For the 12 July 2020 session “Eco-socialist Alternatives to the Global Crises” in the Seventh South South Forum on Sustainability, Professor Alain Badiou was invited to dialogue with Professor Wang Hui of Tsinghua University, and Professor John Foster of University of Oregon and *Monthly Review*. The following questions were presented by Professor Lau Kin Chi of Lingnan University. Professor Alain Badiou made a written reply in English. Communication was facilitated by Professor Remy Herrera of University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne.

The dialogue continues…

Question: LKC (Lau Kin Chi)

Answer: AB (Alain Badiou)

LKC. Samir Amin talked about the implosion of capitalism. There have been so many “predictions” for the collapse of capitalism, yet catastrophe capitalism seems to hang on, feeding on increasing polarizations and suffering/elimination of marginalized populations. Do you see the current conjuncture of pandemics, economic downturn and climate change, and the ensuing state and people’s responses, as a turning point in the global, regional and national order? In what ways?

**AB. I don’t think that we can see, in the contemporary situation, something like a “collapse” of capitalism. Maybe we have something like a crisis, but crises are a part of the laws of capitalism itself. Maybe, as often, the consequence of that sort of crisis will be not a universal communism, but a war, like after the crises of 1905-14 or 1929-39. It’s possible to think of a true “collapse” of capitalism only when the communist politics is really strong, like in Russia after the first world-war, or in China after the second. But today, we have only the very beginning of the third stage of communism, after the beginning, with Marx, in the second part of XIX° century, and the Lenin-Mao stage of “socialist states” during the XX° century. And the communist hypothesis is politically very weak.**

LKC. You stated the Communist Hypothesis in 2008. Now, 12 years later, what would be the most important revisions or additions to the communist hypothesis?

**AB. “Communist Hypothesis” was for me the name the whole story of the communist politics, and not the name of our situation today. I take the word “hypothesis” in the same signification as in the concept of “scientific hypothesis”. All new things in politics begin by some hypothesis, generally at the level of a new ideological conviction. But very often, a new hypothesis appears in the form of an ideological conflict. Today, as you know, the communist hypothesis is seen by a great majority of people as not only a false one, but a criminal one. So the beginning is to re-affirm our communist hypothesis as the only one which proposes to humanity as such a form of positive and creative existence. And it’s only with that sort of absolute conviction that we can organize some political experiences, and create some new local process of universal value, as an experimental form of a universal process.**

LKC. “How do you see the prominence of ecological struggles in relation to economic, social and cultural struggles?

**AB. When ecological struggles are not clearly in close relationship to communist hypothesis, they are inside the capitalistic dominant ideology. Many great trusts organize today an ecological propaganda for their merchandises. There is no real political independency of ecological conviction. We must affirm that inside the domination of private property, it’s impossible to have a good relationship between human creativity and essential natural laws. It’s in fact easy to propose proofs of that point. And it’s a future important dimension of new communist vision.**

LKC. How do you see the legacy of Marxism and of revolutions in the 20th century in posing alternatives to capitalism? How do you see their shortfalls?

**AB. To understand the revolutions of the last century, we must first re-affirm the true contents, the real goals, of a Marxist politics. We have in fact not one goal (like a “socialist state”) but four principles: 1. The end of private property of all that is of public use or value. 2. The end of all “great differences”, between towns and countries, workers an peasants, intellectual work and manual work, social position of women and social position of men, directive job and executive job, and so on. The goal is: a polymorphic human being. 3. A true internationalism, that is the complete abolition, in the political and ideological activities, not only of racism and blind nationalism, but of all forms of cult of identities. The goal is a complete unity of humanity as such. 4. The progressive abolition of all forms of separate state power, through a promotion of collective decision.**

 **In general, the result of the two great revolutions of the last century has been concentrated on the first point, and on a very small part of the second. It was not sufficient to avoid a progressive return to capitalism, more precisely to a state- capitalism. The four points have been discussed by masses during a part (maybe the first three years) of the Cultural Revolution. But it was only a first attempt, and finally a failure. We know now that the four points are all necessary to have a possibly victorious communist process. As said Mao “Without a communist movement, there is no communism at all”. And “communist movement” cannot be reduced to “take the state power”. To take the power is only the small beginning for a real communist creativity.**

LKC. How would you respond to strategies such as “delinking”, and appeals of social movement such as climate justice and de-nuclearization?

**AB. All that is without any strength in the long term. The question is not “climate” or “nuclearization”, but the goal of all the present economic organization, which is to create fatal concentration of productivity, transformed into money, in the hands of a very small oligarchy. The most important point is to suppress the capitalistic close relationship between “production” and “profit”. And to relate “production” directly to fundamental collective definition or the best possible vital existence of Humanity.**

LKC. How do you see the question of the historical subject in the struggles for a future for humanity?

**AB. There is no fundamental change: The historical subject is composed of the relationship between a very large majority, which is named proletarian class, and a small minority composed of revolutionary intellectuals. We must assume today the difference between “proletarian class” and “working class”. Proletarian class is composed today of classical working class and of a big number of salarieds which don’t work in factories, but in services, transports, cleaning and so on. We must use the complete definition of a proletarian: somebody who to survive has nothing else to propose to the market than her or his personal work-strength. In the world today, we have 65 % of proletarians, 20% of small bourgeoisie, or middle class, and 15% of classical bourgeoisie. The communist hypothesis is a positive one for probably 75% of the total population of the present world. The great majority of these future communist activists (I hope!) are today in Africa, Asia, and South-America.**

LKC. What is the gist of your propositions for alternative theories, philosophies, praxis, policies, strategies… that you would like to convey to the younger generations?

**AB. My work is composed of four forms of works: Novels, Plays, Philosophy, Political Essays. The most interesting forms for politics in general are the essays where I speak of communist hypothesis, contemporary world, colonialism, Marxism, and so on. Maybe the most radical, interesting and useful part is, on one side, my radical critics of contemporary “democratic states” and of the ideological use of a false concept of freedom, on the other side my new political definition of Marxism and communism. If you are interested in philosophy, my system is entirely contained in three books: *Being and Event*, *Logics of Worlds*, and *L’immanence des vérités* (*Immanency of Truths*) of which the (difficult) translation in English is not finished.**