 1920 (**il. 11**) we find an illustration presenting a German woman as a sow. She welcomes a black soldier with flowers and tears. It is interesting to note that in this case, it is a white woman, not a black man, who is animalized and presented as greedy. In the "Black shame" campaign, working-class German women became closely related to the black "uncivilized other." Wigger noted that: "Based on stereotypes of female and black 'lechero-

usness' and alleged inferior rationality, both could be constructed as creatures driven by primitive and essentially 'bestial' sexual instincts" (Wigger 2017, 42). Those two different images, juxtaposed in a campaign, created the visual figure of the external enemy (the black soldier), as well as the internal enemy (white working class women). However, as Peter Collar argued, the first years after the creation of the Weimar Republic were marked by a significant change in the status of women in society. Paradoxically, the emancipation of German women gave some of them the possibility to publicly speak out against the "Black shame":

> Newly enfranchised women were now in a more favorable position than ever before to make a contribution in public life. It is not surprising that they — no less than their male counterparts — were to play their part in the widespread protests that accompanied the signing of the Peace Treaty. It was to the campaign against the *Schwarze Schmach*, however, that they were to make a particularly noteworthy contribution (Collar 2013, 94)

Hence they created *Fraunliga*, led by Margarete Gärtner, firstly dominated by the middle classes, later gaining the SPD representation in the advisory committee in an attempt to activate the working classes in the campaign (Collar 2013, 98). Their principal publication was the booklet *Farbige Franzosen am Rhein* ("French of color at the Rhein"), published in 1920 by the Berliner publisher Hans Engelmann. *Frauenliga* took an active part in associating the question of stationing with the morality of German women. They protest not only against *Schwarze Schmach*, but also critiqued "war guilt" (Collar 2013, 120), concentrating on the Peace Treaty's "lie." It should not be overlooked that the stereotypical image of women and the Black soldier was partly created by newly emancipated women activists.

Hannah Höch. Towards anticolonial subjectivity

The "Black Shame" campaign evoked a broad international public response. The stationing of colonial French troops was seen internationally as a disgrace and an undeserved punishment for the German nation (Wigger 2017, 113-121). Although the racist campaign became a subject of scholarly analysis, the voices that countered the "Black Shame" propaganda were studied less often. The German artist Hannah Höch, who was closely related to the German Dada movement, in her post-war works, concentrated on the mass media representations of women and "savages" (Hoesen 2014, 318-319). The artist used the sexualized image

of the body as the raw material for her famous 1925's photomontages. By reshaping them, she gave her own response not only to the anti-feminism of the Weimar Republic but also to the racial discourses of that time. Through her art, Höch argued that nationalism was interlinked with the postcolonial imagination. The photomontages, such as *Die Kokette II*, *Entführung*, *Liebe im Busch*, or *Mischling*, all made between 1924 and 1925, resignify the image of black and white bodies strongly present in racist discourses in Post-war Germany.

In 1929 Höch worked on the series of photo-montages she called *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum*. In one of them, called *Ohne Titel* ("without a title"), the artist juxtaposed an exotic African mask with two strong, muscular black legs (**il. 12**). This way, she played with a stereotypical belief that Africans possess unusual strength that is unnatural for European men. The physical superiority is in this case linked to the supposed irrationality of Black men — a belief inscribed in the European notion of "exotic." In her future work, also called *Ohne Titel*, from 1930

Il. 12. *Hannah Höch, Ohne Titel, Aus einem ethnographischen Museum 1929*. Whitechapel Gallery.

(**il. 13**), the artist mixed photographs of a white women's face with the body of an ancient sculpture in order to reveal the constructive character of beauty in European culture. Höch consciously experimented with the canons of female beauty fixed in the history of Western painting. Through the representation of a white body, fragmented and folded

Il. 13. *Ohne Titel 1930*. Whitechapel Gallery.

from many elements, the artist pointed to falseness of the "femininity" figure. In *Mischling* (**il. 14**), Höch juxtaposed the images of a white woman and a black woman in order to unveil the mechanisms constructing the cultural difference acting on Blackness and Whiteness. On the face of the portrayed women, "European" soft lips became one with black skin, thereby criticizing the victimization of German women in

Il. 14. *Mischling* 1924. Whitechapel Gallery.

the racist anti-stationing campaign. On the other hand, the photo--montages entitled *Entführung* presented the abduction of a woman by "savages," who were transformed into primitive tribal figures.

Höch reenacted the images circulating in the "Black Shame" propaganda campaign and reconfigured them. Since the black men turned out to be imagined figures, the alleged violence of black men towards German women must have been contested as unreal. Höch argued that

Blackness (cultural inferiority), as well as Whiteness (interlinked with women's feebleness), are constructed discursively and can be discovered in modern anthropology, as well as in medicine — both founded on racial stereotypes. With her photomontages, Höch introduced an anti-colonial voice to the German Dada movement. Although her art can be read as a stand against racism and antifeminism in the Weimar Republic, are her photomontages countervisual? The case of the German artist is in fact close to the aesthetic strategy of the *Simplicissimus* magazine. Both the satirical weekly magazine and Höch used stereotypical images of racialized and sexualized subjects in order to criticize the established social and cultural system, which was based on exclusion. Aesthetic activism was, in this light expression of their critical thought, used to destabilize visuality and its hegemony. The strategy of the resignification of the images that shape the cultural imagination creates new meanings. As the forms of counterimagination — the imaginative and creative force — merge images and notions considered separate and distant, such as the white and black body, and "exotic" cultures and Western civilization. Höch's photo-montages, like the illustrations essential to *Simplicissimus*, are marvelous examples of counterimaginative practices that result in the creation of counterintuitive links and associations, where interlinked discriminations are used to think the world without inequalities, aggression, hate, or cruelty.

Unlike Mirzoeff's countervisuality, counterimagination is founded on a critical observation of social, political, and cultural reality. It uses ready-made images and phantasms so that subversive play with visuality becomes possible. The subversiveness of counterimagination lies in a constant contestation of established meanings. If they determine the subject's place in society, the only possibility to change it lies in re-signification, in giving them new meanings. In contrast, countervisuality (the claim to the right to look) is related to anti-hegemonic activism. Although a critical attitude is important, it is only the first step to overcome visuality. As Mirzoeff suggested, the right to look not only theorizes, but also introduces a radical change in social reality. The change that comes with countervisuality does not only emerge in scientific, critical or artistic activity. Thus, it is produced not only by intellectuals or educated artists. Countervisuality can emerge in a dialogue between various excluded groups, who search to find a common language for mutual comprehension. In that sense, the history of counterimagination in the German cultural imagination can be described and analyzed, whereas countervisuality is yet to be imagined.

References

Allen, Ann Taylor. 1984. *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany. Kladderadatsch and Simplicissimus 1890-1914*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky.

Anderson, Benedict. 1996. *L'imaginaire national. Réflexions sur l'origine et l'essor du nationalisme*. Transl. by Pierre-Emmanuel Dauzat. Paris: Édition la Découverte.

Blackshire-Belay, Carol Aisha. 1996. *The African-German Experience. Critical Essays*. Connecticut-London: Praeger.

Burmeister Ralf. 2007. *Hannah Höch. Aller Anfang ist DADA*. Bonn--Ostfildern: Berlinische Galerie, Hatte Cantz Verlag.

Campt, Tina. 2004. *Other Germans. Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

———. 2003. "Converging Spectres of an Other Within. Race and Gender in Prewar Afro-German History." *Callaloo* vol. 26/2.

Collar Peter. 2013. *The Propaganda War in the Rhineland*. Weimar Germany, Race and Occupation after World War I. London-New York: I.B. Tauris.

Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*, *Vol. I. The History of Manners*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.

Simplicissimus. 1898-1907. http://www.simplicissimus.info/index.php?id=6.

Frierichsmeyer, Sara and Susanne Zantop. 2011. *The Imperialist Imagination. German Colonialism and Its Legacy.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Garsha, Jeremiah. 2014. "Picturing German Colonialism. Simplicissimus special 1904 issue." *Przegląd Zachodni* vol. 1.

Gilman, Sander L. 1985. "Black Bodies, White Bodies. Towards the Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine and Literature." *Critical Inquiry* vol. 12/1.

Gründer, Horst, i Hermann Hier. 2017. *Die Deutschen und Ihre Kolonien. Ein Überblick.* Berlin: be.bra Verlag.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 2011. *The Right to Look. A Counterhistory of Visuality*. Durham-London: Duke University Press.

Mitchell, W. J. T. 2012. *Seeing through Race*. Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press.

Mühlhahn Klaus. 2019. *Making China Modern: From the Great Qing to Xi Jinping*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Naranch, Bradley and Geoff Eley. 2014. *German Colonialism in a Global Age*. Durham-London: Duke University Press.

Rancière, Jacques. 2004. *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*. Transl. by Gabriel Rockhill, London-New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Taylor, Charles. 2004. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham-London: Duke University Press.

Weir, Todd. 2010. "Between Colonial Violence and Socialist Worldview: The Conversion of Ernst Däuming." *German History* vol. 28.

Sobich, Frank Oliver. 2006: *Schwarze Bestien, rote Gefahr: Rassismus und Antisozialismus im deutschen Kaiserreich*. Frankfurt-New York: Campus Verlag.

Wigger, Iris. 2010. "'Black Shame'. The Campaign Against 'Racial Degeneration' and Female Degradation in Interwar Europe." *Race & Class* vol. 51/3.

———. 2017. *The Black Horror on the Rhine. Intersections of Race, Nation, Gender, and Class in 1920s Germany*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

AGNIESZKA WIECKIEWICZ – Ph. D. candidate in the Doctoral School of Humanities at the University of Warsaw, a graduate in cultural studies at the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw and in Polish philology in the Department of Slavonic and East European Studies at the Université Paris-Sorbonne. She works on her project entitled "Between Autoanalysis and Autobiography. Everyday Writing Practices of Freud's First Disciples and Their Impact on the Psychoanalytic Theory" as a part of a Diamond Grant (2018-2022). She is a member of the Collegium Invisible and the Polish Gender Society.

Address:
Instytut Literatury Polskiej, UW
Instytut Kultury Polskiej, UW
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warszawa
email: agnieszka.wieckiewicz@gmail.com

Citation: Więckiewicz, Agnieszka. 2020. "The Images of Blackness: Savages, Workers and the Emergence of the Counter-imagination in Germany (1884-1925)". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 137–174.
DOI: 10.14746/prt2020.2.6

Autor: Agnieszka Więckiewicz

Tytuł: Obrazy czarności. Dzicy, robotnicy i kształtowanie się kontrwyobraźni w Niemczech (1884-1925)

Abstrakt: Autorka analizuje obrazy kolonizowanych Afrykanów i europejskich robotników przedstawianych jako grupy zniewolone zarówno przez kapitalizm, jak i imperializm — wyobrażenia zasilające społeczną wyobraźnię w Niemczech po Konferencji Berlińskiej (1884-1885). Celem artykułu jest wprowadzenie koncepcji „kontrwyobraźni" i ukazanie, w jej świetle, w jaki sposób obrazy motłochu mogły łączyć się z wizualizacjami czarnych niewolników. Autorka dowodzi, że obie grupy były traktowane jako realne zagrożenie dla porządku społecznego w Niemczech oraz dla niemieckiej Kultur na przełomie XIX i XX wieku. Pierwsza część artykułu została poświęcona wizualnej warstwie czasopisma satyrycznego *Simplicissimus*. W drugiej części podjęto zaś namysł nad agresywną propagandą przeciwko okupacji Nadrenii przez kolonialne wojska francuskie. Autorka opisuje mechanizmy przedstawiania czarnych żołnierzy oraz wskazuje na antykolonialne rekcje na kampanię przeciw „Czarnej hańbie".

Słowa kluczowe: kontrwizualność, wizualność, kolonializm, rasa, propaganda, rasizm

Review

ŁUKASZ ZAREMBA
Translated by ANNA MICIŃSKA

Slave Wars and the Prerevolutionary Landscape

On Vincent Brown's book Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA—London 2020.

Review of Vincent Brown's book *Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (2020).

