

## **ANOTHER THIRTY YEARS<sup>1</sup>**

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It is now exactly 30 years since I began working at Allied Corporation, which in turn was 30 years after the great Chicago ethnographer, Donald Roy, began working there in 1944. I recently returned to my old stomping ground to see what had become of the engine division of Allis Chalmers – I can now reveal the company’s real name. The physical plant is still there in the town of Harvey, south of Chicago. Its grounds are overgrown with weeds, its buildings are dilapidated. It has a new owner. Allis Chalmers, then the third biggest corporation in the production of agricultural equipment after Caterpillar and John Deere, entered dire financial straights and was bought out by K-H-Deutz AG of Germany in 1985. The engine division in Harvey also shut down in 1985. Soon, thereafter, it became the warehouse of a local manufacturer of steel tubes – Allied Tubes. Thus, in yet another quirk of sociological serendipity the alias that I gave Allis Chalmers turned out to be the actual name of the company that bought it up! Even more interesting, in 1987, Allied Tubes was taken over by Tyco -- the scandal-fraught international conglomerate. In the last year Tyco’s two top executives have made headline news, charged with securities fraud, tax evasion and looting hundreds of millions of dollars from the conglomerate.

Warehousing, conglomeration and corporate looting well capture the fall out of the Reagan era that began in 1980, five years after I left Allis. South Chicago had been

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<sup>1</sup> To appear as a special preface to the Chinese edition of *Manufacturing Consent*.

the home of thriving blue collar ethnic communities, famously around its steel mills, described by Bill Kornblum (1974) in his *Blue Collar Community* -- a book that appeared just as I was beginning to work at Allis. Today the whole South Side of Chicago is an industrial morgue as plant after plant closed down. Allied Tubes is one of the last hold outs. Instead of a working class suburb we now have a ghetto, largely populated by African Americans. Many were evacuated from the celebrated and controversial Robert Taylor Homes, located to the South of the inner city of Chicago. When this “housing project” was completed in 1962 it was said to be the largest public housing development in the United States. The story of the rise and fall of the Robert Taylor Homes has been richly dissected in Sudhir Venkatesh’s (2000), *American Project*. The homes have now been torn down and turned into “mixed-income” housing, while many of the erstwhile residents have been warehoused into the wastelands of South Chicago, to communities like Harvey.

The landscape of Harvey is not what it was but the suburban strip where I used to live is still recognizable despite signs for the sale of real estate at “very cheap” prices, despite empty lots, gutted buildings, broken windows, currency exchanges for pay day loans, fast food outlets, auction signs, African American churches, and run down bars. What happened to Harvey has happened to much of the South Side. Indeed, it is a story that can be recounted time and again in America’s rust belt as industry shut down or traveled abroad to be partially replaced by a burgeoning service economy and the dot.com revolution. The state denied any responsibility for social and economic dislocation, giving rise to deepening inequalities, escalating crime, and poverty. Now it’s

hard to find a union office in this heartland of historic and heroic labor struggles. Such are the legacies of the Reagan era.

All this was entirely unanticipated in *Manufacturing Consent*. I paid no attention to the surrounding community and focused on, what I called, the hegemonic organization of work as though it were the end of history. For all my insistence on “the extended case method”<sup>2</sup> and the contextualization of the ethnographic site, for all my critique of Donald Roy’s myopia, I must confess my own study suffered from similar limitations. I was blind to the future that was already opening before me – not far away steel mills were closing down one after the other. Why should manufacturing escape the same fate? I was riveted to the past, to explaining the small transformations in work organization between the time Roy studied the plant in 1944 and the time I studied the same plant in 1974. I had my back to the future.

