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ALTERNATIVES ARE MISSING

Horacio Capel¹

We are on the verge of catastrophe on Earth. The diagnoses are numerous and very precise; and there is also broad agreement that the main responsibility is of the economic system, which we can call capitalist. There are many data that show that we are at the limit: degradation of the biosphere, climate change produced by human activities, geopolitical problems, environmental deterioration; in addition to economic, social, political and educational inequalities.

It does not seem that capitalism is in a position to solve ecological and social problems because of its obsession with profit. It is not possible unlimited growth that does not respect the resources of nature. So we have to press hard, in order to survive as a human species

1. Optimistic and pessimistic diagnoses.

It is evident that the world has been progressing for two centuries. In 1800 it had 975 million people, in 1900 it reached 1,650, and in 2017 we exceeded 7,700 million. There are more and more people in the world and many of them live well, as two centuries ago you could not imagine, with more life expectancy than in the past. That is why it is not strange that the enlightened optimism of the XVIII, and the idea of progress, has new defenders today.

It can be argued that, despite crises or momentary interruptions, society is better organized with more equality, greater generalized culture, with the decrease in the number of illiterates, with greater freedom and possibilities than ever. Science has reached very high levels and, relying on it, the world is much better. Some author estimates that in the last hundred years poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, labor exploitation, child mortality, life expectancy and other quality indicators are improving faster than ever in the history of Humanity².

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² Norberg 2017.

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Recently the ideals of the Enlightenment have inspired another author who also maintains an optimistic vision and that, with an arsenal of quantitative data, shows spectacular progress in many indicators of human well-being: in years of schooling, health, food, social equality and others³. The growth that has occurred in the last 250 years has been considered a unique episode in the history of Humanity⁴.

You can agree with these descriptions of the advances of Humanity; and defend that only with optimism is it possible to face the problems. But right now we must consider some new things that have made the situation worse and lead to pessimism. Capitalism has created immense wealth, but has failed to distribute it, and has generated great problems; there are still profound differences and enormous injustices, the wealth of today could be better distributed, there are peoples and social groups in a situation of widespread poverty. There are numerous and very precise diagnoses about the things that are wrong from the social, economic and environmental point of view.

Growth is part of the essence of capitalism, trying to ensure profits through the exploitation of labor, increasing production, widespread and increasing consumption, and financial speculation.

But unlimited growth has been disastrous for the planet. It has generated serious global ecological problems: deterioration of nature; ozone holes; climate change and global warming of anthropic origin; loss of biodiversity and extinction of species; contamination by pesticides, fertilizers and chemical compounds; generation of waste that affects the environment and health; degradation of oceans and forest systems; desertification; depletion of fertility of agricultural land due to intensive activities and extension of monoculture. Also in the communist countries the growth product of the productive forces 'was magnified, and intense development policies were followed.

Since the 1960s, there have been calls for attention, and criticisms of growth, which were consolidated in 1972 with the Report to the Club of Rome on the limits to growth⁵, which had a great impact on governmental, institutional and academic organizations. New concepts questioned during that decade and the next unlimited development. As the term 'ecodevelopment', proposed in the second half of the decade by Ignacy Sachs⁶; and the concept of 'sustainable development', prepared in 1987 by the Bruntland Report of the United Nations World Commission for Environment and Development, as a growth that is able to

³ Pinker 2018.

⁴ Gordon 2012.

⁵ A story in Tamames 1979.

⁶ Sachs 1978, 1980 and 1981.

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“meet the needs of present generations without compromising the possibilities of the future ones to meet their own needs”⁷.

The relevance of these terms has been questioned, considering that they are full of good intentions but they are often very thoughtful expressions to continue with economic growth. In any case, ‘sustainable’ is a term that has, at least, the virtue of recognizing that the development that is generally done is in fact little respectful of nature and destructive; It has helped to spread the idea that the conditions of the environment, and the limits imposed by it, must be the essential starting points for action⁸.

The unlimited growth typical of capitalism faces finite natural resources. In the face of unlimited development, the decrease, or controlled decrease in economic production, has been proposed to achieve a new balance between human societies and nature⁹. Or even zero-sum growth, so that the growth of the poorest countries is done with a reduction in the richest.

A negative idea of human nature has been imposed, in which greed, the magnification of pecuniary values and the desire to accumulate income are visible, even at the expense of workers¹⁰.

Reports from international organizations such as Habitat or the World Bank¹¹ provide disturbing data on the world's problems and inequalities. And abundant studies emphasize the destructive human power over nature, so brutal that it has led to talk of a new geological stage, the Anthropocene, in which man has become a global geological force that is massively transforming nature¹².

Mineral resources that have limits, such as oil and others, are being exploited: “Gaia can be converted into Thanatia” for the exploitation of finite resources whose annual loss can be accounted for, and they must be managed in a different way¹³. We have to oppose nature becoming commodified.

There has also been a widespread urbanization with large suburban areas, and energy problems are present, with the need to decarbonize through periods of adjustment or energy transition. The city expands through the surrounding territory, on agricultural land or natural vegetation, obtaining intense revaluations; and strongly urbanized urban or metropolitan

⁷ Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission): Our Common Future UN (11/12/1987).

⁸ Naredo y Valero 1999.

⁹ Taibo 2009, Bayon, Flipo, Schneider 2011.

¹⁰ Naredo, 2015.

