Class, nation, people and the real movement within the crisis of reproduction of capitalist social relations

This text aims at a critique of recent left (and "ultra-left") analyses that use the concepts of "middle class", "interclassism" and populism in order to describe or even polemicize against social movements such as the "movements of the squares" and the "yellow vests" movement. We will specifically focus on a narrative that has become prevalent in the Greek autonomous / anarchist milieu and connects the political nationalism which emerged in the "movement of the squares" in Greece with recent extreme right-wing mobilizations against the agreement between the Greek and the Macedonian states.

The crisis of the reproduction of Greek society

Initially we will provide a brief outline of the crisis of the reproduction of capitalist social relations in Greece. The violent struggle between proletariat and capital that erupted in Greece between 2010 and 2013 was the **main form of appearance** of this deep crisis along with the economic forms it assumed in the previous decade. However, when we say that the class conflict during that period was a form of appearance of the crisis we do not mean at all that class struggle is a "dependent variable" which is conditioned by the "objective course of capitalist accumulation", according to what is argued by some neo-structuralist analyses that have reappeared recently. On the contrary, the historical process of the development of capitalist social relations on a global level is immanently a process of continuous struggle between capital and proletariat. The history of global capitalism is nothing but the history of class struggles.

Capital is not a thing but a social relation. The expanded reproduction of capital is necessarily a process of reproduction of the proletariat, not as a passive servant of capital but as a barrier to this same process. The proletariat threatens to disrupt the circuit of the reproduction of capital in each of its stages. The reproduction of total social capital can proceed only through class struggle. This is the basic contradiction and the permanent source of instability of capitalist social relations and, in this sense, the process of reproduction of capitalist social relations is a **constant process of crisis and restructuring**.

The reason why the last eruption of the global capitalist crisis took such a severe form in Greece must therefore be sought in the history of the class conflicts of the previous decades and in the forms of reproduction of social relations that were constituted through this history. We must be clear on this point: when we are talking about class struggle we do not invoke a mythical, constantly revolutionary proletarian subject but a process of constant decomposition and recomposition of the class as the subject of the transformation and, potentially, the abolition of established social relations including the proletarian class itself.

So we first of all note that during the period of growth the Greek state failed to impose all the reforms that were necessary for the maintenance of the competitiveness of Greek national capital and for upholding the position of the Greek state within the global state hierarchy. This failure was due to the particular forms of the reproduction of capitalist social relations in Greece, which constituted the basis for the outbreak of class struggles that delayed and obstructed the process of capitalist restructuring. Beyond, though, moments of

struggle, these forms of reproduction where characterized by certain particularities that hindered restructuring without challenging the rule of capital: e.g. the clientelist party and union networks, the presence of strong sectional and corporatist unions in central government and the wider public sector, the existence of a very big number of small and very small family capitalist enterprises, a very high rate of self-employment (30%), a very high rate of home ownership (80%) and the role of the (extended) family as the main welfare and protection provider for its members. Even if we cannot proceed now to a more detailed analysis, we must, nevertheless, stress the fact that the specific forms of social reproduction on the one hand resulted in the existence of increased social aspirations and on the other hand restricted the availability and the mobility of cheap labour power. The exploitation of the devaluated labour power of immigrant proletarians after the collapse of the Eastern bloc in the beginning of the 90s provided a solution for capital only in specific production sectors.

However, the fiscal crisis of the Greek state and the crisis of competitiveness of Greek capitalist enterprises are not only connected with the internal / national contradictions of capitalist reproduction. They are simultaneously an expression of the global crisis of the reproduction of capital as it is manifested on the level of the national social formation through the movement of global money.

