

POLITICS AND LABOR IN MARXIST THEORY*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a course on social change, but a particular type of social change, viz. the transition to socialism. There is only one body of theory that treats this type of social change seriously, and that is Marxism. Therefore, this is a course on Marxism. In this time and place, to talk of the transition to socialism risks denaturing the notion of socialism or appearing utopian. We will try to avoid these pitfalls. But precisely because the realization of socialism in the United States in the near future does appear utopian, it is all the more important to keep alive that possibility and indeed the very idea of socialism. And, as Marcuse once wrote, now, when our capacity to transform nature is so immense and the elimination of scarcity is a possibility, is the time for utopianism, for insisting on the huge gulf between what is and what could be.

Marxism and Sociology

Three years ago I offered a course on Marxism and Functionalism which aimed at a comparison of the work of Talcott Parsons and that of specific varieties of Marxism, in terms of how they understood social change. The course was caught between two objectives: on the one hand trying to grasp the relationship between sociology and Marxism and on the other trying to establish the superiority of Marxism based on the criteria supplied by sociology itself. In developing a general theory of social change, Parsons first did not deal adequately with the distinction between changes of a social system and changes from one system to another--that is, the distinction between dynamics and diachronics--and second, constructed a view of history in which the present was viewed as the natural culmination of the past and the future as the ironing out of certain imperfections in the present. Moreover, his assumptions about human nature dovetailed with such a view of history

and the future. Marxism, by contrast, insists that there are general concepts but only particular theories--that is, there are theories of the dynamics of particular types of societies (feudalism, capitalism, etc.) which have to be considered distinct from the problem of the transition from one type of society to another. In constituting the past as being made up of very different types of societies we can then envisage the possibility of a very different society emerging in the future. History does not necessarily end with capitalism.

It was not a matter, however, of dismissing these general theories of sociology as being of no importance. Inasmuch as they were projections into the past of characteristics of capitalism--that is, the universalization of capitalism--they could be useful in the interpretation of capitalism. Thus, Parsons' general and abstract scheme in which any social system has to solve the problems of "adaptation," "goal attainment," "integration" and "tension management and pattern maintenance" when specified for capitalism could be seen to have close parallels with the theories of the relationship between economy, state, public and cultural systems as found in the work of O'Connor, Offe and Habermas. The very emphasis on exchange and "symbolic media of interchange" (money, power, influence and value commitments)--the extension by analogy of economic exchange to all arenas of social and indeed psychic life--finds its parallel in the themes of commodification and the reduction of all social relations to exchange relations under capitalism, so central to the Frankfurt School.

Finally, Parsons' psychology of internalization, while borrowing much from Freud significantly leaves out the dynamics between individual and society and strips the ego of its capacity for resisting the socializing impact of institutions. What for Parsons is a general transhistorical theory of psychology turns out to be, for writers in the school of critical theory, particular to the era of monopoly capitalism. The point, then, is not to reject sociology but to transcend it, reparticularizing its general theories, restoring them to their historical context, and in so doing extracting their rational

kernel.

In any event, this first enterprise of trying to establish the relationship between sociology and Marxism was an important one. The same cannot be said for the second endeavor: to compete with sociology on its own terrain and demonstrate that Marxism can explain the world better than sociology can, and in a more consistent manner. To be sure, it is important to respond to some of the criticisms that sociologists level at Marx: the working class in advanced capitalist countries has experienced an increase in the standard of living; there has not been the consistent decline in the rate of profit predicted by Marx; "socialism" has not appeared in the West but in the East; the state is not the executive committee of the bourgeoisie (whoever said it was?); there hasn't been the polarization of classes that Marx anticipated; etc., etc. It turns out that insofar as these questions make sense they have in large measure been the focus of Marxist theory subsequent to Marx--a body of theory that American sociology has systematically ignored. For Marxists any failure by Marx to anticipate what would actually happen is a reason not for rejecting Marx but for moving beyond him. Just as the relationship between sociology and Marxism is not a simple one of "science" and "ideology," so too the relationship between Marx and Marxism is not easy to grasp in simple terms.

What is the kernel of Marx that is retained in Marxism? One feature that Marx and Marxism share is the claim that their theories are closely related to practical struggles. Inevitably, then, history must push Marxism beyond Marx. But this also means that to assess Marxism on the terrain of sociology, on "scientific" grounds alone, is to risk a dislocation from the political context in which it is produced and to which it must respond. Thus, to rip the writings of the French Marxists, Althusser and Balibar, out of their political context and treat them as theoretical systems unto themselves is indeed to risk an academic elitism, an indulgence of idealism, a separation of Marxist discourse from the real world. In this indictment of current fashions in British academia E.P. Thompson (THE POVERTY OF THEORY) is correct. But an indictment of

Althusser and Balibar themselves on the same grounds is ironically to be ahistorical, to miss the political struggles in which they produced their theory, namely the struggles to rescue a certain autonomy of theory from subordination to Soviet hegemony within the French Communist Party--the attempt to liberate theory from its subordination to Soviet practice, to the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy. In other words, we have to be sensitive to the political context in which theories are produced and be wary of mechanical transplantations to different political contexts. Therefore, in this course we will begin to pay attention to the variety of Marxisms as they spring from different historical situations and struggles.

The Crisis of Marxism

Perhaps recourse to a Marxist "science" can be justified when one is fighting for survival in an academic institution, but in a situation where Marxism has become fashionable such an enterprise is more questionable. There is a definite semblance of truth in sociologist Frank Parkin's characterization of the British scene.

Lenin's wry comments on the efflorescence of Marxism in Russia at the turn of the century seem quite pertinent to our own time and place:

"Marxist books were published one after another, Marxist journals and newspapers were founded, nearly everyone became a Marxist, Marxists were flattered, Marxists were courted and the book publishers rejoiced at the extraordinary, ready sale of Marxist literature."

Lenin was not too enthusiastic about a species of Marxism that appeared to be more congenial to the literati than to the class that really mattered. On these grounds alone, it is unlikely that he would have felt very differently about the Marxist products that have been manufactured and marketed in western universities over the past decade or so. Contemporary western Marxism, unlike its classical predecessor, is wholly the creation of academic social theorists--more specifically, the creation of the new professoriate that rose up on the wave of university expansion in the 1960s. The natural constituency of this Marxism is not of course the working class, but the massed ranks of undergraduates and postgraduate students in the social sciences; its content and design mark it out exclusively for use in the lecture theatre, the seminar room, and

the doctoral dissertation. Hence the strange and fascinating spectacle to be witnessed in social science faculties throughout western Europe and beyond of diligent bands of research students and their mentors busily combing through the pages of Theories of Surplus Value in search of social reality (MARXISM AND CLASS THEORY: A BOURGEOIS CRITIQUE, 1979, p. ix).

From within Marxism itself "Marxist academicism" has come under virulent attack from Edward Thompson. Fernando Claudin, expelled from the Spanish Communist Party in 1965 for his dissident views and now a strong advocate of Eurocommunism, writes of the development of Marxist theory divorced from mass movements.

At present, the great weakness of this renewal (a weakness which is also a symptom, and not one of the least important, of the crisis of Marxism) lies in the fact that these advances in Marxist research are quite detached from the main protagonists of the practical struggles (parties, mass organizations and movements), particularly in the Anglo-Saxon capitalist world, but also in Latin Europe. There is even a growing tendency to abandon Marxism as a theoretical instrument and to replace the cult of other periods by the worship of pragmatism.

If this divorce should deepen, Marxism could eventually be converted into an academic discipline, without much influence on practical struggles for the transformation of the world. It could even become most "useful" for those classes interested in preserving the present social order, because the knowledge of reality serves not only in its own transformation, but also opposes that end (SOCIALIST REVIEW no. 45, 1979, p. 142).

An even harsher indictment of Marxist practice within universities is offered by George Lichteim, sympathetic Hegelian. He warns us:

It is tempting to abstract a general rule to the effect that a new doctrine becomes academically respectable only after it has petrified. However that may be, it is undeniable that interest in Marxism as a system has not in recent years been matched by success in the application of method.... The resulting flow of critical and analytical comment, while impressive in quantity and quality, has increasingly come to bear the stamp of academicism. The absorption of Central European thought into French--and in a lesser degree Italian--intellectual life is clearly a cultural phenomenon of some importance; but in terms of what has been happening to Marxism since 1918 it bears all the marks of an elaborate post mortem.... However highly one values the

contribution made by scholars working with a conceptual apparatus in part derived from Marx, there is nothing in this phenomenon to alter the impression that Marxism has achieved academic status at the cost of ceasing to be the theory of a revolutionary practice (MARXISM, 1961, pp. 394-95).

