

Utopia and Historical Action

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Whoever today interprets the collapse of communism as the defeat of Utopia and demands the definitive rejection and renunciation of the temptations of utopian thought, and of action inspired in a utopian manner or by Utopia, can enjoy broad approval. The argumentation regarding this has been popularised in respect of the thesis that the fragility and futility of the communistic undertaking, in the final analysis, goes back to, and derives from, its utopian theoretical premises, in relation to which the fundamental impossibility of a practical implementation of these same premises drove the communists, for the purpose of the bridging of the gulf between theory and practice, to have recourse to inhumane violence and to all-round oppression, in short, to “totalitarianism”. The interrelation between utopian intent, utopian matters of concern, and, totalitarian rule and dominance, or the transition from the former [[utopian intent and matters of concern]] to the latter [[totalitarian rule, dominance]] consequently appears to be necessary and inescapable, and to this gloomy fatality, a fundamental intellectual(-spiritual) stance is contrasted,

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whose modesty or resignation in regard to the finding of ultimate truths and generally binding ways of life renders, as is said, the tolerance of everyone vis-à-vis everyone, and hence a humane politics, possible. Such interpretations, explanations or views come good or, rather, thrive, in societies in which hedonistic stances and positionings, value pluralism and scepticism vis-à-vis absolute kinds of giving of meaning are mixed with one another in differing variations, in order to generate and to encourage behaviour(s), which is and are indispensable for the unwinding of the process of mass production and of mass consumption. Only large collective subjects can have in mind or dream about ultimate goals or final aims, and, complete, total solutions; however, in Western mass democracies, the atomisation of society, i.e. society's fragmentation into individuals, is so far advanced that one is in general hardly inclined to go beyond or leave aside "self-realisation", and to identify with supra-individual undertakings beyond the degree which appears necessary for the safeguarding of one's own welfare and well-being. Not only utopias on a grand scale seem suspect – everything awakens suspicion here, which would presumably bring with it sacrifice.

We, nevertheless, are not primarily interested in the social reasons for which the condemnation of Utopia in the name of humane-pluralistic tolerance strikes a chord far and wide,ⁱ but rather in the express or unspoken assumptions and positions upon which such a condemnation is founded logically. It is assured expressly and emphatically that bidding farewell to the dream of the erection and establishment of Utopia on earth must contribute essentially and substantially to the pacification of the world, since precisely the struggle over the realisation of the impossible engenders the worst violence; the extremity of the means becomes conditional on or is due to, as is said, the unreachability or unrealisability of the utopian setting of the aim or objective. Undoubtedly, the gulf between utopian plan, design or outline [[draft, project, blueprint, sketch]],

and, existing and or abolishable reality, makes itself felt like a goad, or has an effect like an inducement, for the exercising of violence, which can be prolonged and intensified to the extent that the bridging of that gulf runs into insurmountable obstacles. However, the question must be posed whether this fate exclusively concerns and afflicts action inspired in a utopian manner or by Utopia, and whether it is not inevitable for every grand-scale political action if it sets itself goals and aims which prove in retrospect to be unrealisable. The distinction between both these form of action is indeed often blurred or effaced though current language usage, which is in the habit of lumping utopian and in general unrealisable settings of an aim or objectives together (or confusing these two objectives); yet if we keep or bear in mind the politically and sociologically specific meaning of the term “Utopia”, then such a distinction is underlined as definitive for our formulation of the question or our posing of the problem. There are, namely, historically demanding, overly ambitious plans of action, which by no means aim at shaping and moulding the political or political life urbi et orbi in accordance with ideal representations and notions of the harmony of Utopia, and aim at perfecting the political for all eternity, and all the same, are unrealisable because their originators, creators or executors, for instance, have falsely assessed and weighed up the available means or the constellation (correlation) of forces. If now the act or action is set in motion through such plans, which can be or probably are of a thoroughly power-political (i.e. related to power politics) and expressly anti-utopian character, then it necessarily gets caught up in the same vicious circle like action inspired in a utopian manner (by Utopia) too; the illusion of the reachability and attainability of the aim or goal will let the extent and the intensity of the exercising of violence grow, increase, and be augmented, because for every setback and retreat, ever more massive, powerful, stronger efforts have to be undertaken in order to break the (increasing) resistance. The knower of History – and indeed not only since Napoleon – can cite several such examples (in respect of these facts of the

case). In any event, he can prove that struggles or simply persecutions of men, which were not in the least triggered by, and did not at all take place for, the realisation of Utopia, sometimes have caused and brought about still more sacrifice, victims and human suffering than utopists' atrocities. In actual fact, it is extremely difficult to find one single form of an act of violence and atrocity which would have been committed exclusively in the name of Utopia and not also during the pursuance of imperial, national, religious, racial or other aims and goals dictated by power politics. On the other hand, it is easy to daemonise one side and to play down (as harmless) the – in many cases statute-barred – crimes of others or to drive others' crimes out of one's memory, i.e. erase such crimes from one's memory. But even if one considers the Christianisation of the Saxons in the 8th-9th century more humane than their life or death under Soviet occupation,ⁱⁱ even if one gives one's preference to the methods of persecution of the Holy Inquisition vis-à-vis those of the KGB – one must again admit that both great catastrophes of our century [= the 20th century], i.e. both world wars with their auditions, pre-festivities and after-parties (aftermath), are not to be blamed on striving after Utopia, although this striving reached its zenith, or unfolded and developed most powerfully, in exactly the same period [[between both world wars]].