Ultimately, nation-states derive both their revenue and their power from capital. In order to increase the chances of attracting capital within their borders, nation-states pursue a number of policies (economic and social policies, recuperation and repression, etc.) and provide incentives for investments. However, the success of national policies is dependent upon the establishment of appropriate conditions for the expanded reproduction of capital on a global level. **The main contradiction faced by the national states is that while their participation in multilateral trade and financial agreements and organizations is necessary to enhance the accumulation of capital on the global level, such participation may severely undermine the smooth course of the accumulation of national capital.**

The process of the so-called Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is the most characteristic example of the movement of this contradiction. On the one hand, the process of EMU was the particular strategy of the European Union for the imposition of discipline on government spending and for the increase of the rate of exploitation of the European working class. On the other hand, the process of EMU led to divergence between the “central” and the “peripheral” states within the Eurozone with respect to their competitiveness and, at the same time, temporarily increased the flow of credit towards the “peripheral” states (but also their current account deficit). After the global recession in 2008, this asymmetric dynamic was expressed through the outbreak of the so-called “sovereign debt crisis” in the “peripheral” states –and most acutely in Greece– as well as with severe turbulence within the Eurozone.

The movement of world money transmits therefore the global conditions of capital accumulation and imposes the discipline of capitalist competition to the national spheres of valorization and the respective states through the balance of payments, through the exchange rate regime (or the absence of the possibility of currency devaluation as in the case of Eurozone) and through the credit terms and ratings of each particular state. These mediating mechanisms transform the deterioration of the present conditions and the future prospects of the domination of capital over labour and of the rate of exploitation of labour

power into fiscal and financial crises. The forms of financial and fiscal crisis turn into the form of political crisis as the respective state is increasingly pressured to fundamentally restructure social relations in order to ensure the expanded reproduction of capital.

This is the specific framework in which the acute expression of the global crisis of reproduction with the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2007 was belatedly manifested in 2009 in Greece by assuming the forms of the so-called sovereign debt crisis and the crisis of competitiveness. Therefore, the specific forms of the capitalist crisis in Greece and its severity had to do with the contradictions of the reproduction of the Greek national social capital that we briefly mentioned before but also with the position of the Greek state and capital within the global division of labour and within the global hierarchy of states –and, particularly, with the asymmetric dynamic of the process of Economic and Monetary Union in EU. The Greek capitalist state responded immediately and in cooperation with the IMF and the institutions of the European Union unleashed a total attack which aimed at the devaluation of labour power and unproductive capital in order on the one hand to **reconstitute on new bases the circuit of total social capital** and on the other hand to **internalize within proletarian subjectivity** the discipline and "realism" of reduced aspirations.

On the movement against the restructuring of capitalist social relations after 2010 in Greece, the "new middle classes" and the proletariat

The "movement of the squares" was the culmination of the wider social movement against the restructuring of capitalist social relations in Greece after the outbreak of the "debt crisis". The main demand of that movement was the cancellation of the measures for the devaluation of labour power. A demand which was necessarily addressed to the state due to the character of the particular attack against the working class. Some comrades have argued that claiming concessions from the state leads to the political binding of the working class to the state and to the creation of interclass alliances. For us, however, the relation of the working class with the state is always contradictory. On the one hand, the mobilization of the working class forces the state to respond to its material demands. On the other hand, the "welfare state" can never satisfy the needs of the working class because welfare provisions and benefits remain conditional on the subordination of the working class to the alienated forms of wage labour and of the capitalist state. All the more so that in the particular conjuncture the state was obliged to cut the "social wage" due to the crisis. The relationship of every individual worker, either he is considered "incorporated" or she is considered "marginalized", and of every part of the class with the state is contradictory. The division between "integration into" and "struggle against" the state is not a division between two parts of the working class, the "integrated" and the "excluded" one, but a division which permeates class struggles: every struggle within or around the state contains as a latent possibility the opposition or even the rejection of the state form, even when such a tendency is not obvious or dominant.

Usually, the analyses of the Greek anarchist / autonomous milieu about the occupation of the Syntagma square do not go further than a reference to the participation of extreme right militants in the "upper part of the square" giving the false impression that the content and the tone of the movement was set by them. However, such a view completely