For Lichteim, Marxism is a body of thought rooted in the nineteenth century; it is the link between the French and Russian Revolutions. It can only live on as an anachronism in which its practice and its theory are at odds with its philosophy. The separation of theory and practice in the development of academic Marxism and the subordination of theory to practice in the development of Soviet Marxism has effectively meant the abandonment of Marxism. While Lichteim's is an important statement, and one that has to be considered with unflinching seriousness, it is not one that will inform my lectures. These will be closer to Claudin's position:

... it is not Marxism that has been shipwrecked historically, but, rather, a certain dogmatization and perversion of Marxist thought. Its critical and revolutionary essence, and many of its chief conceptions and theses, remain vital and relevant--on condition, naturally, that we agree to set Marx in his own period, and to continue his work taking due account of the period that we ourselves are in. This compels us to recognize the fact, among others, that the premises of Marxism's dogmatization and perversion lie in its very function as the ideology of the revolutionary movement (THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, 1975 (1970), pp. 8-9).

If indeed the problem is one of the deformation of Marxist theory, and the lagging of Marxist theory behind the conditions it attempts to comprehend and transform, rather than the necessary and inevitable dissolution of the Marxist system as a whole, there is room for opening up Marxist discourse in all arenas of society, not least the university. To be sure, that discourse must be integrally connected with real struggles, although not necessarily our struggles here and now. The crucial point is that theory doesn't spontaneously emerge out of struggles but must itself be produced: it requires mental effort as well as an engagement in struggles. It does not appear through immaculate conception, as suggested by some:

The 'organic intellectuals' envisaged by Gramsci,

generated within the ranks of the proletariat itself, have not yet occupied the structural role in revolutionary socialism that he believed would be theirs. The extreme forms of esotericism that have characterized Western Marxism were symptomatic of 'traditional intellectuals' in Gramsci's sense, in a period when there was little or no contact between socialist theory and proletarian practice. But in the long run, the future of Marxist theory will lie with intellectuals organically produced by the industrial working classes of the imperialist world themselves, as they steadily gain in cultural skill and self-confidence.... When a truly revolutionary movement is born in a mature working class, the 'final shape' of theory will have no exact precedent. All that can be said is that when the masses themselves speak, theoreticians--of the sort the West has produced for fifty years--will necessarily be silent (Perry Anderson, CONSIDERATIONS ON WESTERN MARXISM, 1976, pp. 105-6).

As he suggests in his "afterword," "the conclusions of the essay invite an 'activist' reading of its theses that could be scientifically untenable and politically irresponsible" (p. 109). And he goes on to lay out an agenda for the reconstruction of Marxist theory in the light of a century of struggles, revolutions and counter-revolutions.

The crisis of Marxism is even more acutely felt in the bureaucratically administered regimes of the East (Soviet Union and Eastern Europe). There the response to the deformation of Marxism has been various: the resuscitation of a Marxist humanism, the adoption of bourgeois sociology as an instrument of critique, or the rejection of the very concept of socialism and therefore of Marxism as a grand and disastrous delusion. Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, famous for his writings on Marxist humanism, completes his separation from Marxism in his recently published three-volume handbook, MAIN CURRENTS IN MARXISM:

Marxism has been the greatest fantasy of our century. It was a dream offering the prospect of a society of perfect unity, in which all human aspirations would be fulfilled and all values reconciled (vol. 3, p. 523).... The self-deification of mankind, to which Marxism gave philosophical expression, has ended in the same way as all such attempts, whether individual or collective: it has revealed itself as the farcical aspect of human bondage (vol. 3, p. 530).

Kolakowski's rejection of Marxism is much more bitter and hostile

than Lichteim's, but it follows the same logic. Just as in the West there are those like Claudin who argue for the restoration of Marxism instead of its abandonment, so the same is found in the East. One of the most noted of recent Marxist dissidents, Rudolph Bahro, stresses the importance of intellectuals in the development of Marxist theory.

The workers--individual exceptions apart--were never Marxist in the strict sense. Marxism is a theory based on the existence of the working class, but it is not the theory of the working class. It was always Left intellectuals who found themselves in a position to understand Marxism as a whole (THE ALTERNATIVE IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1978 (1977), p. 197).

Marxism is a theory of intellectuals who recognize that their own emancipation is indissolubly linked to the emancipation of the working class. Bahro's views of Marxism reflect the extreme fragmentation and atomization of the working class in Eastern Europe and the gulf that separates workers from "intellectuals" as well as the discrediting of the notion of socialism among many segments of the population.

The Program for the Next Six Months

Given the crisis of Marxism--the discrediting of the notion of socialism, the substitution of "science" and "abstract formalism" for "critique," the deformation of the link between theory and practice--and given also the requirement that theory be given a certain autonomy yet be integrally connected with struggles in the world of the concrete, what approaches might one adopt towards establishing Marxist discourse within universities? What does it mean to be an academic and a Marxist in Berkeley in the 1980s? I obviously have no definitive answer, but the program I have sketched for the next six months represents my thinking on the matter at this moment.

There are three aspects to this course. The first involves importing ideas into my lectures which I have developed from reading about and, to a very limited extent, participating in working class experience in different countries and also in different historical periods. The theme I will develop, therefore, in the first few weeks will revolve around the issue of the relationship between labor and politics; between factory and

state. My conceptualization will directly incorporate a notion of socialism as a necessary feature of the analysis of working class struggles.

The elaboration of what I call "the politics of production" will provide the lens through which we shall then examine the history of Marxism, beginning with Marx. I hope to show how different Marxists grapple with either labor (the labor process, economic activities) or politics, or both, but have great difficulty in seeing the relationship between the two in any but mechanical terms. We will also see how the form of Marxism is shaped, although of course not uniquely, by the possibilities for the transformation of capitalism and by the very form assumed by capitalism. Thus, we will situate Marx and Engels in the era of nineteenth-century capitalism in Germany and Britain; the Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals (revisionism, orthodox Marxism and revolutionary Marxism) in the context of the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism; critical theory (Frankfurt School, interventionist theories of the state, Monthly Review School) in the context of the rise of monopoly capitalism in Germany and the United States; theorists of class struggle and the party (Gramsci, Poulantzas and Eurocommunist debates) in the context of France, Italy and Spain; and finally, we will look at the emergent schools of Marxist humanism, the appeal to bourgeois sociology and the reconstruction of Marxism (Kolakowski, Budapest School, Bahro) in the light of what has happened in Eastern Europe since World War Two.

This second feature of the course aims to understand the present crisis of Marxism through a broader historical analysis of the relationship between Marxism and the conjuncture in which it is produced. Have there been periods in the past that bear certain similarities to the present? What has been Marxism's response to periods in which revolutionary agency is only very weak? What else can we learn from a Marxist history of Marxism? Since, as Trotsky wrote, history does not repeat itself, to learn from history is very difficult. All too often we use history cavalierly, either totally repudiating or totally embracing a particular experience. Thus, for example, there

are those who dismiss the Bolshevik Revolution as of little or no relevance to the problems of the transition to socialism in advanced capitalist countries, while there are others who equally vehemently cling to it as THE model for revolution. To learn from history is to neither totally reject nor embrace but to recover what can be salvaged, to extract the kernel of truth. And this can only be attempted within a theoretical framework. Irrespective of the new light history may shed on the present conjuncture, I hope this course will debunk the notion of a single doctrinaire Marxism, so popular among those hostile to Marxism's premises, and show how the variety of Marxisms have been shaped by national and international forces.