¹¹ See a list of them at <<http://www5.bancomundial.org/investigacion/publicaciones.htm>>. The 2017 one is titled End extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity.

¹² Rull 2018; other arguments about human action in Klein 2015.

¹³ Valero Capilla & Valero Delgado 2014.

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regions are created¹⁴. Growth in height using existing infrastructure multiplies the capital gains of urban land. Since 1990 urban projects change the scale; they become major projects to be visible internationally, which is the scale at which financial agents and large real estate companies act, and with public-private partnerships.

To all this must be added injustice and social inequity, the violation of human rights, geopolitical conflicts, war policies abroad and inland, imperialism, population displacement, and many others.

Since the mid-1970s, neoliberal policies have opposed state and public regulations in general, and the protective standards developed by liberal or social-democratic governments during the years 1945 to 1975, which allowed the construction of the so-called Welfare State in many countries. developed. The public sphere has shrunk in recent years, with a looting of the public domain.

Several decades of neoliberal policies have led to much privatization. But the trend still continues, often, in many countries, and attempts are made to extend to almost everything that remains in public hands. In Brazil, President Michel Temer undertook a strong privatization program in 2017, the largest for twenty years; half a hundred state assets will go to private hands, in their property or in their management; among them Eletrobrás, the largest electricity company in Latin America. The assets that are privatized are public goods, which should continue to be for the benefit of all and not the private capital that acquires them.

For four decades, attempts have been made to reduce wages to ensure the benefits of employers and limit the power of labor unions and organizations. Still today it continues with those strategies. In France, the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, launched a plan for labor reform at the end of August 2017 that means lowering the dismissal, cuts the labor rights of workers and tries to curb the intervention of unions, said to favor the creation of employment trying to increase the confidence of entrepreneurs and 'encourage them to hire'. Facilitates improper collective redundancies, sets a ceiling for compensation, increases flexibility for companies.

The reduction of the rates of benefits of the industrial and service sectors for two or three decades has meant that the accumulation through the production of merchandise loses relative importance, and that attractive alternatives for making investments are lacking.

¹⁴ Indovina 2009, Brenner 2016, Nello e Mele 2016.

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Capital has mostly opted for profits through exclusively monetary means¹⁵ and has directed investment towards the increasingly speculative financial sector and real estate investment.

Often banks invest in financial markets, from which they obtain more benefit than from ordinary banking activity. Major companies derive many benefits from the issuance of financial assets. Financial capital obtains great profits from the absorptions of companies and capital gains from the sale of assets. In crisis situations they can sell on time, or they are duly collected by the public administration. Despite the crises, the richest still get richer¹⁶.

Capitalism is full of dispossession practices, expropriation and appropriation of value by companies, and especially by large economic and financial corporations. They can also perform oligopolistic or monopolistic practices, against rhetoric about the benefits of the perfect market and competition. And they oppose regulations and public or state regulations, while carrying out numerous illegal practices: from corporate corruption and deception to users about the quality of products sold (as Volkswagen and other car producers have done) to the bank scam and financial capital fraud. That, without counting on the deep ignorance of the practices and strategies of financial firms and investment funds and large asset management corporations, and how they will be affected by changes in the economic situation, in a world that analysts call 'ruthless'.

The financial sector escapes democratic control, and a transnational capitalist class has emerged, with which the nation-state is in the process of being replaced by a new form, the transnational state¹⁷. The states are indebted, with little capacity to maneuver because of the influence of economic powers in them. Monopoly capital and large companies act in the management of the State, directly or through the connection with politicians who get contracts, megaprojects, land requalifications. The relations of US and European politicians with large banks and financial corporations, such as Goldman Sachs and many others, have been the subject of complaints for several years.

Although the world as a whole today has less relative poverty than in the past, the figures for the poor remain very high and may increase, due to the growth of the world population and the maintenance of exploitation situations. In addition, income differences between rich and poor have increased as a result of the application of neoliberal policies; with a population that is temporarily hired with low salaries, and with lower employment possibilities due to technological advances.

¹⁵ López and Rodríguez 2010, p. 55.

¹⁶ Data in Naredo 2015, p. 25-37.

¹⁷ Robinson 2004, caps. 2 and 3.

There are numerous studies that insist on the decline in living standards and job insecurity of large groups of the world population, compared to small numbers of immensely rich people. The social and territorial inequality, the control of the economy and the benefits for less and less hands, the overproduction linked to sub-consumption and others are causing serious conflicts, which may increase in the future.

Globalization, in fact, has meant an increase in the possibilities of tax evasion, the movement from one country to another, the escape to tax havens, the tax system designed for the benefit of the rich. The owner classes have great international strength; The public domain of national economies decreases and passes into the private hands of an oligarchy that can move internationally easily and really benefits from globalization. Bank secrecy and all tax havens allow large companies to breach tax rules and duties with the State¹⁸. States have often decided to be more faithful to the demands of financial markets than to their obligations to citizens.

After the Second World War, the search for social equity, economic growth and democracy was considered to give capitalism legitimacy. Today that legitimacy has been lost. Democratic systems have been transformed for the benefit of high incomes and businesses. The elites seem to be secretly in favor of authoritarian regimes, disbelieved of democracy, to promote growth policies; they are afraid that popular majorities may impose limits on neoliberal policies, and take advantage of the current political fragmentation resulting from the elections. The tendency towards greater inequality does not seem to end. There is a degradation and moral deterioration of capitalism, which is often identified with corruption.