Keywords: slavery, slave war, slave rebelion, Jamaica, Tacky's Revolt

Markus Rediker concludes his story of a modern slave ship—a medium of Western slavery—by recounting a 1791 court case brought against captain James D'Wolf in Newport (Rediker 2008, 343–347). He had just sailed back on the two-masted Polly, having completed one of the variants of the triangular trade: he purchased and loaded 142 persons aboard at the Gold Coast (part of the Gulf of Guinea, today's Ghana), 121 of whom he delivered to Havana alive (in Cuba people were traded directly and indirectly for sugar), before traveling back to his home in Rhode Island. The fifteen percent loss of human "cargo"—more than the average at the time[1] —could have meant that D'Wolf, who not only commanded the ship, but also co-financed the operation, ended up making less than intended. It is also known, however, that he insured himself against losses above twenty percent—he may have thus remained within the range of expected profit.

Meanwhile, in the United States, he was charged with murder. The court case of course did not deal with the deaths of slaves resulting from disease, anxiety, malnutrition, suicides, or disastrous conditions on the ship. It was rather concerned with just one of the twenty one victims. Sailors from *Polly* testified that the captain had ordered them to isolate a female slave (whose name is not known) suffering from smallpox, tie her to a chair and leave her out on deck for several days, before he personally lowered her overboard (the crew declined) on the chair (allegedly, he declared that he was only sorry to lose the chair). D'Wolf's line of defense (as reconstructed by the author of *The Slave Ship. A Human History*) was as follows: "The woman posed a danger because, had a number of the crew sickened and died, they would have been unable to control their large and unruly cargo of Coromantee captives, as they were 'a Nation famed for Insurrection'" (Rediker 2008, 345).

The estimated profit and loss statement—regardless of its plausibility[2]

1 In the last decade of the eighteenth century, there were 867,992 slaves loaded on slave ships in African ports, 767,823 of whom arrived at their final destinations alive, bringing the death rate to twelve percent. Over the course of that decade, 109,441 slaves boarded ships at the Gold Coast alone, and 98,123 left the ships alive (a ten percent death rate). The slave trade data was sourced from Slave Voyages (slavevoyages.org, accessed March 5, 2020). In the eighteenth century, the ratio of women to men among slaves was approximately 2:1, about a third of the slaves were children (there were regional differences in demand for the age and gender of slaves, depending on the nature of work in a given colony).

2 Smallpox onboard didn't necessarily lead to loss. Rediker brings up a report of a sailor testifying in captain D'Wolf's trial who claimed that the crew wished to contract the disease in order to develop immunity to it. (Rediker 2008, 345). Meanwhile, Vincent Brown writes in *The Reaper's Garden. Death and Power in the*

—was strikingly similar to that of Liverpool's sail ship *Zong*, which had carried 440 slaves one decade earlier. Both *Polly* and *Zong* were overloaded with people (in the case of *Zong*, the total count was double the ship's designated limit), while being short on crew (including saving on the ship's doctor) and supplies. Both "cargos" were insured, and *Zong*, like many similar endeavors, sailed on credit. Faced with uncertain circumstances (diseases, shortage of potable water, and navigation errors), its captain, Luke Collingwood (who died three days after reaching Jamaica with merely 208 slaves in tow), ordered 122 male and female slaves to be dumped over the course of several days between November and December of 1781. In light of these events, ten more people committed suicide by jumping off the ship. On behalf of the shareholders, captain Collingwood counted on an insurance payout—issued only if a slave died at sea. Calculus of probability and modern risk management went hand in hand with transforming black slaves into abstract, expendable, "typical" trade units—as Ian Baucom writes in his *Spectres of the Atlantic. Finance Capital, Slavery, and Philosophy of History* (Baucom 2005). And so, the subsequent court trials associated with *Zong*'s journey from Accra, a port on the same coast from which D'Wolf would purchase his slaves ten years later, were focused on the payouts for lost cargo as opposed to homicide.

Although the tragedy on *Polly* may strike one as an ideal addendum to the story of the *Zong* ship, and could act as a supplement to Baucom's study devoted to the Atlantic economic calculations—after all, just like the entire slave trade, murder committed in its name was based on multiple layers of speculation, perfectly reflected in the repeated conditional: "had a number of the crew sickened and [as a result of the sickness—Ł.Z.] died"—this is not the reason I bring it up. I do so because D'Wolf's case took place exactly three decades after one of the biggest modern slave rebellions, which went down in history as Tacky's Revolt. It was sparked in 1760, in British-occupied Jamaica, by no other than the Coromantee, the "nation famed for insurrection." The legend of the strong, combative, and ever conspiring Coromantees must have thus been well and alive in the 1790s. The alleged threat they posed was supposed to persuade the court that the captain's predictions were highly probable and thus his conduct rational (D'Wolf, thanks to his wealthy

World of Atlantic Slavery (Brown 2008, 50): "The market had another way of taking the dangers of smallpox into account. Slaves who had survived the pox—or the deadly yaws—and had scars to prove their immunity drew higher prices." This was referred to as "seasoning" the slaves—usually a year-long period of developing immunity to the diseases and local climate of the colonies.

family's influence, was eventually acquitted several years later). In fact, the Coromantee myth predated the 1760 and 1761 insurrections in Jamaica—the group was supposed to have been responsible for a series of mutinies on ships and in the West Indies at least since the early eighteenth century. As Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker describe them in *The Many-Headed Hydra*:

> The leading cell was made up of Africans from the Gold Coast of West Africa, the Akan-speaking people who were known by the name of the slave-trading fort from which they were shipped: Coromantee (or, in Fante, Kromantse). Many a "Coromantee" had been an okofokum, a common soldier trained in firearms and hand-to-hand combat in one of the mass armies of West Africa's militarized, expansionist states (Akwamu, Denkyira, Asante, Fante), before being captured and shipped to America (Linebaugh and Rediker 2012, 184-185).

"Coromantee" is therefore one of the colonial categories systematizing the Atlantic world, one of the stereotypes enabling the conversion of African communities of diverse geographical, class, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds into a homogenous mass of black captives, and thus into slave ship cargo.

In reality, "Coromantee" is therefore one of the colonial categories systematizing the Atlantic world, one of the stereotypes enabling the conversion of African communities of diverse geographical, class, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds into a homogenous mass of black captives, and thus into slave ship cargo. Already in the late seventeenth century, they had featured as the protagonists of a sensational novel about Oroonoko, a prince who was insidiously kidnapped and sold into slavery, and by somewhat adopting his traits, all of the Coromantees in Atlantic popular culture came to represent a form of gentry among various slave groups (Brown 2020, 103). The legend of the rebellious peoples, layered with captains' stories, port gossip, and the constant fear of the white plantation owners, grew along with the participation (actual and alleged) of the Gold Coast slaves in subsequent insurrections and conspiracies, including those in New York in the 1710s, or in St. John and Antigua in the 1730s.

> Both the fear and the admiration of the Coromantees originated in the same idea, namely, that some intrinsic cultural essence defined Africans from the Gold Coast, and that this essence might distinguish something fundamental about black people in general […]. Noted for martial masculinity, haughty pride, and relentless daring, the Coromantees in the eighteenth century defined a type that has thrilled and frightened whites—and parodied and beckoned to black men—ever since (Brown 2020, 233).

Meanwhile, the Coromantee didn't even always share a language. But perhaps most of all, this category, founded on colonial territorial demarcation, contained diverse African communities, often at odds and

waging wars against each other, or forming volatile alliances (in the course of these battles and invasions, the defeated ones would often be sent into slavery and sold in the Gold Coast ports; recent war enemies from Africa could therefore later find themselves on the same plantations, or even same ships). At the same time, this notion included an additional implication that inadvertently transcended the European racist projections. First of all, it directly and unintentionally indicates that a certain set of competences—in this case, various warfare skills—did not vanish upon boarding a slave ship, nor as a result of the supervisory methods on a plantation complex. Secondly, there's a grain of truth to the externally assigned new identification: entering a ship meant a radically new situation, requiring modifying alliances and building new relationships (such as *shipmates*; see Rediker 2008, 263–307), new communities and hierarchies in these novel conditions. However, these processes would take place based on skill sets (a common language or the multilingualism of many slaves acquired back within their African communities), connections, experiences (past and present), rituals, values, and beliefs (the community-building role of religious and spiritual practitioners, not just during rebellions). They occurred not as a reformulation, but also an extension of African life. It also ought to be stressed that there was no way of returning to previous life, and stories of eighteenth-century slaves who would make it back home years after they had left could be—quite literally—counted on one hand, compared to the 12.5 million who never came back.[3] Third, the Coromantee legend reveals a surplus of fear held by the whites, undermining the popular image of slavery as a stable relationship involving the submission and passivity of the enslaved, only sporadically interrupted by brief and inconsequential mutinies (the Haitian Revolution is cited as an exception proving the rule). Let's return to D'Wolf's argumentation then. After all, it indicates that already on the slave ship, each day (and, as we know, even previously—in the cordon transporting slaves from inland to the ports) was filled with a tense power struggle between the captives sold into slavery and the sailors minding them; that captives attempted to use even the smallest opportunities for an escape or a fight (and also for suicide, which would count both as a loss for the investors and as a final act of autonomy and agency for the Africans); that "most slaves engaged in a fluid struggle that compelled them to make unbearable decisions

3 In 1501–1866, there were 12,521,332 persons loaded onto ships in Africa, of whom 10,702,655 left them alive. Slave Voyages (slavevoyages.org, accessed March 5, 2020).

about when to yield, how to protect themselves and others from harm, whom to align with, and when and how to fight back, if at all" (Brown 2020, 74)

In his book *Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*, published this year, Vincent Brown, cited above, thus returns to one of the most popular definitions of slavery, describing it as a perpetual state of war between the conqueror and the captive. This characterization is not, however, based on the writings of John Locke, who on one hand advocated for liberty as a natural human right, and on the other, invested in the royal company responsible for the slave trade. *Tacky's Revolt* instead pursues a later iteration of the slogan: one that represents a radically different slave trade experience, expressed in the slave memoir of Olaudah Equiano (who, incidentally, had a hand in spreading the word about the tragedy on the *Zong* ship in the 1780s). Equiano's account exposes the "practical, daily war that defined any society afflicted by slavery" (Brown 2020, 4). At the same time, it serves merely as a starting point for historicizing, elaborating on, and drawing conclusions from the perception of slavery as war.

In his book *Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*, published this year, Vincent Brown thus returns to one of the most popular definitions of slavery, describing it as a perpetual state of war between the conqueror and the captive.

When Tacky's Revolt broke out in 1760, Jamaica was Great Britain's most lucrative and productive colony in America (sugar was the island's principal export material, followed by coffee and cotton). The most powerful colonial estate owners, rarely or never stepping foot on the island, were either members of the British parliament or otherwise high military and administrative representatives within the Empire. Their assets were on average thirty six times larger than those of British settlers in the nearby mainland America (Brown 2008, 16). However, Jamaica "was also a death trap. Death was at the center of social experience for everyone on the island during the eighteenth century. […] Death and wealth and power were inextricably entangled" (Brown 2008, 13). In his earlier book, tellingly titled book *Reaper's Garden*, Brown described various methods of dealing with death and the mechanisms of managing its widespread and common occurrence in Jamaica. During the challenging climate of the eighteenth century, tropical diseases were responsible for the deaths of ten percent of the island's white inhabitants—plantation owners and their families, managers, guards, state officials, estate and factory employees, sailors, and vagabonds—per year, whereas the death rate of black residents, the majority of whom were subjected to an arduous regime of labor and discipline, wasn't much smaller (Brown 2008, 13). Moreover, unlike in the nearby North American colonies, there were almost ten times more slaves than whites in Jamaica. During the 1770s alone, when the "slave war" took place, eighty five thousand

slaves would be transported there (to paint a full picture, it should be added that twenty five thousand of them came from the Gold Coast and could therefore have been referred to as Coromantee) (Brown 2020, 266–267). The authorities would make (futile) efforts to regulate the proportions of whites to slaves on plantations, financially penalizing estates failing to follow the mandate of one white person per ten slaves—which was eventually changed even to a 1:30 ratio.