erases from history the role played by the apparatuses of the left parties. Actually, the left, and in particular SYRIZA and, to a smaller degree, ANTARSYA, were not only present in the square but they had dropped anchor in the basic organizing groups that had been created in a systematic attempt to manipulate the general assemblies and the content of the mobilization. Their main aim was to channel the discussion to the level of the central political arena through the promotion of demands such as the demand for the "fall of the government" and the demand for the "cancellation of the debt", through the organization of public discussions with talks by "prominent" left economists and sociologists that spoke of a supposedly "national problem" and propagandized possible "solutions" and, of course, through the condemnation of the riots and of the conflicts of the demonstrators with the police. Therefore, their manifest aim was the transformation of the class question into a national question that could be resolved through a "pro-people government" that would cancel the sovereign debt and would support the national economy and the "people" through the implementation of social-democratic policies against "the vultures of the markets". And eventually that was the discourse that became dominant within the occupation of the Syntagma square in contrast with the anti-capitalist / anti-state tendency which raised the social question in class terms, i.e. in terms of the immediate satisfaction of proletarian needs through the promotion of direct actions such as the "refusal of payments from below" and through the confrontation with the forces of capitalist order, a tendency which criticized the capital as a totality of social relations, and not "the troika, the markets and the governments exploiting us".

The prevalence of left democratic nationalism in the movement of the squares had the result that the practice of the "delegation of power" and of representation also became eventually prevalent. Delegation and representation both regarding the resolution of the crisis that pushed all these people to take to the streets and regarding the organization of the struggle itself. Certainly we are not implying that there was no self-determined initiative and activity on the part of the proletarians that participated in the movement. The occupation of public space itself and its defense vis-à-vis the state and the police forces as well as the mass participation in the daily and lengthy assemblies and in the everyday life of the occupation were important forms of autonomous activity. However, passivity was not really superseded in the movement, since participation did not go further than the self-contained processes and groups in the square, which did not manage to take any substantial initiative for its expansion to the sites of production and reproduction that would challenge the rule of capital and its state. Moreover, the key positions in the groups of the Syntagma square movement were occupied by leftists who often managed to manipulate the discussion and the decisions of the assembly.

Further, even if an important portion of the participants in the movement expressed a critique against the state and to the political system, the content of the critique did not go further than the preoccupation with issues of form, juxtaposing "direct democracy" to "representative democracy". This condition had implications for the wider content of the struggle: politicians and parties were denounced as an elite that does not truly represent and does not care for the "problems of the people". In this manner, "direct democracy" was presented as the method that would permit people to take their lives in their hands.

Therefore, the occupation of the Syntagma square remained a **protest** movement against the political system. The state was not recognized as the **political form of capital**. It

was not understood that the interventions of the state are confined to the limits set by the circuit of the reproduction of capital. It was not understood, thus, that the state-guaranteed growth of the national economy and the “protection of the public wealth” can mean nothing else than the expanded reproduction of the national capital within the global capitalist economy. Therefore, the essential unity of particular national capitals within global accumulation despite the (sometimes fierce) competition between them was not recognized, since the spectacle of "foreign powers" hankering after "national wealth" prevailed. For this reason, the people and the nation, i.e. the illusory interclass national community, were not radically challenged as social forms. The critique was limited to the decision making process and to the search for an alternative / direct democratic constitution of the political community as a separated sphere. And all the above led eventually to the defeat of the movement and to its subsequent subsumption under the political and ideological forms of capital.

As a conclusion, since the movement had not taken any practical initiative that would directly challenge the rule of capital in the spheres of production and reproduction, it ended up merely protesting against the government. It was defeated as a protest movement since it did not manage to gain any concessions from the government. Given the fact that the revolutionary transformation of social relations was not practically posed, the only road that seemed open to most proletarians after the defeat of the movement was the change of the government through elections, so that the new party in power would at least negotiate the reduction of the debt and the imposed measures with the “debtors”.

Class composition of the movement of the squares

All those who felt that the politics of devaluation threatened their own reproduction participated both in the movement of the squares and in the demonstrations and the general strikes that preceded it: full-time and part-time workers from the public and the private sector, unemployed workers whose numbers at that period were continuously increasing, pensioners whose pensions were continuously decreasing, university students who experienced the cancellation of their aspirations, self-employed who were hard hit by the increase of taxation, as well as small bosses and small shop-owners who were proletarianized due to the devaluation of their unproductive capital. Excluding therefore small bosses, the vast majority of the participants in the movement came from the proletarian class, i.e. the class whose only means of subsistence is to sell their labour power. This position comes into direct opposition with the view that the movement of the square was a movement of the “middle class” that saw its “privileges” threatened and, as such, it was electorally capitalized by SYRIZA.