The amazing constancy in the organization of production between 1944 and 1974 was a methodological boon. But in leading me to focus on explaining *small changes* I overlooked the large scale and dramatic transformations of capitalism, its creative destruction as Joseph Schumpeter put it. Still, all was not lost, since that same constancy of technology and piece rate system did stimulate a theoretical innovation. It allowed me to focus on the mode of regulating work, what I called the political and ideological apparatuses of production, or the *regime of production* -- what others, working in a different theoretical framework, might simply call the pattern of industrial relations. I

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<sup>2</sup> Since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent* I have elaborated this ethnographic method in a number of publications. See Burawoy et al., 1991; Burawoy et al., 2000 and Burawoy, 1998, 2003a.

understood the 30 year transition as being along the continuum from a despotic to a hegemonic regime, from extracting effort through coercion and fear to extracting effort through the organization of consent. There is always some coercion and some consent but their relative proportions and their articulation changed over time as the importance of consent rose and coercion declined, and as indeed the application of coercion itself became the object of consent. I saw this shift in production regime in the development of the *internal labor market* that privileged seniority and thus constituted workers with interests in the longevity of the firm, and in the development of what I called the *internal state* whose grievance machine constituted workers with rights and obligations and whose apparatus of collective bargaining coordinated the interests of workers and managers. These two institutions framed *the game of making out* so as to make it even more seductive, even more effective in eliciting our spontaneous consent to managerial expectations of output.

I attributed the shift in production regime to two external factors. On the one hand, Geer Company -- as Roy had called the old independent Buda company -- had moved from the competitive sector of the economy to its corporate sector and with that came a more protected labor force, laying a foundation for a hegemonic regime based on class compromise. Simultaneous with Buda's mobility between sectors the years after WWII saw a secular change in industrial relations as the New Deal legislation was institutionalized, promoting internal labor markets, grievance machinery and collective bargaining across the organized sector of industry. I turned the hegemonic regime of production into a natural and eternal form because I froze the external forces that

generated it. I did not see that those external forces – markets and states – are not fixed external factors but themselves the product of social processes that have their own dynamics.<sup>3</sup> First, I could not see that global markets were enveloping national markets and sending US manufacturing industry into a nose dive. Like so many companies Allis Chalmers could no longer compete on an international or domestic market. Second, I did not anticipate the political offensive against labor that began with Reagan's election as President. In 1981 striking air-traffic controllers were dismissed by President Reagan and non-union employees were brought in to replace them. The attack on the air traffic controllers and their union – PATCO – coincided with the filling of the National Labor Relations Board with Reagan appointees, giving it a pro-management majority that expanded employers' rights to oppose unions.

The twin offensive against labor – first markets and then the state – turned the hegemonic regime from an impregnable form of domination (in my imagination!) to a fleeting moment in US labor relations history. Rather than a harbinger of the future the hegemonic regime I discerned in 1974 was about to be replaced by what, in hindsight, I later called hegemonic despotism – a despotism that was built on the foundation of hegemony that rendered workers helpless against managerial assault. Ironically, 1974-75 proved to be a turning point in US labor history after which unions have only steadily declined in strength. The overall unionization rate dropped from 24% in 1974 to 13% of

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<sup>3</sup> James Zetka's (1994) advances my analysis of hegemonic regimes by analyzing not only the transformation of state intervention but also the transformation of the markets within which large corporations operated. He points up another lacuna in my extension from the shop floor, namely the need for a deeper analysis of the changing relation of the engine division to the central office of Allis Chalmers, the sort of analysis that Robert Freeland (2001) does so effectively for General Motors. It was necessary to extend the idea of production politics to the managerial labor process as Vicki Smith (1990) does in her analysis of the way managers managed themselves and others out of jobs. All these studies opened up the social processes behind the forces that I had reified.

the labor force in 2003. In 1974 the unionization rates in the public and private sectors were the same, but since then they have steadily diverged until in 2003 they were 37% and 8% respectively!<sup>4</sup>