"The slaveholders were paranoid, and their slaves really were out to get them" (Brown 2020, 162)—Brown emphasizes one of the many paradoxical entanglements in this relationship. Fear must have accompanied whites in Jamaica daily—and yet fear was also the fundamental method for keeping slaves in check. Whenever the colonial army or mercenary militia won a skirmish with the rebels, whenever plantation superintendents became aware (or suspicious) of slaves conspiring, they would seek the most cruel, public, and spectacular forms of torture and execution. Dead, decimated bodies—often heads alone—exhibited on poles across the island were supposed to represent as a warning to others against turning thought into action. Such is the first meaning of slavery as a military conflict: daily violence and torture, but also a mutual feeling of physical threat. As we already know, slaves, such as the "Coromantee," for instance, were often experienced soldiers. Opposite them, occupying managerial and supervisory positions, were also military veterans, former British Army soldiers—"viewing Africans essentially as enemies," applying military oversight to a relationship that was (intended as) civilian (Brown 2020, 57). On the other hand, it was also a racial war: of whites against blacks, against a small, diverse group of free blacks and *mulattoes* (some of them partially free), who were (sometimes correctly[4]) suspected of supporting the slaves, or sometimes—as C.L.R. James wrote back in the 1930s in *The Black Jacobins*, which deals with a similar period in Saint Domingue (James 1989, 39 passim)[5]—of protecting their own

"The slaveholders were paranoid, and their slaves really were out to get them" (Brown 2020, 162)—Brown emphasizes one of the many paradoxical entanglements in this relationship. Fear must have accompanied whites in Jamaica daily—and yet fear was also the fundamental method for keeping slaves in check.

4 A particularly interesting story in this context is that of Denmark Vesey, a free black who in 1820 organized a slave rebellion in South Carolina. It was recently revived in the context of disputes over the memory of the American South by Ethan J. Kytle and Blain Roberts in *Denmark Vasey's Garden. Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of Confederacy* (Kytle and Roberts, 2018).

5 James, who is sensitive to the diversity of actors in the Atlantic world, devotes a lot of attention to *mulattoes*—such as the bastard children of white owners and slave women, as well as courtesans and lovers—who in the mid-eighteenth century attained a strong position in San Domingo, purchased estates, sent their children to schools in France, and even carried themselves in the European style. In light of the rising importance of this population, whites gradually introduced promotion restrictions and limitations aimed at this group.

interests, which contradicted those of the white population, while not necessarily aligning with the interests of slaves.[6]

Another fundamental reading of slavery as warfare put forward by Brown (now in macro scale) is based on the a very straightforward decolonized reading of the map of the Atlantic world. Brown leaves no doubt that the colonial trade ports of the Guinea Gulf were merely small islands of Europe's meagre control over the colossal territory of West and Central Africa, where fierce, complex political and military conflicts were playing out among mighty armies and highly organized countries (for example, the Asante nation, whose name derives from *osa nit*—"because of war," had an army of eighty thousand soldiers, half of whom were equipped with fire arms (Rediker 2008, 87). Europeans fueled those clashes (by supplying weapons and generating demand for slaves), but by no means did they control them; meanwhile, the colonial economic endeavors were directly dependent on the policies of the African countries and maintaining proper relations with them. Therefore, to some extent, the eighteenth-century insurrections breaking out in West Indies were extensions of African conflicts: African soldiers training in the latter, sent into slavery as a result of war (fueled by the slave trade, although not exclusively), would then, in a geographically distant location, strive to liberate themselves from that captivity. However, the numerous slave revolts, engaging European armies involved in regular military operations against the rebels in West Indies, could also be perceived as continuations of the great wars—which, despite their locations and range of actors, were recognized as exclusively "Western." From this point of view, the 1760-61 events in Jamaica become nothing other than "one of most arduous and complex" fronts of the Seven Years' War, fought by the British forces against various rivals between 1756 and 1763 (Brown 2020, 209).

Jamaican "slave revolt" itself is best described in categories of war. It is an enduring sequence of partisan invasions, open battles, sieges, multiple declarations of states of emergency, search missions, alliances, and conflicts

Finally, according to the author, the Jamaican "slave revolt" itself is best described in categories of war. It is an enduring sequence of partisan invasions, open battles, sieges, multiple declarations of states of emergency, search missions, alliances, and conflicts—spread over the course of nearly two years, both on the rebels' and British sides.[7] The latter included, at varying times and proportions, the British army tro-

6 The situation in Jamaica was somewhat different from San Domingo. In 1774, it had twenty-three thousand people identified as *mulattoes*, but only four thousand of them were free (Brown 2008, 111).

7 The course of the battles is visualized in the interactive map developed by Vincent Brown: Slave Revolt in Jamaica 1760-1761 (http://revolt.axismaps.com/map, accessed March 1, 2020)

ops, transported by navy ships, a militia consisting of plantation owners (unwilling to fight on their own), plantation workers and mercenaries (including free blacks), and trusted slaves, as well as the community of fugitives, who in 1740 became officially recognized by the Brits, having earned the right to occupy a section of the island as a result of the military conflicts of the 1730s. One of the conditions in their agreement with the British government was their active support of the colonial forces in any military conflicts. And it was the Jamaican *Maroons*—former slaves and slave descendants—who were most effective in tracking down and capturing insurgents, two decades after abandoning their insurgent status.

Viewing Tacky's Revolt as a war helps to recognize the actual nature of that struggle, but also access the perspective of the side whose vision of events may have entered the collective memory indirectly, if at all—through gossip, songs (shanties), and legends traveling via the grassroots, underground (under-the-deck?) Atlantic communication network, outlined by Julis S. Scott, one of Brown's teachers. The written history—unlike the whispered or the sung one—was created by those who have a sense of victory. Even the name, Tacky's Revolt, or Rebellion—solidified in colonial historical writings of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—exemplifies a selective and wishful interpretation of events that represents colonial interests. It enables a reduction of long-term clashes (of whose end no one could be certain and which, due to their essence, could never have ended) to a single point in time and space. It also allows the cause of the insurrection against the owners to be attributed to the influence of its leader—whose name indicates a noble heritage and subscribes to the aforementioned myth of the African gentry who rejected slavery as inappropriate for them—an influence over the supposedly submissive (faithful, and sometimes even grateful), or at the very least, passive slave community. Meanwhile, Tacky (reportedly a military leader back in Africa) most likely died on the seventh day of the eighteen-month long slave war in Jamaica. He might have even been personally responsible for the failure of the initial phase of the conflict (and for his own death). Based on some accounts, we may presume that the battle was to start simultaneously on numerous plantations across both ends of the island. It was scheduled for one of the holidays, but Tacky allegedly got drunk and launched the military offensive prematurely, or the group led by him may have also simply confused European holidays, as suggested by the fact that there were new fronts of the slave war breaking out several weeks later.

It is not a coincidence that there is not a single mention of the word

"revolution" in Brown's book, not even as a descriptive concept. Its use could imply a certain universalism—not so much an affiliation with universal history, discussed by Susan Buck-Morss in reference to the Haitian Revolution (Buck-Morss 2009), but rather a universal character of the fight against slavery. Tacky, Jamaica, Wager (Apongo), Simon, Akua (Cubah)—the "Queen of Kingston," the leaders and members of subsequent fronts of the Jamaican slave war, or, as Brown refers to it, the "Coromantee war," did not fight for the abolition of slavery, and most definitely not for universal freedom. To call them revolutionaries, in the sense that this word (popularized in the English language since at least late seventeenth century) acquired after the events in the United States, Paris, and Haiti, after the declarations of rights and the first constitutions, would not only be anachronistic, but would also risk repeating the gesture of colonial projections (even if well intended). They fought a war—a partisan war against Imperial armies, uncomfortable for the European troops; a war against the white owners, managers, guards, and mercenaries; a war against slaves who refused to support them and against those were sent to fight against them by the whites; a war with "the savages," *Maroons*, former fugitives who aligned with the British Empire to protect their own position.
How, then, does Brown write the history of the Jamaican slave war from below, without access to accounts from its participants?

One of the methodological points of reference for *Tacky's Revolt* is clearly Julius S. Scott's doctoral thesis, defended in 1986, entitled *The Common Wind. Afro-American Currents in the Age of Haitian Revolution* and published in 2018 by Verso (Scott 2018). Scott's doctoral thesis, for over three decades known through excerpts and copies circulating in the unofficial academic circuit, describes the transatlantic, grassroots information network, a collective intelligence of the outcasts of the Euro-Afro-American world. Rediker wrote in his foreword to the legendary study, published upon his initiative: "Intelligence is precisely the right word, for the knowledge that circulated on 'the common wind' was strategic in its applications, linking news of English abolitionism, Spanish reformism, and French revolutionism to local struggles across the Caribbean" (Rediker 2018). It was an information network of "masterless" people: pirates, fugitives, deserters, vagabonds, those who "studied the horizon for what the future might bring" (Linebaugh 2018)—inevitably subversive people. This network, devoid of a center, nationality, or a single language had its nodes in ports; its carriers in ships, boats, and kayaks; its fuel in wind and changing currents, in all the meanings of the word. Within it, information carried a lot of

weight—it could cause unrest or even revolts: if there was news of another rebellion breaking out hundreds or even thousands of kilometers away, in response to some gossip about abolition or the alleviation of slavery by the authorities in a metropolis, as a result of reports about the diminished forces of one Empire or another due to the wars fought, and so on. Scott reconstructs this information network from the official and unofficial state correspondence (which demonstrated that the authorities were aware of the existence and effectiveness of the "common winds"), legal documents and acts, the press from Jamaica, Havana, and Port-Au-Prince, court testimonies and reports, ship logs, and slaves' memoirs. Unlike the economic strain of modern slavery research (usually traced to Eric Williams's 1944 study *Capitalism & Slavery*, describing the role of industry based on slave labor and the industry of the slave trade itself in the transformation of British capitalism [Williams 1944]), which reconstructs the network of capital flow winding around the Atlantic, Scott (as well as Brown) is interested in the tactical, not the systemic network. Therefore, the history of the insubordinates presented in *The Common Wind* is a history of a semi-public circulation of the semi-legal figures and unofficial information. It is also a transnational, "non-terracentric" (Bloch-Lainé 2017) history, written from the perspective of the seas.

Meanwhile, Vincent Brown diligently traces and reconstructs each day and each step (that can be recreated) of the war clashes in Jamaica—as if he wanted to trace them down to a square meter, grounding them as precisely as possible. Indeed, it is Scott to whom he owes the ability to recognize the significance and power of the information traveling the seas—nonetheless, he primarily focuses on the influence it had on the slaveowners, who foresaw, reinforced, and justified their fear of the "black majority" on the islands with the legend of the Coromantees as a "nation famed for insurrection." When it comes to the grassroots information network, capable of engineering a conspiracy across vast territories, separated by mountains and dozens of kilometers, he finds it on the island itself—it was the communication following the treks of slaves as they went from one plantation to another (upon the managers' approval), and of the free blacks, or *Maroons* trading at markets and on plantations, as well as fugitives suddenly appearing during slave holidays and rituals, to then vanish into the mountains. Following in the footsteps of C.L.R. James, but also of Peter H. Wood—Scott's advisor and author of the 1974 book *Black Majority. Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through The Stono Rebellion*—Brown recognizes the wealth and diversity of black life, the variety of tactics of resistance and of

negotiating positions in a world built around the institution of slavery (Wood 1974). If *Tacky's Revolt* also attempts to reconstruct the Atlantic network, it is a network maintaining the continuity of African culture within the Atlantic triangle.

Contrary to Hegel's quip which situated Africa outside of history, it can be concluded that the African countries have become important actors in the history of the modern world, while their inhabitants have reclaimed the continuity of their biographies. *Tacky's Revolt* opens with a story of Wager—one of the main leaders of the slave war, who in May 1760, a few weeks after Tacky's death, initiated military operations on the other end of the island. In the 1740s, Apongo (Wager's African name) was an important military leader on the Gold Coast, who conducted market transactions and maintained relations with leaders of the British coastal fort. It is presumed that, having lost a battle in an African war, he was sent into slavery and sold to work on a Jamaican plantation, where, on another estate, he encountered a former high official from a British slave port, known to him from years before. The latter reportedly treated him with respect and vowed to soon buy him out of slavery. That promise was not kept. Wager led a group of slaves who, a few weeks after Tacky's death in May, reignited the war. He was captured in early June, condemned to hang in chains for three days, to then be burned alive (he died before the first three days passed). We learn of his story from the terrifying journals of the superintendent Thomas Thistlewood. He described its episodes, intertwined with summaries of the torture and physical penalties he imposed on slaves, descriptions of the intimidation methods he employed, and lists of his rapes of female slaves, to be counted in the dozens. Not having access to accounts from the other side, Brown of course needs to read the oppressor's testimonies against the author's intentions and, whenever possible, cross-check in the archives of the colonial company (how does one find Apongo when Europeans wrote down African names by sound, and hastily so?). However, he also needs to find a language in which Apongo can give his own account of the events. How does he achieve that?

