

**REFLECTION FROM THE AMERICAS ON WALTER BENJAMIN'S CRITICAL
THEORY: WORKING AND MEANING IN THE ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE
1933–1945**

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BENJAMIN: TRABALHAR E SIGNIFICAR NA RESISTÊNCIA ANTIFASCISTA
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WALTER BENJAMIN TRABAJAR Y SIGNIFICAR EN LA RESISTENCIA
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ABSTRACT

Eighty years after the arrival of the Red Army troops — whose doctors treated the very few prisoners who had not yet been murdered — at the Auschwitz extermination camp, it is necessary to reflect on the role of a mistaken historical theory of the German, European, and ultimately global left, which made it impossible to resist with the necessary strength against National Socialism and the extermination of European Jews.

Keywords: Walter Benjamin. Critical Theory. Concept of Progress. Fetishism. Karl Marx. Anti-Fascist Resistance.

RESUMO

Oitenta anos após a chegada das tropas do Exército Vermelho — cujos médicos atenderam os poucos prisioneiros que ainda não haviam sido assassinados — ao campo de extermínio de Auschwitz, é necessário refletir sobre o papel de uma teoria histórica equivocada da esquerda alemã, europeia e, em última instância, mundial, que tornou impossível resistir com a força necessária ao nacional-socialismo e ao extermínio dos judeus europeus.

Palavras-chave: Walter Benjamin. Teoria Crítica. Conceito de Progresso. Fetichismo. Karl Marx. Resistência Antifascista.

RESUMEN

A los ochenta años de la llegada de la tropas del ejército rojo —cuyos médicos atendieron los muy pocos presos que todavía no habían sido asesinados— al campo de exterminio de Auschwitz, hay que reflexionar sobre el papel de una teoría histórica equivocada de la izquierda alemana, europea y, al fin de cuentas, mundial que hizo imposible que se resistiera con la fuerza necesaria al nacionalsocialismo y al exterminio de los judíos europeos.

Palabras clave: Walter Benjamin. Teoría Crítica. Concepto de Progreso. Fetichismo. Karl Marx. Resistencia Antifascista.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In 1945, the Allied troops liberated the German and Austrian cities that followed under the Nazi forces. During the last two weeks of the war, between April and May, the Nazis totalled 250,000 people in the famous marches of death. At a time when the defeat of Germany was imminent, the Nazis killed a million people in their own incontable "secondary" camps that existed apart from the large camps and centers of immediate extermination such as Auschwitz, Treblinka or Sobibor, among others.

In addition to the most well-known killing centers, there was a vast system of smaller camps, for which there were at least a thousand in Germany and in the occupied countries. De estos últimos enviaron a los prisioneros a las marchas de la muerte; en parte para que el genocidio no fuera tan obvio. The mataban little by little, those that were the slowest were attacked by the SS guards and were broken there, distributed along the kilometers and kilometers throughout Europe.

The objective of this text is to discuss how the critical theory in general and Walter Benjamin in particular reacted intellectually to the genocide, which Claude Lanzmann called *Shoah*, and Raul Hilberg calls *The destruction of European Jews*, in his famous book that bears this title, without being the most important study on the subject.²

La pregunta que formulata la Teoría crítica no es: ¿por qué fue posible eso? Pues esta es una interrogante muy difícil; Lanzmann, for example, recomienda no formularla, ya que considera que nos desvia de ver el hecho mismo.³ Therefore, we do not plan this question, although we emphasize what Benjamin and all critical theory ask: ¿por qué la izquierda alemana y la europea no supieron reaccionar ante el hecho del fascismo en general y del nazismo en particular? This is more concrete than I can directly inquire about genocide because, according to Lanzmann, it is separate from the attention of the fact that there is no one to be able to see, before the terror and the complexity of the historical and social event.

1.1 EL ERROR TEÓRICO DE LA IZQUIERDA Y SU RESISTENCIA

What Benjamin formulated was: ¿por qué la izquierda no supo reaccionar? Here it is worth commenting on something important: there is the myth that there is a resistance; but

² Hilberg, Raul. (2005): *La destrucción de los judíos europeos*, trans. Cristina Pina Aldão. Madrid, Akal.