The third and final strategy will revolve around the research we will undertake into periods of crisis, when alternatives, particularly socialist ones, were placed on the agenda--periods when large segments of the population no longer viewed the future in the same terms as the present, when that which existed was no longer inevitable, natural and irrevocable. If this is what we mean by a crisis, what might we mean by a revolutionary crisis? Lenin, for example, suggests, "It is only when the 'lower classes' do not want to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph" (LEFT WING COMMUNISM--AN INFANTILE DISORDER). Mandel elaborates this notion of revolutionary crisis to involve: (1) a highly advanced stage of decomposition of the repressive apparatus of the state machine; (2) a generalization or at least broad development of organs of workers' and popular power, to the point where a regime of dual power exists; (3) a crisis of legitimacy of the state institutions in the eyes of the great majority of the working class (REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM TODAY, 1979, p. 8). And then we must also examine the relationship between an economic crisis and a political crisis, between, in Habermas' terms, a system crisis and a social crisis. How do such crises begin, develop and disappear? Asking such questions of periods in the past in different countries will obviously shed much light on the present conjuncture of capitalism in advanced nations of

the West today. Moreover, examining situations of crisis gives us a sense of alternative paths out of the present in which such alternatives appear to be systematically blocked at the economic, political and ideological levels by the organization of monopoly capitalism. One purpose of such historical and comparative study, therefore, is to assault the ideology that presents socialism as a null set and therefore outside the realm of social scientific discourse; the ideology of narrow empiricism which roots us in the present (abandoning empiricism, of course, does not involve abandoning empirical analysis), which cannot theoretically comprehend the possibility of something new (because it cannot be verified) and which therefore ultimately cannot understand history except as post hoc reconstructions; and the ideology that presents those committed to a socialist ideal as deranged (and dangerous) and their movements as "symptoms of disturbance."

II. THE POLITICS OF PRODUCTION

In this lecture and the next I will develop the concept of "production politics." But first I want to begin with some remarks on methodology.

The presentation will omit the process through which I have developed my ideas, what Marx refers to as the mode of inquiry:

Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connexion. Only after this work has been done, can the actual movement be adequately described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere a priori construction (CAPITAL, volume one, 1967 edition, p. 19).

Marx characterizes these two processes in his INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY as the movement from the concrete to the abstract (C-A) and the movement from the abstract back to the concrete (A-C).

If one were to take population as the point of departure, it would be a very vague notion of a complex whole and through closer definition one would arrive analytically at increasingly simple concepts; from imaginary concrete terms one would move to more and more tenuous abstractions until one reached the most simple definitions. From there it would be necessary to make the journey again in the opposite direction until one arrived once more at the concept of population, which is this time not a vague notion of a whole, but a totality comprising many determinations and relations. The first course is the historical one taken by political economy at its inception. The seventeenth-century economists, for example, always took as their starting point the living organism, the population, the nation, the State, several States, etc., but analysis led them always in the end to the discovery of a few decisive abstract, general relations, such as division of labour, money, and value. When these separate factors were more or less clearly deduced and established, economic systems were evolved which from simple

concepts, such as labour, division of labour, demand, exchange value, advanced to categories like State, international exchange and world market. The latter is obviously the correct scientific method.... The first procedure attenuates meaningful images to abstract definitions, the second leads from abstract definitions by way of reasoning to the reproduction of the concrete situation (A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, 1972 edition, pp. 205-6).

However, the processes C-A and A-C cannot be abstracted from the context in which they take place: far from being context free, they are decisively shaped by the society in which they are carried out. Thus, for example, Marx shows how the very concept of "labor" only develops in a specific society, namely bourgeois society, where the particular kind of labor people carry out becomes "accidental" and therefore irrelevant, and where labor becomes the means of creating wealth and is no longer tied as an attribute of particular individuals.

The example of labour strikingly demonstrates how even the most abstract categories, despite their validity in all epochs--precisely because they are abstractions--are equally a product of historical conditions even in the specific form of abstractions, and they retain their full validity only for and within the framework of these conditions (CONTRIBUTION, p. 210).

Or, more generally:

Just as in general when examining any historical or social science, so also in the case of the development of economic categories is it always necessary to remember that the subject, in this context bourgeois society, is presupposed both in reality and in the mind, and that therefore categories express forms of existence and conditions of existence--and sometimes merely separate aspects--of this particular society, the subject; thus the category, even from the scientific standpoint, by no means begins at the moment when it is discussed as such (CONTRIBUTION, p. 212).

In this lecture and the next I will try to show how Marx's appropriation of the concrete, elaboration of the abstract and return back to the concrete was conditioned by competitive capitalism. We will see how Marx's understanding of the labor process has to be modified for it to be useful for an understanding of the labor process under advanced capitalism, the bureaucratically administered regimes of the Soviet Union

and Eastern Europe, and colonial and post-colonial societies. But just as important, we will also see how these modifications in our understanding of the contemporary labor process force us to also modify Marx's understanding of competitive capitalism. That is, any changes we make in the Marxian schema for the understanding of contemporary societies have to be read back into a reformulation of Marx's analysis of competitive capitalism. We interpret (reread) the past according to the standards and context of the present. The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk.

Bourgeois society is the most advanced and complex historical organisation of production. The categories which express its relations, and an understanding of its structure, therefore, provide an insight into the structure and the relations of production of all formerly existing social formations the ruins and components of which were used in the creation of bourgeois society. Some of these unassimilated remains are still carried on within bourgeois society, others, however, which previously existed only in rudimentary form, have been further developed and have attained their full significance, etc. The anatomy of man is a key to the anatomy of the ape (CONTRIBUTION, pp. 210-11).

And, of course, it is necessary to reformulate Marx's understanding of competitive capitalism if only because he was wrong in suggesting that its demise would inaugurate socialism, rather than a new form of capitalism. Indeed one proof of any Marxist pudding is an understanding of the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism. In short, to freeze Marx's analysis as an eternal truth is to freeze history.

Marxism is above all a method of analysis--not analysis of texts, but analysis of social relations. Is it true that, in Russia, the weakness of capitalist liberalism inevitably means the weakness of the labour movement? Is it true, for Russia, that there cannot be an independent labour movement until the bourgeoisie has conquered power? It is sufficient merely to put these questions to see what a hopeless formalism lies concealed beneath the attempt to convert an historically-relative remark of Marx's into a supra-historical axiom (Trotsky, RESULTS AND PROSPECTS, 1969 (1905), p. 64).

From History to Politics

The five premises of history, found in THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY, are that in order for men and women to make history they must

first be able to survive and therefore produce the means of existence; that the satisfaction of the first need begets a new need; that the human species must propagate its kind, must procreate; that in transforming nature men and women must enter into relations with one another; and that as they enter into relations with one another they produce a consciousness. History, then, is periodized according to the different sets of relations into which men and women enter as they transform nature, what we call a mode of production: history is a succession of modes of production.

The transformation of nature involves not just a set of social relations but also an experience of those relations. The activity of transforming nature we refer to as labor or economic activity. The activity of transforming or reproducing relations we refer to as political activity. And the activity of transforming or reproducing experience or the interpretation of experience in consciousness we call ideological activity.

Here I am primarily concerned with politics and political struggles, and therefore with the nature of those relations into which we enter as we produce the means of existence. There are two elements to these relations--sometimes two sets of relations and sometimes two distinct aspects of relations. First there are the relations of cooperation, the relations of the labor process, what Marx sometimes calls the immediate production relations and what I shall refer to as relations in production. Second, there are the relations of appropriation of the product of labor, the relations through which products are distributed within a society. These are the relations of production. A mode of production, then, is made up of a "double connection": relations in and of production, with the latter dominating and shaping, although being at the same time limited by, the former. Characterizing societies by the prevailing relations of production immediately raises the distinction between class and non-class societies. In all societies, direct producers find themselves rendering up a surplus above and beyond their own individual needs, if only because of the existence of non-producers, in the form of the aged, the young and the sick. But in a class society a

distinctive group appropriates surplus from the direct producers and autonomously decides how to use that surplus. In a non-class society, the direct producers themselves decide on the distribution of the product of their labor. There is a collective rather than class appropriation of surplus.

The existence of two types of relations which define the mode of production implies the existence of two types of politics. Struggles aimed at the reproduction/transformation of the relations of production we refer to as global politics, while struggles aimed at the reproduction/transformation of relations in production we call production politics. Each mode of production defines a characteristic relationship between production politics and global politics. We must now specify what these relations may be for feudalism and then capitalism.

From Feudalism to Capitalism

Some sense of the significance of production politics under capitalism can be gleaned through a comparison of the essence of the feudal mode of production with the essence of the capitalist mode of production. Feudal relations of production are defined by the appropriation of surplus labor through rent. There are different types of rent: rent in kind, in money, and in labor. We will consider the latter--the system of corvee labor. Serfs work four days on their "own" land, which they hold at the will of the lord, and two days on the lord's demesne. Here the surplus labor is transparent. It is separated in both space and time from subsistence labor or necessary labor. Moreover, surplus labor takes priority over necessary labor in the sense that the two days of rent are fixed and the actual labor precisely determined. Only when that surplus labor has been rendered are serfs able to look after their own needs. On the other hand, because the serfs can survive autonomously on their own land--that is, they directly produce the means of their existence without having to work for the lord--an extra-economic element is necessary to guarantee the surplus labor. This extra-economic element assumes the form of political and ideological mechanisms. The state and its regional organs, as well as potentially the military retinue of lords, guarantee

those two days of labor--that is, the surplus. This is the form of global politics. Production politics, on the other hand, concerns the mode of cooperation of serfs both on their own land, where it takes the form of some collective self-management, and on the lord's demesne, where it is coordinated by the agent of the lord, for instance the bailiff, but is defined in the manorial courts. The manorial courts as an apparatus responsible for regulating relations in production become the object of struggles, of production politics.