A further observation is here called for. Violence, which is exercised in the name of Utopia, can and should not be deduced or derived directly from the striving after the realisation of Utopia, and only of Utopia. It can definitely be the case that someone in a position of leadership who acts politically by invoking and appealing to the realisation of Utopia, is quite possibly veiling, concealing through this invocation, power-political settings of an aim, i.e. objectives pertaining to power politics, and that the exercising of violence thereupon in reality is supposed to serve the reaching of these latter objectives pertaining to power politics – without, in practice, the success of the utopian

project being worth mentioning and even without the utopian project being given the slightest consideration, i.e. the utopian project is basically a matter of indifference or, at any rate, not of immediate concern to the said actors and practitioners of violent power politics. The coerced, violent collectivisation and the forced, quick industrialisation in the former Soviet Union, which are frequently mentioned as the culmination and zenith of utopian thoughtlessness, ruthlessness and brutality, were – as, incidentally, resulted from clear, pronounced and repeated declarations by the Soviet leadership at that time¹ – not least of all in expectation of, and justifiably, a great war; and out of tackling the objective and sober consideration in view of power politics, that without powerful heavy industry, the Soviet Union would have been hopelessly at the mercy of its industrially advanced foes. However, heavy industry did not mean merely the production of tanks and aeroplanes, but just as much the creation of a mass army which could use, handle and work machines and equipment, devices, appliances,... of all kinds; heavy industry, therefore, commanded, necessitated and presupposed, finally, the smashing of the agrarian village community and the rapid habituation of large masses of the population to industrial labour. Without wanting or having to play down or hush up the horrors, abominations and atrocities connected with this process, today's unbiassed, unprejudiced and impartial historian can ascertain that only forced, quick industrialisation and coerced, violent collectivisation made possible the epoch-making victory of the Soviet Union over national-socialistic Germany at that given point in time. Over and above that, there is a lot to be said for, and there is every reason to believe that there was, a close connection of the central steering, guidance and direction of the economy and the (f)actual enslavement of “labour activity [[= the workers]]”, with the aim and goal of a consolidation

¹ See e.g. Stalin's speech to the Plenary Session of the CC of the CPSU (B. [[= Bolsheviks]]) from 19.11.1928, *Werke*, v. XI, Berlin 1950, esp. pp. 220-221 [= footnote in Kondylis's Greek text which is not included in the German version].

of the political monopoly of the Party against centrifugal tendencies in the multi-national state or imperium – that is, again, a close connection with a concrete setting of an aim and an objective dictated by power politics. Such facts of the case suggest the conclusion that the intensive exercising of violence on a grand scale is, if one wants to be accurate, not the consequence of a stubborn, pigheaded attempt at the realisation of the classless society, but on the contrary, a concomitant or aftereffect of the – determined by power politics – (tacit) bidding farewell to, and distancing from, Utopia and the utopian ideal, which occurred in connection with the formation of new social hierarchies and with the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy.ⁱⁱⁱ The fact that, in the process, Utopia continued to be summoned in order to inspire, spur on, boost, or, to disarm the masses, was only natural and deliberate; however, the dynamic(s) of the demanding Utopia had to, in the meantime, shrivel up and shrink to the statics of legitimising ideology.²

Neither are, therefore, the struggles conducted for the (supposed) realisation of Utopia as such necessarily fiercer and richer in sacrifice and in victims, i.e. bloodier, than other struggles, which are caused by ambitious non-utopian objectives or settings of an aim, nor can the putting aside or eclipse of Utopia bring about a bridging of the gulf giving birth to violence between action plan (blueprint for action) and existing reality. Yet another explicit assumption of the critics of Utopia appears to be weak too, i.e. the putting down or ascription of the collapse of communism to the unrealisability of its messianic promises. Whoever argues thus, must also be in a position to explain why for instance Christianity holds, i.e. survives and continues as an idea and an institution since two millennia ago, although neither the command(ment) of love [[and advice to love]] was realised [[and followed]] to a socially noteworthy extent, nor have the Last Judgement (Second Coming [[Second Advent, Day of Reckoning]])

² According to the classic distinction of K. Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, Frankfurt a.M. ⁴1965, p. 169ff.. [Greek, not German, text footnote].

and the Kingdom of God put an end to the saeculum. That means: the fall and disintegration of communism in contrast to the longevity of Christianity must be explained on the basis of that which distinguishes both from one another, and not with regard to their commonalities; however, both the messianic promise as well as the absence of its realisation belonged to their commonalities. The counter-example of Christianity is for our formulation of the question and examination of the problem particularly graphic or illustrative, yet a look at and examination of other, less emphatic utopias leads one to similar results. The liberal Utopia of the free market, of the state under the rule of law (or constitutional state), of public dialogue as a process for the arbitration and settlement of social conflicts and of autonomous subjects has been able to be realised in the best case scenario only approximatively, and very often it has constituted merely the facade behind which tangible particular interests became entrenched and fortified themselves, or, games of power politics were played and raged. This had, nevertheless, not hindered liberalism as a social-political movement at all from dominating in most of the large and rich nations, from encompassing and embracing almost the entire planet through imperialistic expansion, and finally, under the pressure of new forces and relations of production – but outwardly always under the influence of the same mottos and slogans loaded and charged in terms of utopian language –, from being transformed into modern Western mass democracy; the conservatives, who after 1789 invoked the thousand-year-old reality of rule and dominance of *societas civilis*, and denounced or mocked the utopian essence or character of liberal natural rights, saw that they were bitterly disappointed in their prophecy that such alien/strange-to-men and unrealistic teachings would never be able to stand up to close examination in practice. Nonetheless, the liberal utopia did not at all need to be realised (and be taken) at (its) face value and pass by or circumvent, so to speak, reality; in order to fulfil its historical function it was sufficient for it to mobilise men for liberal goals, and after the social victory, ascendancy and

