



Towards a Manifesto for 21st Century Socialism

Présentation In a statement published last June, following the French legislative elections, the organization *Mémoire des luttes* and the quarterly journal *Utopie Critique*** announced their decision to provide a facilitating framework for elaborating a Manifesto comprising a set of principles, values and orientations that would serve to create a global alternative to confront the neoliberal capitalist project, as well as its social-liberal variants. This would be carried out in anticipation of the future construction of a political project, designed by a social and democratic power that would incorporate national, European and international dimensions. A socialist project for the 21st century that would provide renewed hope in the dream of a fairer society which the popular classes have struggled for for generations; a dream that they haven't ceased to hope for and which continues to give meaning to their lives.

This Manifesto could form the foundation for future public policies that urgently seek to address the growing disruptions and conflicts that the world faces and whose symptoms, accentuated by ever increasing climate change and the destruction wrought by the financial sector, can be perceived by every citizen. This is without even taking into account the risks of a massive explosion in the Middle East, or even worldwide, resulting from the foreign policy of the Bush Administration, which, since the inglorious departure of Tony Blair, has found a new sidekick in the person of Nicolas Sarkozy.

Disconnected from immediate electoral agendas, the initiative taken by *Mémoire des luttes* and *Utopie critique* is grounded in a more long-term perspective. It takes into account the political, ideological and electoral failures of the anti-liberal forces in spite of their decisive role in the May 29, 2005 victory.

Having, among its members, activists from the « *altermondialiste* » movement, its aim is to deepen and surpass this movement. The « *altermondialiste* » activism remains as relevant as ever, as a space for building collective consciousness and carrying out grassroots education, and as a key promoter of mobilizations. Paradoxically, its heterogeneity is a key asset in that it facilitates the agglutination of numerous forces and political and social traditions behind a common cause – the criticism of the dominant system – and allows for the promotion of a variety of models as alternatives to neoliberal policies.

Nevertheless, this heterogeneity forms an obstacle to the development of a dynamic strategic vision, that is both coherent and shared by all, and that incorporates the notion of political power as an area of action. It even prevented, during the world social forums, any sort of consensus on the adoption, as a sort of common foundation, of a series of proposals that emanated from different quarters, but that, together, formed a coherent project. The « *altermondialiste* » movement is thus even less capable of adopting positions in relation to the profound processes of economic and social transformation – not merely dreamed of, but really existing and carried forth by social movements like the Landless Peasant Movement (MST) in Brazil or the peasant movements in India, and by governments springing from the social change in Bolivia, in Ecuador or in Venezuela. Hence the need to enter into a « *post altermondialiste* » era of activism so as to create favorable conditions for the emergence of 21st century socialism.

An internationalism rooted in the conquest, by peoples, of their sovereignty (that some attempt to disqualify as “populism”); the reassertion of genuinely republican ideals; the rejection of comunitarianism, and thus the primacy of citizenship, secularism, equality and solidarity; collective appropriation (for instance, through nationalizations) of sectors identified as being of public utility so as to extract them from the claws of multinationals and financial interests; the calling into question of commercial and financial free marketeering (through draconian measures of controls, regulations and protection); the redistribution of riches; democracy at all levels (including that of private enterprises); the refusal of the false opposition that is drawn between individual fulfillment and collective interest; the equality of men and women; cultural development; making a priority of addressing environmental emergencies and establishing citizen control over techno scientific endeavors: these are just some of the orientations that guide our work. It will therefore be necessary to dismantle the very foundations of neoliberal globalization and its continental variant incarnated by the project that is being undertaken by the European Union.

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For **Utopie critique** : Tony Andréani, Henri Benoits, Robert Charvin, Florence Gauthier, Gilbert Marquis, Michel Naudy and Danielle Riva.

Work Program Our initiative is obviously not the only one of its kind, and we fully intend to nourish it with other initiatives – issue-based or more general – that, in France and abroad, spring from the same source of inspiration. Similarly, we will take into account the maximum amount of published works. This is why the initiative will unfold in four phases that will necessarily overlap one another in certain areas.

First phase: observation and syntheses

From September 2007 to May 2008, the members of our coordinating team and activists who will join them will participate in colloquiums and meetings organized by other groups (namely on environmental issues) so as to extract the relevant conclusions. Furthermore, these same individuals (or others) will elaborate summaries of the primary published works that exist on what are considered to be key issues so as to insure the success of this initiative.

All of these preliminary documents will be posted on the web pages of *Mémoire des luttes* and *Utopie critique*, as well as the pages of this latter publication (or others), and possibly also in the form of widely distributed paperbound “Notes” or in small format books.

Second Phase: two international colloquiums

During this phase, which will unfold during the first trimester of 2008 (and with the first phase still underway), *Mémoire des luttes* and *Utopie critique* will progress from an observer status to the role of debate organizers.

With this aim, two colloquiums will be organized:

- The first, on Saturday January 26th 2008, will explore the notions of the « *post altermondialiste* » activism and of 21st Century Socialism in the context of global geopolitics. It will be conceived as a contri-

but ion to the Global day of struggles that the International Council of the World Social Forum has created.

- The second, tentatively scheduled for Saturday March 23rd (on the eve of the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome), will be focused on the construction of Europe. It will take place during the period of European ratification of the future modified treaty of the European Union (in reality, the defunct Constitutional Treaty in a different guise). It will involve assessing the margins of maneuver that the European Union will (or won't) leave for the development of alternative policies and the compatibility of its structures with the demands of popular sovereignty, and subsequently the determining of all the possible ramifications.

Third phase: confronting original contributions

At the beginning of 2008, researchers, academics and labor leaders (in particular historians, economists, political scientists and sociologists) will be asked to draft analyses that will contribute to the elaboration of the Manifesto in their area of expertise. Their mission will imperatively take into account the corpus that has been produced or is still in the process of being produced, in particular on environmental, scientific, European and international issues.

Work seminars will permit the confrontation of analyses that will also be published.

At the end of June 2008, a day of workshops will make it possible to assess the progress that has been made.

Fourth phase: drafting the Manifesto.

It is still too early to identify the practical details of the implementation of this phase. It should take place during the first semester of 2009.

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Mémoire des luttes is an organization created on the initiative of Gunter Hozmann on January 7th 2000, with the following stated mission in the preamble of its statutes: “Gunter Holzmann, who has always been engaged in struggles for a world that is freer, fairer, more equitable, more fraternal and more united in solidarity, intends to act, beyond his person, to contribute to these struggles and to keep their memory alive. With this aim, he would like a non profit institution to be created for which, so that it has a lasting legacy, he makes a financial contribution.” Gunter Holzmann, who had already made a financial donation to the team running the *Monde diplomatique* to guarantee the publication's independence, left us on January 6th 2001 at the age of 89.

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Utopie critique is a quarterly journal created a few years after the fall of the Soviet Union and its bureaucratic state by a small team of activists belonging to social movements and Communist and Trotskyite movements, as well as intellectuals, all of whom are critical of the current social and political reality. Supporters of a “self-managed Republic”, subheading of the journal, they have assigned themselves the goal of popularizing this perspective by participating in daily struggles and the goal of working to understand the various anti-capitalist revolutionary experiences: their accomplishments, their failures and the lessons to be learned.

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