³ Lanzmann, Claude. (1990): "Hier ist kein Warum" en Bernard Cuau y Michel Deguy et al., *Au sujet de Shoah*. Paris, Belin. p. 279.

at least in the case of Germany and Austria, this is not cierto. En Francia sí existió cierta resistencia, pero mucho más limitada de lo que se solía decir después.

In Poland there was a strong resistance, but in its majority in the era of leftist, a nationalist bell, made up of mostly conservative and/or Catholic Poles. The most famous resistance in Poland has been the important resistance in the Warsaw ghetto, which was organized mainly by young socialist Jews, whose armed arm was not much more than a sweet of *ghetto fighters*.⁴ There was also a very important anti-fascist resistance and against the German occupation in the Soviet Union. In this respect it is known that Stalin, when trying to call for resistance, was with the argument of defending the mother country, but with the argument of defending communism, socialism or the revolution. The Stalinists coincided in that this was the best way to organize the resistance. Despite the fact that this idea was not shared, it is true that in the conditions given was the strategy that was used with success.

Thus, the resistance of the left, specifically against Nazism and fascism in general, existed in Spain during the Civil War, is undeniable; it is also a more izquierdist definition of resistance in Yugoslavia; even isolated cases in other countries; but, in general and more terms, it was not something that existed, and much less in Austria and Germany. For this reason, we return to the question of Benjamin's critical theory and question, ¿why it is not possible to organize a massive resistance of anti-fascist leftists?, ¿qué fue lo que pasó exactly? The contradiction lies in the fact that the European left was more powerful than ever in the 1920s; ni antes ni después ha sido tan intensa como entonces. Esta izquierda estaba bien organizado, y además armada; The German communists, for example, had hidden awareness of thousands of fusiles to prepare the resistance, which did not use: I did not drive against the genocides.

Why? What Benjamin responds is that the lack of resistance was not so much an error, although it is obviously a political error, but it was not due to cowardice, or the inability to organize, nor was it due to the Nazi repression, which was supposed to be fuerte; However, this philosopher would say, reason was a *theoretical* error.

There were several very serious errors in the theory of the German-Austrian and European left that, in some way, led them to commit very wrong acts and this provoked them in no resistance or the non-existent resistance against the Nazis since the left. Esta cuestión sigue siendo importante hoy, a ochenta años del fin del nazismo militar, porque este error no

⁴ This resistance was reduced both in terms of the number of participants and by the little support received by the Polish resistance in the Jewish or other groups.

ha dejado de exist. Benjamin murió in 1940: he died during his journey from France to Spain, and committed suicide because he concluded that he would not leave the United States, but a Nazi death camp. Pienso con casi absoluta certainty that it would be in agreement with me: this theoretical problem is still in force.

Vivimos hoy el mismo error teórico en la izquierda, y hablo en plural a apropos, pues me considero parte de ela. En realidad, son varios los errores; lo central, Benjamin reemphasizes, son of the elements: uno, cómo se concibe la historia y, el otro, cómo se concibe el apoyo popular que puede darse a una lucha. Quisiera comenzar por analizar el segundo.

During the time of Benjamin and until the fall of the Soviet Union and its allied countries, in the 1980s, a cult of the proletariat predominated. There was the idea that the proletariat, by definition, was of left; asimismo, se pensaba que *de facto* lucharía contra las relaciones sociales capitalistas y que sería antifascista. Practically all the left was convinced of it.

I consider that this error persists, aunque ya casi nadie usa el termo proletariat as such. The cult of the proletariat has been transformed into a cult of democracy; en el fondo es prácticamente lo mismo: se cree que las mayorías tienen la razón, que son antifascistas; unless sean engañadas o que alguien les vea la cara, como los medios masivos de comunicación o los gobiernos; que se dé un fraudor, etcetera. If something does not happen, then the people —sean proletariats or the population in general— have the reason, in terms of an anti-fascist reason. Despite the disappearance of the dogmatic left, of the Soviet Union, these political-theoretical errors continue to exist. Never has a true discussion in respect.

The exception was precisely Benjamin and other authors of the Critical Theory, but his contributions have been to a large extent ignored or converted into another thing. Hoy en día se mention mucho a Benjamin, pero no se aborda la parte medullar de su pensamiento.