Not only did I fail to anticipate the transformation of markets and states and thus the intensified pressure on labor but I also failed to discern how vulnerable labor had become by virtue of the hegemonic regime itself. I did not appreciate how the hegemonic regime sowed the seeds of its own destruction. In atomizing workers – forging industrial citizens -- and in tying the interests of labor to those of capital, the hegemonic regime undermined labor's opposition to management and its capacity to resist employer offensives. The error here lay in my dissection of social processes, and it was the obverse of the one I had made with external forces. That is to say, just as I overlooked the social processes behind the external forces, I also overlooked how social processes become social forces. In this regard, most usually, we think of social processes becoming social movements – positive forces that exert pressure for change. Indeed, that was Rick Fantasia's (1988) criticism of *Manufacturing Consent*. In *Cultures of Solidarity* he showed how movements develop on the shop floor from grievances, facilitated by emergent solidarities around race or gender or even class. While, of course, there have been such spontaneous labor movements of this sort, I think the historical record shows them to be rare and that my perspective on diminished struggle is more accurate. The atomization and coordination of interests wrought by the hegemonic regime was, one

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<sup>4</sup>For an analysis of these trends see, Freeman (1988), and Farber and Western ( 2001, 2002).

might say, a *negative social force*, but a force nonetheless, that made labor more vulnerable to employer offensives and diminished collective mobilization.

Methodological flaws are intimately related to theoretical shortcomings. The extended case method calls for four extensions: the extension of the observer into the life of the participant, the extension of observations in time and space, the extension of micro processes to macro forces, and finally, underlying and informing each of these, the extension of theory. Instead of generating theory *de novo* from the ground up, we start with theory and reconstruct it in the light of anomalies we confront in the field. I started with Marxist theories of production and politics, theories founded in the separation of base and superstructure with the base the source of class struggle and the superstructure containing that class struggle. In my experience, however, the notion of production as the source of class consciousness and the site of class struggle was everywhere challenged by workers who were devoted to fulfilling management's output quotas. I myself, Marxist to the core, was no less active and enthusiastic (if less competent) in pursuit of "making out."

My Marxist reconstruction took theories of superstructure and applied them to the base. Thus, within the factory I discovered the analogue of Nicos Poulantzas's "popular class state," and Louis Althusser's political and ideological apparatuses. Based on my observations and experiences at Allis, I claimed that it was on the shop floor that Gramsci's political and civil hegemonies were born – irrespective of what happened in state and civil society. Consonant with feminism's politicization of daily life and

Foucault's micro-physics of power I thematized the idea of a "politics of production." Like so many theoretical innovations, its power but also its weakness came from its unrelenting and singular focus, its one-sidedness. In reconstructing theories of production and of politics, I left intact conventional theories of state, markets and civil society. Perhaps one can only problematize one thing at a time -- one has to keep one's eye on the prize -- but in this case it meant that I lost sight of the dynamism of the external forces engulfing production. To reify those external forces, just as to subjectify internal processes, was as much a theoretical as an empirical shortcoming.

So I failed to anticipate the demise of U.S. manufacturing, of the trade union movement (at least in the private sector), and, of course, of the hegemonic regime of production. Errors of prediction, however, are the lifeblood of science. Subsequent studies made up for my shortcomings by grappling with the transformations I failed to predict. The studying of manufacturing divided into two tracks: the high road and the low road. On the one hand, there were optimistic arguments, such as Piore and Sabel's (1984) *The Second Industrial Divide*, that mass production was being replaced by specialized production, which in turn required flexible specialization and the reskilling of labor. On the other hand, the pessimistic view, as expounded in Bennett Harrison's (1994) *Lean and Mean*, saw only intensified despotism and polarization ahead.