The disparity in development, the increase in economic and social inequalities, and the growing unemployed, poorly paid population, in painful conditions or with unsafe contracts, produce protest movements and could lead to a violent social reaction, and the danger of insurrection popular. Capitalist economic rationality is causing enormous damage, with dangers of outbursts of fury and popular protests¹⁹.

2. The end of capitalism and the alternatives to build post-capitalist society.

There are many who have pointed out serious problems in Humanity over and over again, and have detected strong internal contradictions that allow us to anticipate the end of

¹⁸ El País, February 28, 2018, p. 39.

¹⁹ Among those who have announced serious social conflicts in the crisis of capitalism is William Robinson 2004, chap. Four.

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capitalism²⁰. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the crisis of capitalism has been described in different ways and has also been displaced over time, while several adaptations and transformations of the system have been identified. Numerous voices have been heard about its collapse and its "general and catastrophic crisis", and those announcements have intensified in recent years.

The regime of capitalist accumulation does not seem to be able to limit itself. It has been said that "there is no place for reform from above." It has also been written that "there is no lever that within the State can no longer open a process of democratization and control of the financialized social product, but an intervention aimed at reforming the 'growth model'"²¹.

Some author considers that capitalism has entered "in a period of profound indeterminacy, in which unexpected things can happen at any time", that there are simultaneous causes and "multimorbidity, in which various disorders that usually reinforce each other coincide", and that there is "an entirely endogenous dynamic of self-destruction." It has been possible to affirm that "capitalism has surpassed its opponents and in that process it has become more capitalist than what was convenient." What have been called 'the three horsemen of the Apocalypse' of capitalism (stagnation, debt and inequality), and the systemic disorders 'that affect it, destroy the economic, social and political landscape. Although it is not known very well what will happen, it is feared that, after a stage of severe disorders, the system will lead to "something that would be less than a society, a post-social society or a substitute for society"²². There are numerous indications that announce the possibility of an 'ecological catastrophe', others speak of the need for a 'change of civilization'²³, and some who believe that the crisis of capitalism will be of all Humanity.

Violent opposition movements to dehumanized capitalism can spread to many places, and it can be feared that they will cause repressive reactions that will cause much damage. The rentier classes, in their relationship with the State, could adopt authoritarian attitudes to survive the economic and social system. That is why we must think of other paths, which are possible in democratic states: from social organization to the debate of alternatives, and the realization of them through legislation, which in these countries ultimately depends on the citizens of ourselves.

²⁰ Morin 2011, Harvey 2007, 2013, 2014; Wallerstein et al. 2013, Derluguian 2016, Streeck 2017; Boada, 2017, among others.

²¹ López and Rodríguez 2010, p. 484 and 485.

²² Streeck 2017, p. 27-29, 33 and 52, italics in the original.

²³ Löwy 2011, p. 31.

The fragmented left often acts outside the institutional opposition, in a disorganized manner. There are many opposition movements called ‘anti-capitalists’ and ‘anti-systems’, who become spokespersons for the discontented, but who are not able to organize themselves and propose ambitious and coherent alternatives; and many movements called populists arise that are frightened by the future and look to an imaginary past; and movements that reject modernity supported by religious fundamentalisms. Local protests are generated, without connection, uncoordinately, violent, that increase conflicts and disorder, without concrete proposals that are ambitious and coherent to create a new order. Classes have fragmented, and class solidarity has often been lost. There is a danger of popular insurrections, as a way of expressing political and social protests.

The worst that can happen is that social structures become unstable, disorganized; a situation without security, full of uncertainties, with great risks that affect social groups very unequally. Although there are people who seem to prefer that situation, it is not certain that anything positive comes out of it. A situation that causes unease and feeling of insecurity and that can support calls for an anti-democratic iron order.

A new unitary left must appear, strongly presenting the image of an alternative, progressive and fairer future. What there are now are very diverse oppositions to capitalism and the democratic State in question, unable to present an ambitious and coherent alternative; or more limited alternatives that have important implications.

Making demands for things that can be achieved and constantly raising them until they are achieved is a relevant way for the critical mobilization of citizens. This can put pressure on power, forcing it to make concessions on issues that may give rise to other demands. For example, on the transfer of ownership of individual housing to only two or three generations, which, once achieved, may allow other demands on the transfer of major properties.

Substantial improvements can be made with the democratic vote. We can rely on democratic change, and even Marx felt that workers could impose state laws²⁴. It is true that what we see in Europe goes many times in the opposite direction, with votes increasingly to the right. But that also occurs as a result of the abstention and fragmentation of the vote of the left, and because the alternatives are not clear. For this it is necessary to propose measures and convince people. Programs are needed to redistribute wealth, which can be done in democratic systems with the vote and with popular pressure.

²⁴ Streeck, p. 41.

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Since ancient times, utopias have been developed in the face of a situation that is considered deficient, to improve it. There is no doubt that these elaborations present models of alternative societies, and in that sense they should be considered, as we did in the XIV Geocritical Colloquium²⁵. But it should not be an emphasis solely on utopia as an optimal and immutable situation to achieve; What exists are a series of problems that must be addressed, and what we must do is design the alternatives, discuss them, make them more solid, and fight individually and collectively for their implementation.

