

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Jesús Aller

23.11.2022

Review of the great posthumous work of Josep Fontana

Capitalism and democracy, antagonistic worlds

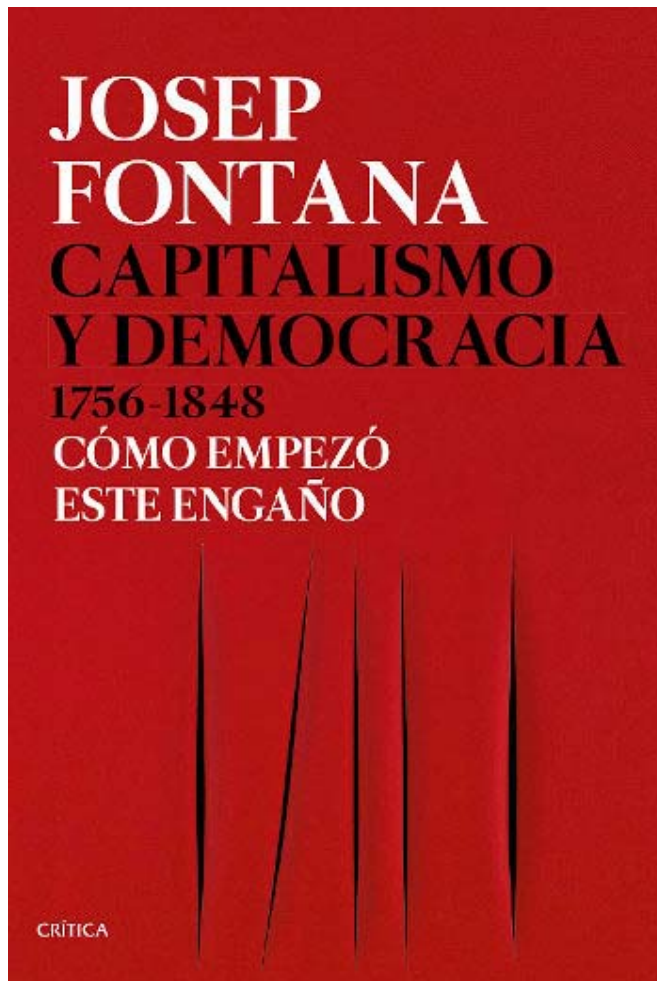


Sources: Rebellion

*In his last work, *Capitalism and Democracy: 1756-1848. How this hoax began*, published posthumously by Planeta in 2019, Fontana analyzes the fall of the old regime and how the bourgeoisie took control in Europe.*

The historian Josep Fontana (1931-2018) developed an intense research work on the Spanish nineteenth century, with volumes that time has become classics, such as *La*

bankruptcy of the absolute monarchy: 1814-1820, of 1971, where he demonstrates that the incapacity of the ruling class To face the collapse of the hacienda led to the beginning of the bourgeois revolution in Spain. In other contributions extends its vision to the twentieth century and studies more geographical contexts broad, even going so far as to propose a global perspective in *Por the good of the empire. A history of the world since 1945*, of 2011.



In his latest work, *Capitalism and Democracy: 1756-1848. How this deception began*, published posthumously by Planeta in 2019, Fontana analyzes the fall of the old regime and how the bourgeoisie took control in Europe. Through the political details of the process, the objective of the work is to highlight the irruption of capital as Rector of history, and how parliamentarism is He institutionalized as an instrument at his service. The lesson of this For the future is that a true democracy, direct and that Consider the economy, it can only be achieved with overcoming of the system of exploitation and destruction in force in the world.

The gestation of a new order

The book begins by describing the growth of the European economy during the eighteenth century and the colonial expansion that occurs simultaneously. The War of the Seven Years (1756-1763) was a real "first war" worldwide" in which it was decided who was going to capitalize on the process that was beginning. The conflict ended with a reinforcement of the axis England-Prussia against France, Austria and Spain. Development of transatlantic trade will thereafter bring to Europe American coffee, sugar and cotton, grown by slaves Africans, and will enrich the English and French elites on all. These aspects are discussed in detail in a chapter of the book.

Sticking to Europe, along of the eighteenth century there is a progress in agricultural techniques that, Together with others very relevant in craftsmanship, it allows to characterize A "revolution of the menestrales". A scholarly record and The artistic nature of these advances can be found in the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alambert. However, it does not appear that this would have an impact on a real improvement in the standard of living of the population. It was a world in slow evolution and of production to small scale, in which guilds were important institutions, but Everything will soon be blown up with the revolutionary events. of France.

The new order implemented after the Napoleonic Wars, at the Congress of Vienna, consolidated at the level It is clear above all that the Establishment of an economic organization in which The bourgeoisie claims its right to enrich itself without tax. His An instrument for this will be the set of governance and regulations, backed by cannons, often referred to as aseptically "the market".

Capital kicks in

After reviewing the ins and outs of the Congress of Vienna, Fontana brings us closer to the process of expropriation and proletarianization of the peasants that had been coming since the previous century being produced in England and in the nineteenth century it extends for almost all Europe. It also describes the activity of entrepreneurs capitalists who, supported by the states, appropriate the technical advances to exploit the work of artisans, Time that guilds and *trade unions* are outlawed. The evolution, however, was different in France, where the peasants preserved their conquests and industrialization was watched over by a thriving workers' movement. Thus, the conditions of Wage earners improved markedly here, contrary to what It happened elsewhere.

