

# Notes, 8/4/22 - Postliterate - Medium

By Postliterate

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“Everyone agrees. It’s about to explode. It is acknowledged, with a serious and self-important look, in the corridors of the Assembly, just as yesterday it was repeated in the cafes. There is a certain pleasure in calculating the risks. Already, we are presented with a detailed menu of preventive measures for securing the territory.” [1]

Capital is on the defensive again, which means its cover is being blown. Its ideology is withering around the edges, its police-state is becoming less hidden. Optics must go to save this dire situation.

This is not the first time capital has faced major opposition in the western sphere. The last time was in the 60s and 70s, and capital, of course, won that fight. As socialism is becoming a more mainstream and accessible term in public discourse, as youth are standing up and asking “*this* is all I get?”, and as the shadow of failed revolutions past hang over us, it comes time to ask how this time it could be different, or how this time it *must* be different.

What was at stake in the 60s was nothing like what is at stake now. “SOCIALISME OU BARBARIE” stands in front of us, some wicked premonition of the past which requires action in the present. On the one hand, there are still those feelings that were had in the 60s — that feeling of failed hope, disappointing dreams, of rising for the day and asking “this is all there is?” But there was not the urgency there is today.

So capital, for now, is on the defensive. It has stopped trying to convince us that it is good, healthy for society, because no one believes it anymore. None of that sophistry about “rising the water level lifts all the boats” works any longer. Instead it simply plays lesser-evilism, constantly trying to size itself up against the fantasy of a horrific alternative, plucked from the imagination of last century. It throws away objectivity and discusses in plain subjective terms — capital can be objectively terrible, but hey, it’s not perfect and it can still be *less bad than...*

But of course this is not enough. When it can, by the baton and by the rifle it beats into us the status quo. Capital used to scream “progress!” and it used to beg for movement, innovation; it used to make all that was solid melt into air. Today it screams the opposite, begging it all to stop. The marches, the looting, the discourse, the violence — it simply wants it to cease moving. Neoliberalism advertised itself as revolutionary; today it begs the damn revolution to quit it.

Capital today is tripping over its own foot, over its own excitement; it has become a restraint on its own principles. All this faux “innovation,” faux “choice,” faux “freedom,” rebranded a million times in a million variations, simply so that it can keep the pieces intact.

“What made Marxism seem implausible, then, was not that capitalism had changed its spots. The case was exactly the opposite. It was the fact that as far as the system went, it was business as usual but even more so. Ironically, then, what helped to beat back Marxism also lent a kind of credence to its claims. It was thrust to the margins because the social order it confronted, far from growing more moderate and benign, waxed more ruthless and extreme than it had been before. And this made the Marxist critique of it all the more pertinent.” [2]

Yet at this moment, at the same time, we see billionaires at their most progressive. “Liberal communism” is the ideology of this elite, as Mark Fisher called it, a sort of nimble hyper-capitalism infused with a “sharing is caring” attitude and performative activism. Many of them are declaring that

“the world as we know it” is ending; many of them are supporting UBI, new programs, new measures to end this period of laissez-faire. They can feel it too — in their bunkers, in their spaceships to the moon or to mars — that the world is not going to be here for long. As image and spectacle, they can run away from reality, with their wealth. As image and spectacle, the world we used to know of can be blinded into nothing.

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[1] The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection*

[2] Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right*