As a result of democratic pressures, some changes have been produced to improve the living conditions of the population. But much more is needed. There are more and more people who agree on the need for changes in the economic model. An alternative should be built and widely supported by the majority of the population, which should urgently try to agree. It can be shown that only the ideals of the left can save the world, which is so convincing that we can expect that the center and a part of the right would also support that option.

In any case, at the present time, the alternatives to the current problems must be anticapitalist. For which the diagnoses on the situation and the analysis of the internal contradictions of capitalism are essential, as has been done from ecological economics, from geography and from different critical perspectives of social sciences

It is not clear the economic system that has to replace capitalism, due to the failure of the communist systems that were built in some countries. The alternatives that are elaborated must arise from the knowledge and public debate of what already exists, of the economic and social criticisms of the capitalist system, of Marxism and of communism in what they have had of liberators and evident advances, of the libertarian movements, of the utopian proposals, of those that try to relate the analysis of the ecological processes with the physical and social world in which they are produced, of the initiatives that are being taken by the critical social movements, of the innovations that are emerging in many places.

It should be added that you cannot destroy everything there is, make a flat board and start from scratch. Perhaps we can claim that many things of the future are already present, even if the context needs to be changed. The theory of subsumption, which Marx used, allows us to think that in the initial precapitalist relations there was inclusion of capitalist elements and, therefore, to accept that there may be a "path to socialism as a progressive creation of socialist processes and relations subsumed in the capitalist space"; This concept opens the

²⁵ Benach, Zaar y Vasconcelos 2016.

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door to the hope of "the emancipation of labor with respect to capital", since "that collective, complex, techno-scientific process may one day be subsumed into a non-capitalist production", for the conviction that "in capitalism itself, processes that anticipate socialist society have emerged and strengthened"²⁶. What seems like a good way to think about the future from our own reality.

The human species lives more and more in cities and, more broadly, with urban behaviors; therefore, it is in that situation, in which we must avoid extinction. I have already spoken on another occasion of the urban form in post-capitalist society²⁷. I will now talk about other issues, specifically some concerning work, consumption, property and the democratic State. These are modest proposals, as a stimulus to discuss and deepen them, and face them to other alternatives that are presented, discussing if they can be applied and how they can be implemented.

3. Work and wages

Capitalism has been able to produce amazing amounts of goods, but it has not been able to distribute them. Employers often pay workers insufficient wages, below the value actually produced by workers. In him the work force is commercialized, the work time is intensified to achieve greater productivity. The employer appropriates a part of the value produced by the workers, and there is labor exploitation. Working conditions are often maintained with violence.

Missing communist regimes, countries in which social democratic policies have been applied and fighting low wages are scarce, while taxing the rich to have resources to increase public services and social wages.

As a result of recent developments, and neoliberal policies, unemployment figures and temporary and poorly paid jobs have increased significantly, and may grow even more in the future. There is a minority with increasing income compared to a majority with low wages. What have been called 'slave labor centers' have grown to support an immense production of items out of the sight of consumers, who do not know under what conditions they have occurred. The abundance of labor and the possibility of bringing it from abroad through migration makes the workforce available to everything.

²⁶ Bermudo 2015.

²⁷ Capel 2016.

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Many jobs have been automated, and the tecnológico technological shift of labor by machinery is already very strong and will increase in the future; Technological development, automation and robotization allow workers to be dispensed with and some anticipate that they will make it possible to reduce many jobs, and can generate 50 to 70 percent unemployment in the mid-21st century²⁸. Unions lose strength and workers have no power to oppose the impact of technological changes. But some demographic calculations foresee a stagnation of the world population from 2030²⁹, which will be linked to high levels of aging.

We will have to discuss a lot to try to reach social agreements on income and wealth differences that are ethically and socially acceptable. Surely justified differences in salary related to the propensity to work and individual effort can be admitted. But minimum and maximum wages must be established. Wage differences should not exceed a certain proportion; for example, the distance between the highest and the lowest could be from 1 to 3 or from 1 to 4³⁰, and the same can be accumulated by personal effort, with strong limitations on inheritance transmission through inheritance tax.

Efforts will be made to avoid fragmented, segmented, alienated work, making the worker have the full idea of the production process or the services he develops, and be proud of his work. Perhaps the heaviest and repetitive tasks should be changed from time to time so that they do not cause negative consequences for workers, and can stimulate their mental capacity, creativity and personal development.

The possibility of having sufficient means to live with dignity must be ensured. Decent wages and minimum income for all will ensure demand for industrial products and services.

The number of occupations and job specializations has grown immensely in contemporary times, making the division of labor much more complex; and no doubt other occupations will appear. You have to redistribute and distribute the work, and possibly reduce it, since it will not be necessary to produce superfluous goods, and only what is necessary will be produced³¹ Production can be adjusted to the really existing demand. It has to be produced to meet the needs of the population; these are those of reproduction and survival and of personal development in all aspects, from intellectual and cultural to leisure. The work must

²⁸ Randal Collins, cit. By Streck 2017, p. 25; although there are also those who believe that jobs will not decrease, but salaries, Luis Doncel in El País April 1, 2018, p. 36, citing the article by David Autor and Ana Salomón, Robocalypse now.

²⁹ See world population forecasts at Mcminsey Global Institute Raport 2016, Harvey 228, with data from 2012.

