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## The Shepherd Borat?

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### *Summary*

Author argues that it would be a mistake to treat Slavoj Žižek's political philosophy as if it were a performance act. Žižek is a neo-Leninist writer, a political-philosophical shepherd, but he is not the Shepherd Borat. Kurelić criticizes and rejects Žižek's reinterpretation of Benjamin's 'divine violence' as theoretically incorrect and politically useless. By comparing Žižek's and Arendt's understanding of the French Revolution Kurelić wants to show why the 'divine violence' recommended by Žižek would for Arendt be an 'element of totalitarianism'. He points out that the political success of socialist and communist ideas was always derived from the vision of the better future, not from the promises of unrestrained revenge and political violence. Žižek's attempt to reconcile the terror of the Jacobins with his modern revolutionary neo-Leninism is a political nonstarter.

*Keywords:* Žižek, Arendt, Divine Violence, Terror, Totalitarianism

### **Introduction**

In a recent interview Slavoj Žižek said that he would rather be feared than treated as a clown. So he prefers the qualification that he is "the most dangerous philosopher of the West" to the one which resurfaced in the introduction to the interview, that he is the "Borat of philosophy". The title of this paper is 'The Shepherd Borat?' because I will try to see whether it makes sense to interpret Žižek's philosophy of violence as some sort of intellectual performance act. I will argue that even if his understanding of violence were part of a performance, it would still be serious.

The paper consists of three segments. In the first one (A) I will present Žižek's understanding of Walter Benjamin's concept of 'divine violence' as an attempt to add a strong voice to Alain Badiou's rejection of parliamentary politics, and his revitalization of the idea of "singular truth" in politics unleashed by the Reign of Terror.

In the second segment (B) I will show that Arendt's anti-totalitarian argument presented in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* forces contemporary Arendtians to question whether modern neo-Jacobinism-Leninism creates new "elements of totalitarianism". I will argue that Žižek's interpretation of Benjamin's 'divine violence' ends up with a concept which is at the same time philosophically incorrect and politically deeply problematic. With the help of Agamben and Sorel I will show why Žižek's operation misses Benjamin's intentions and creates a potentially totalitarian concept of violence. In the concluding segment (C) I will try to show that Žižek, by pushing the envelope of "reinvented terror", created a position which is almost the antithesis of what reasonable politics should be.

## A

In the context of this paper Badiou serves as an introduction to Žižek, but it must be said that Žižek understands his operations on terror and violence as a work of love influenced by his friend Badiou. I will start with a few sentences from Badiou's *Metapolitics* for two reasons. Firstly, because in that book Badiou attacks Arendt's "political philosophy", which is in the context of this paper convenient because she is discussed in the second segment, and secondly, because he introduces a few distinctions essential for the reinvention of emancipatory terror. Badiou, who in the first chapter of the book writes about Arendt and Myriam Revault d'Allones' interpretation of Arendt, from the first sentence insists on the distinction between Arendt's understanding of politics as the exercise of free judgment in public space and his politics of militant "rupture of what exists". In his opinion, Arendt's philosophy of a politics of plurality which insists on consensus, common sense and the courage of judgment is an essentially conservative neo-Kantianism, which perfectly fits the parliamentary state. Arendt's understanding of politics reduces it to negotiation of opinions in public space and eradicates the militant identification of politics and truth. So, opinions belong to the parliamentary politics, while militants introduce the truth. "It is through Saint-Just and Robespierre that you enter into this singular truth unleashed by the French Revolution" (Badiou, 2006: 23). Badiou's epistemological decisionism, in which action creates its own horizon of understanding, perfectly complements his celebration of the Jacobin terror. In Badiou's opinion, the fall of the Jacobins, which happened on the 9 Thermidor, is a sad event which de facto changed the paradigm of political action. It replaced genuine militant politics of terror with institutions. The virtue, which was in his opinion guiding terror, was replaced by interest. Badiou writes:

For a Thermidorean, a country is not a possible place for Republican virtues, as is for the Jacobin patriot. It is what contains a property. A country is an economic objectivity.

For a Thermidorean, the law is not a maxim derived from the relation between principles and the situation, as is for the Jacobin. It is what provides protection, and specifically what protects property. In this regard, its universality is entirely secondary. What counts is its function.

For a Thermidorean, insurrection cannot be the most sacred of duties, as is for the Jacobin whenever the universality of principles is trampled over. The property owner's central and legitimate demand is for peace (Badiou, 2006: 129).

