



CONTINENTAL NEWSSTAND

L'autre Europe

The Misunderstanding of 1968 (The last interview with Rudi Dutschke)

Rudi Dutschke was German leftism's guiding figure at the end of the 1960's, and the leader of the most famous student movement (SDS). He fell victim to an attack in April 1968 and succumbed to its consequences exactly ten years later. A few days before his death, I sought to interview him in Frankfurt for a BBC programme on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the events in France of May '68. His reply surprised me: "I have very little to say about May '68 in France: in the first place, because I happened to be in the hospital, but above all because, in retrospect, the great event of '68 in Europe was not Paris, but Prague. But we were unable to see this at the time."

Dutschke had even been to Czechoslovakia at the beginning of the Prague Spring. His visit was the occasion of a "deaf man's dialogue" between Czech students and the representative of the West German students. The rhetoric of the latter resembled too closely that of the hard-line Prague regime, with its contempt for "bourgeois democracy" and "imperialism", which could only be American. The following is the last interview with Rudi Dutschke; it is trapped in the characteristic language of German leftism of the era and now and then requires a careful reading between the lines. With this caveat, however, the text illustrates the East-West misunderstanding of 1968.

Jacques Rupnik - *How do you explain the inability, in 1968, of the radical left in the West to grasp the importance of the Prague Spring?*

Rudi Dutschke - The explanation is an historical one. Since the revolution of 1917, the majority of the workers' movement in the world has been living off the myth of the October Revolution as being a proletarian

revolution. The persistence of this myth had one consequence: the absence of any critical analysis of what was going on in the USSR. In 1945, the Soviet Union contributed to the defeat of Fascism and to the reconstruction of Europe. In other words, Soviet influence meant on the one hand (and in first stage) liberation, and on the other, the end of all democracy, the end of what became known as the gains of the bourgeois revolution. During

the period of the Cold War, the left once again had a tendency to identify socialism with the Soviet Union, and in the Federal Republic, with the GDR. It is in this context that the student movement of the 60's appeared. I remember that within the core of the SDS the majority thought alike as to the question of the fight against (American) imperialism, but not on the question of Eastern Europe. Nobody even discussed it. It was considered secondary, so we just didn't bring it up. I remember that upon my return from Prague, no one in the SDS could really understand what I was attempting to describe of the events there. For them it was a problem and a process that related to liberalism, and not to socialism.

Jacques Rupnik - *The thesis of the danger of "the restoration of capitalism"?*

Rudi Dutschke - More or less. But no understanding whatsoever of the situation and the real stakes in the country. This is the main reason why the left in Western Europe did not understand the dynamics of social and political emancipation in Eastern Europe. Because of this, communication and cooperation became impossible. It was actually reduced to more of a personal affair than a political one: I was a native of the GDR so I was in contact with Peter Uhl and a few others.

Jacques Rupnik - *In what way were the movements of the spring of 1968 in Paris and Prague important for you? Aside from the misunderstanding, are there any common denominators?*

Rudi Dutschke - At the time, I thought that we were witnessing the appearance of a new dimension in the class struggle in Central Europe, with growing pressure simultaneously in Western Europe and in Eastern Europe.

Czechoslovakia represented a fundamental step forward in the perspective of political change in Eastern Europe. I only learned of the events in Paris of May-June while in a hospital bed. For me, it was clear that a defeat would put a limit on the possibility of East-West cooperation. The defeat in Paris and in West Germany also allowed the communist parties to come back onto the political scene. Moscow had told them to wait, and above all, not to participate in the struggle, because this could have hard-to-control repercussions in the East. After the defeat in Paris, my only question was: Will the Russians intervene in Czechoslovakia? We had already debated it at the time of my visit to Prague. I was convinced that it was unthinkable. But my Czech student friends told me: "Are you so sure that 1956 is already part of the past?" I actually thought that this couldn't happen again. I had poorly judged the situation. But in June, my certainty began to fade. Then there was the terrible shock, just as for all those who honestly believed in their socialist convictions.

Jacques Rupnik - *Don't you think that one of the reasons for the East-West "misunderstanding" of 1968 was not just due to the contexts and rhythms of the different developments, but above all to the fact that they did not have the same objectives? Ideologically, they had little in common: the Czechs wanted to humanise Marxism, while in France, there was a return to the revolutionary purity of Marxist doctrine.*

Rudi Dutschke - Absolutely. I remember that when the Czech students came to Berlin and to see me in the hospital, they told me: "It is so difficult to talk to the Germans...". And they were right. But they met again at the Youth Movement Congress in Sofia and were able to form new ties; the people of the SDS understood that the Czechs were ready to

work together in order to break out of the harness imposed on them by the Sofia officials and the Communist organisations. This was a small step towards rapprochement.