The very form of relations of production and also relations in production leads to a form of politics and ideology in which is embedded the distinction between lords and serfs, and also distinctions among serfs according to their disparate rights in the manor. Politics and economics are deeply intertwined. The reproduction of relations in and of production in which surplus labor is transparent involves a form of politics which also recognizes agents of production as such.

The situation under capitalism is very different. Here the mode of appropriation of surplus labor is through wage labor. Direct producers are dispossessed of direct access to the means of their existence. The only way they can survive is by selling their labor power--their capacity to work--to an employer in return for a wage with which they purchase the means of their existence. Workers sell their labor power for a wage and come to work. The defining problem of the capitalist labor process is then how to turn the capacity to work (labor power) into the reality (labor), while guaranteeing a surplus labor over and above the necessary labor--the wage equivalent.

In contrast to feudalism, surplus is not visible. Surplus labor is not separated in time or space from necessary labor. The situation is not one in which workers first punch in on a red card for six hours, proclaiming that they are working for themselves (i.e. necessary labor), and then punch in on a black card, proclaiming that they are now working for the capitalist. No, they work for eight hours and the capitalist appropriates the product of that whole period and the workers receive a monetary wage. Unlike feudalism, the commitment to the wage is made before a surplus has been realised--hence the

quite fundamental uncertainty of the capitalist, rooted in the labor process and reflected in the operation of the market. As far as the workers are concerned, since they are economically dependent on capitalists for survival, the relations of production, argued Marx, do not need an extra-economic element for their reproduction. The cycle of production does not need an "extra-economic" element for its completion. A worker enters the factory gates and produces, shall we say, eight hubcaps in eight hours. Six of the hubcaps are equivalent to his/her wage, and two are equivalent to the capitalist's profit. With the profit the capitalist is able to continue being a capitalist and therefore continue to employ laborers. With the wage the worker is able to replenish him/herself and but has to come back the next day to earn a further wage in order to survive for yet another day. In short, the very act of transforming nature becomes under capitalism simultaneously the production and reproduction of the relationship between capital and labor.

Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer (Marx, CAPITAL, volume one, 1967, p. 578).

What does this mean for the nature of politics under capitalism? Insofar as relations of production reproduce themselves of themselves, and surplus labor is mystified in the production process itself as well as in the market, the role of the state is to protect the external conditions of production--that is, the market relations among capitalists--against the encroachment of individual capitalists, and act as guarantor to the interests of capital in the case of strikes and other forms of abridgment of the relations between capital and labor. In short, rather than intervening directly in the cycle of production, the state acts as an insurance agency.

For Marx the only form of politics is global politics aimed at the state--the ultimate factor of cohesion of capitalist society. Although Marx describes a form of production politics, he does not see it as a form of politics. Nor does

he thematize the problem of the reproduction of relations in production. For him these relations are guaranteed through the coercion of the market. Workers are subjected to the despotism of the overseer simply because the overseer unilaterally exercises the power to hire and fire and workers are dependent on their employment to secure their livelihood. And indeed, if one takes the cotton mills of England as the prototypical capitalist labor process the reproduction of relations in production cannot be viewed as being so problematic. However, in failing to recognize and draw attention to factory politics, to the political apparatuses of the factory, Marx was only speaking for his times, viz. identifying competitive capitalism with capitalism. With the rise of monopoly capitalism and with it certain minimal rights for workers, viz. the ending of arbitrary hiring and firing, minimum wage legislation, workman's compensation, regulation of the length of the working day and so on, there emerges a separation between the expenditure of labor and the reproduction of labor power. Workers have been able to wrest a certain arena of freedom within the work context, which capitalists have tried to seal off by the substitution of coercive machinery for the despotism of the overseer. The appearance of such an arena free of managerial intervention implies the necessity of new ways of eliciting surplus labor for workers, and a new form of production politics. It involves replacing the dominance of coercion over consent under the politics of despotism with the dominance of consent over coercion under a hegemonic form of production politics. Moreover, the relationship between production politics and global politics, between apparatuses of the factory and those of the state, changes as one moves from competitive to monopoly capitalism. And it is by thematizing this relationship that we are led to a new understanding not only of monopoly capitalism but also of competitive capitalism and hopefully to an understanding of why the demise of competitive capitalism did not lead to some form of socialism.

The Significance of Production Politics

Defining a mode of production as a twin set of relations

rather than the combination of forces and relations of production has some obvious implications. First, it places less emphasis on the capacity to transform nature and more on the relations of the labor process, and therefore takes as problematic in the transition to socialism more the transformation of the relations in production rather than the "development of the forces of production." And this shift in turn reflects in part the fact that capitalism has developed the forces of production to such an extent that the elimination of scarcity and coordination of production at a societal level is already a possibility, if not yet a necessity. Second, whereas the notion of the expansion of the forces of production has often provided a directionality to history--the movement of one mode of production to the next higher mode--the substitution of relations in production breaks the link between modes of production and introduces a certain indeterminacy in the transition from one mode of production to another, in particular the transition to socialism.

Third, the introduction of politics of production whose object is the apparatuses of the factory implies that not all power is concentrated in the state, although all power may ultimately be guaranteed by the state. This means that the transition to socialism cannot necessarily be secured through the conquest of state power alone: it is also necessary to transform the apparatuses of the factory. It becomes important, therefore, to understand the relationship between factory apparatuses and state apparatuses in order to determine the degree of their relative autonomy: how does a change in the one affect a change in the other? Does the transformation of the apparatuses of the state necessarily entail a transformation of the factory apparatuses and the organization of production? And vice versa: does the transformation of the organization and regulation of work entail a transformation of the form of global politics? In the transition from advanced capitalism to socialism where would one begin--with the state, or the factory, or would one burn the candle from both ends? Would this be any different from the transition to socialism from competitive capitalism?

Finally, understanding the relationship between apparatuses

of the factory and of the state would allow a deeper understanding of the relationship between what are usually referred to as economic struggles and political struggles. In regarding these two types of struggles as being shaped by the two corresponding sets of apparatuses we would be able to go beyond a simple notion of separation/fusion of "economic" and "political" struggles.

III. VARIETIES OF PRODUCTION POLITICS

In the last lecture I developed the notion of "politics of production" and generated two types--despotic and hegemonic--corresponding to the periodization of capitalism into "competitive" and "monopoly" phases. In this lecture I will return to these two types of production politics and highlight their distinctive relationship to global politics. From there I will generate two further types of production politics--another form of despotism, bureaucratic despotism, and the system of collective self-management. We can then proceed to an examination of the concrete world as some combination or interpenetration of the various forms of production politics.

Market Despotism and Hegemonic Systems.

The transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism involves a transformation of the relations of production: a transformation of the relations among capitalists and of the relations between capital and labor. The rise of large corporations through vertical and horizontal integration means that, at least for these capitalists, the market is tamed and its uncertainty is contained. Under competitive capitalism (and in the competitive sector of monopoly capitalism), the subordination to the anarchy of the market demands of capitalists that they rapidly deploy and redeploy their labor forces, leading to the establishment of factory despotism, the arbitrary and dictatorial power of the overseer; under monopoly capitalism the subordination of the product and supply markets requires a similar containment of the labor market. The reduction of uncertainty in one set of markets and the concomitant emergence of planning is most effective when other markets can be stabilized as well. With respect to labor this means internalizing the vagaries of the external labor market, through the development of rules governing the hiring and firing of workers and their mobility through the firm. Bidding rules and rewards to seniority attach a labor force to the enterprise and act as

buffers to fluctuations in the external environment. At the same time, collective bargaining and grievance machinery organize and regularize conflict so that it does not disrupt production. Together with the internal labor market, these constitute the factory apparatuses of hegemonic production politics in which the interests of the corporations are concretely coordinated with those of labor.