In his first book, his goal was to reconstruct the framework of understanding and experiencing the world in light of omnipresent death, by outlining how it was conceptualized and processed. In his newest book, when formulating the history of the Jamaican slave war from the perspective of Africans, he focused on reconstructing their abilities and methods of forming resistance. That is why, in the story told by *Tacky's Revolt*, the basis of the biographical continuity in the Atlantic world, of building autonomy and reclaiming agency, lies in the slaves' bodies and

competences. It is the movement of bodies and military skills that become a language for recounting history from the rebels' perspective. The meticulously reconstructed map of army clashes and movements, which Brown developed and made available a few years ago, is where we can learn about their version of events. Over the course of the eighteen-month long war, which would kill half thousand slaves and sixty whites, which would destroy goods and crops then worth thousands of pounds, the fugitive slaves proved their excellence in geographical orientation and their ability to relocate quickly, climb, cover long distances on foot, and find shelter in the mountains as well as camouflage and disappear into the woods. They earned those competences in wars in Africa and, more broadly, in their pre-slavery lives. The precise map and calendar show us how efficient they were in reacting to the movements of their enemies and how—as we may speculate—they tried to anticipate them. The foundation of resistance and the foundation of autonomy thus lie in a body grounded in an environment, which is the body Brown strives to reclaim for the history of slavery. It is neither an animal body (threatening because of its strength and sexuality), feared by the white plantation owners, nor is it the tortured, weary body, presented to the world by the abolitionists. "[T]he Coromantee War was more than an expression of African heritage; it was the outcome of black military intellect in Jamaica" (Brown 2020, 205). It was about the intellect indeed, as in the uneven battle rebels applied their military competences to earn an advantage in combat against the better armed whites—competences that enabled long-term resistance operations, proved uncomfortable for the adversary, that were partisan and thus subversive towards the methods employed by a classic Western army (unaccustomed, for instance, to being stoned by an invisible enemy).

It is the movement of bodies and military skills that become a language for recounting history from the rebels' perspective.

Tacky's Revolt initiated a new phase of slave resistance. Major plots and revolts subsequently erupted in Bermuda and Nevis (1761), Suriname (1762, 1763, 1768-72), Jamaica (1765, 1766, 1776), British Honduras (1765, 1768, 1773), Grenada (1765), Montserrat (1768), St. Vincent (1769-73), Tobago (1770, 1771, 1774), St. Croix and St. Thomas (1770 and after), and St. Kitts (1778) (Linebaugh and Rediker 2012, 224). These Atlantic "slave wars" were driven not only by the "common wind" of news about Tacky, Wager, the "Queen of Kingston," and their brothers and sisters in arms, but also the transatlantic "military intellect" and physical competences of the African soldiers. Some of them were in fact directly powered by experiences earned in the war in Jamaica in 1760-1761. Linebaugh and Rediker continue: "Veterans of Tacky's Revolt took part in a rising in British Honduras (to which five

hundred rebels had been banished) as well as three other revolts on Jamaica in 1765 and 1766" (Linebaugh and Rediker 2012, 224). From Brown's point of view, these are simply subsequent fronts of the slave war fought in the Atlantic in the 1760s and 70s.

References

Baucom, Ian. 2005. *Spectres of the Atlantic. Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bloch-Lainé, Virginie. 2017. "Marcus Rediker: 'I took an interest in pirates and sailors because they were poor'." Translated by David Broder. Accessed March 1, 2020, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3349-marcus-rediker-i-took-an-interest-in-pirates-and-sailors-because-they-were-poor.

Brown, Vincent. 2008. *The Reaper's Garden. Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Brown, Vincent. 2020. *Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*. Cambridge (MA): The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Buck-Morss, Susan. 2009. *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Eric E. Williams. 1944. *Capitalism & Slavery*. Chapel Hill–London: The University of North Carolina Press.

James, C.L.R. 1989 [1938]. *The Black Jacobins. Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books.

Kytle, Ethan J., Blain Roberts. 2018. *Denmark Vasey's Garden. Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of Confederacy*. New York: The New Press.

Linebaugh, Peter; Marcus Rediker. 2012 [2000]. *The Many-Headed Hydra. The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. London: Verso.

———. 2018. "The Significance of The Common Wind." *Counter Punch*. Accessed March 1, 2020, https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/12/14/the-significance-of-the-common-wind/.

Rediker, Marcus. 2008. *The Slave Ship. A Human History*. New York: Penguin Books.

———. 2018. "Foreword to The Common Wind" (Scott 2018).

Scott, Julius S. 2018. *The Common Wind. Afro-American Currents in the Age of Haitian Revolution*. London: Verso.

Wood, Peter H.1974. *Black Majority. Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through The Stono Rebellion*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

ŁUKASZ ZAREMBA – assistant professor at the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw, editor of the academic journal "View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture". Translator, curator. Author of academic book *Obrazy wychodzą na ulice* [Images Walk Onto the Streets] (2018) and co-author of *Kultura wizualna w Polsce* [Visual Culture in Poland vol. 1-2]. Co-translator of Jonathan Crary's *Suspensions of Perception* and translator of W.J.T. Mitchell's *What Do Pictures Want?*, Hito Steyerl's *Wretched of the Screen* and Nicholas Mirzoeff's *How to See the World*.

Address:
Instytut Kultury Polskiej
Uniwersytet Warszawski
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warszawa
email: lukasz.zaremba@uw.edu.pl

Citation: Zaremba, Łukasz. 2020. "Slave Wars and the Prerevolutionary Landscape". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 177–191.
DOI: 10.14746/prt2020.2.7

Autor: Łukasz Zaremba
Tytuł: Wojny niewolnicze i krajobraz przedrewolucyjny
Abstrakt: Omówienie książki Vincenta Browna *Tacky's Revolt. The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (2020).
Słowa kluczowe: niewolnictwo, wojna niewolnicza, powstanie niewolnicze, Jamajka, Bunt Tacky'ego

Varia

MARTA OLESIK

Saving Planet Capital – the Logical Bailout of the Financial Market

When analyzing the neoliberal model of the market in terms of the transcendental conditions it creates, researchers concentrate on two distinct categories - competition and debt. Together, they constitute a form of reason specific to the economic development which occurred in our recent history. The aim of this text is to show how the financial crisis of 2007-2008 affected these two iterations of the neoliberal economic paradigm, with the bailout procedure simultaneously breaching the rules of competition and debt and then slyly re-purposing them in order to justify the situation. This re-purposing is the eponymous logical bailout which depended on a brand new transcendental form which the market has taken on. This form is introduced in a nut-shell by the formula "too big to fail". The essay shows that this slogan helped introduce an understanding of the market in terms of an *environment* – an intricate and inherently fragile network whose preservation is necessary for the survival of the species inhabiting it. This transcendental shift will be discussed as a survival mechanism which allowed the neoliberal paradigm to avoid demise despite its complete fiasco.

Keywords: financial crisis, debt, competition, financialization, neoliberalism, "too big to fail"

During the global financial meltdown which began in 2007, the market threw its logic out the window. Though its basic organizational and normative principle was said to be freedom from political constraints and regulation, it was not shy about asking the State for help when things went pear-shaped. However, rescinding on its position regarding state intervention was just one in a string of logical violations which accompanied the massive bailouts in the financial sector. When analyzing the neoliberal model of the market in terms of the transcendental conditions it creates, researchers concentrate on two distinct categories – competition and debt. Together, they constitute a form of reason specific to the economic development which occurred in our recent history. The aim of this text is to show how the crisis affected these two iterations of the neoliberal economic paradigm, with the bailout procedure simultaneously breaching the rules of competition and debt and then slyly re-purposing them in order to justify the situation.

According to the logic of competition, market-actors are expected to manage their assets in a constantly changing market environment in order to secure increased profit. The global crisis proved that the financial market fails rather spectacularly on this point. If it indeed practiced what it preached, it would accept the collapse of major financial institutions as proof of their ineffectiveness in terms of competition. However, it demanded that they be spared at all costs, inefficiency aside. According to the debt paradigm, creditors are bound by obligation to the lender and adjusts their behavior accordingly, directing all their efforts toward solvency and creditworthiness. Unfortunately, no such obligations were recognized by the bailed-out banks, even though the relief packages they were awarded amounted to massive loans from governments and societies. As a result, the cost of debt was borne by the lenders, who became subject to austerity treatment in what amounted to a severe violation of the logic of debt. Thus, the market compromised two of its governing principles in a single swoop. In what follows, I will analyze these violations in detail, in order to elucidate the patterns which informed the strategy of survival adopted by the market during the crisis.

Stirred by the contradiction at the heart of the bailout procedure, numerous researchers, who will be referenced throughout the text, began to inquire if it constituted only an incidental relation between the state and the "free" market. They found that, contrary to circulating slogans, the proponents of a deregulated economy were actually not that keen on a *laissez-faire* attitude and acknowledged the importance of the state in advancing their project. Since the emergence of neoliberal economic

thought dates back to the times when Keynesianism was still the prevalent economic doctrine, its militant advocates understood that the implementation of the free-market model could not be a matter of the spontaneous development of social practice. It required intervention. As Jamie Peck puts it in *Constructions of Neoliberal Reasons*, "[d]enied the spontaneous utopia of laissez-faire, the architects of neoliberalism were engaged in the construction of what Foucault called a 'regulative scheme,' rooted in a trenchant critique of prevailing governmental practices" (Peck 2010, 65). According to this scheme, the market is perceived as striving for freedom with the help of the state, which has both the prerogative and institutional means to shape economic policies. The market needs the state to become its muscle, the enforcer of the rules it devises as the brains of the social organization.

However, I believe that in order to properly understand the logic behind the bailouts, it is not enough to refer to this ongoing relation between the market and the state. In demanding that it be rescued from the crisis by political forces, the financial market didn't just exploit their already existing dynamic. It established a precedent. In order to understand its logic, we need to distinguish between an economic model being introduced as an official policy and then this same model falling into crisis. A market ideal, considered to be both perfect and powerless on its own, may very well require the support of the state in becoming an official policy. However, with the socio-political context thus primed, this ideal should experience no *immanent* obstacles to its functioning. And yet, the crisis saw the market ideal compromised by none other than the market itself. The bailouts were administered despite their blatant violation of the principles of competition and debt, two forms within which the market purported to operate. Supporting the market with its logic is nothing like saving the market from it.

The question is *how* the failing market was able to survive its logical transgressions. Phrasing the problem in this particular way, I want to turn our attention to a transcendental form which the economy developed in the wake of its crisis. It was not just a sense of empirical necessity which prompted the assessment of the banking sector as "too big to fail". Pragmatic considerations may explain the immediate actions being taken to save the financial market but not its subsequent exemption from being held accountable for the havoc it wreaked. Therefore, I contend that this acquittal depended on a brand new transcendental form which the market has taken on. And the slogan I have just invoked introduces this form in a nutshell. The market which is too big to fail is considered in terms of an *environment* - an intricate and inherently

The market which is too big to fail is considered in terms of an *environment* - an intricate and inherently fragile network whose preservation is necessary for the survival of the species inhabiting it.

fragile network whose preservation is necessary for the survival of the species inhabiting it.

This new framework surreptitiously replaced the violated forms of competition and debt. It emerged just in time for saving, equipped with a sense of urgency which made all other considerations pale in comparison. Specifically, what was thus rendered inconsequential was accountability, whose strong sense had been imposed by preceding forms. As a result, the financial crisis no longer appears to be a clear sign of the dysfunctional character of the neoliberal paradigm. It can be reclassified accordingly, as an ecological rather than economic phenomenon. It is a catastrophe, in the sense that it is both unpredictable and caused externally. It poses an enormous threat to planet capital - the new transcendental frame claimed by the global economy in urgent need of protection. *Environment* is therefore a set of transcendental conditions for the bailout to be unconditional.

As a result, the financial crisis no longer appears to be a clear sign of the dysfunctional character of the neoliberal paradigm. It can be reclassified accordingly, as an ecological rather than economic phenomenon. It is a catastrophe, in the sense that it is both unpredictable and caused externally.