Jacques Rupnik - *Unity in defeat, but not during the movement's initial phase?*

Rudi Dutschke - This is absolutely correct. The experience was not conclusive. And yet, I am convinced that in the years to come, the

West German left will have to understand (as it is beginning to do) that a change in the status quo in the Federal Republic and in Western Europe is unthinkable without some tie to political and social emancipation in Eastern Europe. Change in isolation is impossible. And to understand this implies a formidable change in conscience.

Jacques Rupnik
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Bursting through the Seams

In Austria the editor of the magazine *Healthy Living* spoke out for "racial purity, eugenics and the movement against the integration of foreign immigrants". And when the case came up for trial, the judge, Ernest Maurer, sentenced that "the idea of a racially pure people of healthy stock is in itself an ideal conception, which was not invented only by National Socialism".

Subsequently, a bomb blew up a Pakistani vegetable shop in the eastern Norwegian town of Brumandal, and shortly after, a homemade explosive device was detonated in the garden of a refugee centre in Eidsvoll. The chairman of the right-wing populist Progress Party, Carl I. Hagen, has made a demand for "no more reduced-rate housing credit for new immigrants, no public support for their associations, and mother-tongue teaching programs only on payment", and he was successful with these demands.

Meanwhile, a "Popular Movement against Immigration" has been filling the Norwegians' letterboxes with print against foreigners.

A regional referendum in Sjöbo, in southern Sweden, showed that 67.5 per cent of the voters were against the area accepting refugees and asylum-seekers. The social-democrat leader Ingvar Carlsson immediately declared the Sjöbo result "a blot" on the record of the country, yet many now fear that anti-foreign feeling elsewhere in the country, with the help of local referendums, might succeed in putting through a veto on the integration of refugees. And many of these votes in favour of veto came precisely from those areas where they would not be expected: amongst social-democrat voters.

The Primate of the Catholic Church in Poland, Cardinal Glemp, has tried to set still

latent Polish anti-Semitism off against ostensible Jewish anti-Polish feeling. "We have failed with regard to the Jews", the Cardinal said, "yet today I should like to ask you, dear Jews, not to talk to us from the position of a people raised above all others". The situation in question was a Carmelite-nun cloister in Auschwitz, and the Solidarity newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* immediately criticised the Cardinal—moderately but unambiguously. Nevertheless, many people have been wondering whether Catholic anti-Jewish feeling in Poland could break out again as it did in 1946 and 1968.

The right-wing populists in Germany will now see all this as justification. "Look here", they will say, "what we are doing here is perfectly normal. It exists all over Europe." And this observation is unfortunately true, though it is no reason for relief, rather for worry.

At the present moment in Europe, two world historical movements are merging into each other: the (economic) unification of twelve Western-European countries in the EEC, and the collapse of the postwar order in the eastern parts of Central Europe. The former process is leading to large-scale mingling of European populations, in addition to the refugee flow from poor or totalitarian Third World countries. The latter process is blowing off the lid of Communist Party monopoly from the cauldrons of various Eastern European societies. And the Polish-American Zbigniew Brzezinski is already referring to the probable "victory of nationalism over communism" in eastern Central Europe.

Could it be that the world of East-West opposition in Europe is decaying, and that the old world of nationalism is arising again? Will the successors of the real socialist dictatorships be nationalist dictatorships after

the model of the twenties or thirties? Will the Pilsudskis and Horthys resuscitate? And what effect would this have on Western Europe?

The greatest danger threatening Europe at the moment is a new wave of nationalism. Every nationalism has two aspects, one being directed beyond the borders, whilst the other is for internal use. The instinct for expansion, and the demand for areas temporarily possessed or "administrated" by others, belong to the former, across-the-border policies. Internally it is a case of racial hatred, and fear of "foreign infiltration", of the "death of the race", or of racial intermingling. And it is also true that the less one can let off steam outside a country, the more harshly one turns against the enemy within the borders. In a world of drones and pocket-sized nuclear bombs, nationalist wars are probably harder to wage, at least in Europe, and thus the struggle finds its outlet all the more brutally within the country itself.