It does not have to be pointed out that in Badiou's opinion the birth of bourgeois parliamentarism starts with the fall of the Jacobins. The reign of truth ended together with the reign of virtuous terror. This is why he is so bothered by Albert Soboul's understanding of Thermidor who, as a Marxist, sees the continuity of bourgeois revolution, a replacement of one bourgeois faction with another.

This is basically the framework in which Žižek tries to interpret Benjamin's 'divine violence'. He wants to connect Benjamin's concept with Robespierre's politics. The problem with the concept is that it was originally formulated in 1921 by Benjamin, who was 28 at the time and was not the clearest writer in the world. The text 'Critique of Violence' invites dramatically different interpretations and numerous writers: Marcuse, Honneth, Agamben, Butler and Žižek, to name a few, came up with sometimes barely comparable solutions. Benjamin criticizes law as the source of violence, and believes that the institution of law, which is locked in the scheme of means and ends, could be revolutionary removed. The act of revolution would be pure, beyond the means-end conceptual scheme, a pure mean. Living in the time when the parliamentary system was despised more than nowadays, Benjamin was impressed by Bloch's *Spirit of Utopia* and quite dramatically by Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*. However, the essay is only partly about the political violence. Benjamin introduces a few important distinctions. He talks about the law-making and law-preserving forms of violence, which are both tied to the institutions of the state, and about – in the context of this paper fundamental – distinction between mythical and divine violence. Divine violence is the one which goes beyond the means-end constellation, and for that reason it is revolutionary violence. The political example of this type of violence is the general strike, which, unlike the singular ordinary strike, which is a legally regulated mean for an end within a system, destroys the entire system, and therefore as a pure divine mean creates a new order. He writes:

But if the existence of violence outside the law, as pure immediate violence, is assured, this furnishes the proof that revolutionary violence, the highest manifestation of unalloyed violence by man, is possible, and by what means. Less possible and also less urgent for humankind, however, is to decide when unalloyed violence has been realized in particular cases. For only mythical violence, not divine, will be recognizable as such with certainty, unless it be in incomparable affects,

because the expiatory power of violence is not visible to men. Once again all the eternal forms are open to pure divine violence which myth bastardized with law. It may manifest itself in a true war exactly as in the divine judgment of the multitude on a criminal. But all mythical, lawmaking violence, which we may call executive, is pernicious. Pernicious, too is the law-preserving, administrative violence that serves it. Divine violence, which is the sign and the seal but never the means of sacred execution, may be called sovereign violence (Benjamin, 1999: 300).

So, what did Žižek make of this? For Žižek, divine violence is “immediate justice/vengeance” (Žižek, 2007: x), “brutal intrusions of justice beyond law” (Žižek, 2009b: 152), “when those outside the structured social field strike ‘blindly’” (*ibid.*: 171), “the counter violence to the excess of violence that pertains to state power... it can appear in many forms: from ‘non-violent’ protests (strikes, civil disobedience) through individual killings to organized or spontaneous violent rebellions and war proper” (Žižek, 2009a: 483) and “desperate violent acts of popular self-defense” (Žižek, 2011b: 115). These different formulations show that for Žižek ‘divine’ primarily means something rough and just, which happens beyond law, an un-institutional act of vengeance. This is why he mentions riots in favelas, popular justice like lynching and, of course, massacres committed during the French Revolution. Terror can also be divine. The distinction he wants to stress is the one between the subjective acts of violence of the oppressed and the structural violence of the system. By system he understands capitalism mostly in combination with democratic parliamentary institutions, but his criticism includes the global economy and civilization in general.

The concept of terror is an element of Badiou’s story about the eternal “Idea of revolutionary justice at work” which operated via Chinese “legists”, Jacobins, Bolsheviks and Mao. In his book *Logiques des mondes* Badiou presents four moments of the Idea: voluntarism (the belief that one can politically do whatever one wants ignoring objective laws and obstacles), terror (understood as the will to destroy enemies of the people without mercy), egalitarian justice (in its immediate brutal imposition) and trust in the people (the belief that the people are virtuous and trustworthy). Žižek accepts the story and tries to process Benjamin’s essay through it. This means that the Reign of Terror which started in 1793 has to be reconciled with the idea of divine striking beyond law. This is not an easy task because the Jacobins were not exactly the people, and they happened to be in power. Žižek makes an interesting manoeuvre and tries to make a distinction between the divine Robespierre and the mythical Danton. It is obvious that the elimination of Danton does not qualify as vengeance against social injustice, but he had to go because he wanted to institutionalize the divine violence, he wanted to take away from the people the possibility to exercise their rage unmediated by the state apparatus. Žižek points out that

this mythical violence is not acceptable because it creates law-making violence and limits the will of the people to brutally exterminate the enemies of the revolution. It takes the revolution out of the revolution. Žižek makes one more step and compares Lenin's terror to Robespierre's understanding of violence, while Stalin becomes a law-making, Danton-like institutional terrorist. Lenin's terror was divine because it was a form of dictatorship of the proletariat, while Stalin's violence represents either the mythical violence or the law protecting violence of the state.