"Too big to fail" demands that we consider an economic failure in non-economic terms. A financial institution judged according to this criterion no longer functions as a market-actor whose survival depends on maintaining competitiveness and solvency. Its existence is valued regardless. This value judgment is atypical for the neoliberal paradigm which is supposed to hold everything to market standards. The economy prevails despite the crisis of its own making, thus belying the unprecedented universalization of the economic logic which did not allow social, political, or individual enclaves to be governed by different sets of norms.

Philip Mirowski recognizes that "the reaction of both economists and the NTC [Neoliberal Thought Collective] to the global economic crisis is a case study in the applications of Schmitt's doctrine of the exception" (Mirowski 2013, 84-85). The exception here was the market itself, its overall structure reneging on laws which it simultaneously instantiated and which were considered binding for all market-actors. However, this state of exception was not negative, a simple case of non-compliance. The reference to Schmitt entails a clear indication that the exemption was considered legitimate. Therefore, the financial bailout was accompanied and validated by a transcendental one which allowed for a different assessment of both the causes of the crisis and the measures adopted to alleviate it. What would constitute an instantly punishable transgression suddenly became an obvious conclusion.

The tale to be told here is, therefore, one of survival, an instinct that neoliberal reason served from the outset. The logical maneuvering involved in rescuing the economy from crisis is not without precedent. The

forms of competition and debt were implemented for the same reasons that they were violated – in order to help the market out of a tight spot where it finds itself time and again because of its unsustainable logic of growth. As David Harvey writes in *The Enigma of Capital*,

> If we conclude that it is the further expansion of production that creates the demand for yesterday's surplus product and that credit is needed to bridge the temporal gap, then it also follows that credit-fueled capital accumulation at a compound rate is also a condition of capitalism's survival. Only then can the expansion of today mop up yesterday's surplus. The reason that 3 per cent growth requires 3 per cent reinvestment then becomes clear. Capitalism, in effect, must generate and internalize its own effective demand if it is to survive under conditions where external possibilities are exhausted. (Harvey 2010, 112)

To keep the accumulation process alive, the economy needs to meet the increasing demands of exponential growth. Therefore, its logical forms become increasingly unrestrained. What makes them beneficial from the point of view of the market's rapaciousness is also what makes them unsustainable. It's this dynamic of accumulation, a purely formal voracity of a system where constant acceleration is confused with stability, which drives the choice (and subsequent abandonment) of formal patterns. The neoliberal economy is thus an exercise in what Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* refers to as "perspectivism, which is the fundamental condition of all life" (Nietzsche 2002, 4). The Nietzschean idea of truth as a logically organized confabulation which benefits life will be referenced throughout the text in order to account for the considerable liberties with logic that the neoliberal economy allows itself.

What follows is therefore an analysis of competition, debt and environment as temporary respites for the market – a peculiar life-form which adopts anomalous, destructive preservation patterns inherent to its formal insatiability. This contradiction will be shown to both constitute and pester the conceptual architectures of competition and debt, which attempt to shelter the market from itself by defining it as both the rule and exception. The crisis saw global finance renege on both these forms, however, given the peculiar nature of its mechanisms of survival, in both cases a dialectical relation will be shown to exist between the logical form and the transgressions made against it, a relation which will then feed into the logic of environment.

Competition. Price as a form of truth

The neoliberal makeover of the economy is radical, involving the very core of market principles. It revolutionizes the formal space of the economy, altering its parameters and upending its organizational laws. In *Undoing the Demos*, Wendy Brown strongly emphasizes that "in neoliberal reason, competition replaces exchange as the market's root principle and basic good" (Brown 2015, 36). This means that equivalence, the formal condition of exchange, is replaced by asymmetry which creates a competitive market environment and preserves it. Asymmetry is inequality embedded within the formal space of the market which defines its participants before they undertake any specific action. They are thus forced to contend as a matter of formal principle and are defined in accordance with this destiny, as "little capitals (rather than as owners, workers, and consumers) competing with, rather than exchanging with each other" (Brown 2015, 36).

The asymmetry introduced to the market space by competition has another fundamental formal consequence. Stability, a condition resulting from and corresponding with the relation of equivalence, disappears from the market. Its asymmetrical structure is volatile as a matter of principle. This condition is in no way irreconcilable with the competitive equilibrium of the market, which the neoliberal paradigm insists is facilitated by financial deregulation. On the contrary, the market equilibrium is engendered by its opposite - tightly woven and impeccably timed yet absolute volatility.

The source of this instability is the fractured temporal framework which captures the randomness of the market processes expressed in prices. This is how the *truth* of the market is constituted, as system of prices which Mirowski defines, tongue-in-cheek, as "transcendental superior information processor" (Mirowski 2013, 61). This ontological relation between price and truth is defined by the Efficient Market Hypothesis, which is one of the cornerstones of the neoliberal paradigm. Efficiency is defined by the exhaustiveness of the system of asset prices, which is supposed to flawlessly reflect all market relations. Prices are posited as an infallible measure of value – which makes the economic relations they represent appear redundant. Market is truth, then; it is a self-contained reality identical with its representation. A neat trick of the Efficient Market Hypothesis, whose specifics will be discussed below, allows the financial market to appear as if it *stood for* the economy as a whole and thereby to usurp the position of truth.

This is where instability enters the picture, in the formal capacity of

architectonic support of truth. Constantly processing an influx of information and adjusting themselves accordingly, prices are determined in a sequence of discrete moments. This sequence is therefore an ontological guarantee of efficiency, as it testifies to the market's capacity for automatic self-correction. This inbuilt mechanism determines the movement of prices as momentary, instantly changing its course whenever new circumstances arise. And with the adjustment being instantaneous, each temporal instance is marked off by a violent rupture whose immediacy determines the change of price as random, lacking continuity based in regular patterns.

Randomness is the criterion of objectivity established by the efficient market hypothesis. Prices contain no information regarding the meaningful continuity of social relations of production. The efficient market hypothesis eliminates this perspective, associating it with bias. The status of perfect conduits of information is therefore predicated upon uncoupling the system of prices from any notion of socio-economic process. This is what makes market relations redundant with respect to their representations. Prices function as snapshots of the intricate socio-economic relations which all factor into the market position of the priced assets. The Efficient Market Hypothesis deems these snapshots to be exhaustive, despite the compartmentalization of their temporal complexity, its violent carving into discreet instances. Although the chaotically moving prices are styled as quasi-physical particles, they are in fact social phenomena in denial. Their randomness is defined negatively, through the suppression of historical determinations by the unmediated formal difference. This suppression conditions the gesture of the universalization of the neoliberal paradigm which, in the words of Wendy Brown, acts as "an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life" (Brown 2015, 30).

The entire procedure fits neatly into the M-M' formula which represents Marx's definition of interest, a particular method of accumulation and a *reductio ad absurdum* of the logic of accumulation as a whole. According to the definition given in the Third Volume of *Capital*, the formula denotes "money that produces more money, self-valorizing value, without the process that mediates the two extremes" (Marx 1991, 515). The relations of production no longer mediate the relations of money (M-M'), which therefore gain autonomy as measures of value. Capital, which anchored the financial flow in the formula M-C-M' (money-capital-money), becomes formally suspended, pushed out by

the two extremes. All that remains are representations of capital, representing nothing but their mutual relation.

The market thus becomes a reflexive entity, a purely auto-referential structure. Marx puts it more harshly, writing of "capital reduced to meaningless abbreviation" (Marx 1991, 515), a system of measure which obliterates what it was supposed to evaluate. The efficient market hypothesis can be expressed as the exact same abbreviation, denoting the same auto-referential relation of extremes without mediation. Their difference proliferates, the M-M' relation multiplies into a system of prices referring to themselves by way of temporal rupture which consumes social relations of production. M-M' – with no reading between the lines allowed, this is what the efficiency of the market is based on. The appearance of the random price change stems precisely from the reduction of market structure to unmediated extremes, bypassing all form of causal relations. This is what truth becomes – a perfectly meaningless relation between prices whose random change doesn't represent anything besides itself.

The market thus becomes a reflexive entity, a purely auto-referential structure. Marx puts it more harshly, writing of "capital reduced to meaningless abbreviation", a system of measure which obliterates what it was supposed to evaluate. The efficient market hypothesis can be expressed as the exact same abbreviation, denoting the same auto-referential relation of extremes without mediation.

Guiding the movement of prices, the transcendental form of competition solicits the violence of rupture. It seeks out difference, a temporal variation which is how profit (or loss) appears and registers in the case of assets, which are the unstable units of a competitive market. The system of prices objectifies their competition, rendering it in a neutral form of figures whose random dynamic appears untainted by historical coincidence. Therefore, the violent struggle for survival is judged to be fair game. Individuals risk everything, while the market risks nothing. John Quiggin bitterly summarizes this situation, welcomed with enthusiasm by those enamored with the neoliberal paradigm, "[i]n economic policy, the Great Moderation and the Great Risk Shift went hand in hand" (Quiggin 2010, 15). The structural imbalances are present, inherent to the asymmetrical form of the competitive market. However, they are allocated to distinct temporal segments which absorb and balance them out. They simply become formal difference. Since market actors are defined as clusters of assets, the economic failures they might experience will have the innocuous appearance of adjusting prices. Thus, failures themselves feed into the efficiency hypothesis, testifying to the accuracy of the self-correcting mechanism of the market.

However, it is precisely the efficiency of the market which puts it at risk. Actually, it inscribes risk into the formal coordinates of its structure. Uncoupled from social relations of production, prices express nothing but their absolute, unmediated difference which the market sets loose. Positing extremes without mediation, it creates a relation of pure, unchecked

imbalance. Instability is inherent in the system of prices, with its discontinuous temporal structure. It consolidates the market-structure and defines its fractured dynamic. In the event of crisis, it manifests quantitatively, but its conditions are formally entrenched in the market, asserting themselves with each violent temporal rupture.

Volatility is therefore the truth form of the market, structuring information expressed in prices and granting them their status as infallible measures of value. It is truth which is not afraid of absurdities. In reference to Nietzsche, I will define the truth form as the measure of stability and certainty achieved through falsification. The situation is perplexing, then, even by the Nietzschean standards for a truth-claim. This is because volatility acts as the stabilizing factor. The efficiency of the market puts it at risk, which is then repackaged as the source of stability. The inherent volatility of market dynamics is created by the fractured temporal framework and simultaneously harnessed by it. Systemic risk is contained within the synchronic boundaries of each temporal instance. It is grounded.

The efficiency of the market does not remove risk but calculates it and this calculation alone is supposed to give it the status of exception. The entire system of prices is more than just the sum of these calculations – it is infallible. Although each and every particular connection is fraught with risk, the market-system as a whole accommodates their imbalance. Locally, the shifts can be dramatic, but the overall structure curbs them. Thus, what is catastrophic for some market-actors constitutes a potential success for others. Although inherent in the system, imbalance is thus never unaccounted for. Prices reflect it, simply changing in time. The market becomes the circulation of difference, its distribution evening off systemic risk by setting it in motion. Volatility as the truth form of the market is this general stability built on the basis of violent shifts.

Unlike all its participants, the market is not at risk simply because it is risk – this is the measure of stability and certainty provided by the efficient market hypothesis. It is rather insidious, as the balance thus gained is not grounded in social relations of production but in the language of prices which neutralizes them. What counts as stability is precisely this neutralization, the act of formalizing instability in the logical form of difference. This allows risk to remain hidden in plain sight, calculated into the formal structure of the market whose truth-form is precisely this blatant display of (and disregard for) irregularities.

If the claim of formally guaranteed infallibility sounds simultaneously tautological (with the market emerging as truth because this is what it is assumed to be) and paradoxical (with perfect stability guaranteed

through its exact opposite), this is because it is just that. In his account of the efficient market hypothesis, Mark Blyth does not attempt to hide his amusement with it:

> Given all this, while we can expect random individuals in markets to make mistakes, systematic mistakes by markets are impossible because the market is simply the reflection of individual optimal choices that together produce ‚the right price.' Agents' expectations of the future, in new classical language, will be rational, not random, and the price given by the market under such conditions will be the ‚right' price that corresponds to the true value of the asset in question. Markets are efficient in the aggregate if their individual components are efficient, which they are, by definition. This world was indeed, to echo Dr. Pangloss, the best of all possible worlds. (Blyth 2013, 57-58)

The efficient market hypothesis is clearly a *niasairie*, which is Nietzsche's term of choice for truth-claims. However, in accordance with Nietzsche's assessment of the function of ridicule, the hypothesis works. Although its efficiency is ridiculous, its ridicule is also effective. Marx gets to the truth of its life-saving *niasairie* when he states that "In M-M we have the irrational form of capital, the misrepresentation and objectification of the relations of production, in its highest power: the interest-bearing form, the simple form of capital, in which it is taken as anterior to its own reproduction process" (Marx 1991, 516). The neoliberal market thrives precisely on such misrepresentation.