While some U.S. commentators harped on the fate of the industrial heartlands and the consequences of reindustrialization others turned elsewhere to the study of the service sector. Arlie Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart* – a study of airline attendants –

broke new ground in examining the extraction of emotional labor and stimulated a whole new literature on care work. Equally important was Robin Leidner's (1993) *Fast Food, Fast Talk* which focused on the three way relation, characteristic of service work, between managers, workers and consumers in two very different sectors – insurance and fast food. Both studies examined new forms of workplace control and resistance, overlooking the always problematic organization of consent. This lacuna was recently filled by Rachel Sherman's (forthcoming) *Class Acts* that studies the power and credibility games that workers play against their clients in luxury hotels.

One of the consequences of the feminist infusion into U.S. sociology has been the extension of the very meaning of work, from wage labor to unpaid domestic work. Here too Hochschild (1989) made a classic contribution with *The Second Shift* – an interrogation of the myths and realities of the domestic division of labor. From there it was a short step to the burgeoning literature on paid domestic work, studied as a relation between employer and employee, from Judith Rollins's (1985) *Between Women* to Pierrette Hondagneu Sotelo's (2001) *Domestica*. There are also a wide range of studies of domestic work beyond the United States such as Rhacel Parrenas's (2001) *Servants of Globalization*, comparing Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles or Pei-Chia Lan's study of Filipinas in Taiwan.

Feminism has invaded studies in manufacturing from a historical standpoint as with Ruth Milkman's (1987) *Gender at Work* that attributed the changing gender line in the electrical and auto industries before, during and after World War Two to logics of

capital accumulation. Others studied plants of the Global South where women dominated the labor force. Ching Kwan Lee (1998), *Gender and the South China Miracle*, compared the gender regimes in two manufacturing plants -- one in South China and the other in Hong Kong while Leslie Salzinger (2003), *Genders in Production*, studied the very different gender regimes in Maquiladores factories on the US-Mexican border. Beyond manufacturing, in the public sector, there is also a gendered politics of production as Linda Blum (1991) showed in her analysis of the interlocking logics and class bases of affirmative action and comparable worth.

Such historical and comparative studies are not all informed by feminism. Richard Biernacki's (1995), *The Fabrication of Labor*, traces the divergence of factory regimes in the textile industries of 19<sup>th</sup>. century Germany and England to different cultural conceptions of labor. Jeffrey Haydu's (1988), *Between Craft and Class*, compares metal workers in England and the United States during World War I. Linda Fuller's (1992) *Work and Democracy in Socialist Cuba* explores the transformation of production politics in Cuba during the 1970s when industrial decentralization was accompanied by greater democratic participation. Later she took the same framework of factory politics to examine the silence of the working class in East Germany's transition to capitalism (Fuller, 1999). A very different story can be found in Karl Von Holt's (2003) *Transition from Below*, which focuses on the micro-dynamics of shop floor politics in the South African metal industry. Here factory politics were at the center of the struggles against apartheid, but giving rise to a very fragile postapartheid workplace regime. Finally, Gwo-

shyong Shieh's (1992), *"Boss" Island*, takes the idea of production politics in a different direction by examining the networks of domestication of manufacturing in Taiwan.

Each of these studies -- and this is a very partial and personal list, even recognizing it as a sample drawn largely from the U.S. -- reflects some salient feature or trend in the world. Sometimes, however, sociology deliberately goes against the grain, or picks up some deviant tendency. Such, one might argue, is the resurgent interest in the link between production regime and labor movement. In this area we encounter the synthesis of social movement theory and labor process theory as in Fantasia's (1988) aforementioned study of collective mobilization, *Cultures of Solidarity*, or in Kim Voss's (1993) historical account of the rise and defeat of the Knights of Labor, *The Making of American Exceptionalism*. More focused on contemporary labor organizing among janitors and nurses, Paul Johnston's (1994), *Success While Others Fail*, explains how public service sector unionization achieved its greatest successes -- by exploiting common interests between worker and client. More recently, Chris Rhomberg (2004), *No There There* and Steve Lopez (2004), *Reorganizing the Rust Belt* examine specific geographical areas (Oakland, California and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) to show the importance of city and state politics for the success of labor movements. Capturing the redirection of the AFL-CIO toward organizing strategies and the innovative techniques of one or two unions such as the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE), Dan Clawson's (2003) *The Next Upsurge* dares to predict the renaissance of what he calls social movement unionism -- the fusing of labor with other social movements. Ruth Milkman (2000) put together a collection of