There is, then, a naïve belief of party leaders deposited in the popular mass that they follow, and vice versa; también una creencia ingenua en los líderes. Benjamin argued that in the end of the fund, it is a good idea; It seems different, but it is a single construction: the leader of masses and the masses, together, will guarantee that a resistance against the fascists works.

2 THE DEMOCRATIC IMPOSSIBILITY OF AN ANTI-NATIONAL SOCIALIST RESISTANCE

The German left insistently defiende *democracy*, and it is necessary to clarify that with this argument, the anti-National Socialist resistance would have been impossible, because the Nazis arrived democratically in power in 1933. That vote was not falsified, not the electoral fraud, of such a way that, by the way of democracy, the anti-Nazi resistance was a falsehood, even before the time of reprisal. Effectively, in the following years they falsified the elections to always obtain 99.5% of the votes. In any case, many people thought that Nazi policy was correct, including extermination, in which there was something close to a social agreement.

Hoy en día, it is said that in Germany and other countries the people did not know that they were succeeding the genocide, which is false. Hitler repeated without tiring the phrase of the *final solution of the Jewish question* [*Endlösung der Judenfrage*], he mentioned it on any occasion and everyone understood what it was referring to. Everyone saw their vecinos disappear and knew that they would never regress, they were aware that they were "in the East" and that there was no food; veían partir trenes llenos de personas que regresaban vacíos. To affirm that nadie sabía lo que pasaba, es una "piadosa" lie to sleep peacefully.

La gente, en su mayoría, estaba de acuerdo con estas acciones. Here lies the big problem. The left did not resist, in part, because if it was the case, it was placed against democracy, the proletariat and, at least part, against the convictions of the people.

The Vatican protested once: when the Nazis ordered to exterminate the disabled lamas. After the claim by the highest Catholic institution, the reaction of the Nazis was to change the norm that foresaw that all people with various disabilities, defined in a long list, had to be exterminated. After this criticism, it was modified that only if the family was in agreement, it would be carried out—but the families, in a large percentage of the cases, the state—. Hubo pocos casos en que la familia dijo "no queremos"; Even those who take their children, priests or brothers directly to the euthanasia centers to suffer a violent death. En un inicio estos centros eran hospitales, luego fueron *sofisticándose*. Thus, in many cases the family members do not only hope that the pidieran permiso, but that they themselves take the initiative to provoke the euthanasia of their "disabled" family members; de la misma manera, no dudaban en denounce to sus vecinos judíos.

A large part of the Jews arrested in Germany was held by the Nazis, not thanks to their methods to find them, which in this historical moment was not as sophisticated as today in terms of digitized data bases. The German state was not so organized, it was necessary to

denounce the population and this functioned "very well". Many inhabitants of buildings, for example, systematically señalaron to the sospechosa personas. If the vecinos rest on Saturdays, but Sundays do not, call the police to warn of such a terrible action. In many cases, I reached the conclusion that this was a good idea, until it was bad, judíos; then this persona was exterminated. There was in this sense a "democratic" agreement, which caused difficulties for the left to oppose resistance; No sabían cómo lidiar con ello, cómo cometer el acto "antidemocratic" de ir contra la voluntad popular, no pudieron decir: "nosotros, aunque seamos una minoría, nos oponemos al genocidio".

Hoy en día creemos ciega e incondicionalmente, en "la democracia". In addition, the concept has been reduced to a simple system of choices carried out each four or six years. Ni siquiera hay una definición cabal de democracia e, incluso, si el concepto fuera más completo, el primer paso sería cuestionarlo. Herbert Marcuse, also a member of the Critical Theory, presented a very good formulation on this subject in *Reason and Revolution*,⁵ his book on Hegel and the Theory of Bourgeois Society. Apunta que la democracia sólo funcionaba en verdad si cada miembro de la sociedad tuviera la voluntad de cuidar del bien de todos; If each one, at the moment of voting, proposing, directing, etcetera, this is in mind. But according to Marcuse, living immersed in capitalist social relations, is impossible. The social formation that reigns in the present day educates us, from birth, from the moment we have the first consciousness, to care only for our individual and selfish interests; if we are very open, we could be concerned about two or three bad personas; o si somos muy radicales, perhaps por un grupo de hasta cien personas, pero casi nadie llega a más.