In order to understand this relation, we need to put the efficient market hypothesis in context. Fifty years ago, the capitalist world-system found itself in a bit of a contradiction, thwarted by the very success of its expansion. Capital already accumulated stood in the way of continued accumulation which required an ever-growing rate of reinvestment whose possibilities nevertheless grew increasingly thin. Although the contradiction itself was nothing new for capitalism, the conditions were different this time around. As David Harvey describes at length in *The Enigma of Capital* (Harvey 2010, 26-31), the existent scale of the global market and the required pace of reinvestment impeded standard resolutions, that is, geographical expansion and the creation of new areas of production. The global economy was forced into a corner. However, Harvey continues with his argument, instead of curbing its dynamic, the capital expansion became even more excessive. This course of development was, and still is, dictated by the aggressive logic of growth whose ideal rate is set at 3%. The excess is preservation, then, and thus it is absolutely necessary that it is somehow wielded by the economy.

However, in order to meet these requirements, the economy needed to reinvent itself thoroughly. This is where the hypothesis intervened, with its ridiculousness steering capital away from the hindrances of its material reproduction. Uncoupled from the socio-economic processes, prices no longer represented assets, but became assets themselves. And the value of these assets is their logical difference, the discrete systemic shifts which organize them in discrete sequences. This bizarre situation is phrased by Adam Tooze in an adequately bizarre fashion, "[b]y the early 2000s, the private mortgage industry was waiting for the starter's gun. It had its new raw material - securitized mortgages" (Tooze 2018, 51). In what sense is a securitized mortgage, a complex financial instrument, raw material? It is precisely raw difference, the relation of extremes without mediation which becomes the basic resource for the brave new form of accumulation. Thus, a whole new dimension for reinvestment is created, one which is potentially boundless.

This new dimension was monopolised by the financial sector. As Christian Marazzi writes, "[t]he typical twentieth-century financialisation thus represented an attempt, in certain ways 'parasitic' and 'desperate,' to recuperate on the financial markets that which capital could no longer get in the real economy" (Marazzi 2010, 27). The virtual nature of the financial market rests precisely in the fact that it deals in representations. Therefore, it is a reflexive parasite, feeding of its own image. If the market is simply the system of representations, then finance becomes its metonymy, a segment which condensates the economy as a whole. The M-M' formula represents this condensation and the profits which can be reaped from it. Its meaninglessness helps global capitalism out of the historic predicament that it has found itself in. No longer bound by reference to the relations of production, it is no longer hindered by their ever-limited capacity.

Market efficiency does the trick, then. The formal difference which it is based on knows no bounds. It simply differs, as a matter of logic. Its never-ending fluctuations constitute an inexhaustible resource which the market can rely on to maintain its rate of growth. Mirowski writes that "[d]erivatives such as CDO's and CDS's were based upon a set of normative theories invented by financial economists, which asserted that their purpose was to repackage risk and retail it to those best situated to bear it. This theory was colloquially known as the efficient market hypothesis" (Mirowski 2013, 178). This peculiar definition of the hypothesis in terms of financial instruments which it backs theoretically coincides with its definition as truth. The financial market is where investors acquire truth itself. Its products are speculative devices, con-

ceptual machines packaging reflexivity. They are just layers upon layers of formal difference, expertly combining and manipulating it[1]. Its reflexive volatility is pivotal, then. Derivatives put it to work, exploiting imbalance in order to multiply the levels of difference and then hedge them against each other. They are created in order to milk the irrationality of the M-M' formula. Thus, the abbreviation bloats into a tautological system, a self-sustaining (though unsustainable) network of *niaisairie*. Truth and inanity go hand in hand here, their alliance instrumental in sustaining the market, the insane form of life where excess is mistaken for bare necessity.

Debt. Socialization unto death

But why would one ever make a decision to surrender oneself to this indifferent logic of difference? Mirowski finds it improbable, "in practice, it seems unlikely that most people would freely choose the neoliberal version of the state" (Mirowski 2013, 57). Although its supposed truth might serve as an incentive, it is nevertheless self-contradictory in this respect. Defining market-actors in terms of competition, the system of prices performs a thoroughgoing reduction of their subjective faculties, remaking them into loose collections of assets. This transformation trims them in accordance with market standards but simultaneously strips them of their subjective sense of accountability. They become provisional and temporary instances which can dismantle in a flash. And since the assets constituting these collections are permanently at risk – after all, the truth-form of competition is volatility – such dismantling becomes a distinct possibility. Therefore, there is no ontological basis for exacting responsibility from market-actors. Mirowski again, "[u]nder this regime, the individual displays no necessary continuity from one 'decision' to the next" (Mirowski 2013, 59).

Therefore, a different logic must intervene in order to inspire the transcendental cohesion which will render the subject answerable before the market. It needs to anchor prices in a social reality which has been submitted to reduction. Therefore, its structures are required to establish an economic relation capable of creating a non-economic, existential investment, a sense of belonging stronger than any blows dealt by the market. This relation is debt.

In *The Making of the Indebted Man* Lazzarato remarks that "[e]conomists tell us that every French child is born 22,000 euros in debt. We

1 For the exact architecture of this pyramid, see: Blyth, 2013, 41-47.

are no longer the inheritors of original sin but rather of the debt of preceding generations" (Lazzarato 2012, 32). This is a statement of an indestructible bond between the market and its participants, collections of assets with identities based on their obligations to the lender. They have a memory of the market which itself has no memory – its structure falling apart into discreet temporal instances. Their subjectivity as debtors is not something they acquire, but which they are born into and forced to abide by. This bond is economic in character, as debt creates purchasing power and enables the accumulation of capital in the form of interest. But it goes far beyond that, since it makes everyone beholden to the market structure long before they can incur any actual, empirical debt. It is a perverse form of baptism, an immediate admission into the community of debtors. This purely formal relation transforms the system of prices into a species of moral reason, with M-M' serving as its imperative maxim.

This formal admission and the very real responsibilities which accompany it are the proper goals of creating the relation of indebtedness. As Lazzarato points out, from the point of view of debt, "finance is not an excess of speculation that must be regulated, a simple capitalist function ensuring investment. Nor is it an expression of the greed and rapaciousness of 'human nature' which must be rationally mastered. It is, rather, a power relation" (Lazzarato 2012, 24). This is a pivotal moment, as debt creates society which acknowledges its own redundancy towards finance. Lazzarato opens his account of debt economy with an account of the condition of UNEDIC, a French institution providing unemployment insurance which was privatized in 2008. Like countless other institutions and governments, it was induced to incur debt. This course of action had three, closely interlinked consequences identified by Lazzarato: unemployment taxes became a source of revenue for the market in the form of interest, policies regarding unemployment became dependent on credit-ratings and unemployment insurance was designed to benefit the investors rather than the unemployed (Lazzarato 2012, 16). Lazzarato describes the situation at UNEDIC as a paradigmatic example of the logic of debt incapacitating social institutions by making them renounce their proper objectives. Debt is thus self-inflicted redundancy. It does not help to improve performance; an institution incurs it for the sole purpose of becoming inconsequential, its own logic gratuitous and subjected to the market conditions.

The neoliberal market structure breeding indebted children is the latest version of socialization through debt, which Nietzsche identifies as the basis of social bond in general. According to his second essay in

the *Genealogy of Morals*, a citizen is defined as a debtor, beholden to society which properly secures his human conditions of life.

> Still retaining the criteria of prehistory (this prehistory is in any case present in al1 ages or may always reappear): the community, too, stands to its members in that same vital basic relation, that of the creditor to his debtors. One lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a communality (oh what advantages! we sometimes underrate them today), one dwells protected, cared for, in peace and trustfulness, without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man outside, the "man without peace," is exposed - a German will understand the original connotations of *Elend* - since one has bound and pledged oneself to the community precisely with a view to injuries and hostile acts. (Nietzsche 1989, 71)

Individual fitness for social life is created with the sense of limitless obligation due to the immensity of bestowed advantage. Nietzsche writes of the horrific demands placed on a person learning to recognize his indebtedness; "indeed there was nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his mnemotechnics" (Nietzsche 1989, 61). The fury with which society imposes and enforces its rule is therefore the necessary counterpart of the tremendous worth of social life and an immediate manifestation of the undisputed claim of this worth.

Accordingly, the process of socialization entails becoming accustomed to the violence which shapes one as a debtor, that is, one who is capable of recognizing his dependency on society and feeling obliged (though never actually able) to repay his dues towards it. Violence is therefore a civilizing force, an imprint of society on a willful and careless body, quick to forget what it owes to the community. It is not gratuitous, then; it intervenes as a necessary remainder of how vile life would be outside societal boundaries.

> The direct harm caused by the culprit is here a minor matter; quite apart from this, the lawbreaker is above all a "breaker," a breaker of his contract and his word with the whole in respect to all the benefits and comforts of communal life of which he has hitherto had a share. The lawbreaker is a debtor who has not merely failed to make good the advantages and advance payments bestowed upon him but has actually attacked his creditor: therefore he is not only deprived henceforth of all these advantages and benefits, as is fair-he is also reminded *what these benefits are really worth*. (Nietzsche 1989, 71)

Nietzsche appreciates these benefits, simultaneously acknowledging how harsh and drastic is the price they command. There is an uneasy (im)balance

between these two aspects – and the Nietzschean account revolves around it, interpreting the evolution of social life in terms of mutual transformations of human communities and the punitive measures they resort to. A crucial caesura here is the sublimation of violence, which we will now discuss in detail.

Corporal punishment thus enforces transcendental change; it is meted out against individuals who are not yet fully-formed and do not possess themselves in satisfactory measure. But society which resorts to such means doesn't fully possess itself either, with the physical violence it uses being a clear sign that its legitimacy is still precarious. It is only when it can refrain from violence that it becomes universal law. Leniency and mercy it can show the debtor indicates that it is no longer threatened (1989, 72-73). The socialization process thus involves both the taming of the individual and of the universal. It is the taming of violence which does not disappear, however, but associates itself with universality, its formal rules and injunctions. "The gods conceived of as the friends of cruel spectacles - oh how profoundly this ancient idea still permeates our European humanity. Merely consult Calvin and Luther" (Nietzsche 1989, 69).

It is precisely the cruelty of the formal kind which interests Nietzsche and the relation of power which underwrites it. The case of UNEDIC discussed above is a model example of this kind of cruelty, an extreme case of formalization of violence inflicted on the debtor. It is extreme because violence is in this case alienated from the metaphysical benefit which justified it in Nietzsche's narrative. An institution devoted to unemployment insurance had no internal reason for restructuring its policies and aligning them with solvency, a thoroughly external logic which then devoured its own form of rationality.

The only gain here is a formal inclusion into the relation of violence. As Lazzarato puts it, "[t]he privatization of social insurance mechanisms, the individualization of social policies, and the drive to make social protections a function of business constitute the foundations of the debt economy" (Lazzarato 2012, 29). The universal creditor no longer gives, but takes everything, destroying public services and social ties and offering us a loan in their stead. It is thus stripped of its metaphysical dimension as the benefactor commanding boundless gratitude. Debt today is an utterly void social bond. Again, it can be expressed as meaningless abbreviation, the AAA or CC rating which, according to economic science, expresses all there is to know about any given institution. They are all forced to subordinate their proper objectives to the endless reproduction of a tautological system of prices.

The universal creditor no longer gives, but takes everything, destroying public services and social ties and offering us a loan in their stead. It is thus stripped of its metaphysical dimension as the benefactor commanding boundless gratitude. Debt today is an utterly void social bond.