³⁰ At present, in Spain the companies listed on the Ibex 35 have a difference of 1 to 98 between the salary of the employees and the managers, David Fernández, El País-Negocios 22-4-2018, p. 2-4.

³¹ Naredo 2017, final chapter “Dialogues about the notion of work”. See also IV Geocritical Colloquium on “Work” <<http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/prog-c4.htm>>.

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be used to produce useful goods and services for the community, not to produce useless, harmful or superfluous goods.

There will be no appropriation of economic surpluses from work. Social security must cover retirement rights. And there will be a guaranteed basic income for everyone.

Work is not just a paid activity; It is an essential human dimension, and must change its value. It must serve for the self-realization of human capacities for good, and allow socialization. It will not only be the economically remunerated, since there are many occupations for the benefit of the family or the community that are carried out without having an economic counterpart³².

Many jobs are done without financial compensation, at the service of the family or the community; How to take care of people There will be many jobs shared for the benefit of society. The hard and painful work, of responsibility, that are important for the community, the most isolated, the heaviest have to be highly valued, and will have a greater remuneration, in economic and social consideration.

There will be numerous forms of mutual and solidarity assistance: cooperatives, self-management of workers, and new forms such as solidarity economies. The quality of life, collective well-being and working conditions can be improved through cooperation. Production systems have to be organized in which workers collectively control their work and its product.

The collaborative economy could be a good way to distribute the work³³. But, although it is sometimes called that, today the economy of sporadic jobs supported by the Internet (gig economy), demand and supply systems cannot be considered such of digital platforms that are used by large business groups (Amazon, Deliveroo, Cabify, Airbanb or Uber)³⁴. They certainly offer advantages for consumers, but - in the current state - few workers, since they are autonomous, outsourced, temporary, precarious and with poor working conditions, instead of being employed with salaries and social security. Those who work in them are forced to accept those jobs because they have no others.

The collaborative economy must be collectively owned, in organizations controlled by workers, cooperative, mutual and community structures. You have to have control of the network used to distribute the work. The labor discipline will be widely discussed, decided

³² Naredo, 2006, chap. "The mythology of production and work"; Valero Chapel and Naredo 1999.

³³ Botsman & Rogers 2010.

³⁴ Srnicek 2017.

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and accepted by the workers, aware of the social importance of the collective work they develop.

Stable jobs and the limitation of working hours must be ensured. It will be possible to combine working time with family life, in case workers want it. Very strict legislation, and secular education, will mean that there are no differences in employment in relation to gender, race or religion.

Since the 19th century, companies have been interested in technological innovations that increase productivity and efficiency in the organization of work. In post-capitalist society, scientific and technological innovation will be produced continuously and can be widely applied to reduce human work.

Technology must be at the service of needs, it must be used to the extent that it contributes to reducing work and effort. In the current economic system, technology not only gives free time to human beings, it has often been very effective in continuously occupying them with electronic games, permanent connection, the permanent flow of inconsequential news, or gossip.

The type of qualification needed for work in the era of automation and robotization is very specialized for creation tasks and little for auxiliary tasks.

Perhaps the latter, which involve alienated and harder work, should be compensated economically and in social consideration.

An essential social service will be education, always public, which ensures equality and social coexistence. The privatization of educational institutions, which sometimes carry out an education at the service of capital or of religious or other ideologies, will not be allowed. The improvement of the preparation of the working citizen will have an impact on it and on society.

The State will have to find resources to ensure basic income for the entire population, including the unemployed. There must be a shared access to services and products. In addition to the salary for the work performed, there will be the equivalent of a social salary, facilitated widely by the public administration; through the rights to education, health, housing, basic social services, culture and leisure, disability and retirement pensions. Without more financial burdens than those necessary for the operation of the services, all in a transparent way. The beneficiaries of basic income or unemployment and retirement insurance should, if possible, do some work for the community.

4. The necessary limitation of consumption.

Capitalism tries to get the maximum benefit. Hence the need for endless expansion of markets and, when they are missing, try to increase demand through consumption. The increasing production of goods leads to the extension of their consumption to absorb production, stimulating desires, artificially creating new needs for the population, which repeatedly demands many goods that are not necessary. As many entrepreneurs have said, and Amazon owner Jeff Bezos, one of the richest men in the world, has recently repeated, the important thing is to generate a need before the customer has it, or “generate a need from one custom adopted by the consumer”³⁵.

Fordist production made it possible to massively manufacture standardized, increasingly cheap products; Production was no problem, but marketing. Some products that were previously unimaginable became common to large social groups. What may be possible due to the improvements in the performance of the machines and the relocation of production.

From a certain moment, populations became subject to powerful companies that boosted consumption through the use of propaganda and fashion. Sometimes with harmful effects on health: pharmaceutical companies that press for the consumption of medicines, companies of chemical products, of fertilizers, of food and other articles, that defend the consumption of their products, without taking into account the consequences for the population. Faced with this, it is necessary to start from the reasonable needs of the population and produce what it needs to live with dignity. The productive activity must be aimed at providing use values at the right price. The goods will be valued not only for the cost of obtaining them, but the cost of the ecological deterioration that it implies, if any, will be added to them³⁶.