In the form of capitalist reproduction it is impossible, by definition, that someone piense en el bien de todos; este problema se da necesariamente. The democracy we have today is, for example, no systematic structure to protect minorities. If it is decided on them on the basis of democracy, with great ease it happens what is happening now in Europe, where it was democratically determined not to send boats to the Mediterranean, where every year thousands of expatriates died. One of the ideas of European governments is to send boats and planes to destroy the boats in which they could transfer after the refugees. On the other hand, it has become the most dangerous sea in the world despite being more peaceful and with less storms than the Atlantic or the Pacific; it has not killed so many people.

⁵ Marcuse, Herbert. (1971): *Razón y revolución: Hegel y el surgimiento de la Teoría crítica social*, trans. Julieta Fombona de Sucre. Madrid, Alianza. (El libro de bolsillo. Humanidades, 292) (1st ed. in Col. Área de conocimiento: Humanidades, 2003. 462 pp.)

There are no mayorías que levanten la voz, nadie dice: "ya no vamos a votar por nuestro gobierno si actúa de esta forma en contra de los africanos y asiáticos". So it was like the left to speak before Nazism. We should decide: hubo un fracaso rotundo de la izquierda europea, perhaps with the exceptions mentioned; Spain and Yugoslavia, the only ones that stand out the least. Another would be Holland, from where the day that the deportations of Jews in Amsterdam began, a general was organized. There are other small significant cases in historical terms, but regrettably, in numerical terms are each irrelevant. Let's then return to the initial question: ¿Por qué existe esta fe ingenua en las mayorías? ¿Y por qué la izquierda se somete a ello a sabiendas de que es falso? Se somete al argumento equivocado de las mayorías y luego lo justifica theoretically.

Hubo largos debates después del nazismo focados en cómo pudo pasar eso, cómo las poblaciones pudieron, en su mayoría, estar de acuerdo. The communist justification, and also of some socialists, is that they were all deceived: the people themselves are not so much revanchists and pro-war, so much racist, so many anti-Semites; but they were crawled by the Nazis. This explanation persists in many countries today, especially in the left; Sin embargo, es una explicación peligrosa y se fundamenta en una teoría muy simple de la manipulación.

Para Georg Lukács el engaño y la manipulación existen, pero el problema central radica en la cosificación. This is given in capitalist relations and is reflected in consciousness. Cosification if I decide that things dominate the world, we are our annexes; what decides, Marx would say, is the automatic subject, the value that is valued at ism, we are alone sus helpers. Even we convert to things. Adorno formulates a similar idea: the same reality, the same materiality, ya is ideología. From the material there is an ideological presence. The current ideological instances do not sound the televisions or the periodicals manejados or the maestros manipulados o manipuladores, todo eso existe, pero no es el punto central. El punto central es la materialidad socially reproducida a diario; por eso hay que cambiarla.

Horkheimer, Adorno and Benjamin explain that there resides the reason for which the left actúa así. The problem is the following: although the left is aware of this tendency of many people to manifest a mistaken conscience due to the capitalist relations of coexistence, in any way it is only to the decisions of the majority. It is the first extraordinary view, since it implies that people with anti-capitalist political positions accept the procapitalist consciousness with the argument that it is about "modernity".

It is difficult to understand why it is to be reached. Benjamin sostendría que es dedudo a una fe ingenua en las masas populares y en que estas se encaminan automáticamente

hacia una revolución, o por lo menos hacia una sociedad mejor. This simplifying view is the result of limited and mistaken interpretations of Karl Marx.

Marx can suddenly appear in his extensive work in his extensive work, but have affirmations of this nature, but appear in his writings on occasion. Marx's main work never mentions him like this, in the main construction that is expressed in the famous chapter "The Commodity" in the four section of *Capital* Says the Following: "The Fetishism of the Marketplace and its Secret", Marx expresses as the same conscience in our society is systematically mistaken. However, no Marxist at that moment took seriously these critical statements of Marx. By him, Benjamin would affirm that he has a progressive and naïve interpretation of this author. *Progresista* en el sentido de asumir una fee ingenua en el progreso; part of this progress would be that the population, which will be more intelligent, more lucid, will tend to have a greater desire for democracy. In present-day Mexico, this ideology persists that dates back to the decade of the ochenta. Why does it grow that Mexico is more democratic than ever?