Violence is still correlated with social order, though. The structural adjustments demanded of the indebted developing countries constitute precisely this type of correlation. The restructuring process prescribed by international financial institutions created a global community quite literally based on debt. Bob Milward gives the following definition, "Essentially, structural adjustment is the process by which the IMF and the World Bank base their lending to underdeveloped economies on certain conditions, predetermined by these institutions. The preconditions concern the drafting and implementation of economic policies that are acceptable to the institutions themselves" (Milward 2000, 25). These economic adjustments require thoroughgoing policy changes which alter the very meaning and purpose of the social bond.

Due to the socio-economic ravages of the colonial period, the independence of developing countries is very much dependent on the assistance of the former colonizers, which allows the latter to pressure for convenient solutions. Thus, the former colonial powers practice the passage from literal to formal cruelty described by Nietzsche. Military invasion, political repression and economic extraction all pave the way for structural adjustment programs. We remember that Nietzsche writes of the sublimation of violence in the context of the gained self-assurance of its administrator. This diagnosis applies to "the world capitalist system – a sphere that is now synonymous with the entire globe" (Arrighi and Silver 1999, 213). Arrighi and Silver, the authors of the preceding quote, write of a historical moment where the concept of the world-system ceased to be a metaphor and approximation and became literal. Viewed from the Nietzschean perspective, this development means that consolidation on the global scale was firm enough to sublate physical cruelty into a virtual one, the execution of everyone's obligations towards their credit rating.

The global community unified by debt is a mockery of the metaphysical indebtedness to the social order described by Nietzsche, since the structural adjustments demanded of its participants amount to the programmatic dismantling of all the vestiges of safety which national states created for their citizens. Therefore, the relation is stripped to formal violence based on agreements with global financial institutions whose agenda is that of the suppression of the redundant forms of social rationality. The sustainable human habitat, which backed and legitimized our debt towards it, is now reduced to international debt service. This gesture voids debt of its meaning, with social and political institutions which bound the populace now meaninglessly abbreviated to their credit rating. Therefore, capital flow is a perverse universality which

erases universality, the common context of social existence, now put in shackles of the M-M' formula.

In Nietzsche's narrative, violence is punishment for the violation of the precious social order. With structural adjustment, the situation is quite different. In a species of grotesque reversal, the order itself constitutes punishment – imposed on societies as the condition of favorable credit rating. The circumstances of the introduction of structural adjustments, which effectively made entire societies into debt collaterals, belie their supposedly beneficial character. There is no gain in subscribing to the system of debt, just punishment, which is a gain for someone else, since sovereign debt is packaged, sold and turned into profit. The metaphysical benefit of the social form of existence is shortchanged, transformed into financial instruments.

This redefinition and repackaging completely destroys the fragile (im)balance between worth and cruelty, predicated on the existence of a shared world sheltering all its participants. A capitalist variation on this ideal briefly accompanied the historical process of decolonization, but it was jettisoned once the neoliberal paradigm became the driving force of global change. Arrighi and Silver write that

> The domestic and global New Deals were abandoned (…). The world's surplus was drawn to the United States in the 1980's precipitating the "debt-crisis" and signaling the abandonment of the hegemonic promise of "development". In abandoning the hegemonic promise of universalizing American Dream, the U.S. ruling elite was essentially admitting that the promise was fraudulent. (Arrighi and Silver 1999, 214-15)

In the end, the only common ground left has been the unrestrained capital flow, which makes for an extremely divisive unifying principle. Rather than bringing its participants together, it blows their mutual alienation completely out of proportion.

Environment. A fragile network of violence

We arrive at the moment when the global financial crisis hit the market defined by the two forms of reason we've been discussing above. Both competition and debt were profoundly shaken by the financial turbulence. And for a short period of time it was acknowledged that it was the neoliberal paradigm itself which brought the catastrophe about. Simultaneously, there was no question of abandoning the financial market

to its fate. Philip Mirowski, Mark Blyth and John Quiggin demonstrated how these circumstances finally led to the undeserved comeback of the paradigm as the true science of the market. However, the massive bailouts and accompanying austerity policies were in operation before this "renaissance". Although the rehabilitated neoliberalism provided an *ex post* justification for the adopted solutions, their introduction occurred before that and in a different ontological climate.

Mirowski writes about "the neoliberal blanket absolution of the financial sector for causing the crisis" (Mirowski 2013, 279). However, absolution preceded restoration and followed a completely different rationale. It espoused forgiveness as a basis for value judgments which ran counter to the proven failure of the paradigm. The slogan claiming the financial market to be "too big to fail" is precisely the vehicle for the absolution of the faulty system of prices, with the banking system posing as its metonymy. Acknowledging the fiasco of the financial sector, it simultaneously insists on its preservation. The market in its current form is *about to* fail – the sense of urgency is important, as it allows the issues of accountability to be skipped over. The desperate need to pull the market back from the brink of destruction replaces all concerns with causation of and responsibility for the crisis and renders them inconsequential.

It is precisely *on the brink of failure* where the new form of neoliberal reason constitutes itself, defining the imminent collapse of the global financial market as a natural catastrophe of the logic. The crisis thus marks the rise of the market as an *environment*, an institutional form which is defined by being endangered. For a short period of time, the survival instinct behind the neoliberal market logic is out in the open; it becomes logic. The blanket absolution pertains to the violations of both competition and debt. In the situation of imminent danger, it no longer matters if the market is competitive or not, or if it manages to honor its obligations. It is nonsensical to ask these things of an environment. It just cannot be allowed to fail, for the sake of all our kind. Therefore, being saved is a logical inference which the market needs to impress on society. It is a function of the logic of *environment*, that is the only form of being entitled to be rescued unconditionally, since all our lives depend on its existence.

Being saved is a logical inference which the market needs to impress on society. It is a function of the logic of *environment*, that is the only form of being entitled to be rescued unconditionally, since all our lives depend on its existence.

The *truth* we face is the environment in state of damage which constitutes the *form* of truth of the market in crisis. Damage seems an innocuous enough concept when used to describe the results of a crisis. However, it is in fact charged, informed by value judgments which

subtly redefine causal relations between the neoliberal paradigm and its breakdown. Damage functions as an instrument to stave off the demise of the efficient market which seeks absolution from its disastrous performance as truth.

This performance created a speculative bubble defined by Robert J. Shiller as "an unsustainable increase in prices brought on by investors' buying behavior rather than by genuine, fundamental information about value" (Shiller 2000, 5). Shiller infers that in the case of a bubble "the value investors have imputed to the market is not really there" (Shiller 2000, 5). However, the non-existence he writes about is at the very core of market efficiency based on the representation of market relations suppressed by the M-M' formula. In the first chapter we discussed the uncoupling of the system of prices from social relations of production as a survival practice. Shiller defines a bubble in terms of the discrepancy between growth and prices (Shiller 2000, 4), but this discrepancy was the desired effect of the reflexive market structure, established in the attempts to substitute price for increasingly impracticable growth.

Nevertheless, during the crisis, the suppression comes back with a vengeance. The formal volatility of the truth-form now develops into the quantitative volatility of the system. The immanent risk can no longer be contained, resulting in an eruption of instability. The efficient market fails to constitute as truth, then. Or rather, it succeeds but this success causes the economy to spiral out of control. On the brink of disaster, its truth-form is revealed to be that of a speculative bubble. The uncoupling of the system of prices from their social context worked, and thus there is nothing to backstop their drastic fall. There is no way to anchor the economy whose form of growth relied so heavily on the social relations of production becoming redundant. Houses disappeared into the reflexive mire of the M-M' formula, political entities dissolved in financial instruments created in order to resell their debt over and over again. There is nothing to refer to, then, just a massive, multi-layered structure of truth packaged in derivatives.

The system of prices is indeed the perfect conduit of information – regarding its own failure. It failed as truth not because its volatility was inefficient, but because its efficiency is volatile. The layers of reflexive difference functioned exactly the way they were supposed to and became unwieldy in the process. The multi-layered structure of derivatives collapsed under its own, virtual weight. Therefore, the crisis was the climax of immanent irrationality which Marx diagnosed the M-M' formula with. Unsustainability was inscribed into the neoliberal market structure from the outset.

Since the system of prices failed so spectacularly, the financial sector should no longer enjoy its special status as the metonymy of the market. The performance of instruments repackaging and layering formal difference should be assessed in terms of their competitive character. If this had indeed been the case, the enormous losses would have cost the sector its life. However, the immanent failure of the efficient market hypothesis was subsequently turned around, with the layout of the collapsing system of prices adapted into the form of an endangered environment. The efficient market got to keep its status as an exception. First granted on the understanding that its rules were infallible in terms of allocation of resources, its privileged status is now secured by their failure in this respect. However, the condition of the financial sector is no longer defined as failure but as fragility. An interpretative shift occurs and the market goes from being the cause of the crisis to its defenseless victim.

Thus, the endangered environment replaces competition in its function of dominant logic; the truth of the financial market as a speculative bubble is spelled out and transformed to meet the challenges that it created. The global economy is still conflated with the same formal system of prices, the bifurcated and multi-layered M-M' formula. However, this virtual structure no longer exists *as* objectivity but *as* an environment. This redefinition exploits its systemic characteristics, interconnectedness and complexity. Both were crucial to the possibility of repackaging risk, moving it around the market structure, which Tooze defined as "the 'interlocking matrix' of corporate balance sheets" (Tooze 2018, 19). Both constituted the objectivity of the system of prices and its self-sufficiency with regards to the suppressed relations of production. The crisis *cripples* this objectivity, which the market nevertheless doesn't surrender. It just replaces it with damage. *Objectivity* is now crippled. It turns into a plea, an absolute injunction to save the system of prices.

Interconnectedness and complexity on a global scale are indeed environmental qualities; they project an immersive ubiquity of habitat. Which is why the market can be represented as, to use John Quiggin's words, "'too big to fail' or, more precisely, too interconnected to fail" (Quiggin 2010, 61). However, a not-so-subtle shift is involved here. The system of prices is a purely formal structure which effectively suppressed the interconnectedness and complexity of social relations, repackaged them into discrete temporal instances. It is not a social habitat, then, not anymore. However, the suppressed returns, though only in a negative form – as the unraveling of the formal construction which usurps the qualities of the endangered environment.

Being what it is, logical difference – that is the formal basis of the efficient market – cannot possibly be endangered. Yet it becomes just that, a complex representational structure of Planet Capital, an ecosystem of meaningless abbreviation. The crisis is interpreted as a natural catastrophe of a purely artificial institution, whose faulty construction masquerades as cataclysm. In a transcendental foul trick, the utter failure of the efficient market hypothesis shows itself as vulnerability. Being crushed under the weight of their own (mis)judgments, the interconnectedness and complexity of the market create its fragility. They are its fragility, as the logical transformation into an environment adds nothing new to the market structure. Nothing except the situation of crisis.

Understanding of the market as an environment thus constitutes an unusual logical shift which doesn't change the structure but imbues it with vulnerability. It is the same network of differences which organizes the global economy. Only now we don't keep it in power because it works. On the contrary, we save it from the dysfunctions it created, because of them. The crisis turns out to be the very proof of the environmental quality of the market. This is a perfectly absurd (non)transformation, a bizarre logical bailout where the conclusions change dramatically while the premises stay basically the same. Nothing changes here, except the sense of urgency which demands immediate action rather than profound reassessment. This allows the system to avoid radical, or indeed any, change in its functioning.

This logical (non-)shift is guaranteed by yet another logical violation – that of the rules of debt. As a result of the transgressions of the big players in the financial sector and the subsequent decision to bail them out, these players – and by extension the financial market which they epitomized – became debtors to political creditors. Therefore, according to its own rules, the financial market was supposed to become responsible for paying this debt off. However, it proved completely deaf to this condition. Therefore, it showed utter contempt for the rules it had previously established and judged to be unavoidable, blatantly refusing to constitute itself as a subject.

Austerity policies, involving budget cuts which destroyed the very idea of the public sphere, are the direct results of this immature refusal, which are being borne by society, that is, by the lenders of the bailout money. This is what Mark Blyth has in mind when he states that "we mistakenly call this a sovereign debt crisis when in fact it is a transmuted and well-camouflaged banking crisis" (Blyth 2013, 18-19). The debts of the banks were quickly forgotten due to the very mechanism of the bailout, whereby they became the responsibility of the state. Thus, debt

effectively changed its subject. This shift was facilitated by the logic of the environment, which the financial sector adopted to weasel its way out of crisis. The market changed its ontological status; it became an entity which is incapable of incurring debt and which everyone is indebted to for their survival.