domination of its representatives, to live on and survive in the form of an ideology for the legitimation of existing institutions. For the continued existence of these institutions, the full realisation of the initial, underlying utopian plan was superfluous – indeed, it can or is to be presumed that such full realisation would have been in fact a hindrance and or harmful; the tangible continued existence of institutions able to rule and dominate was, in any case, the reason why the utopian plan for the society concerned was taken at all seriously and instils respect – precisely as the actual political and military power of the Soviet Union demanded and imposed a more detailed and thorough activity or preoccupation with regard to Marxist theory, even of and on those who were not in the slightest deluded about, or deceived by, the true relationship between Soviet ideology and Soviet reality. The far-reaching, extensive calling off and abandoning of this activity or preoccupation after the disintegration and dissolution of communistic institutions and relations of dominance, constitutes a clear reminder of the priority of the real-political (= real, i.e. practical politics), and confirms ex negativo our conclusion or finding: just as communism was constituted as a real-political phenomenon or manifestation, i.e. a phenomenon of real politics (or realpolitik), so too communism's collapse is not due to the misfiring, ineffectiveness, and failure of the utopian promise in itself, but to real-political reasons, which could have brought, forced to its knees any other imperial construct or empire whatsoever.

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These thoughts on, and this discussion of, the express and explicit main arguments of the critics of Utopia, lead us to the investigation of their unspoken and implicit suppositions and presumptions, which are certainly closely, tightly

connected with the former [[arguments of the critics of Utopia]], and are founded and take root in classical rationalistic prejudices or in very familiar and prevalent commonplaces of “healthy and sound common sense”. Behind the argument that the collapse of communism is ultimately to be put down to the unrealisability of Utopia, the perception hides and is latent that there are ideas in History in relation to Utopia in order to just be understood (and taken) at (their) face value, and if and where possible to be translated and converted into praxis and practice without cuts or compromise, i.e. purely as they are. We shall come to that point in the answer to the question whether and in what sense Utopia is realised. First of all, we want to go into and examine another rationalistic prejudice and bias of the critics of Utopia, which for its part props up and supports their aforementioned argument that the gulf between utopian plan and historical reality must beget, generate violence, but without the said gulf being able to be bridged through violence. By, in the process, overlooking that the asymmetry between the action plan and reality does not spring alone from the utopian character of the former, and that the utopian and the unrealisable are two different kinds of things, or they don’t necessarily coincide, the reverse is suggested and ineluctably becomes accepted, that between the subjective intentions and the objective results of historical action or of the historical act, there can and should be a more or less exact, precise correspondence, that intentions, which do not sufficiently take into account reality, must in practice meet with, endure and suffer a shipwreck. Accordingly, as the only solid and ethically responsible, justifiable, tenable, and reasonable form of praxis remaining and left over, is considered that which scrutinises and verifies the, in regard to that praxis, goals as to their realisability, and that, whose means employed and used are commensurate with realisable goals, so that the hiatus giving rise to violence between ends (goals) and means can be avoided and evaded.

It is patently obvious that in such a schema, historical action or the historical act must be made shorter and abbreviated as much as possible both as to its duration, as well as regarding the number of actors and its bearers, so that its desired clarity, transparency and controllability are not lost. Without a doubt, the harmonisation of means and ends (goals) and consequently the rational course and development of action or of the act succeed all the more, the less time is taken up and demanded by such a course and development, the fewer actors take part in such a course and development – and the more restricted and limited the aims, ends, goals are. Only under such circumstances and conditions can the acting subjects check, control and verify whether the results correspond to the intentions, and whether the intentions are thus realised, as they were originally meant. Collective action or the collective act, which extends and stretches over long periods of time or even over generations, of necessity lacks such transparency, and such controls are eluded, dodged. Inside of the cumulative collective (entity) coming into being, which yields and constitutes the bearer of such action or act, the intentions and the motives of individuals cross and intersect with one another, and in their interaction as mutual influence, they give to the action or act a direction, which very probably no side had ever wished for or had ever foreseen, whilst at the same time the ultimate aim, goal, end of the action or act is constantly reformulated and finally – if at all – reached and achieved in and on the roundabout way of several, varied re-interpretations. If one takes to heart and heeds the above-mentioned rationalistic prejudices and biases, which start from the idea of an at all times definable and calculable, ponderable bearer of action or of an act, then one can of course doubt whether collective action or the collective act over longer periods of time deserves the name “action” or “act” at all. Such doubts are, nevertheless, resolved, proved wrong or shot down, when we take as a basis or starting point not a subjectively oriented and rigid, inflexible to boot definition of the bearer of action or of the act, but rather the objective given fact that there are historical

epochs which are distinguished from all others by certain general features. These features (works of technical civilisation just as much as ways and modes of thinking, thought and behaviour) are objectifications (objectivisations) and crystallisations of collective action or of the collective act of a number of generations and countless actors (active persons), who for the most part have acted independently of one another, out of different motives and considerations and under various, multifarious signs and flags – and indeed in order to promote historical tendencies, which they by no means knew or only vaguely foresaw or sensed, and which can, by the way, only retrospectively be outlined and comprehended with some clarity.

