9:05 a.m.

TBA

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9:25 a.m.

Where Did All The “Workers Of The World” Go From 1917 To 2017? Can Alain Badiou’s re-conceptualization of volition and revolution as a counter-devolution guide us towards a beyond faithful to our past (Wo Es war, soll Ich werden)?

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The paper proposes to assay the different theoretical conceptualizations of the evolution of the overloaded/determined term “Revolution,” from the Frankfurt School to the Structuralist and Post-Structuralist critiques of the term, and to its postmodern devolution/dissolution under the onslaught of globalization, total commodification, and High-Tech consumerism, when late/neo- capital decided to compete with “the Revolution,” by pre-empting its premises, by trying to stay one step ahead, by enrolling human desire in its (death-)drive, and by hyper-virtualizing and hyper-realizing the societal and the objectal (voiding the Revolution of its content.) The works of socio-political and philosophical intellectuals and thinkers such as Adorno, Marcuse, Baudrillard, Althusser, Jameson, Derrida, Lacan (notions of “Imaginary” and “Real”), Slavoj Zizek, Badiou, and others..., will be called upon in order to map the different re-evaluations of this key concept of the History of the world and capitalism during the 19th and 20th centuries. In its “successful” 21st overall transmutation of what it means to be human, capitalism is turning the world upside down.
9:45 a.m.

*Italian Fascist and Russian Communist Revolutions as Platforms and Models*

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Why do some new regime types promoting a different way to legitimate political order prompt a fear of contagion effects while others do not? What are the foreign policy consequences of this dynamic? This paper compares the response among European great powers to the fascist regime that emerged in Italy in 1922 and communist regime that emerged in Russia in 1917. The response to these radical ideologies differed markedly. I argue that the fear of contagion is driven less by infecting agent – the policies of the revolutionary states – and more by the characteristics of the host – the nature of a regime’s preexisting opposition. When present, contagion fears can profoundly affect patterns of cooperation and conflict, although geopolitical pressures at times overwhelm these factors. These findings help us understand when and why ideological differences between states become salient in international politics.

1:00 p.m.

*Argentinean Revolutionary Movements in the 1960’s and 1970’s: What was Behind the Violence?*

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In reflecting about the revolutionary movements that erupted in Latin America in the 1960’s and 1970’s, and that were inspired mostly by the Cuban revolution, it seems pertinent to inquire and critically evaluate the motifs and mythical substratum that inspired the revolutionary leaders and the revolutionary militants. These movements and the response they received from the state (the democratically elected government of Isabel Martinez de Peron in the early 1970’s, and later the military governments in power after 1976) created a cycle of violence with specific drives, methods, responsibilities, and consequences for Latin American societies. Every revolution creates an imaginary sphere which delineates its ideological bedrock and solidifies its ideologies (an ethics of violence, the value of life and death, and an epic of sacrifice).

The paper will focus mostly on the Argentinean case: the guerrilla movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s. The return to democracy in 1983 witnessed a surge of reevaluation initiatives that revisited these revolutionary years. The early approaches displayed a nostalgic narrative centered on the figure of the victimized revolutionary and the war heroes. Recent studies have approached the period under a sharper critical lens and have benefitted from the time distance. This presentation will evaluate some of these new approaches which intend to reassess the implementation of violence by guerrillas in the 1960 and 1970’s. The result is the blending of several historical contents that nurtured the choice of guerrillas to take up arms: the inspiration of Che Guevara and his vision of the new man (also his idea of “total war” and the “foquista violence”) the idea of
the inner value of violence as a catalyst for social contradictions, the power of violence to raise consciousness from subjects. Especially important was also the role of the Catholic Church and the teachings of Liberation Theology which interpreted social violence as a response from upper violence. The studies evaluated seem to suggest that any future implementation of the left in Argentina needs to reconsider these previous attempts to implement emancipation through an infatuation with violence even after the military battle had been lost.

1:20 p.m.

*Can’t Spell Rasputin Without Putin: What’s in a Name, or Early Emergent Soviet Bolshevism at its Crossroads*

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The study of words and ways they relate historically to their previous iterations is called etymology. The study of personal names (and place-names), on the other hand, is called onomastics. Since words appear in personal names in this case, the studies are combined. It is said, “words matter,” so names matter too, being like words, surrogates for substances. An historical and compositional analysis informs us of what the names denote, augmenting our reading of its use in the sentence, “Without Rasputin there would have been no Lenin.”

Sentences matter, too, because they fix logical relations for weaving a chronicle of events. The one in quotes is credited by legend to Kerensky; as a single sentence, it asserts a logic uniting two, tacitly causative yet plainly post-hoc: The equation for the October Revolution adds up only with the operative coefficient of the semiliterate itinerant peasant. To explore this rationale, a point of departure is chosen, the centuries old distinctively Russian concept of the Autocrat, or the *Rus*.

*Rus* shows us well where etymology and onomastics intersect, the place-name originating from a single word, one borrowed from outside the language family describing an outsider, a foreigner able to wield supreme executive power with the purpose of keeping the peace at the behest of combatants whose deeply embedded enmities for one another render them incapable of governing. Nicholas II fails to operate autocratically, creating a power vacuum in the seat of government around which Rasputin revolves, revolution becoming inevitable as their paths crossed.