It is extraño que la izquierda, hasta nuestros días, legitimize this discourse and believe that it works. For Benjamin has to see with the faith that we have in progress —this is the theoretically deeper point—, a faith in which history advances in automatic. This had been formulated by social-democratic thinkers and all the German reformist left; Benjamin critically quotes Josef Dietzgen, who stated that every day the population was more knew and the workers were more intelligent because they were puntually working for work.⁶ For this reason the greatest contribution that we can make to the socialist revolution, it is to go every day, without delay, to the factory; to carry out the least possible huelgas, not to lack work even though we are sick: as we achieve a more productive system. This is the true "anti-capitalist" attitude, according to Dietzgen.

These ideas were predicated on the ground by the communists, but also by the German social democracy. The communists at this point were slightly less dogmatic, but sometimes the social democracy, the reformist left, the dogmatic ones. On this point, the most dogmatic were the reformists. Dietzgen was one of the *great* social-democratic intellectuals, of the pioneers of the first line of thought; he insisted on efficiency, discipline and the environment. I insist: dogmatism is not specifically Stalinist, the bell of all reformist left.

⁶ Cf. Dietzgen, Josef. (1906): *Sozialdemokratische Philosophie*. Berlin, Vorwärts.

Benjamin's critique has faith in *progress*, as something that necessarily improves the life of persons, starts from the observation that this science is mistaken *in its totality and in all perspectives*. Hoy en día, the critics of the progress reduce the aspects or the perspectives, criticizing that only the technical, quantitative, aspect of productivity is considered; My human progress, democracy and human rights are stagnant.

Today, this argument is shared by several thinkers: criticism of progress has been demanding strength since the 1980s, but practically not developing Benjamin's radicalism. He *didn't* think that there was a lack of a redefinition of progress or expanding the concept beyond the technical and organizational; creía que el progreso es un concepto equivocado para la izquierda. He postulated that the idea is merely bourgeois: at the time of the French Revolution and other similar ones, the bourgeois need this concept; It turned out to be the most powerful against the classes, political and economic relations, as well as medieval ideologies.

In this context, the idea of progress was brillante and succeeded in crushing a large part of the medieval heritage. From the bourgeois point of view, progress is, without doubt, the best there is. Many theories were based on this: the German idealists and many bourgeois theoreticians, the positivist misms, who at first glance were very different from the idealists, but on this subject they have points of encounter; así también los empiristas y pragmatistas. All the most or less bourgeois theories are difficult to interpret the progress, have, of course, their variants, but between them the difference on this topic is not really important.

Benjamin señalaría a la izquierda el erro de pensar, como muchas veces lo hacen los bourgueses, en términos de progreso. As is known, at our time there is a deindustrialization worldwide, present for several years, clear examples are Detroit in the United States and Ciudad Juárez in Mexico, where many factories remain vaccinated. Lo único que mencionan los políticos al respecto es que se ha dado un *crecimiento negativo*.

However, criticism cannot be reduced to that progress is not carried out in a broader way, which brings the technological and economic awareness to achieve a social progress of inclusion. Benjamin sostendría que la idea misma de progreso no sirve a la izquierda; solo funciona para los bourgueses, originalmente más revolucionarios y decididos. When Benjamin refers to the bourgeoisie, he does not do it spectively, but it refers to terms of a social class that in this era was revolutionary, which organized the revolution against the feudal class. The bourgeois developed and used the concept with outstanding sophistication.

But the left, specifically the anti-capitalist left, does not work us in the absolute concept. Es un error grave pensar que debemos radicalizar el concepto de progreso. La izquierda asegura, por lo general: "Ustedes llevan a cabo el progreso a medias; nosotros, en cambio, lo hacemos de verdad" y se propone que el progreso ahora sí irá bien, que antes única tinha tinha una promesa o un hecho a medias, pero ahora será completo.

For Benjamin, it is necessary, during revolutions or radical political, economic or ideological changes, to attack the ideological center of the era that one wants to overcome. However, this is not the case and is in the European and world left; It has not been detected that the ideological and economic center of the form of capitalist reproduction, of the bourgeoisie and its philosophers, is precisely the idea —and hasta greater reality— of progress; this is the center of which it is a whole. If it is not attacked, bourgeois tendencies will be victorious as always, both in ideology and in politics and militarily.