The concept of the middle class is so vague that it can lump small farmers, small bosses, artisans together with retail workers, public sector workers, white collar workers and service workers, in sum all the workers in the tertiary sector. The justification why a huge part of the wage workers, especially in the western capitalist countries, are not proletarians but a part of the “middle class”, as argued by certain analyses, necessitates a series of theoretical acrobatics and jugglery which we will briefly expose.

Nicos Poulantzas, the basic initiator of these views, argued that classes in capitalism are not defined on the basis of the ownership of the means of production, and therefore by

the relations of exploitation, but according to the *position* and the *function* of someone within the production process. Regarding the position and the function within the production process, he defined as a basic structural criterion for the distinction between the working class and the waged middle class the distinction between productive and unproductive labour. In other words, between the workers that **directly** produce surplus value and the workers that do not. The first constitute the working class and the second the "waged middle class". Based on this technical separation (which was actually conceptualized in a wrong way, but we cannot say more here), the greatest part of wage workers in contemporary western capitalism is excluded from the working class, deliberately ignoring the fact that all these categories of workers (retail workers, public sector workers, service workers) do not have their own means of production, and therefore are obliged to sell their labour power and to be exploited since they provide surplus labour.

Therefore the question remains: what is the reason why this part of the working population does not belong to the proletariat but is a part of the middle class? The answer provided by Poulantzas is that these workers are permeated by the dominant bourgeois ideology and support the political rule of capital and that's the condition that makes them part of the middle class.

The definition of the working class on the basis of productive labour short-circuits given the fact that parts of the so-called middle class according to Poulantzas such as engineers perform productive labour. On the other hand, the classification of workers into the waged middle class on the basis of their ideology is completely arbitrary. Actually, such a classification indirectly introduces vanguardism: the role of the guardian of the correct ideology is always played by parties and/or informal organizations of any kind. These organizations may subsequently qualify in any particular case which is the pure proletarian subject and strategy disregarding and even attacking the real proletarian movement with all its contradictions.

Class and alienation

The sociological approach of Poulantzas defines the class as a "group" or as a "position" which is occupied by the individual within society. However, the class is neither a "group" nor a "position": it is a *social relation* of the capitalist mode of production. Class is the constant process of the separation of the great mass of the population from the means of production and subsistence, a process which was not completed once and for all in the period of the so-called primitive accumulation but is continuously repeated through the accumulation of capital and, from time to time, through the direct exercise of state violence. Class is a *relation of struggle*, i.e. a constant struggle, inconspicuous or pronounced, in and against the constant effort of capital to subordinate every aspect of life to the law of value. Class is not an "identity", it is the *dialectical relation* between the objective conditions of the relations of production and the subjective terms of the experience of struggle against these relations of production and exploitation. Class is *class struggle* itself, a *historical process* with defeats, attacks, setbacks and pyrrhic victories.

If the class is perceived as a *social relation* no "pure workers", "ideal revolutionary subjects" exist. The wage relation itself is a form of mystification that obscures exploitation: "*whoever lives under its sign…lives a life divided in and against itself. So to say, his or her feet*

remain mired in exploitation even while his or her head breathes in bourgeois ideological clouds".[1]

That's why the concept of *alienation*, as it was developed by Marx in his work, occupies a central place in our understanding of capitalist social relations. The experience of the individual, separated worker in capitalism is shaped by the totality of the world of commodities. All the mystified forms assumed by the capital relation stand in front of her as an alien power that dominates her while at the same time she is the one that reproduces this alien power every day. The illusory fixedness of capitalist forms and categories, the appearance of capital as a natural and eternal reality, shape the convictions of the worker. This *process of alienation* permeates the proletariat as a whole, including both "productive" and "unproductive" workers, to use the false –from the standpoint of the struggle against capital– separation utilized by Poulantzas, actively shaping hierarchical relations within the proletarian class.