The minimisers distinguish between irrational nationalism and rational national sentiment, but they are making a mistake. The essence of the problem is the idea that nation and state must necessarily coincide, and that a people must be "ethnically homogeneous". Now this idea can be successful where a large nation lives alone on a large territory, but peoples notoriously do not live tidily organised like the opposing pieces positioned on a chessboard. In Eastern Europe, the national state with its irreversible historical reality of non-homogeneous population has already collided once. And the consequences were interference from above: exile, forced integration and genocide. People have been resettled, then moved back again; nations have been altered and transferred. If there is a European imperative today, then it must be this: there must be a final end to methods like

these. Europe means variety, and we must bear with a mixture of races.

The Germans, as well, can learn a useful lesson from this experience. The profound crisis of Communist ideology, (some would say the disintegration), is leaving a vacuum in its wake. Are we really to fill it with "nationalism" or "national sentiment" as in the past? The maelstrom which Bismarck's empire-founding imposed on Europe, is still fresh in our minds. After Prussia-Germany

had developed, there was no more hold to be kept on Austria-Hungary, and the multi-racial state fell to pieces. The question we must ask ourselves—with respect to reunification—is this: is the Europe of the future really conceivable other than a coexistence of diverse, and internally pluralist, "multi-racial states"? Europe is changing. And hopefully, in the right direction.

Peter Glotz
September 29, 1989

EL PAÍS

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Frankly speaking

The outbreaks of violence in Colombia and President Bush's message to the North American people have made the problem of drug addiction and drug trafficking the number one focus of international public opinion. I believe that we Latin Americans must speak frankly and directly about this subject to the people of the United States.

We hail with favour the decision expressed by President Bush, as we do his appeal to the North American people to refrain from drug consumption and to get on with drug education. Undoubtedly, however, we think that much more importance was given to the theme of repression and to legal action than to that which was defined as "aid" to the producer countries and which in the end boils down to minimum provisions for helicopters, arms, et cetera.

In the latter assumption lies the weakest point of the proposal, not only because of the scant economic contribution, but also because of the means in which this is to be employed. With a few arms and airplanes allocated to our Governments, only the symptoms of this enormous problem can be tackled. First of all, because in Latin America, the state does not fully represent society as a whole, and secondly, because more effective than repression is development. For this reason, providing a few arms to our Governments has a reduced effectiveness. It would be more important for the US to establish an economic relationship with the farmers and peasants of Peru and Bolivia, a genuine alliance with the producers. This alliance, which would derive from the market, would transform each farmer in Peru, Bolivia and Colombia into a decisive actor against drug trafficking. I

believe that this proposal, even if more complex and costly, would be more effective than any proposals made up to the present.

However, to convert a farmer who produces coca is a problem of the costs of production, of technology, of a market for his products, of industrialisation, of decent roads and, if need be, of air links to transport his produce abroad.

Today, a hectare of coca yields 1,000 kilograms per year and is purchased by the cartels at three dollars a kilo. The farmer, then, receives a thousand dollars annually per hectare. In addition, air trafficking guarantees the product's exit, which in its own turn has a secure and growing market. The case of other crops is quite different. For example, one hectare of coffee in the same area produces 400 kilograms and, at a price of two dollars a kilo, means 800 dollars in annual income. A hectare of cocoa yields 500 kilograms at the price of one dollar per kilo. A hectare of *achiote* yields 600 kilograms at the price of ninety cents per kilo. In these conditions, no product is attractive to the farmer. In addition, because of the condition of the roads and the situation of terrorist violence, access to the market on the Peruvian coast is in the end impossible: even if the farmer gets his produce this far, the merchants claim the greater part of the price.

In light of this, how can these crops become more competitive with the coca revenues? In the first place, by establishing an agriculture fund and price guarantees for these products, so that farmers do not rely on the merchants and receive a large percentage of the international price.

And here we must say frankly that coca production will be able to be fought in a

responsible manner by economic means only.

The richest lands of Peru, which are hundreds of thousands of hectares in the Huallaga Valley, today have been left infertile by the cultivation of coca. The Governments built roads so that on these lands, food and export crops could be grown. But the demand for drugs was stronger than public investment, and cut off this valley from the alimentary economy of Peru. One hectare of coca produces two or three times as much revenue than any other product in the area. What is more, the drug traffickers sealed off the roads of the Huallaga Valley with acts of terrorism, leaving no other choice to the farmers but to produce coca, exported directly by the traffickers thanks to their fleet of airplanes.