The bourgeois class never won the feudal class if it did not wholesale the religious concepts. If someone fights in favor of an anti-feudal stance, but he accepts that God creates the king and reigns, he will lose certainty. First it will be necessary to demonstrate that it is not by divine decree and that there is no God, that this is not violently and militarily. This is what the bourgeois politicians and thinkers of the *Lumières system* are.

La izquierda has never achieved this argumentative level, Benjamin would say, there has not achieved a radicality comparable to the bourgeois in its rupture with the dominant thinking of its moment. There has never been such a legacy in ideological struggles as the bourgeoisie, which is able to destroy the existing theologia, which is supposed to be able to reach a high class in its place. Con dicha ruptura, la bourgeois pudo pudo justify, analize and propel su lucha, and also convince people to participate in this. La izquierda is not about anything like that.

Marx did not try, of course, but the problem is that Marx has been systematically misinterpreted. From the outset, his most aggressive and repetitive phrases of the dominant ideology at the time, the most "progressive", where a naïve belief in progress was revealed. These ideas exist in Marx, undeniably, are the moments that are bourgeois in which he copied the naïve naïve model of the moment. The problem is that these concepts have been repeated until the fatigue is less critical and profound than the most critical and profound part of your thought, precisely your criticism of progress, if there is a treaty to deny, or for the least obviar and minimize. Por ejemplo, habla de la necesidad de que deje "el progreso humano de parecerse a ese horrible ídolo pagano que solo quería beber el néctar en el cráneo del

sacrificado".⁷ This is the way in which Marx, in his best moments, refers to progress; it is for which every day he died more people for illnesses that could be cured, and but only if it was a question of children of the class on war refugees.

In the subchapter "The fetishism of the market and its secret" Marx also refers to the development of consciousness. He distances himself from the bourgeois (revolutionaries), who affirm that every day, every generation, we are more aware and, above all, that we owe to the great rupture with feudalism an explosion of consciousness—at least according to the bourgeois epistemological theory in its many variants—. All bourgeois thinkers agree on this point, Marx, on the other hand, compared in this passage of his magnum opus four five historically existing economic forms and the degree of economic consciousness, and concluded that the degree of this consciousness has been diminished.

According to him, the evil calls *primitive men* knew perfectly how their economy works; the slaves also had a lot of clarity in respect of their knowledge and exploitation. In the Media Age, it was sophisticating and complicating the forms of exploitation and the relationship, which was exploited, subordinated, violated.

On the contrary, Marx asserts, economic consciousness tends to disappear, but it does not exist, because it is practically not entiendo—sometimes not the specialists—that is really passing. Marx asserts that there is a fall in the level of economic consciousness, but at least no dogmatic Marxist has cited this Marxian observation.

Benjamin would note that Marx began to develop a critique of progress and naïve progress, but most of his readers did not percibieron, and much less other leftists: as for example the reformist social-democratic German leftist. Alleging this party throughout the years of Marx's theory, it has increased only its naïve faith in progress because it does not enclose the historical, social and economic contradictions that this author analyzes. We must resume Benjamin's argument to understand what is passing in the process of contemporary history, and the first thing we must have behind the naïve idea of *progress*, as something that necessarily improves the life and coexistence of humans.

Ahora bien, regressando ao tema del nazismo: la izquierda alemana, y la europea de cierta manera pensaban, erroneously, that the Nazis would fight against the progress and that like this it was considered something automatic, as a river that advances and only by its own weight dragging the Nazis because according to this mistaken imagination, the fascists

⁷ Cf. Marx and Engels (1973), "Futuros resultados de la dominación británica en la India", en: *Sobre el colonialismo*, Buenos Aires: Pasado y Presente, pp. 83-84.

swim against it and would not persist much time. This was the conviction of all the German left: the social democrats and the communists, although among them there were great differences, totally coinciding on this point. They were convinced that Nazism would not last long, in large part because they did not fight in an armed way against National Socialism and against genocide. ¿Para qué luchar, para qué arriesgar la vida, para qué mete en pleitos militar armados, se de todos modo pronto el nazismo caería por su propio peso? Y, dicho de paso, a primera vista tuvieron razón, el *Behemoth* (Neumann, 1943) del nacionalsocialismo solo se mantuvo en el poder por doce años.