In contrast with the "politico-ideological" factors of Poulantzas which are supposedly determined in a consistent and unambiguous manner by the type and the concrete character of wage labour, alienation is not an accomplished fact but an antagonistic *process*. The concept of alienation implies its opposite, that is resistance, refusal and rejection of alienation in our daily practice, in the course of the inconspicuous or pronounced struggles of the proletariat. And it is exactly the processes and sites of struggle, and, especially, mass struggles, which reveal all the contradictions of the proletarian class and which open up perspectives for the collective practical critique of capitalist alienation.

Returning to the movement of the squares, its characterization by a part of the ultra-left milieu as a "middle class" or an "interclass" movement is an easy way to get rid of the tormenting question: why proletarians are not able to overcome the alienating forms of capital and move towards a radical, communist direction, even when they are facing such a harsh and unprecedented attack by capital? The practical answer to this question can only be given within struggles and through the study of their history and not through ready-made recipes from the position of an external observer.

People and Nation in general

Starting the third and last part of our presentation, we will initially note that we understand the categories of the nation and the people as **social forms,** that is, as particular **modes of existence** of the class antagonistic relations. Therefore, the categories of "the people" and of "the nation", as concepts which express capitalist forms of **social life** in a socially valid and historically determined and determining manner**,** are contradictory in themselves, since they exist as **differentiated** forms constituted through **class struggle.** Perhaps, in the activity of the "people" as a **mass movement** the possibility of its internal split may become actual, i.e. the possibility of the formation of the class, leading to a rupture within the nation. The difference of the people-form from the nation-form is that in the case of the latter every class activity and social conflict appears to have dissolved/vanished in its result, within the **representation** of national unity.

[1] R. Gunn, "Notes on 'Class'", *Common Sense* 2, 1987.

More particularly, the rule of capital has been founded and reproduced since its early emergence through the incorporation of proletarians within the national/political community **not as a class** but as citizens of a nation-state. The social hegemony of the capitalist class is established only with the **political** reconstitution of the working class on a national basis through the state, i.e. when the **nationalization** of the class question is achieved. It is important to point out from a class standpoint that since its appearance at the forefront of history, the working class has been **in-and-against** the state and all the capitalist forms of objectivity.

On the one hand, the nationalization of class struggle, that is the **nation in-and-against** the class, unifies the class on a wider scope than sectional struggles in local enterprises and against individual capitalists, and produces the objective preconditions for the supersession of the national limits and for the creation of the global human community. On the other hand, the nation-form constitutes a moment of subsumption of class activity under the capitalist social forms as well as an internal division of the class and, thus, a temporary suspension of the possibility to supersede national limits.

The negation of class antagonism through the nationalization of the class question is realized by the politics of the state which organizes the process of atomization of the working class and strives to ensure that the capacity for labour will retain its commodity form and that exploitation will be mediated by the free and equal exchange between individual commodity owners. This process is complemented by the **recollectivization** of individual proletarians not as a class with autonomous aspirations but as a sum of citizens without class distinctions, namely through a process of fetishization of class antitheses which is expressed in their abstract grouping in the form of the "people". Nationalism as the objective site of the constitution of the contemporary forms of social consciousness on the ground of the nation-state, that is, as a moment of capitalist ideology and of the practices that reproduce it, is the **flip side** of this subsumption of the working class. But we must necessarily make a distinction between this, let's name it, **political nationalism** and the **nationalism of the extreme right** which substitutes all forms of social identification with itself, producing a priori the totalizing framework of the nation-form as a precondition for every social activity and as a naturalized generator of all political events.

People and Nation in the squares

To clarify our position from the beginning, we must note that we don't see any immediate connection between the movement of the squares and the recent nationalist rallies in Greece against the agreement with Macedonia, under the umbrella of the "revolt on the right". However, we will say again that there was a **specific** form of appearance of the national identity and of the citizen identity in the squares, on the one hand as an element of self-identification of a part of the participants in the movement of the squares and, on the other hand, as a sign of the confinement of this majoritarian part within the limits of the established social relations. We question though the assertion that this specific form shaped the **general** content of the struggles which foreshadowed the monolithic nationalism of the "Macedonian rallies".