studies that ask why so much of California's dynamic expansion in union organizing has come from immigrant workers, hitherto thought to be unorganizable. Despite these uplifting accounts, despite innovative tactics that circumvent the law, despite notable victories against recalcitrant employers, such as the United Parcel Service, despite unionization of new occupations, despite the redirection of central resources toward organizing campaigns, despite all this, drawing in new members is still not keeping up with the loss of old members. The overall decline in U.S. unionism is relentless.

Prospects for workers' organizations often look brighter in other parts of the world. Gay Seidman (1994) identifies new industrializing societies as the place for a new unionism. In *Manufacturing Militance* she shows an unexpected convergence in labor movements in Brazil and South Africa, rooted in close connections between labor and community and divided relations between state and capital, themselves overdetermined by the rhythm of industrialization in the world system. In her recent book, *Forces of Labor*, Beverly Silver (2003) gives such a world systems perspective a longer historical and comparative reach, arguing that the global transplantation of industry brings new rounds of class struggles and class organization. She optimistically points to the next upsurge in labor struggles as taking place in China. At the same time, Silver makes the important distinction between Marx-type struggles based on the leverage power of workers to resist exploitation and Polanyi-type struggles based on their associational power to resist commodification. She suggests a sea change from exploitation to commodification struggles that will inaugurate a new era of transnational mobilization. Hwa-Jen Liu has adopted these ideas to explain why environmental struggles have been

more important in Taiwan whereas labor struggles have been more important in South Korea. Wherever they are stationed, students of labor are forever seeking out optimistic scenarios in a bleak world order!

I too have sought out optimistic scenarios, only to have them dashed on the rocks of a nascent capitalism. Let me sketch out my own trajectory these last 30 years. One of the criticisms of *Manufacturing Consent* that I took to heart was the charge that I had described the logic of industrialism, not capitalism. To meet this challenge would require comparing capitalist with non-capitalist production, but what non-capitalist production? I decided to study work in Soviet societies. For a long time I had thought the Achilles heel of Marxism was “actually existing socialism” and that Marxists would ignore its peculiarity at their peril. It was dishonest to simply dismiss the Soviet Union as a form of state capitalism (or a degenerate workers’ state) and then project “real” socialism as some unexamined and idealized utopia that contrasted with the ugly realities of capitalism. This was no more acceptable than launching attacks on the Soviet Union by comparing its brutality and inefficiency with idealizations of capitalism put about by apologists and ideologists. These false comparisons of the idealization of one society with the reality of the other had to be replaced with comparisons of ideal type with ideal type, reality with reality. Best of all would be a comparison of the relations between idealization and reality in the two worlds!

I began to explore what details I could find in the literature on Soviet factories. The material was thin to say the least – production was off limits to serious sociological

analysis. Fate, however, decreed that I discover Miklos Haraszti's (1977) *A Worker in a Worker's State* – an autobiographical account of his experiences in a piece work machine shop, very similar to Allis! Indeed, Red Star Tractor Factory was the direct Hungarian analogue of Allis Chalmers in the United States. The shop floor that Haraszti described had the same array of drills, mills, and lathes, etc. and operators were paid on individual piece rates. But there were, of course, differences. For one Haraszti was doing the impossible – running two machines at once! I couldn't believe it. And in a country where it was said that the one right a worker had retained was the right not to work hard! Of course, the regime of production was also completely different with party, management and union collaborating in organizing what I called bureaucratic despotism. This regime had more in common with the market despotisms of early capitalism or the colonial despotisms that I had studied in Zambia and South Africa than with the hegemonic regimes of advanced capitalism. I elaborated these different regimes in *The Politics of Production* (Burawoy, 1985), making rather strong claims about the way production regime shaped the form of class struggle. If state, market and civil society were important for class struggle, I argued, then those effects were mediated through the regime of production they determined!

