



# THINKING BEYOND CAPITALISM

Edited by  
Aleksandar Matković, Mark Losoncz, Igor Krtolica



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# Introduction

This volume comes as a published outcome of the *Thinking Beyond Capitalism* international conference which was organized in Belgrade by the Group for Social Engagement Studies (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory) in June 2015. The main aim of this conference was to open space for a general discussion of the problems raised by contemporary capitalism, its crisis and its critiques. But how is it at all possible to make sound statements about contemporary capitalism? How does one adequately diagnose the current state of the economy? Clearly there is no consensus whether the financial crisis which culminated in 2007-2008 should be seen as a symptom of the structural crisis of neoliberal capitalism only, or of capitalism in general. Moreover, one should keep in mind that the term 'crisis' is itself laden with different ideologems. The discourse on 'crisis' implies that there is a superior prior state of capitalism, free of any crisis, and subsequently that we are now witnessing a phase which is alien to the 'normal functioning' of the system. Should we understand the crisis merely as means for restructuring the existing system, or as the beginning of an irreversible demise of the current mode of production, or even an objective indeterminateness between the two possibilities? Has the crisis enabled the exact preservation of the status quo and prevented any change, or was it on the contrary the crucial catalyst for the politicization of the otherwise depoliticized actors within late capitalism? And in any case, on what ground relies our answers to this alternative? We are indeed simultaneously exposed to various suggestions, more or less grounded suggestions, apologies and identifications of fundamental contradictions within the capitalist reproduction process.

In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels argue that capitalism is a social order which arises and subsists in the form of a critique of all alternative orders and subjective dispositions. In that perspective,



capitalism has proven more radical than its competitors: it has destroyed the 'Ancien Régime', has rendered all societal bonds flexible and has constantly revolutionized the means of production. It is a system in which "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned". To what extent, then, is it even possible to formulate a critique of such societal system, a system that has managed to incorporate critique itself? Can one stage a revolution against the 'revolution' itself? If capitalism thus emerges as the actual constitutive framework of our thought, how do we begin to think beyond capitalism?

Aleksandar Matković, Mark Losoncz, Igor Krtolica