The long waves of historical action (or of the historical act), which come to rest, subside, die down temporarily only after the formation and development of new social formations (or a new social formation), come into being, therefore, out of action or an act, which in its course and its consequences cannot be kept track of and controlled by any individual actor (active subject); it is in fact not surprising that the supra-individual stems from the supra-individual. Action or an act, in which the means and ends can be co-ordinated and harmonised with one another through rational weighing up, unfolds, on the other hand, in short waves, which in the course of time are absorbed by the long waves of collective action or of the collective act. The subjective intentions of individual actors (individuals), and the rational action plans are, so to speak, estranged from their initial goals and ends, and in accordance with or through and within the frequently and in many ways opaque effects of the heterogony of ends, are led, guided into channels, which flow into the great collective creations or debacles. It is, nevertheless, not for starters necessary that the short waves of action or of the act spring from rational plans in order to be able to bring forth and shape the long waves of collective action (the collective act). Because it is not at all true that only rational action or the rational act brings about the desired results in

good time or, the other way around, that irrational action or the irrational act – namely, such an act(ion) that “passes or misses, i.e. ignores realities, reality” – only brings about the undesired, i.e. has unwished-for consequences. But regardless of how rational their corresponding components are: the long waves of historical action or of the historical act are set in motion through the energies, energy which are contained in the short waves, and with the diversion, detour, rerouting, channeling or dispersal and scattering of these energies, energy through the heterogony of ends, the energies, energy are used up, consumed, spent very often more by the heterogony of ends than it would be absolutely necessary – purely mechanically or end(goal)-purposefully-expediently-rationally seen – for the achievement of the end result or the realisation of [[initial]] conscious intentions. Just as the accumulation of smaller endeavours and in themselves particular goals (ends) can change (abruptly) or lapse into a new historical quality, so too can the search for the absolute be put at or in the service of a new historical relativity.

At this point, the currents, streams of Utopia flow into the river of collective historical action or of the collective historical act, which runs and drains off or unfolds in long waves. Utopia would really be historically useless or even harmful, if historical action or the historical act could be reduced to the short-winded schema which the rationalistic prejudices think of, imagine and outline. And Utopia would likewise hardly be in a position to come into contact with, or pick up the thread of, realities, in which that (or every) action or act, entirely regardless of the “rationality” of each and every respective actor or bearer, was once anchored [[but]] now moves, if Utopia consisted exclusively of the pure dream material (stuff) and indulged in the dogged, blind pursuit, quest and striving of converting the material (stuff) of what is existing into the material (stuff) of the dream or dreams. It cannot in fact be contested or doubted that the component or dimension of the uncompromising dream inheres in every utopian

plan; *this* component or dimension gives the utopian plan wings and *this* component or dimension drives the utopian plan in the final analysis to the act (deed). The said component or dimension cannot be comprehended with words, it however is behind or hides inside everything, which is comprehended, in Utopias, in words.^{iv} It blends, merges, fuses with longings, yearnings, which go beyond the wish for the conclusive, definitive harmonic regulation of human living together, co-existence and concern the realisation of very subjective and very intimate matters or desires, that is, these longings and yearnings set their sights on inner rest, calm, peace and felicity, bliss, and not seldom even want to subdue, defeat and conquer the biological frailty of man, illness, disease and death. To this dimension of Utopia, an, as it were, supra-historical or anthropological character can be ascribed, because here not merely individual concrete evil (and trouble) is supposed to be overcome, but evil (and aching) in general and as such; oppression, struggle, suffering, pain have, however, marked the human situation in all periods, epochs and in all places, and that is why the desire and longing for their definitive putting aside and effacement, elimination and extinction contains a desire for the overcoming of History and every finiteness (finite limit); in this desire, again, a statement, assertion and judgement on the true nature and the ultimate possibilities of man is articulated.

If the utopian plans were now reduced to this component or dimension, then they would constitute the unwatered-down, unadulterated, pure expressions of the pleasure principle, which the reality principle would show to be a lie every so often or (even) at every turn. Wishing or the desire for the overcoming or transcending of the reality principle through the complete, all-out realisation of the pleasure principle of course constitutes the perpetual motivation for utopian action or for the utopian act,^v however, this wish or desire in itself does not grant to or confer upon such action or such an act its historical effectiveness.^{vi} In relation to that, modifications and mediations (interventions) are required,