After reading *A Worker in a Workers' State* I wrote my first piece on state socialism in 1979, comparing bureaucratic despotism with market hegemony, arguing that the former fueled class hostility to the party state -- as in the East German revolt of 1953, the Hungarian and Polish Revolts of 1956, and the somewhat muted worker opposition in the Prague Spring of 1968 (Burawoy, 1980). This hypothesis was brilliantly

confirmed by the Polish Solidarity movement of, 1980-1981. Inspired by this working class movement of societal dimensions, self-consciously aiming toward a self-limiting revolution, I began preparing to do research in Poland. I was, of course, too late.

Jaruzelski organized his military coup before I could get there. So instead, with the help of Ivan Szelenyi, I turned to Hungary that was undergoing its own surreptitious revolution. Then, over a period of 7 years, from 1982 to 1989, I worked in a variety of Hungarian plants – a champagne factory, textile cooperative, a machine shop and, my ultimate dream, Miskolc's famous Lenin Steel Works.

From the standpoint of the politics of production I asked why the first genuine working class revolt in history had been against state socialism and not capitalism, and why in Poland and not Hungary. I argued that the socialist rather than the capitalist labor process was the archetype of flexible specialization giving considerable autonomy to workers, while the regime of production brought the party state directly and oppressively on to the shop floor. I used painting socialism as a metaphor to describe the working class experience of socialism. It came from an amusing incident with my adopted work group – the October Revolution Socialist Brigade. The Prime Minister was coming and we were required to do an extra unpaid shift painting our filthy plant in a gay yellow. I could only find a black paint brush and so began painting our shovels black. The supervisor came storming over, demanding to know what the hell I was doing. With all the innocence I could muster I meekly replied: "I'm building socialism." There was an anxious silence in the brigade until my witty workmate said, "Misi, Misi you are not building socialism, you are painting socialism! And black at that!" So I extended the idea: the rituals of socialism

organized by the party state called on us to paint socialism in the colors of efficiency, equality, and justice and in so doing they drew attention to just how inefficient, unequal and unjust it was. State socialism was a game of pretense in which pretense became reality, manufacturing dissent. Thus, I concluded that socialist class consciousness did arise from production -- an immanent critique of state socialism for failing to live up to its own ideology as a workers' state. The party state sowed the seeds of its own transformation. The only question was the direction of the transformation -- democratic socialism or market capitalism! Hoping against hope that the insurgence of worker councils -- a replay of 1956 -- and employee ownership would win the day, even as late as 1989, I opted for democratic socialism.

*The Radiant Past*, written with János Lukács, summarizes our decade of industrial research in Hungary. The book appeared in 1992, three years after the demise of state socialism. We argued that if communism was to have been "the radiant future," it was now "the radiant past." Piling irony upon irony, we further claimed that, for my fellow workers, the past would indeed appear radiant as capitalist markets would destroy the industrial heartland of Hungary as they had done before in Chicago, and elsewhere. János and I returned in 1999, ten years after the fall of communism, to interview my fellow workers of the October Revolution Socialist Brigade. Even though the number of employees had fallen from 15,000 to some 3,000, they were among the lucky few to still have jobs. They were no longer the proud workers I knew, however, but the demoralized refuse of an untamed capitalism.