In the last decades, one more step was taken, trying to adapt to the tastes of customers and offering the greatest amount of articles and services. Production can be segmented to adapt closely to customer tastes, which can be manipulated through advertising. It tries to stimulate and satisfy personal desires in an opulent society, with increasingly anxious clients. Market forces, which since the nineteenth century, had penetrated more and more into society, spread and reached the yearnings and appetites. Capitalism no longer tries to cover the needs that exist, but creates new ones. Try to convince social groups that live with their needs

³⁵ El País. Negocios, 10 september 2017, p. 2-5.

³⁶ Naredo 2009, 2ª ed. 2015.

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covered, that they have many shortcomings, so that the benefits of capital can continue to increase.

Consumption is stimulated to have a feeling of happiness. There is a strong pressure to acquire goods that are not needed, a boost to emulation with other people and social differentiation or belonging to a group through consumption, and relationship with other groups that have the same specific consumption.

Which can be exploited and manipulated by marketing, with the knowledge of the longings and deep tendencies of people. Customer service serves for commercial expansion: illusions are created to encourage consumption and maintain merchandise production. Personal differentiation has been extended to clothing, watches, cosmetics, health sports, sponsors various products for physical exercise and body, shoes, shirts. A competition for consumption has been reached, stimulating the desire to consume more than others; a consumerist narcissism has been imposed, in an aspiration that does not seem to have limits. Consumerism supports capitalism and maintains it, consumers can be considered as allies and holders of capital.

The duration of the goods consumed has been tried to shorten by capitalism, to stimulate their obsolescence and the purchase of new ones. In post-capitalist society, excessive consumption of goods should be limited: needs must be reduced, and they must be modest. Consumer items will be as long as possible, and scheduled obsolescence will not be allowed. The quality control of the production will be very strict to obtain items that can last as long as possible, due to the nature of the mechanisms or the raw materials used in their manufacture. And individuals will not be pressured to become compulsive consumers. Nor will the fashion mechanism, the desire for distinction, the search for permanent novelty, which leads to wastefulness be used.

Consumption must be stopped because it multiplies not only the desires but also the needs in a way far superior to the possibilities of being satisfied, causing states of anxiety and frustration. The one who consumes more will not be valued, but the one who consumes less and advertising will not be accepted, beyond the information of a product. It is part of education to run away from advertising, to penalize it. When basic needs are met, there will be no need to stimulate new desires through advertising and fashion. It is claimed that human desire is unlimited and the ability to imagine consumption is too. If so, we must limit it: in the post-capitalist world, limits will have to be imposed on many things.

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It is not to be accepted that companies and markets decide what is useful for life. In particular, luxury products will not be produced for a privileged population, but rather all merchandise will be relatively homogeneous, although with enough variety to satisfy, within an order, the specific peculiarities and individual desires.

All have to make a similar consumption that allows for an acceptable life, to enjoy goods that are made available to consumers for their use value. Zero-sum growth means that the poorest have to increase consumption at the expense of the decrease of the richest.

Agents and institutions necessary to create a livable world must be created, which cannot be that of overflowing consumption and commodification of everything from nature to work and leisure.

The tendency to commercialize leisure should be limited, which was previously free in many cases. The society of permanent spectacle, as a form of commodification of leisure, of compulsive consumption, must be avoided. The individual or team practice sport will not be commercialized. In sports, clubs will be encouraged to compete with players from the city itself, and no signings of other players not linked to it may be made.

5. Property and real estate sector.

The legal system and the State is what regulates the property. In democratic states, laws that limit that right can be developed and passed.

In the nineteenth century individual property, the unique and exclusive property rights, which were previously the patrimony of many, were magnified in the face of more valued views of collective property³⁷. In the post-capitalist society, private property of large companies and economic corporations will not be admitted. Of course there will be no ownership over the means of financing and over the large means of production.

The usufruct will be privileged, the active use of the goods; Physical infrastructure will always be public. Nature will be public property and usufructed by the social groups that use them, with conditions. The values of nature cannot be monetized, converted into exchange values, into merchandise, as capital does now.

On the other hand, the individual property of the home, and of the means of production of a personal or family nature will be admitted when the work is carried out by the

³⁷ Congost 2007.

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same owners (agricultural exploitation, workshops, production and repair...), provided that they cannot be merged with other properties.

A basic social service insured will be housing. Housing must be considered as use value. There should be no segregation of housing, work or access to services, by racial or other characteristics.

The most general will be the existence of common property assets, managed collectively³⁸. It is important to create collective management institutions of common goods, of wealth.

In any case, inheritance taxes will heavily enforce individual property rights. The transmission of this should be limited to the third or fourth generation, then moving on to public goods. The real estate property will not have the capacity and the power to extract income from the land or real estate that it owns, as it is now.

The role that the real estate sector represents today in the accumulation of capital is very important. Neighborhood improvements, equipment investments and others increase the value of the home without the owner investing anything. In post-capitalist cities, these increases in value, these capital gains, cannot be accepted. It will not be admitted that housing is a speculative instrument on the part of the users, let alone the speculative investment in housing.

The real estate sector is not aimed at responding to the needs of the inhabitants of the city, but is directed by the speculative logic itself, which seeks to maximize profits. Construction or real estate agents direct the urban development and transformation of the city. The capitals increasingly deviated from industrial investment because of the problems it has presented, and have focused on finances, trying to obtain financial income, and investment in real estate and land in the territory surrounding cities. The spontaneous or provoked price increase produces valuable capital gains. Capitalists of all kinds are interested in the acquisition of buildings, to renovate them for housing, for residents or for tourists. Neoliberal policies favor this evolution. In post-capitalist society, all this will be done by the public administration, for the benefit of the community.

