

# The demoralized pessimism of Chris Hedges’ “New Dark Age”

David North  
20 May 2025

*This article is an edited version of a tweet that was initially posted on X.*

Last year, Chris Hedges advocated self-immolation as a way to protest the Gaza genocide. In his latest demoralized screed, he transfers blame for the crimes of the Israeli-Zionist state and capitalist imperialism to the entire human race. Gaza, he proclaims, proves the futility of any belief in the possibility of human progress.

In support of his insistence of the hopeless state of humanity, he counterpoises what Hedges claims were the pessimistic views of Auguste Blanqui to those of Hegel and Marx.

Hedges writes: “The 19th century socialist Louis-Auguste Blanqui, unlike nearly all of his contemporaries, dismissed the belief central to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, that human history is a linear progression toward equality and greater morality.”

As so often in his previous writings, Hedges demonstrates once again that he understands nothing of the philosophical foundations of Marxism and the materialist conception of history. Neither Hegel or Marx claimed that history is “a linear progression” toward paradise.

Hegel (1770-1831), who witnessed the complex and tragic fate of the French Revolution, famously described history as a “slaughter bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of States, and the virtue of individuals have been victimized.” He explained, albeit in an idealist manner, that the historic development of humanity proceeds through contradiction and conflict.

As for Marx and Engels, they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (1847) that the class struggle leads to “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the

common ruin of the contending classes.” They rejected any form of simplistic determinism. Marx and Engels explained that the contradictions of the capitalist system created the objective possibility of socialism. But its realization and the fate of humanity would be decided in struggle.

August Blanqui did not reject the possibility of progress and devoted his entire life to the cause of revolution. But this great fighter had no understanding of the socioeconomic basis of revolution and the objectively revolutionary role of the working class. Blanqui conceived of the overthrow of capitalism as the outcome of a coup d’état organized by a small group of conspirators.

Engels wrote in 1874 that Blanqui ‘has neither a socialist theory nor any definite practical suggestions for social remedies. In his political activity he was mainly a ‘man of action’...” Three years earlier, in 1871, the Marxist conception of revolution as a mass movement of the working class had been substantiated in the uprising of the Parisian working class and the creation of the Commune.

All the great Marxists of the 20th century warned that the crisis of capitalism led to one of two outcomes. They were, as stated by Rosa Luxemburg, “socialism or barbarism.” The scientifically grounded understanding of the nature of the capitalist epoch underlay Lenin’s conception of the decisive role of the revolutionary party.

In 1938, responding to the rise of fascism, the defeats of the European working class as a consequence of the betrayals of Stalinism and Social Democracy, Trotsky wrote in the founding document of the Fourth International, the crisis of mankind is the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

Hedges writes: “Campaigns of mass killing unleash

the feral qualities that lie latent in all humans ... It is a testament to our hypocrisy, cruelty and racism.” This is a libel against humanity. To blame humanity in general for the genocide is to obfuscate the specific responsibility of the imperialist leaders and the system they represent for the crimes committed against the people of Gaza. However incorrect his politics, Chris Hedges himself bears no responsibility whatsoever for the genocide. He is a politically disoriented journalist who is overwhelmed by the ongoing atrocities. But Netanyahu and his cohorts, and their imperialist enablers, are mass murderers. This is not a minor difference.

Hedges claims that mankind is entering a “New Dark Age,” from which there is no escape. In reality, mankind is entering a new era of revolutionary struggle. The imperialist-backed Gaza genocide has been met by protests involving millions across the globe. The crimes of imperialism—the desperate attempt of the ruling class to resolve its crisis through fascism and war—is setting into motion a mass movement against capitalism. The historic task of this era is to resolve the crisis of revolutionary leadership by building the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

To all those who want to take up this fight, join the Socialist Equality Party. Fill out the form below.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**