In his introduction to the book *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror* Žižek explains why Robespierre was a perfect terrorist. He was different because he was prepared to mercilessly decapitate enemies of the revolution whether they were kings or former colleagues, and at the same time he was not afraid to be killed himself. In works that followed, Žižek even compares him to Keyser Soeze, a character from the movie "Usual Suspects", who killed his own family to become inhumanly free and capable of anything.

The question is why would we need people like Robespierre nowadays? And the answer is direct and simple: to save civilization. The story about the divine Terror, which, as part of the eternal Idea of revolutionary justice, gets reincarnated in different times and places in history, is a part of Žižek's attempt to explain the need for his apocalyptic Jacobinism-Leninism. Unlike the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks who as heirs of the Enlightenment believed in progress, Žižek lives in a world which, in his strong opinion, is heading towards the apocalypse. Nothing more, nothing less. The responsibility of the revolutionaries is to save the world, "to 'stop the train' of history which runs towards the precipice of global catastrophe" (Žižek, 2007: xxxviii). Žižek believes that his responsibility is to get that message out. This opens a can of worms, because the world is full of post-modern radicals, identity politics people, multiculturalists, and the worst of all, European social-democrats and American left liberals. On top of that, our civilization celebrates a breed of capitalists Žižek calls liberal communist. They are the "agents of structural violence". People like Bill Gates and George Soros are responsible for the creation of the capitalism with a human face, which makes the revolution less likely to happen.

Divine violence, in its politically relevant destructive form, is an explosion of the rage of the oppressed wherever they are and whoever they are. The enraged are excluded from the structure and violated. Capitalism with a human face lessens the possibility of the revolutionaries to use "the rage capital" in order to make dramatic changes. The non-revolutionary left, which for Žižek means the non-violent left, is also doing serious damage to the cause of revolution because it is spreading the idea that the reform makes sense. Together with Badiou, Žižek concludes that the representative western democracy itself is becoming a problem. He quotes his friend and explains: "Today the enemy is not called Empire of Capital. It's called Democracy.

What today prevents the radical questioning of capitalism itself is precisely the belief in the democratic form of the struggle against capitalism” (Žižek, 2009a: 183).

In order to finish his story on violence with a dramatic twist, Žižek concludes that the problem of Hitler’s, Stalin’s and Pol Pot’s regimes was not that they were too violent, but that they were not violent enough. He defines violence as a “radical upheaval of the basic social relations” and concludes that Hitler did not abolish capitalism, that Pol Pot did not create the new culture and so on.

Violence becomes a fundamental concept for Žižek, and the Idea of Communism is for him not the idea of a future just society, which he never tries to describe, but the idea of its painful birth. Communism is the byproduct of the revolutionary voluntarism which saves the world.

In the next segment I will try to show why the fusion of Badiou’s and Benjamin’s ideas does not work.

## B

When one reads Arendt’s book *On Revolution* today, it sounds as if she wrote it to refute Žižek’s attempt to revitalize the Jacobin terror in order to prevent the apocalypse. In combination with *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the combination essential for Agamben’s homo sacer “project”, Arendt’s story about the failure of the French Revolution is a warning against the reduction of politics to issues related to bare life. The essence of the revolution is not terror, “the revolution with the revolution” for Žižek, but the creation of a republic which is a space in which citizens can be citizens and exercise public freedom. Terror is exactly the opposite of public freedom because it violently takes away the space in which freedom can exist. Žižek permanently talks about the “liberal” preference for the 1789 without the 1793. Arendt, who was certainly not a liberal, has the same preference. Her book compares two revolutions: the American, which in her opinion was “triumphant”, and the French, which failed with catastrophic consequences for the European civilization. Terror is the reason why the French Revolution failed to realize its starting goal – freedom. What went wrong? The rage of the hungry masses, their fundamental need to save the bare life became the driving force of the revolution and eventually the reason of its failure. So, Žižek’s divine violence doomed the revolution. Arendt, of course, knows that the revolutionaries had to feed the population and does not blame the poor for their misery, but she recognizes the fatal switch from the freedom as a goal of the revolution to happiness of the masses. Freedom for them and for the future revolutions became “the fruit of necessity”. She writes:

It was under the rule of this necessity that the multitude rushed to the assistance of the French Revolution, inspired it, drove it onward, and eventually sent to its doom, for this was the multitude of the poor. When they appeared on the scene of politics,

necessity appeared with them, and the result was that the power of the old regime became impotent and the new republic was stillborn; freedom had to be surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself (Arendt, 1990: 60).

Arendt points out that the terrible social circumstances in which the revolution started contributed to the forming of a fatal revolutionary cooperation between the Jacobins and the Sans-Culottes. Robespierre killed the leader of the militant poor in the same way in which he eliminated Danton, but not before the rights of Sans-Culottes “dress, food and the reproduction of their species” transformed the Rights of Man into the struggle for basic happiness. Hunger and poverty eliminated politics. Terror was used to secure the control of the prices of food, to fight the counter-revolution within and without, to support the draft, to punish corruption and, in the end, to resolve the fight between different fractions. However, the dynamics of terror were dictated largely by social misery felt by the Sans-Culottes, and even the Jacobins believed that justice and equality would rise from the violent outbursts of the needy. This is exactly why Žižek tries to interpret the Reign of Terror as divine violence.

Arendt recognizes a number of problems and argues that the terror of the Revolution demonstrated that “absolute goodness is hardly any less dangerous than absolute evil” (*ibid.*: 82), and shows how the monolithic Truth of the Jacobins is nothing but Rousseau’s *volonté générale*, with all undesirable consequences it has under the best of circumstances, let alone in the middle of a bloody revolution.

She also recognizes the link between Robespierre and Lenin but it is not flattering. In her opinion, both of them used the forms of direct democracy while it was in their political interest and destroyed them when they decided to centralize the political power. It was one of the reasons for the fall of Robespierre. The direct democratic bodies which he neutralized did not come to his rescue.

The French Revolution gave birth to a new figure on the political scene, the professional revolutionary. Arendt does not like them too much, because they are parasites of social misery, bankers in the banks of rage. “The outbreak of most revolutions has surprised the revolutionist groups and parties no less than all others, and there exists hardly a revolution whose outbreak could be blamed upon their activities. It usually was the other way round: revolutions broke out and liberated, as it were, the professional revolutionists from wherever they happened to be – from jail, or from the coffee house, or from the library” (*ibid.*: 259). The political life should be a life of every citizen, not a life of their parliamentary representatives or professional shepherds.

Her fundamental distinction between the struggle for bare life and the struggle to create institutions in which political life can flourish is the one Agamben creatively reinterpreted.

In the context of this paper Agamben's Arendtean operation from *Homo Sacer* is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because Agamben uses both Arendt and Benjamin in his book and, secondly, because his criticism of the predatory state implicitly points out weaknesses in Žižek's maneuver. Without going into any details of Agamben's theory presented in the *Homo Sacer* trilogy (*Homo Sacer*, *State of Exception*, *Remnants of Auschwitz*), I would like to stress the fundamental difference between Agamben and Žižek. Part of their difference is in my opinion caused by Agamben's Arendtianism. The famous story of homo sacer is the story of the predatory character of the state and the international order in which we live, which in Agamben's mind turns biopolitics into thanatopolitics. Liberal democracies can easily turn into totalitarian regimes because they share the unrecognized biopolitical foundation. Our civilization is a biopolitical attempt to manage the survival of humanity which can go wrong. This is the reason why Agamben argues that we should think about the new politics beyond the state and the law. And this is why Benjamin, as a philosopher who criticized the violence of law, becomes essential for Agamben. Benjamin and Carl Schmitt represent two paradigmatic positions. Schmitt is the thinker of the state of exception, while Agamben, who believes that our states are in permanent latent state of exception, uses Benjamin to point out that it is necessary to separate violence and law and to free politics from law. That change cannot be done without the revolution of some kind, but we never learn from Agamben exactly what kind. So, like Žižek, Agamben wants a new civilization and believes that Benjamin makes a good philosophical ally. Arendt and Benjamin appear together in a key chapter of the book *Homo Sacer*, 'Potentiality of Law', in which Agamben, after explaining that the relation between the constituting power and constituted power is for Benjamin like the relation between the violence that posits law and the violence that preserves it, uses this distinction to interpret Arendt's insights from *On Revolution* and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. He quotes Arendt and writes:

Here the problem is not so much how to conceive a constituting power that does not exhaust itself in a constituted power... as how clearly to differentiate constituting from constituted power, which is surely a more difficult problem. Attempts to think the preservation of constituting power are certainly not lacking in our age, and they have become familiar to us through the Trotskyite notion of "permanent revolution" and Maoist concept of "uninterrupted revolution". Even the power of councils (which there is no reason not to think of as stable, even if de facto constituted revolutionary powers have done everything in their power to eliminate them) can from this perspective be considered as a survival of constituting power within constituted power. But the two great destroyers of spontaneous councils in our time – the Leninist party and the Nazi party – also present themselves, in a certain sense, as the preserves of the constituting moment (*istanza*) alongside constituted power. It is in this light that we ought to consider the characteristic "dual"



structure of the great totalitarian states of our century (the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany) which has made things so difficult for the historians of public law (Agamben, 1998: 41-42).

This paragraph is very important for my paper, because, if Agamben correctly understands Benjamin's concepts, Žižek's attempt to make terror divine and to distinguish between Robespierre and Danton by using the difference between mythical and divine violence does not hold water. Agamben correctly recognizes that revolution is a law-making process in which the constituting power creates a new institution of power – the constituted power. Councils, sections, districts and soviets are all forms of self-organization of the people who is a constituting power in a popular revolution. So, when Robespierre limited the importance of direct democracy and when Lenin eliminated soviets, this can only be understood as an act of de facto established constituted power. In totalitarian regimes the constituting power operates as the movement in power and creates the dual structure. I think that this is a correct way to use Benjamin's concepts in describing Arendt's insights.

Why would this be a problem for Žižek? Because divine violence never appears. The terror, whether it is exercised by the executive power or by the uncontrolled militants, is always law-making violence and therefore mythical violence. The Reign of Terror is nothing but law-preserving violence in the very clear means-end structure. The direct democratic activity of the Sans-Culottes is mythical violence coordinated with the law-preserving institutionalized activity of Danton and Robespierre. Žižek smartly avoided mentioning the Sans-Culottes because they would create a number of problems for his story, but only their outbursts of rage and the Public Terror from 1789 till 1792 can be called divine violence in Žižek's understanding of the concept. His difference between Lenin and Stalin does not work either, because both of them are members of the revolutionary mythical party which stays within the state and creates a specific totalitarian regime. Lenin's destruction of anarchists is not divine but law-preserving. However, there is a much bigger disagreement between Žižek and Agamben and it is also related to Žižek's understanding of terror. In *Violence* Žižek says:

So, paradoxically, divine violence does partially overlap with the bio-political disposal of Homini sacer: in both cases, killing is neither a crime nor a sacrifice. Those annihilated by divine violence are fully and completely guilty: they are not sacrificed, since they are not worthy of being sacrificed to and accepted by God – they are annihilated without being made a sacrifice (Žižek, 2009b: 168).

Žižek is right, but there is nothing paradoxical in the extermination of the aristocrats. They are killed because their existence in a republic creates a "biopolitical fracture" and the state either does the killing or withdraws the protection of the law

and allows killing by the militias who may or may not be coordinated with the state. This is exactly what Agamben means when he talks about the sovereign decision to “make live and let die”. The revolutionary government of the first European bourgeois republic was doing biopolitics by securing the bare life of the poor and by deciding that a certain part of the population should surgically be removed in a way in which one would remove a tumor from a body. This is biopolitics through terror. There is nothing paradoxical about it. This is precisely what Agamben is trying to point out. The bloody mythical violence which created the law-preserving institutions can survive in contemporary states transformed in a permanent unrecognized state of exception. The phenomenon looks paradoxical if you believe that terror is divine, but, of course, it is not.