Knowledge must be accessible to all. The commercialization and privatization of natural assets must be prevented. Property rights have advanced in the capitalist system, and have been extended to knowledge as an intellectual property right and to biological processes (patents on medicines produced from botanical substances ...). Patents and intellectual

³⁸ Capel 2003.

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property rights will be protected for a short time, as long as they are individually created, but will go into the public domain later. In the case of investigations, discoveries or innovations that are made with public (or collective) assistance, they will always be in the public domain. There will be no patents on natural materials, nor on the genome of plants or animals, there will be no ability to make the DNA of living beings, genetic engineering and genetically modified plants and animals private property.

In the field of computer science and communication, the control of the data, and the calculations that can be made from them, will not be allowed to be exercised by companies (such as Google), but will be done by public agents and subject to controls and strong transparency. Companies and institutions that control databases will have the obligation not to use them to discriminate against anyone, and will treat them equally; Privacy will always be protected.

6.A more democratic and participatory state.

To have some hope, we can affirm that the democratic State offers possibilities for the necessary reform and the possible revolution, and possibilities of action against unjust power, ideological indoctrination, the bureaucratization of the state apparatus, intolerance, the market.

There have been other organizational policy proposals different from that of the States. Just remember the calls made a few years ago to the Europe of the Cities, or to the Europe of the Regions. But both political structures would pose many problems. The State is more socially and territorially inclusive, and with greater capacity to obtain and redistribute resources.

The State and agreed international standards should make it possible to limit the differences in income and wealth of the population. The State must provide collective goods and services: roads, communication systems, water, sewers, education, health and other necessary. The role of the State must be fundamental, and exclusive in finance and banking.

Many services can be decentralized to local communities. There must be a balance between central power and decentralized powers (regional and local).

The desire for freedom will guide the construction of an equal and equitable social order. Freedom from the economic conditions of poverty that limit the attainment of justified desires; freedom with responsibility, with limitations imposed by oneself, and by collective

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ethics agreed upon. Freedom for citizens, not for power that must be strictly controlled. In post-capitalist society, the desire for individual freedom will be fulfilled provided they do not collide with others.

Solidarity, cooperation, generosity and detachment must be sought and encouraged. Also stimulate and encourage social control by citizens, as support for a more democratic system. In this sense, we must generalize citizen participation and control practices in decision making and public management. Organize a truly democratic system in which everyone feels committed to society and participates in debates and decisions.

Getting citizens not to be passive and conformist is an arduous task, but it is essential. Citizens will have rights and duties; everyone will have the right, and the duty, to participate in political life. What constitutes a change of political culture, which must be supported by education, and stimulated by the mass media. It could be debated that all citizens can successively exercise, on a rotating basis, authority³⁹.

The State will not be subject to the interests of large companies and private corporations or financial capital, and may be able to freely meet the needs of its citizens. The State, through state economic institutions, has to plan the economy and become a fundamental economic agent. The State must regulate the economic activities, and the processes that generate harmful consequences on the community, limiting in these aspects the individual freedom and the usufruct.

Money and credit must be common goods regulated by the State, in a democratic way. The so-called invisible hand 'of the market will not act, nor the visible hand of companies⁴⁰.

For years, industrial products can be assembled with parts produced in different places. The improvement of transport and the development of logistics makes it possible. That will allow in the post-capitalist society the industrial development in different parts of the world with a view to the production of articles in the places where they are needed, making possible the maintenance and dispersion of economic activities in different regions.

Public institutions will decide the locations of the production plants in the most appropriate places to obtain the maximum social benefit, which is possible due to the sharp decrease in costs and transport times. And that at regional, national or international level.

³⁹ 38 Even the election by lot of some of those who have to exercise it has been proposed, as Naredo 207, p. 54, citing Linares 2013 and Albi 2017.

⁴⁰ Chandler 1977, Arroyo 1999.

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It is about no growing regional inequalities, compared to the concentration processes typical of the capitalist system. Efforts will be made to reduce the costs of centralizing activities in large metropolises, reducing pollution, traffic jams, congestion and the cost of living.

Efforts will be made to ensure that territories fully develop their agricultural productive capacity to supply their population. The demand for distant agricultural products would occur when they cannot occur in a territory, or in cases of environmental catastrophes or poor harvests.

The operation of international economic activity should avoid the processes of circular accumulation in some areas and the impoverishment of others. This can be achieved with the creation of physical and social infrastructure in less developed areas, directing investments towards them. The endogenous development of each territory will be promoted; In an interconnected world, regions must be complementary in what they produce. It will be ensured that the elements involved in the production can be manufactured in geographical areas not too far away to reduce pollution caused by transport.

The active intervention of the public administration can give rise to a lot of power to it, which must be strictly controlled; and to corruption of public administrations, which will be decidedly prosecuted. Therefore, some private economic agents in the field of agricultural production, commerce and industry, individually and through cooperatives, should be allowed, provided they are small or medium, and have no political power.

There will be no interregional or interurban international competition, but rather exchange, collaboration and solidarity strategies for the welfare of all citizens.

The press and the media will not be controlled by private companies. Control must be exercised so that this does not happen.