I had come to Hungary to study the possibilities of democratic socialism but then found myself embroiled in a market transition. So I took off for the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1991, as soon as glasnost and perestroika made ethnographic research feasible. Those were exciting and expectant times! In that freezing Moscow winter of 1991, Kathy Hendley, then a Berkeley graduate student in political science, and I studied a famous rubber plant, Kauchuk, in the heart of the city (Burawoy and Hendley, 1992). What a dungeon! What atrocious working conditions! More than that it was the scene of a veritable civil war, not between workers and managers but among the managers themselves. We witnessed there, in intensified form, a war that was taking place all over the Soviet Union between the marketeers and the planners, the young Turks and the old guard, those who wanted to free themselves from the party state and those who sought to uphold its fraying timbers. After two months at Kauchuk I went north to Syktyvkar, the capital of the Komi Republic, where I obtained a job as a machine operator in a furniture factory. Out there in the periphery the political waves from the center had dissipated, though their effects were nonetheless discernible. Already then in the Spring of 1991, Pavel Krotov, my collaborator, and I could trace the lineages of the market order that was emerging from within the disintegrating Soviet order (Burawoy and Krotov, 1992). I was there from March to June, 1991. In August there was the failed insurrection and by December the Soviet Union was history.

With nowhere else to go I have continued my research in Russia, in the Komi Republic, watched planning transmogrify into markets with Soviet characteristics – a bizarre combination of money and barter. Those who controlled the sphere of exchange

be they oligarchs or financiers, mafia or merchants, became the new class that arose from the swamp into which the rest of society sank. I described the situation as one of *economic involution* in which resources were being pumped out of the sphere of industrial production and into a sphere of unproductive exchange, consumption and personal wealth. For the working class their fate was governed by their access to the rapidly diminishing jobs that paid real wages, and, failing that, access to subsistence. In this world of rampant deindustrialization men became superfluous, a burden on the household rather than its vital bread winner. Women took up the defense of society. How different one wonders are the ghettos of South Chicago from the industrial ruins of postSoviet Russia? How different are the Russian oligarchs, who plundered the postSoviet economy, from the corporate scoundrels of Tyco? Only scale separates Khodorkovsky, on trial for absconding with billions of dollars of public money through the oil privatization scams of the 1990s, from Kozlowski, the chief executive of Tyco, on trial for defrauding shareholders and employees of only hundreds of millions of dollars.

The death of communism spells the death of Marxism. Or so think those who reduce all Marxism to Marxism-Leninism, to official Soviet Marxism. I take a different view: the death of Marxism-Leninism has liberated the Marxist tradition from its most degenerate branch – the branch that for so long stifled its more youthful, imaginative and open branches. Even if that liberation has been temporarily aborted by the triumph of corporate capitalism and by the ideologists of the end of history, in the long run Marxism – if not the workers of the Soviet world -- will have benefited. Socialist forces have had to regroup from below, no longer sponsored or protected by states but rather having to

create their own defenses in civil society – national and increasingly global. Still weak though they may be, their autonomy and imagination holds out hope for the future.

If Marxism evolves with the capitalism it opposes, then what is the Marxism of today, what new (or old) branch might we explore? We need a Marxism that first and foremost resuscitates the idea of socialism, but without the crutch of its inevitability. We need a Marxism, as Stuart Hall once put it, without guarantees. We can no longer rely on any Hegelian philosophy of history. First, we need to abandon the idea of history as a linear succession of modes of production that follow the inevitable expansion of the forces of production. Productive forces do expand and this does entail the transformation of relations of production but the expansion does not endow those relations with any given destiny. There is no guarantee that socialism follows capitalism. Second, we need to abandon the idea of history as the inevitable rise and fall of any given mode of production, in particular capitalism. There may be no laws that guarantee the demise of capitalism but that does not mean it is not a contradictory social formation with profound crises – it does not exclude the potentiality for transformation and transcendence. Third, we need to abandon the idea of history as the history of class struggle. There is no doubt about the importance of classes as actors and we can retain the end of class exploitation as a normative ideal, but there is no guarantee that class struggle intensifies in the way that Marx described.