This specific form of appearance of nationalism did not challenge the development of national economy but attempted to reestablish it on firmer grounds and to funnel some of

the expected gains more democratically into the whole citizen body. A citizen body which was on the one hand positively defined in national terms but which, on the other hand, was **not** constituted **negatively** against non-citizens, in this specific case. It is true that in the squares, the critique of capital did not go further than its **reified** and **fetishized** appearance as money-generating-money and as public debt, while at the same time the critique of politics did not go further than a **personalized** indignation against political representatives. Nevertheless, a movement which is situated in civil society, and therefore presents the struggle between classes in a distorted way, contains contradictions which are not a priori **resolved.** And they are not resolved because the constitution of civil society must constantly reproduce its preconditions, i.e. to suspend the activity of the working class as **class.**

On the contrary, in the case of the nationalist "Macedonian rallies", the mobilization took as its **point of departure** the **universal** form of the nation and of the abstract national interest. In this way, it eradicated within its process every possibility of rupture and of the promotion of proletarian needs –which are **immediately** constituted as **particular** class interests against the appearance of the reproduction of capital as the general purpose of social reproduction. The rupture that can be produced by the nation-form can be nothing else than the conflict with another "universal", i.e. with another nation.[2]

Therefore, the very forms of the nation and of nationalism are not "relatively autonomous" social forms but the mode of existence of either the **defeat** or of the **absence** of **class struggle.** In the movement of the squares, the rise of nationalism did not indicate the absence of class struggle but its **defeat,** since the fetishized discourse about debt and democracy ultimately prevailed; a discourse that transforms the aim of the satisfaction of needs into an alternative proposal for a **formally** differentiated reproduction of capitalist social relations. Besides, that's why there was also room for the active participation of tendencies that posed the issues from a proletarian, anti-capitalist standpoint, which we cannot even imagine for the nationalism of the "Macedonian rallies", where the **absence** of class struggle was from the beginning a hard fact due to the displacement of the conflict as one between nations.

We must add that while "objectively" perceived, the flip side of the abolition of the memoranda agreements appears to be the growth of the national economy, such a fact does not invalidate the subjective moment of the temporary reappropriation of the capitalist space-time. And this is true, despite the fact that this reappropriation was realized with the alienated means of the critique of the bankruptcy of the economy instead of the critique of the bankrupt social life due to the existence of economy. Consequently, the movement of the squares did not manage to challenge the alienation of capital as a **social relation** that assumes an **economic** and a **political** form. Likewise, the existence of the political demand for direct democracy which targeted the sphere of the decision making process, without saying much about what kind of decisions are taken within this sphere, does not invalidate the fact that it was a moment of a practical critique of the constitution of the relation between civil society and the political community of the state. Therefore, it was an **insufficient** rupture with the determination of citizenship by the state, which remained

[2] "Socially undesirable" strata (marginalized proletarians, radical political minorities, minoritarian identity groups etc.) may be excluded from this "universal" form as "internal enemies" to be persecuted and cleansed.

confined into the limits of the separated political sphere by demanding only its alteration through direct democratic procedures.

Nationalism as the contemporary historical form of appearance of an imploded reformism

The crisis of the political and economic forms of social reproduction of the previous decades generalized the tendency of **proletarianization**, which is a part of the process of change of the mode of existence of the nation-states and their economies within the global circulation of capital. In combination with a historical development where labour is regarded more as a **cost** than as an **investment,** the problem of the management and control of the autonomous needs of the proletariat which may go further than the passive acceptance of a "necessary fate" becomes crucial. The reappearance of **right wing** nationalism in several capitalist social formations, either with an openly neoliberal program or with a national-conservative alternative not far from it, cannot be disconnected from this move which constitutes the material basis for the tensions between proletarians. At the same time, it contributes to the ideological concealment of the attack against the working class as a **whole**. Therefore, depending on the level of the class struggle within each national social formation, its position in the global division of labour and the respective possible alternatives of capitalist accumulation, different capitalist strategies are promoted. The content of these strategies is related to the degree that the incorporation –in subordinate and devalued terms– of the immigrant proletariat within the circuit of the reproduction of total social capital may be utilized as a **means for the devaluation of the working class as a whole**.