We have seen the replacement of market despotism with a hegemonic system from the point of view of the transformation of competitive and interdependent relations among capitalists. From the point of view of relations between capital and labor the significant shift is from a situation in which survival is directly dependent on the amount of labor expended to a situation in which there is a separation of the reproduction of labor power (wage) from the expenditure of labor (effort), accomplished through minimum wage laws, unionization and so forth. The unhinging of the expenditure of effort from the coercion of the market requires a new mode of eliciting the cooperation of workers in the pursuit of profit--that is, in the reproduction of relations in production. It becomes necessary to replace apparatuses of market despotism in which coercion prevails over consent by the apparatuses of a hegemonic system in which consent prevails over (although is dependent on) coercion.

Production Politics and Global Politics

Just as the relations in and of production are inextricably intertwined within a single mode of production, so the corresponding forms of politics are equally inseparable. Production politics cannot be understood outside global politics, just as global politics cannot be understood outside production politics. Under a system of market despotism the apparatuses of the state protect the external conditions of the market, the competitive and interdependent relations among capitalists and the unmediated market relation of capital to labor. Illustrative of this role of the state is the legislation which repeals protectionist measures, e.g. corn laws with respect to capital and poor law reform which throws workers into the hands of capital. Thus the state does not directly shape the factory apparatuses, although it guarantees their effectiveness. Despotism on the shop floor

ultimately rests on the mobilization of the coercive instruments of the state in the face of class struggles.

Under a hegemonic system the state continues to guarantee the effectiveness of factory apparatuses, but in addition it shapes the limits of struggles over relations in production, as in the cases of the limitation of the working day, the employment of children, and minimum wage legislation. Often the state not only defines the limits within which the factory apparatuses must organize struggle but also shapes the form of the apparatuses themselves, as in legislating the form and content of collective bargaining.

The differences between these two systems then lie in the form of intervention of global politics in production politics. Under market despotism the apparatuses intervene only "externally" or "indirectly", whereas under the hegemonic system the state apparatuses intervene directly: that is, they do not merely regulate the external conditions but also shape the very form of struggle over relations in production. At the same time, both systems share one characteristic, viz. the differentiation of the factory apparatuses and the state apparatuses. We must now turn to systems of production and global politics in which the apparatuses of factory and state are two nodes of a single link: the systems of bureaucratic despotism and collective self-management.

Under a system of bureaucratic despotism the state reaches down into the factory itself to become a means of communicating directives and organizing the reproduction of the relations in production. Organs of the state such as the party, the secret service or the trade union become instrumental in enforcing norms, intensifying work, disciplining workers and so on. However, the direct connection between factory apparatuses and state apparatuses does not necessarily imply that the linkage guarantees that factory apparatuses always act in accordance with the dictates of state apparatuses. These apparatuses may be turned into instruments of managerial dominance at odds with the interests of the central planning agency. They may also be subject to pressure from the work force itself. Indeed, whereas the presence of organs of the

state within the factory refers to the bureaucratic aspect of production politics, it is the balance of power among these three forces that shapes the despotic element.

In a situation where enterprise management has certain discretionary powers--that is, there exists a certain enterprise autonomy--and where the economic plan engenders uncertainty, through the ambiguity of the criteria for the evaluation of performance (physical outputs, profit, quality, etc.), rapid and arbitrary changes in plan targets, or the unavailability of supplies, then there are tendencies towards managerial despotism over the labor force. For just as the anarchy of the market leads to despotism in the factories of competitive capitalism, so the same uncertain relations to the plan lead to similar responses in bureaucratically administered regimes, particularly when the livelihood of directors is linked to the fulfilment of the plan.

However, this form of bureaucratic despotism can be offset by state guarantees of security of employment, as in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Without the sanction of firing workers the ability to effectively impose a despotic order within the factory is more difficult than under competitive capitalism. One way, of course, is to offer employment security without wage security, as in the use of a straight piece rate system, or one that is supported by a below-subsistence minimum wage. This is one reason for the popularity of piece rate systems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Where there is an effective minimum wage the factory apparatuses must resort to other, perhaps informal methods of persuasion or coercion. On the other hand, where the enterprise management can wrest some power from the central planning agency and secure loose sets of targets then the necessity of applying despotic pressure to the labor force is correspondingly reduced.

Under a system of collective self-management there is still the institutional link between the factory and the central planning agency. But the bureaucratic features--that is, the presence of the organs of the state directing the reproduction of relations in production--give way on the one hand to the enterprise as a self-managing entity, and on

the other to the responsiveness of the central planning agency to needs expressed at the level of the enterprise. The despotic features are also removed, in that some form of collective participation organizes the reproduction and shapes the form of relations in production.

At the same time, the systems of market despotism and collective self-management do have one feature in common: the external intervention of global politics in production politics. The central planning agency communicates targets for each factory as well as the resources available as "inputs" and the allocation of goods necessary for the satisfaction of politically determined needs. However, the planning agency does not dictate the particular mechanisms through which inputs are transformed into outputs--that is, the form of the labor process--nor does it dictate the distribution of the goods it allocates. There are no minimum wage laws, safety regulations, etc., since these are determined collectively at the level of the enterprise.

In terms of the link between production politics and global politics, collective self-management and the hegemonic system are direct opposites. But in terms of one criterion--the possibility of global politics being influenced by demands articulated by the enterprise--they fall into a category that distinguishes them from both forms of despotism. Thus, the corporation and trade unions of advanced capitalism are able to influence decisions made by the state, although the mechanisms are not necessarily institutionalized, while there are specific mechanisms through which the self-governing enterprise can shape the content of the plan.

<u>The Four Basic Types of Production Politics</u>		Institutional Linkage of PP and GP	
		Separation	Fusion
Intervention of GP into PP	External	MARKET DESPOTISM	COLLECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT
	Internal	HEGEMONIC SYSTEM	BUREAUCRATIC DESPOTISM

Collective self-management corresponds to a notion of socialism in which we begin to make history ourselves: we collectively participate in determining the needs to be satisfied (global politics) and the manner in which these needs will be met (production politics). Global politics involves, therefore, first a decision about the unit which expresses needs (neighborhood, factory, family, etc.); second, a mechanism for articulating those needs; and third, a mechanism for aggregating those needs into a plan which stipulates the way of producing the goods necessary for the satisfaction of those needs. It is in the process of determining the plan from needs expressed by distinct units of a society that a "bureaucracy" with interests of its own can emerge, the possibility, as Marx says in THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY, of "an illusory communal interest imposed on them as an interest 'alien' to them, and 'independent' of them." The mechanism of aggregating needs must itself be subject to political (public, undistorted) discourse.

Clearly there are definite material conditions for the development of such a society, in particular the development of the forces of production to such a level that a detailed plan can be developed that can effectively take into account what a given enterprise is really capable of. This possibility involves a certain level of automation, which may make nonsense of the notion of self-management: an effective plan may have to eliminate the autonomy of the enterprise with respect to the plan's fulfillment. Is collective self-management compatible with a planned economy? The blueprints for socialism, such as those of guild socialism (G.D.H. Cole) and worker councils (Castoriadis) are responses to precisely this apparent antimony. Second, the development of the forces of production will be necessary to shorten the working day and thereby release time for participation in politics as well as for the satisfaction of disparate needs.

Three concluding remarks: First, just as market despotism, the hegemonic system and bureaucratic despotism may each assume a variety of concrete forms, so one would expect there to be not just one form of socialism but a variety of socialisms, although they would share certain common attributes such as

those suggested above. Second, I would claim that the discussion both of socialism, as a theoretical conception and as a blue-print, and of the material, psychological and political presuppositions of its possibility, let alone its realization, must be integral aspects of Marxist theory. Moreover, the absence of such an explicit, sustained discussion of socialism in the writings of Marx has facilitated the transformation of Marxism into an ideology of domination disguised as a science. Third, underlying much Marxist theory is the assumption that socialism is capitalism's inevitable successor, and that therefore the transition to socialism is coterminous with the collapse of capitalism. In this way "scientific socialism" manages to avoid serious analysis of the idea of socialism because it is predetermined by the expansion of the productive forces under capitalism. Shifting the emphasis from forces of production to relations in production and production politics introduces an indeterminacy concerning the future (socialism or barbarism), severs the link between the transition to socialism and the collapse of capitalism, and therefore unavoidably restores the discussion of the nature of socialism to Marxist theory.