which build bridges towards reality and provide the grip points, in which action or the act can be held in its unavoidable historical determination. The absolute dimension of the utopian plan is now put to the side and coupled with another dimension, which we want to call time-determined, i.e. it is determined by the historical age or epoch. This second dimension does not appear in the yearnings and longings, or as simple desire, for redemptive, saving, freeing bliss and possibly immortality, but is connected, or crosses above all, with the utopian plan for (the restructuring) of society. As much as both these aspects of Utopia may also blend, merge or interweave with each other, they nevertheless must be kept apart for the apprehension of their historical function. The distinction is both logically valid and sound as well as legitimate from the point of view of the history of ideas, if we consider that the new-times Utopia arrived on the scene as a Staatsroman [[= romance or novel about an ideal state]], and it remained in that form until, in the framework of the Marxist Utopia, the ideal of the classless society was combined with the demand for the lifting, i.e. abolition, of “estrangement or alienation”; it was to be expected that in the period or epoch following, and above all under the influence of the mass-democratic desideratum of “self-realisation”, subjective dreams of fulfilment dominated the space of Utopia. However, irrespective of how one assesses the value, importance and status/position of both aspects inside of Utopia in general and from epoch to epoch, Utopia develops its historical effectiveness by virtue of the time-determined (time-bound, time-conditioned) aspect of its plan for (the restructuring of) society. It anticipates evolutionary tendencies which flow precisely into the already being formed social formation of the future; it is therefore realised through the mechanisms of the heterogony of ends in an approximative and distorted form, whereas the longing for rescue, redemption, salvation, release and relief from every pain and evil (trouble, affliction) remains behind, unsatisfied and, really in itself historically powerless, is anew

on a lookout for a further, continuing or new plan for (the restructuring of) society.

From the perspective of rationalistic prejudices, the contrast between Utopia in general and reality appears one-dimensional and rigid, inflexible, and at the same time it is thought of together, or even mixed up, with the contrast between the unfeasible, undoable and the feasible, doable. But Utopia does not simply by-pass reality – in this case, it would really and truly be a mere obstacle, obstruction, form of hampering, not the driving force of and for collective action. Between Utopia as plan for (the restructuring of) society and social-political reality, exists, rather, a two-dimensional and flexible contrast. Utopia, on the one hand, denies or negates reality (simply) by transcending it, that is, Utopia anticipates – through the extrapolation of embryonically existing tendencies – the future, in any form whatsoever; on the other hand, Utopia denies or negates present-day reality by turning against concrete aspects of the same, and by constructing its plan for social restructuring exactly as the concrete negation of concrete phenomena. Even if one is inclined to brush aside and downgrade Utopia as a (vain, futile) dream – there are no formless dreams, and the researcher should historically and sociologically account for and explain the form of the utopian dream before him exactly like the psychoanalyst does it too in the psychoanalyst's sector on the basis of (other) methods of his own regarding individual dreams. As a dream, Utopia denies or negates concrete phenomena in the name of absolute settings of an aim or objectives: by, however, denying or negating something concrete, it itself becomes, through this act of denying and negating, concrete, it picks up the thread of, or refers to, something current, and as a call or appeal to (practical) action, it shows the way, which the concreteness of its negations already presages, adumbrates, foreshadows. Otherwise said: the time-determination (or bindedness (attachment) with regard to time and history) of (the content of) Utopia already

results from the fact that Utopia in particular turns against those elements of contemporaneous reality which it looks at as the root(s) of existing misery, hardship, troubles. The description of the ideal state of society takes place in the incessant, unremitting confrontation with the present, and through that, the existing largely turns into a negative determination of the utopian. In its polemic(s) against the existing (situation), Utopia does not contrast to this existing situation only, for instance, anthropological constants and or ultimate aims (goals), which it is supposed to take the place of and take over from, that is, the contradistinction between the utopian state of affairs and the present is not only moral and logical, but also direct and tangible; utopian institutions constitute means for the realisation of the future, at the same time however means for the combating of the present, that is, of the obstacles, impediments, barriers, hurdles standing in the way of Utopia. Thus, the description of the final or end (ideal) state of affairs contains also an implicit or explicit confrontation with problems of the transition to such a final (ideal) state of affairs. The utopian plan for (the restructuring of) society consequently obtains a hermaphroditic character. Next to, or to the side of, the primary strategic demands which are made in the name of the (non-negotiable) dream, secondary and tertiary tactical demands appear, which indeed, as is said, should also ultimately serve the absolute aim and goal, simultaneously however, they present the prospect of, and make possible, social-political (practical) action under the circumstances of the present. These latter tactical demands can also be represented and projected by social forces which do not welcome utopian objectives or settings of the aim as such – and exactly therein it is shown and seen that the overcoming of the existing (situation) in the sense or to the extent of the direct, immediate or short-term demands of the utopists, not only must not lead to the realisation of the absolute dimension of Utopia, but can serve pragmatistic settings of an aim or objectives pertaining to real politics (realpolitik).