Nevertheless, even in the cases where nationalism does not stand firmly in favour of a new regulation-through-deregulation of class relations, it essentially does **not** provide an actual prospect for their reproduction with some "positive" content. On the contrary, it provides only a negative response to some of the effects of their crisis. It **appears** therefore as a distinct response to the crisis of capital as a social relation but this distinction is rather confined within an **ideological** framework, since it is practically undermined by the common goal, of both nationalists and their liberal opponents, to transfer the cost and the consequences of the crisis on the back of the global working class. If nationalism is at the same time **one of the methods for the realization of this transfer** we think that it doesn't have a real and strong material basis for its possible future empowerment as a mass social movement that could call together and unite big parts of the proletariat under its flag.

And we have such a position due to the fact that while a differentiation of the value of labour power may be reproduced temporarily through nationalisms, leading to the improvement of the standard of living of the nationalized part of the proletariat and the reproduction of hierarchical relations within the working class, the crisis-prone reproduction of class relations makes this relative differentiation and hierarchy extremely **unstable.**

However, as we see it, the **retreat** of radical practices and perspectives and the reduction of the **general aspirations** of the working class that could directly or indirectly threaten the established order, but also the generalized discontent due to the fall of the standard of living, bring to the forefront the ostensible solution of a **right wing nationalist**

reformism[3] that confronts and simultaneously complements its left-wing versions. On the one hand, this type of reformism remains a continuation of the capitalist assault by other means, as shown by the quick alternation in power between its left and right-wing versions in several countries. On the other hand, it is the **temporary absence** of another alternative, let alone a revolutionary one, within the broader front of class struggles, which reinforces practices that reproduce nationalism as one of the supposed, ostensible ways of improving the conditions of social reproduction.

Returning to the Greek case, the question of if and how nationalist ideas and practices are produced within the totality of social relations can be examined only through the concrete analysis of class relations as they are expressed in everyday life and within class struggles. Certainly it cannot be examined by lumping together parts of the society into some structurally reproduced "backbone of the nation". We will certainly disagree with interpretations that view nationalism as a transhistorical expression of the interests of a hypostasized middle class. The concept of the "middle class" tells us more about the society's ideal self-image, i.e. the false consciousness of **class reconciliation**, than about its reality.

As far as the potential of nationalism is concerned, we must note that as much as the class of capital and its functionaries is international, it is also equally and necessarily national. Capital even in its internationalized form needs a basis for its operations. In other words, there is an organic connection of capital with the nationalism of "national development" which helps the accumulation of **capital in general**, even if individual capitalists do not see it in this way due to their limited perspective of individual profit. However, when their own existence as a class is threatened, many of them will rally behind the national flag in defense of the reproduction of total social capital as a relation of exploitation. Apart from the working class which, as we argued, is constituted **in-and-against** the nation, several social groupings such as small owners of means of production and self employed workers who own their means of labour, the so called "creative classes" and "new middle classes" do not constitute a separate class with distinct goals **against** some other class. The dynamic relation of **proletarianization/deproletarianization**, i.e. the relation of capitalist accumulation itself which produces on the one side capital and on the other side the proletariat, in an expanded but not historically linear way, is the field where the class interests of these strata oscillate and the class relation penetrates their social existence. Further, we do not understand why a working class which struggles against capital, and has created through its struggles a **proletarian public sphere,** which enables the circulation of the already produced experience of struggle in order to expand the struggle, cannot integrate parts of these social strata, against any kind of left and right-wing nationalism. In order not create any false impressions, we are **not** referring to the tactics of making "alliances" with individuals occupying class "positions", which fits exactly the sociological

[3] When we use the concept of reformism we are not referring to the historical tendency of the socialist movement. We use this admittedly vague concept to refer to supposed alternatives to neoliberalism as an economic policy containing doses of Keynesianism, protectionism and developmentalism. The programs of Trump, SYRIZA, Diem25, Lega Nord, etc. provide some examples about what we mean. Certainly, when the aforementioned political parties and fractions come to power their "alternative" economic programs are watered down when they are not completely abandoned.

theory of class by Poulantzas as its logical and political consequence. Being fully aware that within the **material community of capital** what unites us is simultaneously what divides us, the only alliance that can be made is on the basis of the **antagonism** against this generalized separation and its false unity. National or any other.

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