In the last 10 years, the programme against the production of coca has been accorded aid amounting to eight million dollars annually. With this aid, groups were organised which, with the use of force, were to destroy the coca plants. It was counter-productive. In the Huallaga Valley, there are 50,000 to 60,000 families and each one has from two to four hectares of land. The destruction by force took from each family their actual means of subsistence, and moreover, hampered the sowing of new crops for months and even years. Little by little, this nurtured subversion.

I believe that the genuine and solid alliance which the North American Government should form would be with the farmers of the tropical areas of our countries. And this in order to change their present crops.

In the second place, technical improvements in the production of coffee, cocoa and *achiote* would increase production per hectare. This has already been demonstrated in the case of coffee: the production of the im-

proved hectare passed from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per year and the farmer's profit rose from \$800 to \$2,400. This already approaches the \$3,000 received for a hectare of coca. The same thing applies to the other crops.

In the third place, if processing industries for coffee and chocolate were established in the area, their market value would increase. And if to all this a means of aerial transport to reach the external market is added the conversion of the land would begin immediately. Furthermore, the United States holds a decisive instrument. It need only guarantee that, over the next ten years, coffee, cocoa and *achiote* produced in the Huallaga Valley or in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) would have a 30 per cent higher price and would enjoy priority in their introduction into the North American market.

With all these means conversion would be sought and every farmer would be made a player against drug trafficking, and very concrete goals could be set. If the Huallaga Valley produces 60 per cent of all coca paste, I am sure that in the turn of 18 months this production would fall to 50 per cent. In addition to this, if as an additional means of enforcement a radar network and a number of interceptors on the border between Peru and Colombia were added, the reduction in the cocaine supply would be much greater. This is a concrete proposal.

Pessimists will argue that in the next few years the production of cocaine will relocate into other areas. My answer is that in the meantime we will have gained several years in which to reduce consumption in the industrialised countries, for this is the true

origin of the problem. It also be argued that this proposal is more practical but very costly. However, this objection is absurd and goes against history.

Yes, I criticised the fact that in President Bush's proposal only \$260 million were allocated as "aid" for one year to all three countries, and I compared this figure with North American military spending and federal spending. If, as it was energetically stated in the message, drug addiction is the worst scourge, there is no comparison between what is spent on other things and what is destined for stopping coca production in the Andean countries, and it must be accepted that an effort to reduce the supply along with a simultaneous effort to eradicate consumption, requires substantial investments. In brief, only by attacking the market will the production of coca truly be combatted. What is more, police or media repression will be transitory, occasional or aimed at getting votes. The problem is not how much it will cost to do it, but how much more it will cost the longer it is left undone.

In this way, the farmers can be the firmest allies of North American society in its fight against drugs. They, too, wish to free themselves from the drug traffickers. Perhaps they will listen to this proposal. In the meantime, I repeat, let us applaud the commitment of the North American Government, let us fight politically with all of our means and let us ask that, along with Europe, the countries of Latin America direct a responsible and serious political focus on this grave problem—now.

Alan García, President of Peru
September 28, 1989

LA STAMPA

Utopia Overturned

The disaster of historical communism is literally under the eyes of everyone: the disaster of communism as a world movement born of the Russian Revolution for the emancipation of the poor, the oppressed, the "damned of the earth". The move toward its dissolution is becoming ever more rapid—above and beyond every prediction. But this does not yet mean the end of the Communist regimes, which could endure for a long time finding new strength in order to survive. The first great crisis of a Communist state occurred in Hungary over thirty years ago, and yet the Hungarian regime did not collapse. Hence it is best not to make predictions about their future.

What is undisputable however, is the failure of the revolution—much more evident than the failure of the regimes—inspired by the Communist ideology, i.e. the very ideology for the radical transformation of a society considered oppressive and unjust, into a completely different, free and just society. The unprecedented drama of the events of these days lies in the fact that what is occurring is not the crisis of a regime or the defeat of a great, invincible power. Instead, what has appeared, and apparently in an irreversible form, is the total overturning of a utopia, of the greatest political utopia in history (not to mention religious utopias), into its exact opposite: a utopia that for at least a century fascinated philosophers, writers and poets (recall "les lendemains qui chantent" of Gabriel Pery); that stirred entire masses of the

impoverished pushing them towards violent action; that carried men of high moral sentiment to sacrifice their own lives, to face prison, exile, and extermination camps, and that suscitated a force not only material, but also of an indomitable spirituality, which on many occasions had seemed irresistible from the Red Army in Russia to Mao's Long March, from the conquest of power by a group of determined men in Cuba to the desparate fight of the Vietnamese people against the most powerful military in the world. In a youthful writing, Marx defined communism (as it is worth recalling): the "solution to the enigma of history".