From the time-determination (or bindedness (attachment) with regard to time and history) of the utopian plan for (the restructuring of) society, the variety, multiformity and heterogeneity of the materials is explained, on the basis of which the said utopian plan is erected, built, constructed on each and every respective occasion. Inside the suggested institutional or technical solutions for the satisfaction of the needs and for the lasting pacification of the collective (i.e. society) on a just basis, we encounter in open, naked (bare); encoded, cryptic; or reverse(d) form, experiences of the present and expectations or angst and fears in respect of the future of a certain epoch; in parallel utopian plans from the same period or epoch, different elements of the present, are again reflected, or different tendencies of the future are anticipated. Time-determined (Time-bound, Time-conditioned) is also the language^{vii} of which the utopist makes use on each and every respective occasion; this language can stem from politics, theology, anthropology or science, from which conclusions are drawn with regard to forces which have an effect and predominate outside of the narrower utopian field (surroundings, environment). For the new-times Utopia as a time-determined or historically determined construct, it remains in general characteristic that early on it placed its hopes on science and technology (technique, technics), and saw in them a central precondition for the realisation of its own plan for (the restructuring of) society. Under the aegis of science and technology (technique), Utopia detached itself and broke away from the From There (i.e. That World or Life) [[= life on the other side = the afterlife]], but also from primitivistic notions; Utopia was not supposed to simply be a dream of the return to a Golden Age already having beaten everything [[that came after it]], but was supposed to represent and constitute an essentially new achievement of history. As a result, new-times Utopia embraced and appropriated the idea of Progress, which – just like belief and faith in technology (technique) – not only inspired utopists. From this narrower perspective, the meaning of our thesis becomes clearer, that Utopia anticipates

the future exactly because of the fact that it is articulated in the language of fundamental, contemporaneous (with it), social-historical tendencies. Many are enthused and inspired by the sometimes astonishing, amazing prognoses which they find in technological Utopias, and stunned, they ascertain how (so very) much has been realised, in the meantime, compared to what was conceived and dreamed of a long time ago on a more or less speculative basis and as the daring extrapolation of still then embryonic attempts, approaches, undertakings, ventures. Often, however, the sense and keenness or readiness and willingness for similar ascertainments in the sector of political Utopia are lacking, missing.

3

As we observed and remarked, the description of the utopian end or final state of affairs contains an implicit or explicit confrontation with regard to the problem of the transition to such an end/final state or situation. These problems become, understandably, more intense to the extent that the utopian plan for (the restructuring of) society becomes a programme of political action; such problems necessarily become acute and critical when the actors or acting subjects, who invoke and appeal to this programme, occupy and achieve an influential, significant or even dominant, ruling position in society, without however being in a position to *hic et nunc* [[here and now]] realise their promises. The referentiality or relatedness to the present and the time-determination (or bindedness (attachment) with regard to time and history) of Utopia are then strengthened, intensified and reinforced because in the original, initial plan, thought motives, i.e. ideas, and helpful (assisting) constructions are inoculated and built in, which, in relation to that, are supposed to serve in the explaining or the legitimising of the absence of the realisation of Utopia, and to

make action under the circumstances and conditions of the absence of Utopia, but always in the name of this same Utopia, possible. On the basis of secondary, in terms of theory, constructions, primary organisational mechanisms as regards practice are promptly formed, and indeed as levers of a historical act(ion), which unfolds in long waves over generations and brings forth epochal results corresponding with, and directed and guided by, the heterogony of ends. The constant postponement of the advent of the Kingdom of God and the prolongation of the saeculum determined and had as a consequence the practical preponderance of the Ecclesia militans [[militant Church]] vis-à-vis the Ecclesia triumphans [[triumphant Church]]; and the analogous impossibility of an immediate establishment of the classless society founded and entrenched in the Marxist context the pre-eminence and precedence of the Party for the period of “socialist construction (or the building of socialism)” before the final stage of “communism”. Had the utopias concerned proven to be incapable of inoculating and building into their fundamental ideal plan such theoretical helpful (assisting) constructions, and thereupon of subjecting (practical) action to the logic of these helpful (assisting) constructions, and not any more to that [[logic]] of the ideal plan – then such utopias would have had to quickly vanish from the scene, forefront or spotlight as soon as it was found out that the eschatological expectation is not going to be fulfilled in the foreseeable future.

The reason why the Marxist Utopia was able to dominate on the world-historical scene for a good one hundred years long, and relatively effortlessly displace or drive away the competing with it anarchistic etc. utopias, not least of all rested on its suitability to organise and to legitimise political action, which indeed was supposed to erect and establish Utopia, but precisely because of the absence of Utopia was necessary.^{viii} Praxis (practice) in the pre-utopian reality remains, however, of necessity praxis interwoven with real, pragmatistic politics (realpolitik) or power politics, that is, time-determined (i.e. determined by the

historical epoch) praxis. Over and above that however, the time-determination (or bindedness (attachment) with regard to time, topicality and history) of the utopian (element) reached in Marxism such an extent and magnitude that it in fact, not without pride, arrogance and conceit, could define itself as science turning and directed against the usual utopias. Contemporary philosophy, political (national) economy, and historical science (science of history) chiseled, sculpted and moulded the intellectual face of Marxism, which as an analysis of the capitalistic present, just as much as a prophecy of the communistic future, could join in and have a say in all the great debates, and frequently dictate also their themes, topics, subject matter and direction. Not the mere mobilisation of vague longings, yearnings and dreams, but the formation or, one would almost say, the disciplining of the absolute dimension of the utopian (element) and Utopia through its time- and history-determined aspect or dimension, does Marxism have to thank for its enormous historical effect and impact. And this impact was not in the least transient, passing as today's critics of Utopia like (and have the good will) to ascertain.