In terms of time, sweet years are not so much and in this sense it was apparently in the cierto; the theme is that in these years they killed, in the concentration camps and extermination, six million people –without speaking from the deaths of the Second World War– destroyed the European Jews and with them, to every form of life. Cambiaron el continente, me temo que para siempre, aunque espero equivocarme. Unless there is an interruption of this social form, as long as there is no radical rupture, we have to observe that Europe has changed – in an apparently permanent way –

If we think that it was a continent with a very strong Jewish presence, important in every way, and that the Nazis managed to disappear this impromptu in Europe, the change was totally good. There is all some Jewish manifestation, in France perhaps a little more than in other countries; In Germany, for example, it is minimal, but it does not exist, in the synagogues, compared about all the previous situation.

Los nazis lo lograron: consiguieron cambiar el planeta; No solamente asesinaron a muchas personas, sino que modificaron la estructura social europea. The German government is tan cynical in the respect that has been held for some years, when the European Union was founded, suggests that it was written in its constitution, at the beginning of the foundational text: "Europe is by definition a Christian continent". They did not kill the people, but pretended to deny their existence before they had been assessed. As if you put it: "the European Jews in the fund have never existed".

Implicitly, with these denialist statements, the idea that the National Socialists agreed with the de *facto* progress of the progress and in this readjustment it was necessary to homogenize. One of the great goals of capitalist modernity and progress as we know how to homogenize, and part of this process is precisely to make people equal. Within models of progress that are less violent and aggressive than the National Socialist, it is understood that it would have to convince the members of the minorities of the need for this homogenization.

Pero si no se dejan, ¿qué se hace con ellos? Today —as there are no Nazis—, European governments deport new minorities to be left, or they leave their country in the Mediterranean. The Nazis had a more efficient plan: it was not enough for them to wait for the murierer *to actually* prohibit the retreat on the high seas; they took more drastic measures and de-escalated the extermination camps.

The logic implicit in this type of policy was *progresista*, in the effort to create a homogenized society that would eliminate everything that became complicated, contradictory, entangled, too complex. Puesto que cada uno cree en cosas distintas, la convivencia totalmente homogenizada se vuelve un asunto highly difficult; The Nazi option was the extermination to succeed, in a society with my happy members, but it is what they imagine as a "*sano*" organism-pueblo.

As is well known, Hitler and his people often referred to what the *body of the German people* and this had to be "healthy"; so that those persecuted groups: Jews, Gitanos, homosexuals —of whom the largest group was that of the Jews— were perceived as an "illness"; the *body was not* safe to cure of this supposed *illness*. The idea was to "function better", in this sense this posture had something democratic, if we understand democracy as erroneously made by the general today: that the majority is imposed and has the problem that the plazca.

The problem is based on the fact that in this sense the National Socialists were "progressive", they carried out the progress not only in their policy of extermination, but also in the cultural one. Por ejemplo, el alemán es un idioma highly diverso hasta el día de hoy. If one is in the north of Germany, it is very complicated to understand the dialect, sometimes, for more absurdity than it seems, it is more easy to speak English. It also happened in the setback, yendo from Frankfurt to the region of Innsbruck, a pueblito en la montaña de Austria, there are Germans who piensan: "¿de qué habla esta gente?". This was something that the Nazis also tried to homogenize, and in large part it was achieved.

Many Austrian conservatives did not want the Nazis just because of their progressive tendency. The conservatives in Austria were the most hateful; uno de ellos era mi abuelo. Conservative, of the middle class, it had a more or less good port in Austrian Correos and not the Nazis for its line of *progress*, advancement, homogenization, its intention to dejar behind the specific form of hablar in Austria or in Innsbruck.

The Nazis imposed the so-called "Hochdeutsch" [high German] on the school and on the radio, it is a dialect from a specific area of the north of the country. In the colleges of

Austria, there is a very different German from the Germans, and in the other Austrian areas, the National Socialists also achieve homogenization. In this line and following Walter Benjamin, the Nazis were a modernizing movement, a modern movement that imposed the progress and radicalization, in some way, the bourgeois ideology. This is not what I decide that the bourgeois would have the same mind as the Nazis; Although many people have allied themselves with them and changed them, they have renounced and betrayed their own ideology, which was originally humanist.