Interpreting Concrete Societies

If they are to achieve the status of a concept, the systems of production politics and global politics discussed above must be able to exist in their pure form. At the same time, any concrete form of production politics will probably be best understood as some combination of two or more of the different types. Moreover, within a single country it is more than likely that you will find a variety of types of production politics, existing in different sectors of the economy. That is, production politics are shaped not only by the form of global politics but also by variations in relations among enterprises, by the form of the labor process itself (relations in production), and by the relationship between factory and local community. We can point to the way forms of production politics manifest themselves in reality by examining competitive capitalism, advanced capitalism and the bureaucratically administered regimes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

We can discern a variety of forms of production politics in the competitive capitalism of nineteenth-century England. One reason lies in the relative abstention of the state from intervention in the factory. It was only with the passage of factory acts restricting child labor and hours of work that the form of production politics began to become more homogeneous, but then it was also necessarily approaching a more hegemonic form. Throughout the nineteenth century management was responding to the legacy of a pre-industrial order. One of the consequences was the prevalence in manufacturing industries of various systems of contracting. There was of course the transitional system of external contracting or domestic industry, but there was also a system of inside contracting in which work was hired out to "contractors" who in turn were entirely responsible for organizing the labor process, recruiting and disciplin. Thus, in those industries based on pre-industrial crafts such as metal-working or wood-working, craft workers would be paid for the work completed and would hire their own helpers. In newer industries management would use a system of inside contracting in order to externalize risk. In mining, for example, the butty system operated through a contractor who would recruit and organize gang labor. In the textile industry the contractor was the head of a family. The paternalistic or patriarchal relations between contractor and helper might moderate the structures of despotism encouraged by the lack of formal protection afforded to workers. The overseer and then the foreman with curtailed powers emerged out of the system of inside contracting as management appropriated the control exercised by the contractor. However, even in the nineteenth century there were new industries, such as those using chemical processes, brewing, distilling, and sugar refining, that from the beginning involved the direct employment of labor.

The factory village was another mode of adaptation to the emergence of the industrial order. Like the company town in the United States, the factory village was established by employers to subject the entire life of the worker to the discipline required by industrial labor in the era of competitive capitalism. The possibility of controlling the life of a worker

both inside and outside the factory meant that the "external" state became irrelevant and a factory state with a local monopoly of organized force emerged to dominate both the community and the shop floor.

The responses of labor to the emergence of the particular apparatuses of factory and state can be distinguished according to the form of intervention of global politics into production politics. Where the state was organized to protect and regulate rather than to intervene, the formation of strong trade unions and cooperative movements was more likely. Where the state played a more important role in the organization of the economy a political party was likely to emerge as a powerful weapon in the defence of worker interests, and struggles would be focused more on the state. Thus the very different relationship between trade unions and party in Britain and Germany during the second half of the nineteenth century might be understood in these terms.

Turning to advanced capitalism we immediately note that the existence of two sectors--competitive and monopoly--means that both hegemonic production politics and a form reminiscent of market despotism are to be found coexisting in the same society. The relationship between the production politics of competitive capitalism and those of the competitive sector of monopoly capitalism will hinge in part on the mode of intervention of the state into the factory. To what extent does the state enforce meaningful minimum wage laws, workman's compensation, union recognition clauses, etc. in the competitive sector? The form of production politics in the competitive sector will also be decisively shaped by the nature of the labor force it employs. Illegal migrants, women and Blacks have less power to shape the form of production politics or to work through the state to impose legislation on recalcitrant employers.

If we focus on the monopoly sector itself it is clear that the form of production politics varies among countries. Thus in the United States legislation emerging in the New Deal and reshaped later has not only imposed limits on the content of production politics but has shaped its very form through the stipulation of the mode of union representation, by making

collective agreements legally binding, by outlawing closed shops and by dictating the sort of issues that can and cannot be subject to collective bargaining. In Britain, by contrast, the state abstains from legislative regulation of production politics. There is multiple union representation on the shop floor; collective agreements are not binding in the law, but are shaped through continual negotiation and struggle at the point of production. Unions have successfully resisted state regulation of factory apparatuses. Whereas in the United States global politics have stamped themselves on the form of production politics, in Britain the trade union movement and its arm the Labor Party have managed to hold back state intervention in the factory: production politics have stamped themselves on global politics.

Just as a critical distinction between market despotism and hegemonic systems of production politics depends on the relations of interdependence and competition among enterprises, so, within countries such as the Soviet Union, the political orchestration of relations of interdependence among enterprises and relations of enterprises to the administrative planning body give rise to different forms of production politics. The purer form of bureaucratic despotism will emerge where the enterprise has little room to manoeuvre and its very survival is threatened or where management is subjected to crisis directives, as frequently occurs in priority sectors. Whereas in the 1930s accounts suggest that bureaucratic despotism was indeed the form of production politics, contemporary interest in "human relations" studies conducted in the United States suggests that security of employment combined with the diminished use of piece work incentives might be leading towards less coercive modes of domination. Virtually all of the literature points to successful resistance by workers of the intensification of work. At the same time, there are few rewards for direct producers which might provide the basis for the coordination of the interests of worker and enterprise.

Clearly there are variations between different countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and one major dimension of such variation is the relative importance of the plan versus the

market. However, it is not at all clear how this affects the operation of the enterprises and production politics. The Hungarian economic reforms which shifted quite drastically from the use of physical planning to a system of financial incentives does not appear to have made that much difference to the individual enterprise, according to David Granick, because of the government's twin policies of guaranteeing security of employment and keeping inflation down to a minimal level. Yugoslavia, of course, is very different from the other countries in Eastern Europe in that planning plays a relatively small role in organizing the economy. Studies suggest that under circumstances of the free reign of the market, worker control over the factory, the election of managers and so forth have not had a significant impact on managerial policy.

Transitions

Having explicated the four types of production politics in terms of their relationship to global politics, the final step would be to try to understand the transitions from one system to another. Here one has to distinguish between the dissolution of an old system and the genesis of a new one. Clearly the relationship between production politics and global politics has repercussions for the emergence of "revolutionary" struggles. Thus under both despotic systems conflict tends to be of a zero-sum nature and therefore struggle leads to its own intensification, whereas under a hegemonic system struggle can lead to concessions which undermine further struggles. But under the system of bureaucratic despotism struggles that break out in any single factory threaten not only that particular factory (as in the two forms of capitalism) but the entire political fabric--hence the importance in the Soviet Union of being able to mobilize an effective repressive apparatus against strikes.

As regards the transition to socialism, if we are to take the diagram presented above seriously it suggests that the chances are greater from either form of despotism than from the hegemonic system. Certainly our typology does pose the question of the

relative chances of the transition to socialism in the East rather than the West. Moreover, the question is posed in political terms rather than in the more usual economic terms. Of course such transitions are shaped by world historical factors, in particular the uneven and unequal development of capitalism. Thus, just as it has been argued that the Soviet road to industrialism was necessitated by the peculiar world historical conditions faced by Russia in 1917, and Japan had to leap into a hegemonic system, so it is now argued by some that industrialism in the third world can only proceed along a socialist road--although the nature of that socialism is not mapped out.

IV. THE NATURE OF POLITICS AND LABOR IN MARX

At this point the following question arises: who makes the decisions about how productive capacity should be allocated? Who decides, for example, how long the production of goods directly serving consumption can "wait"? Marx's reply, of course, is everyone (this is precisely why he speaks of "associated individuals"). But how can every individual make such decisions? Marx did not answer this question, because for him it did not arise. For us, however, in our times, it has become perhaps the most decisive question of all. The focal point of contemporary Marxism is to work out models for this (or at least it ought to be) (Agnes Heller, THE THEORY OF NEED IN MARX, p. 124).

The traditional antinomies in the writings of Marx are between the early "philosophical" and later "scientific" works, and between the themes of determinism found in the economic theories and the voluntarism found in the political theories. In the next two lectures I propose to question the second antinomy by showing that Marx's writings on the economy are less deterministic and his political writings less "voluntarist" than is usually assumed. In this lecture I will break down the distinction between the early and mature writings by pointing to common underlying philosophical premises. In place of these two antinomies I will substitute a third which threads through his entire works, that between labor and politics.