This turn of events is a twisted variation on the rule Nietzsche formulated in *Genealogy of Morals*, that is, the gradual formalization of the lender which was discussed in the previous chapter. The latest development of this process involves a complicated shift regarding violence and power. Nietzsche describes a growing leniency of the social universal towards its debtors. This attitude, which could be read as weakness, is in fact the sign of its historical maturity as a powerful ontological guarantee of human life. How does this formula apply to the global market in crisis? Its greatest strength in managing the situation was to appear genuinely weak and helpless. Its power as a social universal, a role it usurped and monopolized, resided in the skill to project dependency and the urgent need for preservation.

Having destroyed the legitimacy of all other social forms, the global market demonstrated the vulnerability of a body in serious crisis. Here was a universal which not only relinquished the use of violence, but became a fragile object under attack. Once society was feared, now it is feared for. The virtual turmoil on the financial market took on the meaning of a terrible blow against a living organism that is the system of prices. The financial market postured as a delicate global environment, a complex jungle of the bifurcating M-M' formula (an endangered species) which we all inhabit and have to protect, if we want to survive ourselves.

The meaningless abbreviation posing as an endangered environment is of course a big, fat joke. This is not to say that contemporary finance didn't cause a lasting transformation of society and that it can simply be removed without a cost. However, its real impact doesn't begin to explain the utter disregard for societies and their living, breathing members, which is considered to be fully justified by the fragile state of the financial market. And it doesn't make it possible to fathom how the natural environment can be further destroyed by the unhindered expansion of capital, which masquerades as the destroyed natural environment. Reactions to the environmental crisis have hitherto been nowhere near as urgent as reactions to the financial crisis. The latter commanded that immediate action be taken to bail out the banks, however, since we've learned of the former, CO2 emissions rose by 40%.

There is no rational explanation for this striking and thoroughly

misjudged disproportion of priorities between the harm of one dysfunctional economic structure and the harm of everything else. Environmental studies scholars declare that our gravest oversight was to treat nature as if it were an object. Jason W. Moore claims that

> Needed, and I think implied by an important layer of Green Thought, is a concept that moves from the interaction of independent units—Nature and Society—to the dialectics of humans in the web of life. Such a concept would focus our attention on the concrete dialectics of the messily bundled, interpenetrating, and interdependent relations of human and extra-human natures. (Moore 2015, 45-46)

However, the dark irony at play here is that capitalism is perfectly capable of thinking in terms of a *web of life*. It just restricts the model to itself, which results in masquerading as an endangered environment to the detriment of the rest of the world. It is precisely the premise of universal interpenetration which allows global capital to demand, without a second thought, our sacrifice and the sacrifice of the entire planet at the altar of a faulty system of numbers.

Thus, the metaphysical dimension of debt, superfluous in the heyday of credit default swaps, returns in the grotesque form of an ailing structure. The injunction formulated by the "too big to fail" slogan forces us to think of formal emptiness in terms of naked vulnerability. The utter helplessness of formal logic. Systemic interconnectedness under pressure appears as a delicate web whose multiple layers enclose social reality and nature. The M-M' structures are out of joint and fraught with the risk accumulated within its brittle boundaries.

The preposterousness of this redefinition, and its apparent success, is the reason why the Nietzschean framework, where the absurd and hilarity serve as explanatory categories, proves illuminating for the analysis of the global market crisis. Finance takes itself very seriously indeed, and a deadpan reconstruction of its portentous attitude is crucial for the understanding of its functioning as the transcendental form of an environment. The neoliberal economy managed to convince society that it would perish without it, even if it proved itself absolutely dysfunctional. Its formal constructions, which have proven both void and dangerous in their effects, retain their position, as the financial market creates a completely artificial situation where it becomes mother nature. It thus creates the level of attachment beyond any expectation of profit or even belief in its basic rationality. Preposterousness becomes dialectic, here; the more blatant the inanity, the more binding it becomes.

The logic of debt creates a relation of dependence between the universal and its participant. During the global financial crisis this relation becomes more pronounced than ever, although the roles are simultaneously reversed. It is the system which becomes dependent on our reaction to its crisis. However, this dependency does not give us power over it. On the contrary, the global financial crisis made us even more powerless. Posing as an endangered environment, the global finance cajoled us into saving it, on pain of apocalypse. The vulnerability displayed by the system of prices in crisis is the form of violence it now exerts, the power it holds over the society which it first made redundant.

The environmental logic is the last perverse step towards the sublimation of this power where weakness becomes a sign of tenacity and the authority to use violence. Frailty is weaponized in the form of austerity. Nietzsche underlines the affective component of the violent form of settling debts, it is the *enjoyment of violation* which recompenses the lender for the lost property (Nietzsche 1989, 65). With the shift we have just defined, this affective economy changes also. The universal is no longer an active party excited with the prospect of torture. On the contrary, it enjoys its own violation, a position of weakness which gives it leverage over the society as a whole. The tortured being of the market flaunts its suffering and places impossible demands on its account. There is a perverse tenderness underwriting the brutality of budget cuts, a tenderness for the structure which exploits it, turning it into gold.

The cruelty of the regime of debt is no longer associated with punishment but with the unconditional sacrifice which the fragile being of the market demands from its participants (who, in this case, are also its lenders). This demand seems only fair, given the reversal of roles. The market is too fragile to bear any more hardship, as opposed to a subject who became a bundle of assets and is therefore impassive. As far as the formalized system of debt is concerned, once a person internalizes the rule of debt, thus assuming irrevocable responsibility towards the global economic system, s/he becomes just as redundant as anything else. Wendy Brown bitterly summarizes this situation, remarking that "as a matter of political and moral meaning, human capitals do not have the standing of Kantian individuals, ends in themselves, intrinsically valuable" (Brown 2015, 37-38). Therefore, their potential suffering can be bracketed and suppressed by the M-M' formula.

Society is thus primed for austerity, a debt paid for the indebted market which supposedly lacks the necessary resilience. This is why, despite the failures of the financial sector, it is perfectly understandable to close a school or bus connection while the closing of a bank is still

considered a tragedy if not outright forbidden because of the consequences. Thus, violence is not suffered, but is exerted by the victim and takes the form of a supposed moral obligation towards it. This is why, according to Blyth, "each national state's balance sheet has to act as a shock absorber for the entire system" (Blyth 2013, 20).

Conclusion

This text proposed a short story of the changing fortunes of neoliberal reason and its fantastically manipulative paradigms. Established over the last fifty years, this recent development of capitalist world-system is just one more historically transient paradigm, which moreover proved itself to be seriously dysfunctional. Nevertheless, it managed to assert itself with unprecedented and perverse vigor, which caused Mark Fisher to coin the concept of *capitalist realism* (Fisher 2009) in reference to its particular brand of legitimacy. The concept denotes something even stronger than perceived necessity, namely a certain atrophy of imagination. Numbed by the relentlessly reductive logic of accumulation, we suffer from an *inability* to escape the patterns of experience dictated by our current condition. It is the very sense of possibility which is being impaired here. The first aim of the text was to understand how the neoliberal paradigm managed to insinuate itself into the social texture with such tenacity. To that end, I followed the interconnections between three logical forms which it adopted in the course of its development. However, the second aim, which fully coincided with the first, was to ridicule the claims of capitalist realism based on this constellation of concepts. The critical gesture employed in the text was therefore one of parody.

The legitimacy of the paradigm was first based on far-fetched claims to rationality, but it managed to outlive them all. The idea that the system of prices could successfully stand in for the economy as a whole and secure its growth proved both unfounded and catastrophic, a figment of economic imagination with dire consequences. Yet, the branching complexity of the system of prices managed to survive as the endangered thicket of the formal M-M' relation. The idea that global capital is organized as the universally binding relation of debt underwent a similar process of ridicule. Here, the abstraction of the system of prices posed as the unshakable moral imperative, shaping its very own moral subject. The market functioned as both the formula of this imperative and the unavoidable punishment for breaching it. Yet, when the time came, the

market scoffed at the imperative and evaded punishment – a turn of events made possible by the convoluted, though perversely coherent, re-imagining of the logic of violence inherent in debt.

The logic of environment which followed these two forms constitutes a peculiar case of capitalist realism, being fully dissociated from the reality of the crisis, both from its own role in its outbreak and the social cost which it commands. It draws on the forms of competition and debt but then outdistances them in its brazen irrationality. Here, capitalist realism is at its most absurd. But also at its most cunning, since the surreal redefinition of its failed logic effectively reorganizes the conjecture in its favor. In a feat of Nietzschean perspectivism so outrageous that it beggars belief, the crisis itself became the strategy of survival. Sanctioning this outcome required a huge leap of faith on the part of society, but this gesture didn't even register as such. On the contrary, it registered as absolute necessity. The aim of the text was to spell this relation out, addressing the sheer ludicrousness at the heart of the cunning of neoliberal reason.

References

Arrighi, Giovanni and Silver, Beverly J, et al. 1999. *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Blyth, Mark. 2013. *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, Wendy. 2015. *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books.

Fisher, Mark. 2009. *Capitalist Realism: Is There no Alternative?*. Winchester: Zero Books.

Harvey, David. 2010. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lazzarato, Maurizio. 2012. *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition*. Translated by Joshua David Jordan. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Marazzi, Christian. 2011. *The Violence of the Financial Capitalism*. Translated by Kristina Lebedeva and Jason Francis McGimsey. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Marx, Karl. 1991. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume 3.*

Translated by David Fernbach. London: Penguin Books.
Milward, Bob, Mohan, Giles, Zack-Williams, Alfred B. and Brown, Ed. 2000. *Structural Adjustment: Theory, Practice and Impacts*. London--New York: Routledge.
Mirowski, Philip. 2013. *Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown*. London-New York: Verso.
Moore, Jason W. 2015.*Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital.* London and New York: Verso.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2002.*Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Judith Norman. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press.
———. 1989. *On the Genealogy of Morals. Ecce Homo*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books.
Peck, Jamie. 2010. *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Quiggin, John. 2010. *Zombie Economics: How Dead Ideas Still Walk Among Us*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Shiller, Robert J. 2000. *Irrational Exuberance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Tooze, Adam. 2018. *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*. New York: Viking.

MARTA OLESIK – Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, the author of a book on Kierkegaard and bourgeoisie (*Mieszczanin na górze Moria*) and an upcoming book on Descartes, Georges de La Tour and sensuousness of abstraction (*Kwadrat przebity włócznią*).

Address:
Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN
Ul. Polna 18/20
00-625 Warszawa
email: olesikmar@gmail.com

Citation: Olesik, Marta. 2020. "Saving Planet Capital – the Logical Bailout of the Financial Market". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2(36): 193–222.
DOI: 10.14746/prt2020.2.8

Autor: Marta Olesik
Tytuł: Na ratunek planecie kapitał - logiczny bailout rynków finansowych
Abstrakt: Analizy neoliberalnego modelu rynkowego w kategoriach transcendentalnych koncentrują się zwykle na dwóch stwarzanych przezeń warunkach doświadczenia – konkurencji i długu. Te dwie reguły tworzą wspólnie formę rozumu właściwą współczesnej ekonomii. Poniższy esej poddaje analizie ich przemiany w czasie kryzysu finansowego 2007- 2008 roku. Pokazuje, że bailout instytucji finansowych zagrożonych upadkiem jednocześnie łamał prawa konkurencji i długu oraz dostosowywał je chytrze w celu usprawiedliwienia zaistniałej sytuacji. Dostosowanie to stanowi tytułowy bailout logiczny, który umożliwiła nowa transcendentalna forma, jaką przybrał rynek. Jej streszczeniem jest formuła "zbyt wielkie, by upaść". Esej pokazuje, że sloganowi temu towarzyszyło ukryta przesłanka rozumienia rynku w kategoriach środowiska - niezwykle złożonej i delikatnej sieci relacji, niezbędnej dla przetrwania zasiedlającego ją gatunku. Ten zwrot logiczny zostanie poniżej ujęty jako mechanizm przetrwania, który pozwolił rozumowi neoliberalnemu uniknąć detronizacji pomimo kompletnej klęski.
Słowa kluczowe: kryzys finansowy, dług, konkurencja, finansjalizacja, neoliberalizm, „too big to fail"