The 1820s were marked by revolts, mainly in southern Europe, none of the which managed to modify the existing power structure or start social reforms. Only in France in

1830 can it be said that It materialized something akin to a revolution when the mobilization of the proletariat and the liberal bourgeoisie made a coup inevitable. palatial that removed the Bourbons from the throne again and put in it Louis Philippe d'Orléans. Democratic gains were negligible, pure cosmetics, and the echoes of the vacuous burst were felt soon after in Belgium, Poland, Italy, Germany and the Empire Austrian, with events remembered in the work.

The new French king promoted What was defined as the "government of the bankers", with access of capital to the highest political instances. On the other First, the abolition of censorship contributed to the development of a Press that soon became the opposition's weapon for Question the system. The proletariat immediately revolted in Paris. and Lyon, and it became clear that the new class in power had no absolute egalitarian ideals with respect to the social structure, but that the old "aristocracy of the blood" by an "aristocracy of money".

The Revolution of 1848

The end of the book is dedicated to this revolution, which consolidated the triumph of the bourgeoisie. In his Pregnancy seems to have been influenced by population growth, unemployment and food shortages, due to pests such as the one that affected potatoes, But the root cause can stem from the very dynamics of the capitalism.

In those years they preached their Various theories of social reformers and in February 1848 published in London the *Manifesto* Karl Marx's communist and Friedrich Engels. It stated that: "*The History of all societies that have existed to this day it is the history of the class struggle,*" The proletariat was identified as the only social actor potentially revolutionary, and an uprising was advocated in which: "*The proletarians have nothing to lose (...) but their chains and They have a whole world to gain.*"

The altercations began in Italy in the month of January, but it was in February in Paris when attracted the attention of all over Europe. In the face of the deep crisis On the 22nd, workers and students took to the streets to demand reforms and were massacred. Two days later, Liberal republicans and socialists proclaimed the Second Republic and elections were called for April, with an expanded census (of 200 000 to 9 million voters), which the Conservatives won, very powerful in the provinces. Reactionary politics provoked in June a workers' insurrection, drowned in blood, and in December Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was elected president, who at the age of three and through a self-coup d'état he re-established the empire.

From February, the flame The revolutionary revolution is spreading throughout Europe, except Russia and Spain, and the Masses everywhere demand constitutional and national rights. The earthquake does not turn out to be at last the overturn announced by the *Manifesto Communist*, and goes to To promote only a strengthening of the bourgeoisie, because as he points out Fontana: "*Se eliminated the most visible remnants of feudalism and serfdom, except in Russia, and almost everywhere parliaments were formed. elected by census suffrage that granted political predominance to the owners, i.e. to the alliance of landowners, and bourgeois.*"

The misery of democracy Under capitalism

Josep Fontana describes us in detail in *Capitalism and democracy* as the The history of Europe was violated in the eighteenth century by the Emergence of capital, a spawn born of the expropriation of the peasants and the ownership by entrepreneurs of progress Technical. Thus arose the proletariat, the class whose exploitation It guaranteed the accumulation inherent in the system.

Un rasgo esencial de esta nueva sociedad eran las factorías, antros de reclusión de hombres, mujeres y niños en los que se consumaba la extracción de plusvalía. Lo que ellos sufrían fue definido por Marx como una “esclavitud oculta”, paralela a la “patente” de las plantaciones americanas. Es enormemente cínica e inhumana la visión de aquella realidad tenebrosa con el sesgo positivo de ser un requisito imprescindible del “progreso”. Sin embargo, el control ideológico de los dueños del mundo ha conseguido extender la idea de un determinismo social sin alternativas más allá de la jungla capitalista.

Todos los cambios políticos descritos en el libro empoderan a la burguesía, la clase propietaria del capitalismo. Ésta tratará de sumar al proletariado al proyecto social que dirige, pero cualquier intento de reivindicar un nuevo orden que cuestione la explotación económica va a provocar siempre represión a sangre y fuego para impedir tal cosa. Esto se evidenció ya en junio de 1848, se volvió a ver en mayo de 1871 con el aplastamiento de la Comuna de París, y así se ha repetido infinitas veces hasta hoy.

The inevitable conclusion is that Bourgeois democracy is powerless to overcome the dynamic of capital. The epilogue of the work extends the perspective to the The present moment, when after the "glorious thirty", the economy enters a neoliberal spiral of exacerbation of differences social and ecological and climate collapse. Under these conditions Criticism, the only alternative is to strengthen a A grassroots structure, genuinely democratic, which confronts the system, and that it must necessarily be transnational.

With Capitalism and democracy, Josep Fontana meets the expectations of the book's subtitle: "*How This deception began*," showing us how the bourgeoisie used the processes revolutionaries of 1789, 1830 and 1848 to consolidate power. The analysis makes it clear that the type of democracy he established offers a space for political discussion incapable of questioning the real mechanisms of social power, i.e. connecting rods and gears of the capitalist system.

Author's blog: <http://www.jesusaller.com/>. In it you can download his latest collection of poems: *Los dead books*.

Rebelión has published this article with the permission of the author through a [Creative Commons license](#), respecting his freedom to publish it in other sources.

Rebellion 22.11.2022