The Marxist utopia penetrated its epoch just as deeply as it could be determined by its times (era, epoch). It could of course do that only in a paradoxical and contradictory manner – as expected by the way, if one thinks of the unrelenting, pitiless heterogony of ends. Because this Marxist utopia was realised less there, where its representatives prevailed politically and ruled, and more there, where it was supposed to have been realised according to the original, initial prognosis and strategy, i.e. in the industrially developed West. The communists naturally had to deny that the West was found to be nearer to the aim (goal) of historical motion than their own dominion or territory (of dominance) was; for them, the realisation of Utopia was a question of power, i.e. they had to identify Utopia and their own domination with each other. However, through their world-wide activity, they promoted tendencies which

were anchored or inherent in their utopian plan for (the restructuring of) society, and they did it from two points of view. As they believed, Utopia had to and could, in the industrial age, if at all, be established on the whole planet, since the creation, formation and development of the world market by the capitalistic revolution had unified world history for the first time and forever. They accordingly understood and conducted their own revolution as a world revolution, even if the communistic world movement was steered and guided for decades from a national centre of power (power centre). Through that, they contributed directly and indirectly, positively and negatively to the political unification of the modern world and to the increase in, heightening of the degree of density of planetary politics.³ Today's intensity in this degree of density was, even if under more hopeful portents and omens, anticipated in the plan for a Utopia on a planetary scale or of planetary dimensions. On the other hand, the communists through their impact or their indirect influence inside of the large industrial nations helped to bring about the disintegration and dissolution of oligarchic liberalism, and the transition to egalitarian mass democracy. In these nations, important premonitions of or demands for the utopian plan for (the restructuring of) society were realised in modified form – not of course on the political road which Marxism had anticipated, but no doubt through the development of forces, to which Marxism had attached world-historical importance and key functions. That means: technology (technique) and industry developed an until then inconceivable, unimaginable dynamic; however, this did not lead to social polarisation and proletarian revolution, but to the defusing and easing of class conflict(s), and to the formation of an in principle egalitarian social formation – which represents and constitutes an astonishing world-

³ For the form and the perspectives of today's planetary politics, as well as regarding the role of communism in the formation of such planetary politics, see more extensively P. Kondylis, *Planetarische Politik nach dem Kalten Krieg*, Berlin 1992 = Π. Κονδύλης, *Πλανητική πολιτική μετά τον Ψυχρό Πόλεμο*, Αθήνα 1992 = P. Kondylis, *Planetary Politics after the Cold War*, www.panagiotiskondylis.com 2014 [= footnote in Kondylis's Greek text which is not included in the German version].

historical novum. Material social inequality was of course not put aside, eliminated or abolished, nonetheless, the overcoming of the shortage of goods and the new necessities of the division of labour entailed or dragged along with them, gradually, the simultaneous disintegration and dissolution (decomposition) of the traditional bourgeoisie and the traditional proletariat. But not only was the Marxist insight into the interrelation between the development of the forces of production, and the inevitable collapse of the class structure of bourgeois society, proven true: the principle of material equality, which socialism summoned and mobilised against the formal freedoms of the bourgeoisie, dominates today – despite actual inequality – the ideological field, and drives constantly towards the continuation and furthering of the process of democratisation (democratisation process). The interweaving of the utopian (elements) with the long waves of historical change makes it, incidentally, clear that the great turn from bourgeois liberalism to mass democracy was accompanied by complementary intellectual(-spiritual) movements, as for instance the artistic avantgarde at the beginning of the 20th century or the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, which had an intense utopian streak, element or hue, and in domesticated form deeply influenced the mentalities and daily life in mass democracy.

The classless society, on the basis of the overcoming of the shortage of goods, was therefore realised – and if it was realised only as a caricature, then the reason for that lies simply in the fact that it could only be realised as a caricature. It can in general be said that utopias can be transmuted or implemented in(to) social praxis (practice) as to their time-determined (i.e. historically bound or conditioned), not as to their absolute dimension. Presumably, all the elements in a utopian plan can be realised – only not its real matter of concern, i.e. apart from its deeper and more authentic, genuine intention: the dream of the complete and definitive overcoming of struggle(s)

and of suffering, troubles, pain. Nonetheless, this matter of concern, intention or longing is not a concrete historical magnitude, but rather an anthropological constant. Action or the act remains, however, historical and concrete, and that is why in the area of action or of the act, the deeper and authentic, genuine utopian matter of concern or intention does not decide the issue, or is determinative; such a matter of concern or intention functions only as the absolute motivation for necessarily and inescapably relative historical act(ion). Seen thus, Utopia suffers an unavoidable, direct defeat every time, and, all the same, in an indirect manner, Utopia carries itself to victory – and furthermore, that (element) which in it must be defeated, is its anthropologically ineradicable dimension, which cannot be eliminated by any historical defeat. That is why the collapse of communism does not mean a definitive farewell of world history to Utopia, but it is the defeat of a great nation (Russia), which in its struggle for world domination (or the world setting and positing of power) and world dominance (or rule) made use of Utopia – just as every other modern world power must also come on the scene as the herald of universal(-historical)^{ix} ideas. At the time of the Cold War, the anti-communists often and rightly pointed out the instrumentalisation in terms of power politics of Utopia on the part of the Soviet Union.^x They commit today a logical error when they reverse the order and sequence of things, and declare the Soviet Union to be the sword or armed defender of Utopia to which the defeat that occurred actually applies (i.e. the anti-communists concluded that the defeat of the Soviet Union constitutes the defeat of Utopia).^{xi} On the other hand, they overlook that communism in the East^{xii} was defeated exactly because of the mass-democratic realisation of Utopia in the West, which despite all its shortcomings, bound and tied the masses to the “system”, and took the wind out of the sails of revolutionary movements.