Not one of the ideal cities described by the philosophers was ever proposed as a model to be transformed into reality. Plato knew that that ideal republic about which he had spoken with his friends was not destined to exist in any place on the earth, but was true only, as Glaucon said to Socrates, "in our discourses". And yet it has occurred that the first utopia that tried to enter into history, to pass from the realm of "discourse" to that of things, not only has not come true, but in the countries where it was put to the test, it is turning itself inside-out—the process now nearly completed—and becoming something that more and more comes to resemble the negative utopias, these, too, which until recently, existed only in "discourse" (think of Orwell's novel).

The best proof of the failure lies in the fact that all those who have rebelled periodically

over the past years, and again with particular strength during these days, are asking exactly for the recognition of those rights of freedom that constitute the first precondition of democracy. The precondition, *nota bene*, not of progressive democracy or popular democracy or of whatever other way it is called in order to distinguish it from or to exalt its superiority over our brand of democracy and of their own, but precisely the precondition of that democracy which I know no other name for but "liberal", democracy erected and consolidated by the slow and difficult conquest of certain fundamental freedoms. In particular, I am referring to the four great freedoms of modern men: personal freedom, or the right not to be arrested arbitrarily, and to be judged according to a well-defined penal code by due process of law; the freedom of the press and of opinion; the freedom of assembly, which we saw conquered peacefully, but suppressed, in Tiananmen Square, and finally, the most difficult to attain, the freedom of association, from which are born free unions and free parties. With these free unions and free parties comes pluralist society, without which democracy does not exist. The culmination of this centuries-enduring process has been political liberty, or the right of all citizens to participate in the formation of the collective decisions that concern them.

The disruptive—and as far as can be seen, unstoppable—force of the popular movements that are wreaking havoc upon the universe of Communist regimes extends from the fact that these great freedoms are all being requested at the same time. The State of liberty arrived in Europe after the legal State, the democratic State after the State of liberty. In the streets of the Communist capitals now, the legal State, the State of liberty and the democratic State are being

demanding simultaneously. In one of their papers, the Chinese students declared that they were fighting for democracy, for freedom and for a state no longer above law. Any such situation, objectively, is revolutionary. Any such situation, when it cannot have a revolutionary outcome (as it appears that this could not occur in any one of these countries), has either a gradual solution, the most advanced of the like being the case of Poland, or a counter-revolutionary one, as in the case of China, unless it degenerates into that classic, historical form of failed or impossible revolutions known as civil war.

The conquest of freedom by modern men—assuming it is possible and as far as it is possible—for the countries of the capsized utopia can only serve as a starting point. But where will they head? I ask myself this question because it is not sufficient to found the legal, liberal and democratic State in order to resolve the problems which gave rise to the "hope of revolution" that spurred the proletarian movement in those countries which undertook the process of industrialisation in a savage way, and among the impoverished peasants of the third world. The world is still characterised by frightening injustices and is still condemns the poor, the derelict and the victims of the unreachable and apparently unchangeable centres of economic power, which almost always control political power, even in formally democratic systems. In such a world, to think that the hope of revolution has been extinguished and is finished merely because the Communist utopia has failed is tantamount to closing one's eyes so as not to see.

Can the democracies that govern the richest countries of the world solve the problems that communism did not succeed in solving? This is the problem. Historical communism

has failed, this is undeniable. Yet the problems remain, precisely those same problems—now on a world scale and more so in the near future—that the Communist utopia targeted and considered resolvable. This is the reason why it is only for fools to rejoice in the defeat, rubbing their hands together in their contentment as if to say “We told you so!”. Ah, misled! Do you really believe that the end of historical communism (I insist on “historical”) has put an end to the need and the thirst for justice? Would it not be better to realise that, while in our world the society of the two thirds rules and prospers and has nothing to fear from that third of poor devils, in the rest of the world,

the society of the two thirds (or of the four fifths, or of the nine tenths) is precisely that of the latter?

Democracy has won the challenge of historical communism, it must be admitted. But of what means and of which ideals does it avail itself to confront the same problems from where the Communist challenge was born?

“Now that there are no more barbarians”, wrote Dante, “what will become of us without barbarians?”

Norberto Bobbio
June 9, 1989