Two Problems in the Possibility of Socialism

In the last lecture I developed the notion of socialism resting on a particular relationship of production politics to global politics. Two fundamental criticisms were then raised. The first revolved around the aggregation of needs as stipulated by specific units in society. In the process of collectively shaping a common structure of needs, how can one avoid the formation of an "illusory general interest" imposed on society and embodied in an administrative structure which opposes itself to society? What sort of mechanisms might be necessary, what sort of conditions would have to be realized to guarantee the responsiveness of the needs formulated in a plan to the needs articulated by "associated producers" as

individuals or councils? The second criticism concerned the realization of the plan. Here it was suggested that my emphasis on relations in production underplayed the development of the forces of production as a necessary condition for the implementation of a plan. Under the alternative imagery society becomes a huge factory--the unit of decision making becomes society itself, and production politics becomes wholly subordinated to global politics. The basis of socialism lies in the untapped potential of the forces of production, in particular technology, which develop under capitalism.

In fact, however, the notion of relations in production and the derivative production politics were deliberately introduced to counter this more orthodox understanding of socialism and at the same time to respond to the first problem of political representation. Therefore I will now try to show how the notion of forces of production to be found in Marx is the basis of an inadequate notion of politics.

Let me also make it clear what is at stake here. I am not talking about the problems of transition to socialism but of the very possibility of a society that we might want to talk of as socialist. That is, I am not concerned here with historical realization but with the very general conditions for a self-regulating society of associated producers. It is not worth worrying about the transition to socialism until we have examined the possibility of socialism. This sort of problem emerges with particular force when we no longer believe in the inevitability of socialism. It means that in studying the Soviet experience, for example, we have to try to distinguish between the particular and the universal--that is, between the historically specific problems that have thwarted the rise of socialism within that country and the very general problems that any country attempting such a transition would experience.

From Forces of Production to Relations in Production

Why then do I want to look at the labor process more in its aspect as a set of relations than in terms of the capacity to transform nature? To begin with Marx's notion of the labor

process:

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway.... The elementary factors of the labour-process are 1, the personal activity of man, i.e., work itself, 2, the subject of that work, and 3, its instruments (Marx, CAPITAL, volume one, pp. 177, 178).

Here Marx is clearly concerned with the activity of transforming nature rather than with the relations of cooperation that this entails. It may be claimed that those relations are implicit or assumed, but Marx later writes:

The labour process, resolved as above into its simplest elementary factors, is human action with a view to the production of use-values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements; it is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and Nature; it is the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human existence, and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase. It was, therefore, not necessary to represent our labourer in connexion with other labourers; man and his labour on one side, Nature and its materials on the other, sufficed. As the taste of porridge does not tell you who grew the oats, no more does this simple process tell you of itself what are the social conditions under which it is taking place, whether under the slave-owner's brutal lash, or that anxious eye of the capitalist, whether Cincinnatus carries it on in tilling his modest farm or a savage in killing wild animals with stones (Marx, CAPITAL, volume one, pp. 183-84).

But the fact that the transformation of nature is a social activity, that men and women have to cooperate in the transformation of nature is as much a universal fact as is the necessity of interaction with nature (see, for example, the third premise in the GERMAN IDEOLOGY). To be sure the taste of porridge does not tell us who grew the oats, but it does tell us that someone did.

So why does Marx omit social relations from his theoretical formulation of the labor process? Clearly, in his actual account of any specific labor process he does restore those relations of cooperation and domination. We hear much of the despotism of the overseer, etc., later in volume one of CAPITAL. But he does not think of those relations as a distinct realm of "relations in production" but rather as a manifestation of the relations of production (although at one point Marx insists on the distinction between those relations of the labor process attributable to the capitalist nature of production and those which are attributable to coordination, which would be independent of the particular mode of production--i.e., a distinction between the technical relations in production and the social relations in production). What I have insisted on calling the relations in production Marx sometimes calls the "immediate production relations," and others, for example Edwards, call more clearly the relations of production at the point of production. What purpose is served, then, by my turning from forces of production to relations in production as the distinctive component of the labor process which couples with the relations of production to form a mode of production?

First, in turning away from the "forces of production" I am quite deliberately turning away from the notion of the inevitability of socialism. Underlying many of Marx's general schema of history is the view that the forces of production lay the basis for and necessitate the transition from capitalism to socialism. This is most clearly stated in the preface to A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY (Tucker, pp. 4-5). From being an impetus to the development of the forces of production the relations of production become fetters, are burst asunder, and a new set of relations of production is established, which again turns from a support of to an obstacle to the growth of the productive forces. The increasing capacity to transform nature gives a directionality to history.

But does the development of the forces of production lay the basis of socialism? Marx makes claims of this sort based on the "socialization" of production and the potential of new

technology for developing the varied talents of individuals.

Modern industry, on the other hand, through its catastrophes imposes the necessity of recognising, as a fundamental law of production, variation of work, consequently fitness of the labourer for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of varied aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail workers of to-day, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labour, ready to face any change in production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers (Marx, CAPITAL, volume one, pp. 487-88; see also GRUNDRISSE, p. 325).

He also points to the application of science to technology, turning all workers into planners or regulators of production:

Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself.... He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body--it is, in a word, the development of a social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth (Marx, GRUNDRISSE, p. 705).

Marx is saying more here than that the expansion of the forces of production makes possible the shortening of the work day. He is claiming that capitalist technology lays the basis for a certain emancipation in the labour process as well. In the light of the development of technology and its embodiment in machines, this issue has to be examined much more carefully. What technical constraints do capitalist machines and technology impose on the possibility of self-regulation by workers of the labor process? What is the nature of the technical as opposed to the social relations in production? Certainly, there is not a great deal of evidence that capitalist technology in

its most advanced form spontaneously generates a movement towards collective self-management.

Even if we grant the potential harnessing of the advanced forces of production to a socialist society, this says nothing about their necessitating the transition to socialism. Indeed, the opposite might be argued: at the same time that capitalist technology has provided the basis of economic expansion, it has also reproduced capitalist relations in production and secured consent to those relations. It is important to examine whether the capitalist labor process generates new "radical" needs whose realization is impossible under capitalism, such as needs for more disposable time and for varied labor.

Turning from forces of production to relations in production takes away the fundamental prop to the inevitability of the transition to socialism and thereby allows us to repose questions about the emancipatory potential of technology without any presuppositions. It introduces an indeterminacy into the future, into the nature of post-capitalist societies, and forces us to consider what we mean by socialism.

The second reason for introducing the notion of relations in production, distinct from relations of production, is to afford the former a certain autonomy from the latter. Under the Marxian schema where the relations of domination at the point of production are but an expression of the relations of production, the transformation of the one automatically implies a transformation of the other. That is, the transformation of the state and of global politics is simultaneously the transformation of the factory apparatuses and production politics, and vice versa. This has historically proven to be the basis of unwarranted optimism. Introducing a specific notion of "production politics" based on the reproduction of the relations in production allows us to formulate as a problem, and examine, the conditions under which one form of politics leads to changes in the other and what those changes might be. In other words, the concept of production politics asserts that the relations of the labor process and the processes through which they are reproduced are both important, and this is no less true of socialism than of any other type of society.

The Realms of Freedom and of Necessity

But why are the relations in production and the form of production politics so important? Here I base myself on Marx's notion of human nature, namely the capacity for self-transformation through interchange with nature. "By thus acting upon the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature" (Marx, CAPITAL, volume one, p. 177).

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals they express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production (Marx and Engels, THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY, in Tucker, p. 150).

Again Marx insists on confining the labor process to material conditions rather than the mode of cooperation, the relations in production and their reproduction. Nevertheless the manner of transforming nature into the means of subsistence shapes the needs which define the character of human beings.

Under socialism, or what Marx call communism, human beings develop rich and varied needs as expressed in his poetic vision of the abolition of the division of labor:

... while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic (Marx and Engels, THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY, in Tucker, p. 160).

This same view of the realization of varied needs under communism is to be found in the PARIS MANUSCRIPTS:

... so the society that is fully developed produces man in all richness of his being, the rich man is profoundly and abundantly endowed with all the

senses, as its constant reality.... It can be seen how the rich man and the wealth of human need take the place of the wealth and poverty of political economy. The rich man is simultaneously the man in need of a totality of vital human expression; he is the man in whom his own realization exists as inner necessity, as need. Given socialism, not only man's wealth but also his poverty acquire a human and hence a social significance. Poverty is the passive bond which makes man experience his greatest wealth--the other man--as need (Marx, EARLY WRITINGS, pp. 354, 356).

The question thus becomes: what manner of producing the means of existence corresponds to the development of this "rich individual"?

Clearly it involves the abolition of classes, so that "associated producers" themselves partake in the distribution of material goods. But what form does the labor process--i.e. the relations in production/forces of production--assume to generate these diverse needs? In the PARIS MANUSCRIPTS Marx compares animals, who "produce only when immediate physical need compels them to do so," with the human being, who "produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need" (p. 329). What is suggested, therefore, is the necessary existence of a realm of necessity and of a realm of freedom.