Finally, I would like to finish this segment by showing that Benjamin would never in his wildest dreams call the Reign of Terror divine. The reason for that is very simple. The concept of divine violence is not a narrow political concept. “Educational violence” can also be divine. However, when Benjamin thinks about violence in politics he primarily thinks about the general strike. The reason for that is also known, because Benjamin was strongly influenced by Sorel. So strongly that he, like Sorel, believed that in the bourgeois state the behavior of the police is even worse than in the monarchy. The French bourgeois state was created by the bourgeois revolution and this is the state Sorel is fighting against. So in *Reflections on Violence* he wrote the entire chapter to clearly distinguish the revolution of the proletariat from the bloody bourgeois revolution. The chapter is significantly called ‘Prejudice against Violence’ because people have prejudice that all violence is like the bourgeois terror. The violence of the proletariat can never be deplorable like the one committed during the Reign of Terror. Georges Sorel, who, by the way, also prefers 1789 without 1793, writes:

From the Inquisition to the political justice of the monarchy, and from this to the revolutionary courts of justice, there was a constant progress towards greater severity of laws, the extension of the use of force, and the amplification of authority. For a considerable time the Church had left doubts about the value of the exceptional methods practiced by its inquisition. The monarchy, especially when it had reached its full maturity, was troubled with very few scruples about the matter; but the Revolution displayed the scandal of its superstitious cult of the State quite openly, in the full light of day (Sorel, 1925: 114).

A few pages later Sorel makes his position perfectly clear and writes:

We have the right to conclude from the preceding analysis that Syndicalist violence, perpetrated in the course of strikes by proletarians who desire the overthrow of the State, must not be confused with those acts of savagery which the superstition of the State suggested to the revolutionaries of '93, when they had power

in their hands and were able to oppress the conquered – following the principles which they had received from the Church and from the Monarchy. We have the right to hope that a Socialist revolution carried out by pure Syndicalists would not be defiled by abominations which sullied the middle-class revolutions (Sorel, 1925: 124).

I do not think this needs any further comment. Badiou and Benjamin simply do not click.

## C

Finally, I have to answer the question from the title. Is Žižek the shepherd Borat, an entertainer with a bizarre intellectual act, which includes forbidden ideas, or a dangerous Stalinist? Should we laugh or cry? He is neither. But even if he were a performer, the mere fact that he is globally recognized would force us to take his (and Badiou's) story of terror seriously, especially because the overlap between the radical left and the radical right reminds us of the time in which Benjamin wrote 'Critique of Violence'. The problem I wanted to present is directly related to my understanding of political theory. I agree with Arendt and Popper that ideas do count politically and political philosophers produce (or recycle) ideas.

Žižek takes the concept of violence seriously. Violence is a part of the story of the revolution and the revolution is necessary to prevent the apocalypse. The things cannot get any more serious than that. At the end of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Arendt predicted that totalitarian solutions would outlive the totalitarian regimes. As we know, she was right. Žižek's radical solutions would be totalitarian in her book, especially the description of a genuine Keyser-Robespierre revolutionary, and voluntarism powered by the rage of the masses. She would consider them to be elements which could crystallize in some future form of totalitarianism. For Arendt the lost treasure of the revolution are forms of people's self-organization, councils, districts, sections and soviets which were never institutionalized in any workable way. These forms are fundamental because the citizens who exercise political freedom do not become mobs or masses. The problem we should worry about is not the over-discussed democratic deficit of the EU, but a more dangerous political deficit of its member states.

Žižek does not do political science, so understandably he does not give policy recommendations, however, two implicit recommendations for political action can be derived from the story on violence. The first one is that reforms make no sense because they save capitalism and that the only right action is the revolutionary action. The second one is about the right revolution and it says that the only revolution which can really save the world is "the revolution with the revolution", which means a radically violent revolution. It is impossible to say which of these two is less pru-

dent. Any kind of action capable of doing anything useful to save the planet would have to include large international coalitions of politically different groups which would include most of the positions Žižek rejects and very likely “liberal communists” as well. That kind of an action would be exactly the opposite of the rage bank explosions because it would focus on the removal of the causes of rage. It would be a form of piecemeal global engineering designed to form workable governance for the planet. None of the apocalyptic problems discussed by Žižek can be solved by politics of terror, either local or international. However, if one wants to keep the Idea of Communism as an idea in which planetary cooperation replaces planetary competition, one has to do exactly the opposite of what Žižek is doing. Political success of socialist and communist ideas was always derived from the vision of a better future, not from the promises of unrestrained revenge and unavoidable violence. Hope and vision can move any mountain, not the fear of the apocalypse. If our choice is between September Massacres and Armageddon we may very well choose Armageddon. Why it would be beneficial for the Idea of Communism to be associated with deplorable explosions of murderous passions which sullied the bourgeois revolution is known only to Žižek and Badiou. There are lost treasures of previous revolutions which are much more useful and worth revisiting than terror.

However, Žižek helped us by showing us clearly, and with some panache, what not to do.

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