A global government for the benefit of citizens and not capitalists is possible. The debts of the countries will be abolished. There will be no vulture capitals such as hedge funds and private equity funds, and there will be no financial engineering practices or capital-free displacements. A UN full of new powers will be effective for this. International institutions, such as the IMF, the World Bank and the like, which will continue to be reconfigured, will no longer be at the service of the banks and the capitalist financial system and will be at the service of the general economy, paying with low interest where necessary.

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In a post-capitalist society, there will be environmental justice and space justice. It is not possible to deposit residents of the countries or regions of the poor, severely degrading or the environment.

We live in a society in which the individual is of the utmost importance and is sorry to do. But we will have to set limits, in relation to the environment and not the social environment that lives.

It is necessary to build communities of voluntary and solid citizens, collective regulation for a social organization, to dismantle inequality. As democratically controlled public institutions in various scales, such as guaranteeing equal to e or work; they must prevent that triplicate or code e that a smaller oligarchic control political power. It is necessary to specify the value of social and collective companies.

The nation will need to order stability, security, or tempo that or individual releases and semi shock as others. You trust the public institutions and the collector's action. We will have to organize strong socialization structures and help to confederation of who to be able to profit from adversity, with the help of other personalities, with solidarity. Social rights will ensure individual improvements. As a member of the State, the human expectations of a decent life are protected by the needs of the market economy.

An economic policy will be decidedly political and with social objectives to achieve equality. No reduction no public spending that affects social policy. Public goods are for all without restriction.

7. Difficulties number.

Assuming that the system can be changed democratically and reach post-capitalist society, there will still be many problems.

The most important problem from the economic point of view will be to replace the numerous economic agents that make decisions by public institutions; and that they do it in an orderly and transparent way. It has to fight decisively against corruption; for example, avoiding political influence through contributions to parties or institutions. The contracts of private companies with public administrations will be made transparently avoiding the increase in costs; and other corrupt practices that are common today, for which we know enough.

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The economy must be managed democratically. Democracy must be redistributive of wealth. The rationality of democracy and the ability to manage complex problems with it must be affirmed.

For this, and for the functioning of democracy, participation is essential. It is possible that a part of the population wants a political and managerial class to solve their problems, similar to what exists today. We will have to think about systems that stimulate participation and that this is essential for the full recognition of citizen rights. The citizen's first duty is to participate and collaborate politically with the community, to the extent possible. It will be a collective obligation.

Criticisms of the political party system are very numerous today, but perhaps excessive. The contempt for political parties is not reasonable, since they are surely needed. No doubt a regeneration of the games is needed, but it is necessary to discuss whether it is good that they disappear. There must be different political options and general programs and objectives have to be proposed and reach consensus on them. There should be commitment and loyalty to a general program, and a deep debate about concrete solutions.

In any case, different organizational structures are needed in which citizens can participate stably. It cannot be totally individual, but it needs some support structures.

It has to be accepted that social groups may have different preferences. It will have to be agreed for the majority government, even if it does not please individually. For this the debates of the political parties are necessary. With intermediate organizations. Surely we will have to think of a combination of systems of direct participation of citizens, at the local level, with other democratic forms representative at other regional, national and international scales. Young people must have a decisive voice in building the future. Women are essential for the changes to be made, which means changing many traditional mentalities around the world.

The remuneration of work in collective enterprises (agricultural, industrial and service companies) must be discussed; with the need to take into account all the discussions and concrete experiments that have been carried out in the past in relation to the processes of socialization, very strong in the communist and anarchist tradition; in space, the debates about the hours dedicated and the type of activity carried out, or the satisfaction of individual and family needs and the commitment to collective tasks and objectives.

Agriculture has increased its yields, and can feed the world population today, from productivism, industrialization, standardization and the application of genetic engineering. Faced with it, post productivist agriculture has emerged since the 1990s, which recovers

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traditional products, which emphasizes quality, variety and local agricultural heritage. It is spreading widely in developed countries; although the question is whether this agriculture can feed itself to the current and future world population, and if it should be complemented and why.

The house will be preferably built by the State and with permanent possession by the user as if it were their own, with no possibility of eviction. But, in any case, the processes of housing allocation in urban areas must be studied in a transparent and equitable manner.

Surely there will be geopolitical blocks, such as the European Union. But they have to be organized differently, since the democratization of the European Union is a fundamental problem

The measures taken to carry out innovative alternatives must be global, not in a single country. That is why economic institutions have to be created to regulate the economy and international exchanges, but democratically regulated by the UN and with different rules than those that apply today for the IMF, the World Bank and others, which today often support capital and to imperialism

Zero-sum economic growth policies must be put in place. International institutions will be responsible for managing all the conflicting aspects of these policies. There will be no tax competition between countries to attract capital.

But even if all these political, social, economic and cultural changes are not achieved, will things be easy. Among the problems that will have to be addressed and resolved are the deep impulses of human nature. Man, who is often good and generous, can sometimes be selfish, violent, envious, greedy, eager to dominate, or devalue others, with a broad estimate of his own ego, with tendencies to depressions and exaltations. People can adopt terrible and detestable behaviors towards other humans and even institutionally, as reality shows again and again. Post-capitalist society will not eliminate the problem of evil in the world. To address this problem, intellectual debate and political consensus are needed. On the other hand, how these traits are addressed in post-capitalist society will surely necessitate, in addition to the emphasis on collective education, a new psychology, a new psychoanalysis and a new psychiatry.

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