

# *Sur le journalisme – About Journalism – Sobre jornalismo*

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## **Call for Papers**

### *Narrative Journalism and Socialism: From Marxism to the New Lefts, in Action and Stories*

Starting date: **1 July 2019**

Deadline for paper submission: **1 December 2019**

Editors of this special issue:

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From Jack London to George Orwell, from Upton Sinclair to Gabriel García Márquez, from José Martí to Elena Poniatowska, from Joseph Roth to Günter Walraff, literary journalists have often pursued a socialist agenda. Undercover reporters, muckrakers and, increasingly, whistleblowers share a common dedication and commitment to social justice and progress. Because it explores the extraordinary lives of ordinary people, narrative or literary journalism falls within the traditions of *History from Below* (United Kingdom), *Alltagsgeschichte* (Germany), or *microstoria* (Italy) of the past century, all of which have a staunch socialist or Marxist allegiance. Poverty, precarity, unemployment, displacement, imprisonment, malady, i.e. the many plagues that affect the downtrodden, feature as essential topics in Anglo-American literary journalism, French *grand reportage*, and Hispano-Portuguese *crónicas*. By way of illustration, Ted Conover follows Mexican migrants crossing the border to the United States, Adrienne Nicole Leblanc reports on a Puerto Rican family in the Bronx drug underworld, William T. Vollmann investigates poverty across the world, while in France, Florence Aubenas tells the stories of precarious workers and dropouts, and in Portugal Mário and Pedro Patrocínio tell of lives in Brazilian *favelas* and Angolan urban ghettos.

With the rise of populisms and right extremisms, movements from the left, far-left, and even beyond the left side of the political spectrum, have also gained in visibility. Socialism today, drawing either from its Marxist heritage or as a legacy of a pluralist Left, takes different directions, including radicalization or direct action. Grass-roots movement are thriving, whether they originate from the political sphere or civil society. The dramatic comeback of socialism is also characterized by the popularity of some politicians who totally assume this new turn to the left, from Bernie Sanders in the United States to Jeremy Corbyn in the United Kingdom. The nature of this socialism is not homogeneous; it comes in a variety of forms. Growing inequalities between elites and citizens, big bosses and minimum wage earners, and the shameless

exploitation of vulnerable populations, cause considerable discontent on a worldwide scale. A global conversation allows for new ideas to emerge on the management and action levels, and “conscientization” (Paulo Freire) remains an important key to understand the prevailing climate, to untangle problems, to imagine viable solutions or even pedagogical projects. However, if radical imagination and direct action are undeniably back in favor, socialism does not necessarily mean radicalism or anarchism, nor Marxism, nor communism.

Movements for social justice have always been supported and performed through storytelling. This issue of *About Journalism* will interrogate the specificities of such stories, which prompt and convey meaning to action, in a diachronic perspective. It will highlight the roots, convergences and divergences, but also the prospects for socialism in the twenty-first century, as well as the manner in which it is revisited and modernized by future generations. It will aim at understanding how narrative journalism, or literary reportage, allows for a better understanding of the stakes, promises, and values of socialism today, in a transcultural and interdisciplinary perspective. This issue will deal with the main motivations and subjects of socialism, now that it is actively resisting, and will define the journalistic and literary practices and strategies used to reflect such realities. It will analyze the poetics, poietics, and politics of narrative journalism when it specifically reports on the people from below, those whom we have come to call the new poor, the underprivileged, or poorly-paid workers.

From a purely journalistic point of view, it is a fact that the political press is losing momentum and is being supplanted by pluralistic and nonpartisan media. Therefore, it is worth considering the vacuum left by many newspapers that explicitly assumed their left-wing alignment, be it simply socialist, progressive, or else, not to mention those who are still, strictly speaking, the official organs of a party – *Le Peuple* in Belgium, *L’Humanité* in France, *Pravda* in the Soviet Union, *People’s Daily* in China – to name just a few. This void is now filled by editorialists and polemicists of all kinds who are providing opinions and commentaries, while social networks offer space to vent off anger, hatred, and abuse. Conversely, literary journalists propose an alternative path where long-researched and well-crafted stories disclose the details of felt lives and reveal the humanness of complicated realities.

Papers for this special issue of the journal will reflect the variety of definitions, conceptualizations, representations, and interpretations of socialism, along the following lines:

- Activism, radicalism, direct action, journalism
- Ethics and aesthetics of literary/narrative journalism
- Literary/Narrative journalism and social justice
- Literary/Narrative journalism in immersion
- Politically committed journalism, journalism of attachment
- Active literature and positive journalism
- Militant and pedagogical practices through the media
- Representations of struggles and revolutions in media productions

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**The deadline for submitting the final manuscripts** (30 to 50,000 characters, including notes and bibliography) is **1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**, at: [Isabelle.Meuret@ulb.ac.be](mailto:Isabelle.Meuret@ulb.ac.be)

Manuscripts may be written in **English, French, Portuguese or Spanish**.

**Double blind** review.

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