Utopia appears to have historically run out of steam and become exhausted in the post-communistic present, and to be without a recognisable or discernible function; that, however, is not due only to the eye-catching, strikingly obvious failure of its absolute matter of concern or absolute goals, but also to the imperceptible prevailing of its own relative objectives and aim settings. Regarding Utopia, in whatever shape or (a or b) form, a dynamic re-appearance can be reckoned on and is not to be precluded in the future, as long as historical action or the historical act with specific features unfolds in long waves and stamps or moulds entire epochs. Yet Utopia could fall silent forever should the movement of planetary history reach a dead end, in which political action would be restricted and limited to basically the distribution of material and ecological goods becoming scarce on a densely populated planet. Then that sense of a new era, or the rejuvenating and radical disposition, which characterises the circumstances and conditions of Utopia's coming into being, would tire and become paralysed over the long term; rather, ideologies, which would legitimise hard disciplining (harsh disciplinary measures) and rigid hierarchies would be in demand and flourish.^{xiii} After the fulfilment and realisation of the positive Utopia in Western mass democracies, the fulfilment and realisation of (the) so-called "negative Utopia" could, at a planetary level, loom.

ⁱ The translator reminds the reader that this article by Kondylis was published in 1992 (Greek) and 1993 (German), at a time when inanities like the “End of History” and other such jokes presented as “serious theories” were “all the rage”.

ⁱⁱ For some quickly obtainable, basic information about the said Soviet occupation, starting in 1945, see e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_occupation_zone [translator’s endnote].

ⁱⁱⁱ This seems to be suggesting that Stalin’s “Socialism in One Country” was a far more realistic course than (Parvus and) Trotsky’s “Permanent Revolution”, strictly defined as Trotsky intended it and not meant in any later supposed (American”-neoon”) “manifestation”, and that is why, inter alia, the former “won” [translator’s endnote].

^{iv} Greek text = “inside all those elements of Utopia, which are expressed with words” [translator’s endnote].

^v German text = “stands (is) indeed (as) the motivation for utopian action always in the background” [translator’s endnote].

^{vi} Greek text = “however, the above desire in itself does not give birth to the historical effects of this act” [translator’s endnote].

^{vii} Greek text = “The historical epoch determines also the language” [translator’s endnote].

^{viii} Greek text = “establish Utopia, but whose [[i.e. the action’s]] necessity arose precisely from the non-realisation of Utopia” [translator’s endnote].

^{ix} One could write in English “of ideas pertaining to the history of the universe” or “of ideas with regard to the universe of history” and still derive the notion of ideas and values constructed by humans acting socially which purport to be universal, and hence also set the notion of history in a particular value-laden light, i.e. in a state of ideology, normative values, obfuscation and “false consciousness” or “anti-science”, which of course is the main prism or lens through which all societies function. When in particular societies, e.g., a particular broadly defined Group as tiny minority occupies positions of “authority” in (elite) institutions of higher learning, in GROSS DISPROPORTION compared to the said group’s percentage of the population, combined with near complete and GROSSLY DISPROPORTIONATE ownership and or control and or influence of the Mass Media and Mass Political Parties incl. through billionaires, bankers, Lobby (Special Interest) Groups, etc.,... then society ventures into the realm of relations of the political including a very strong element of (primitive Secret Society-like) “Divide and Conquer”, “Divide and Rule”, in the name of “universal values” (whereas e.g. Great Britain as a Colonial/Imperial Power etc. openly engaged in “Divide and Rule” on the basis of a hodge-podge of universalistic and or particularistic notions such as Progress, Reason, Civilisation, Christianity, Racial Superiority, etc.,...), since if Domination as GROSSLY DISPROPORTIONATE crystals of forms of Power was wielded openly and consistently in the name of particularistic values reflecting real power relations, then the status quo vis-à-vis the distribution of power could be put “in jeopardy” for the group in question in a societal context of “Democracy” and “Equality”. That the masses (and “out-group” elites) accept such a political situation or state of affairs is of course a matter for serious social psychologists and analysts of forms of power, influence, authority, dominance, domination, hegemony, pre-eminence, etc.,... who make a distinction between science and ideology in practice and not just verbally (if at all) [translator’s endnote, and obviously not to be attributed to P.K. under any circumstances whatsoever].

^x Greek text = “... rightly underlined the subjugation of Utopia to Soviet politics of power” [translator’s endnote].

^{xi} If Utopia can be instrumentalised and subjugated by a particular nation, then Utopia can be similarly used by other nations who have not been defeated (yet). Utopia cannot be defeated just because one nation, state, etc. is defeated. Hence, the said error in logic [translator’s endnote].

^{xii} Obviously, Eastern Europe is meant [translator’s endnote].

^{xiii} This does not mean that a particular (despised) elite won’t be able to continue under a “new regime”, though a fundamental change in social formation can also bring in an era of homines novi and or desperados, previously not in power. The said (despised) elite of course, one way or another, sooner or later, will eventually “meet its fate” [translator’s endnote].