

The *Platypus* Affiliated Society in Chicago
presents a public forum on:

The 3 Rs: Reform, Revolution, and "Resistance" **— The problematic forms of "anticapitalism" today —**

Tuesday November 6, 2007, 7-9PM
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
280 S. Columbus Drive main auditorium

"[After the 1960s, the] underlying despair with regard to the real efficacy of political will, of political agency [. . .] in a historical situation of heightened helplessness [. . .] became a self-constitution as outsider, as other [. . .] focused on the bureaucratic stasis of the [Fordist/late 20th Century] world: it echoed the destruction of that world by the dynamics of capital [with the neo-liberal turn after 1973, and especially after 1989].

The idea of a fundamental transformation became bracketed and, instead, was replaced by the more ambiguous notion of 'resistance.' The notion of resistance, however, says little about the nature of that which is being resisted or of the politics of the resistance involved — that is, the character of determinate forms of critique, opposition, rebellion, and 'revolution.' The notion of 'resistance' frequently expresses a deeply dualistic worldview that tends to reify both the system of domination and the idea of agency.

'Resistance' is rarely based on a reflexive analysis of possibilities for fundamental change that are both generated and suppressed by [the] dynamic heteronomous order [of capital]. ['Resistance'] is an undialectical category that does not grasp its own conditions of possibility; that is, it fails to grasp the dynamic historical context of which it is a part."

— Moïse Postone, "History and Helplessness:
Mass Mobilization and Contemporary Forms of Anticapitalism" (*Public Culture* 18:1, 2006)

Please join us for a panel discussion and audience Q&A on problems of strategies and tactics on the Left today with: **Michael Albert** (*Z Magazine*), **Chris Cutrone** (*Platypus*), **Stephen Duncombe** (Gallatin School of New York University), **Brian Holmes** (*Continental Drift* and *Universite Tangente*), and **Marisa Holmes** (new Students for a Democratic Society).

Questions for panelists

Using the argument offered in the above epigraph from Moïse Postone's essay "History and Helplessness" (2006) as a potential springboard, please try to address the following questions in your remarks at the forum:

(Panelists' opening remarks should be *at most* 5-7 min. [or 500-750 words or 2-3 double-spaced pages]. Please incorporate, beyond the first one, at least some of the following questions into your introductory statement. Those points not addressed in your opening remarks may be reserved for subsequent responses during the forum, in the panelist discussion and audience Q and A. Panelists: please arrive at 6:30PM for set-up.)

1. Please introduce yourself and the group(s)/institution(s)/collective(s)/movement(s) you are representing at this forum.
2. Since the 1960s, and especially since the 1990s, struggles for social, economic and political emancipation have been conceived less in terms of structural reforms or revolutionary transformation and more in terms of "resistance." How do you define "resistance" and how do you understand its role in possibilities for social change?
3. One powerful way "resistance" has been conceived has been in terms of "culture" and practices of "everyday life." How do you understand the implicit (if not explicit) distinction thus made of politics directed at society as a whole, from the more apparently mundane concerns and stakes of quotidian existence?
4. What, in your understanding, are the reasons for and the consequences of this historical shift away from movements for reform or revolutionary politics, to tactics, strategies, and self-understandings in terms of "resistance?"
5. Where do the new forms of politics of "resistance" point, in your estimation, for social-emancipatory possibilities, today and in the future?
6. What kinds of change do you envision on the horizon of present social concerns? How do you imagine the potential manifestations of such change?
7. What can and should those on the Left — those interested in working towards social emancipation — do, tactically and strategically, in view of such possibilities for change?