If this is what we have to abandon, what must we create? For classical Marxists socialism was inevitable so they didn't need to think too much about it. When socialism

is no longer inevitable, Marxism must, first and foremost, probe the meaning of socialism. We must start, not end, with the concept of socialism. But where exactly to start? The Marxian legacy has handed down a notion of socialism with abstract characteristics. Today, with socialism run out of credit, we must pursue what Erik Wright calls “real utopias” -- actually existing institutions that already pose alternatives to capitalism or could lead to such alternatives. Among the candidates he has included associational democracy, coupon socialism, universal basic income grants, and the reorganization of pensions. His most popular program has been for empowered participatory governance, based on deliberative democracy in the governance of Chicago’s public education, Kerala’s panchayat system and Porto Alegre’s democratic budgeting (Fung and Wright, 2003). One can also recover alternatives buried in history such as the socialist projects organized against the party state – Polish Solidarity, Hungarian cooperatives, Russian civil society. In an analogy to postcolonial theory, this is a project for postcommunist theory. Whether we seek alternatives in the present or the past, in both cases the role of the social scientist is the same: to elaborate the principles of the experiment, to examine its internal contradictions and external conditions of existence, and thus to formulate the conditions of its dissemination and generalization.

It is here that Marxism and the extended case method converge. Studying the intricacies, possibilities and meanings of alternatives requires deep experience of their operation, participant observation extended over time, as well as examining the macro foundations of their micro-institutional form, all fostered by the development of Marxist theory. Capitalism is no longer doomed to a singular collapse, the future is no longer

given, and socialism no longer springs from the head. But rather it is a slow opening of spaces as well as spatial connections among openings. If Real Utopias is the project, Marxism is the theory, and reflexive ethnography is the method.

Why should Marxism be the theory? Because we are interested in Real Utopias from the standpoint of the possibilities of socialism. But can we say anything more about socialism, other than that it is an alternative to capitalism? Classical Marxism was divided between productivist and statist conceptions of socialism: the end of alienation in production versus the end of scarcity through planning. Too much of Marxism has been a dialogue between standpoints of state and economy, leaving civil society as a residual realm. Together with Erik Wright I have been reversing this hierarchy of spheres, giving priority to civil society -- amply present in Marx's notion of communism and much further elaborated in the theories of Gramsci and Polanyi (Burawoy, 2003b). Indeed, it is the surprising convergence of their writings around the idea of socialism as a self-regulating society subordinating to itself both market and state that lays the foundations of what we call a sociological Marxism (Burawoy and Wright, 2003). Our mantra: restoring the social in socialism.

*Manufacturing Consent* was part of a wave of ascending Marxism that followed in the steeply descending path of structural functionalist sociology. The Marxism of the 1970s began to fill the vacuum left behind by a sociology out of sync with and unable to adapt to turmoil in civil society at home and a rising tide of revolutionary optimism abroad. Academic Marxism flourished but for a short time, however, until sociology

recovered, initially by taking on board many of the Marxist and feminist criticisms. Political sociology elevated the state to a central concern, economic sociology turned to the labor process, cultural sociology studied ideology, status attainment theory became the analysis of inequality, family sociology studied gender domination and the domestic division of labor, and in theory interpretations of Weber and Durkheim were radicalized. Marx became part of the canon.

Then, with the retreat of social movements, the defeat of labor, the collapse of communism Marxism suffered its own crisis. Erstwhile Marxists lost interest in socialism, the critique of capitalism lost its edge, classes lost their appeal, a fascination with markets replaced the focus on production. Sociology itself turned back to an earlier modernization theory under the banner of all manner of neo-institutionalisms. The focus, once again, turned to harmony, value consensus and convergence. The domain assumptions of Talcott Parsons returned, if not his architectonic brilliance! Once again there is no alternative to capitalism. In the 1950s they called it the end of ideology, now it's called neoclassical sociology (Burawoy, 2001)! How long will it last this time? How long will we endure the devastating realities of Empire, both at home and abroad, before critique turns into social movements, and movements rejuvenate Marxism?

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