In the history of philosophy there are two famous cases, one more than another: Martin Heidegger, who joined the National Socialists; he worked for them as rector of the University of Freiburg [Freiburg] and developed his philosophy as an increasingly racist and anti-Semitic one. On the other hand there is the similar case, and the same different time, of Hans-Georg Gadamer; His history is less known and although later he did not return to talk about it, there are sweet texts about what he llamaba in this then and the *platonian violence*, in which he justifies the National Socialist violence. In May 1941, he presented the conference "The Volk and the history in Herder's thought" at the German Institute of Occupied France. After the years I tried that those texts – and about all their passages open to the Nazis – were forgotten.

Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer are the representatives of that part of the German (and European) bourgeoisie that betrayed their own ideals. ¿Why?, because they were convinced that the bourgeoisie was not proactive, but too lukewarm. I refer to them as both represent minds that formulated their ideas with sophisticated intelligence and clarity, much people thought —and the same thing they had— equal to them, although they could not plant with the same skill.

The idea of the end is that the bourgeoisie does not develop the progress with the intensity needed by its "cursilerías" in themes such as human rights and respect for minorities. There is no need to forget that the bourgeois of the school will try to give certain guarantees to minorities in their first constitutions. However, this represents a contradiction with its model of progress and provocation that its project will not be carried out with the speed of the project. There comes the critique of philosophers such as Heidegger or Gadamer, who affirm that the bourgeois should dejar behind the *cursilerías* of humanism. Esto le generó conflictos a varios burgueses, porque implicaba dejar atrás su vieja teoría; and in this context Gadamer acquires greater importance, who "explained" to the bourgeois

that Dudabán, in his texts from the national socialist era, that the violent acts of the National Socialists in the end were something "platonic".⁸

3 REFLEXIONES FINALES

Benjamin would affirm that in order to criticize the concept of *progress* it would be necessary to go all the way and analyze the current dominant concept of *time*, as something lineal, uninterrupted, directed and homogeneous, clearly encaminado hacia a redirection defined in the *future*. Esta idea de *tiempo* es necesaria para que funcione a su vez la *progreso*. Benjamin's criticism is radical and the concept of time as today is established, in which each second is equal to the previous. Estos tres aspectos del actual concepto de tiempo: homogeneidad, ininterrupción y dirección clara, diría Benjamin, tendrían que ser olvidados para dejar atrás la imaginación ingenua del *progreso*.⁹

This is a very close point between Marx and Benjamin —I insist on this proximity, because there are several Marxists who reject Benjamin, falsely thinking that he is discarded from Marx because of his criticism of progress, and in reality Benjamin is who is better than he is—. Karl Marx argues on several occasions in *Capital* that the center of capitalist economic construction is the *time measured in hours*, obviously, of work. Esto define the value: el de cada mercancía se determina por el tiempo de fuerza de trabajo invertido en ellas; y esta cantidad de fuerza de trabajo se mide en horas. Thus, for Marx, the form of capitalist reproduction needs a central concept: the time, precisely the homogeneous, uninterrupted and clearly directed; However, this social form does not work, its economic form would have to exist.

Benjamin is a little more explicit than Marx, but they coincide: without the *time* —as today in día lo percibimos— the social form currently reigning in the functionary. Marx refers to it on the whole economic thing; Benjamin a lo político y filosófico Sin estos conceptos de *tiempo* y *progreso*, no existía la sociedad que tenemos. Como izquierda, lo que debemos hacer es break radically with him. Solo si lo hacemos podra really. Obviously, it is too late to oppose National Socialism, but we can fight against other similar movements, but it is imperative to separate ourselves from bourgeois ideology and to conceive our own way, at the same time, to understand the world, history and *time*.

⁸ Véase: Orozco, Teresa (1995). *Platonische Gewalt. Gadamer's politische Hermeneutik der NS-Zeit*. Hamburg/Berlin, Argument.

⁹ Véase: Gandler, Stefan (2009). *Frankfurt fragments. Ensayos sobre la Teoría Crítica*. Mexico, Siglo XXI Editores/UAQ, about the whole chapter: "Interrupción del *continuum* histórico en Walter Benjamin.pp . 37-84.

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