The actual wealth of society, and possibility of constantly expanding its reproduction process, therefore do not depend upon the duration of surplus labour, but upon its productivity and the more or less copious conditions of production under which it is performed. In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this

with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with the realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite (Marx, CAPITAL, volume three, in Tucker, pp. 440-41).

Although the shortening of the working day is a basic prerequisite for the realization of diverse talents, including participation in politics, in the realm of freedom, it is the form of relations in production and of their reproduction, as suggested in this passage, that stimulates those diverse needs in the first place. The capitalist labor process stimulates only certain very limited needs and leads to a stunted existence in a relatively small amount of disposable time. The importance of the labor process in fostering new needs is found in another passage in Marx:

Labour-time, even if exchange value is eliminated, always remains the creative substance of wealth and the measure of the cost of its production. But free time, disposable time, is wealth itself, partly for the enjoyment of the product, partly for free activity which--unlike labour--is not dominated by the pressure of extraneous purpose which must be fulfilled, and the fulfilment of which is regarded as a natural necessity or a social duty, according to one's inclination (Marx, THEORIES OF SURPLUS VALUE, Part III, p. 257).

However, it would also be a mistake to draw too sharp a distinction between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom. For the activity of social labor of associated producers rationally regulating their interchange with nature becomes itself a vital need.

It is self-evident that if labour-time is reduced to a normal length and furthermore, labour is no longer performed for someone else, but for myself, and, at the same time, the social contradictions between master and man, etc., being abolished, it acquires a quite different, a free character, it becomes real social labour, and finally the basis of disposable time--the labour of a man who has also disposable time, must be of a much higher quality than that of the beast of burden (Marx, THEORIES OF SURPLUS VALUE, Part III, p. 257).

Finally, we must consider the relationship of the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Under all previous forms

of society the conditions for the reproduction of the relations of production determine which arena will be dominant--whether it be religion under feudalism, politics under the Ancient mode of production, or the economic itself under capitalism--whereas under socialism the realm of necessity is subordinated to the realization of a realm of freedom. But in that subordination one has to face the problem of politics, of the articulation and aggregation of needs. It is not clear whether Marx's rich individual has diverse needs in both the material and non-material realms. A relatively homogeneous set of material demands means that the problem of political negotiation among competing needs is less difficult than where material demands are heterogeneous.

The Abolition of Politics

The distinction between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, therefore, implies a concept of global politics (formation of a new structure of needs and the resolution of the limitation of needs by other needs) and of production politics (associated producers rationally regulating their interchange with nature). Yet in Marx we hear nothing of this. For him, communism represents the abolition of not only the state, but, it would seem, also of the very notion of politics.

Communism is the positive supersession of private property as human self-estrangement, and hence the true appropriation of the human essence through and for man: it is the complete restoration of man to himself as a social, i.e. human, being, a restoration which has become conscious and which takes place within the entire wealth of previous periods of development. This communism, as fully developed humanism equals naturalism: it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution (Marx, EARLY WRITINGS, p. 348).

This reconciliation of conflicts emerges from Marx's critique of Hegel's view of state and civil society. Marx shows in his CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S DOCTRINE OF THE STATE that the development of the state as an entity apart from civil society is specific to the capitalist period. The state perfects itself as such

in the modern representative state based on citizenship. This is political emancipation. As Marx says in ON THE JEWISH QUESTION:

All emancipation is reduction of the human world and of relationships to man himself. Political emancipation is the reduction of man on the one hand to the member of civil society, the egoistic, independent individual, and on the other to the citizen, the moral person (Marx, EARLY WRITINGS, p. 234).

But human emancipation goes beyond political emancipation and involves the reabsorption of the state in civil society.

Only when real, individual man resumes the abstract citizen into himself and as an individual man has become a species-being in his empirical being, his individual work and his individual relationships, only when man has recognized and organized his forces propres as social forces so that social force is no longer separated from him in the form of political force, only then will human emancipation be completed (Marx, EARLY WRITINGS, p. 234).

These two forms of emancipation are formulated in THE CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S DOCTRINE OF THE STATE as follows:

(1) Either the political state is separated from civil society; in that event it is not possible for all as individuals to take part in the legislature. The political state leads an existence divorced from civil society. For its part, civil society would cease to exist if everyone became a legislator. On the other hand, it is opposed by a political state which can only tolerate a civil society that conforms to its own standards. In other words, the fact that civil society takes part in the political state through its deputies is the expression of the separation and of the merely dualistic unity. (2) Alternatively, civil society is the real political society. If so, it is senseless to insist on a requirement which stems from the conception of the political state as something existing apart from civil society, and which has its roots only in the theological conception of the political state. On this assumption the legislature entirely ceases to be important as a representative body. The legislature is representative only in the sense that every function is representative. For example, a cobbler is my representative in so far as he satisfies a social need, just as every definite form of social activity, because it is a species activity, represents only the species. That is to say, it represents a determination of my own being just as every man is representative of other men. In this sense he is a representative not by virtue of another thing which he represents but by virtue of what he is and does (Marx, EARLY

WRITINGS, p. 190).

The realization of a truly political society is achieved through the supercession and abolition of politics itself. But how does everyone become a legislator? How are we to decide on the social needs which the cobbler satisfies in order to become my representative?

Finally, one last passage which refers to the reabsorption of political society in civil society and the transformation of both:

Only when civil society has achieved unrestricted active and passive suffrage has it really raised itself to the point of abstraction from itself, to the political existence which constitutes its true, universal, essential existence. But the perfection of this abstraction is also its transcendence. By really establishing its political existence as its authentic existence, civil society ensures that its civil existence, in so far as it is distinct from its political existence, is inessential. And with the demise of the one, the other, its opposite, collapses also. Therefore, electoral reform in the abstract political state is the equivalent to a demand for its dissolution and this in turn implies the dissolution of civil society (Marx, EARLY WRITINGS, p. 191).

We can see, then, that at least in these early writings Marx's conception of the fusion of labor and politics under communism springs from the transcendence of their separation, brought to perfection in the modern representative state. This stark representation of the relationship between politics and labor (separation/fusion) pervades Marx's writings and those of Marxists who follow in his footsteps and talk about the dissolution of the state while refusing to deal with the theoretical issues posed by the reality of politics under socialism. Of course, it is true that Marx develops some implicit notions of the politics in the first stage of communism, socialism, for example in his account of the Paris Commune and in THE CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAM, but even here the political realm is cut off from the economic. Restoring politics to the realm of capitalist production and posing questions of the relationship of production politics to global politics means that politics no longer wither away but, in a restructured form, become an essential element of socialism.

V. THE DYNAMICS OF CAPITALISM

In the last lecture, I discussed Marx's notion of politics and of their eventual abolition. I linked the reabsorption of the state in civil society under communism to the philosophical apparatuses that Marx inherited from Hegel. I suggested that restoring politics to the conception of socialism (and communism) would mean introducing a notion of politics into civil society--that is, developing some notion of production politics as distinct from global politics. I now want to approach the idea of production politics through Marx's understanding of the dynamics of capitalism. I will suggest that it was the very strength of his theory of competitive capitalism and the accuracy of his economic forecasts of its demise that makes the extension of Marx's economic analysis to the dynamics of monopoly capitalism difficult. Yet, although Marx was wrong in identifying the dissolution of competitive capitalism with the dissolution of capitalism itself and the emergence of socialism, the reasons for this error are not at all obvious. Indeed, historically capitalism did undergo quite traumatic crises before a relatively stable form of monopoly capitalism emerged. The transition was by no means preordained. In any event, here I will suggest that it was the generalization of certain features of competitive capitalism, namely the form of relations in production and the manner of their reproduction, to all forms of capitalism that stymied his understanding of the rise of monopoly capitalism. I will suggest that he correctly identified the logic which made inevitable the emergence of large corporations, trusts, joint stock companies, etc. But his failure to address corresponding transformations in the form of politics--global politics, production politics, and their interrelationship--led him to see these new forms of ownership as capitalism's last gasp.

The Seismograph of History

We defined capitalism as a mode of production which appropriates surplus value through a system of wage labor. That is, direct producers are dispossessed of the means of

production and direct access to the means of subsistence, and have to sell the only commodity they possess--labor power--to a capitalist, who sets them to work, privately appropriates the product of their labor, extends them a wage so that they can survive to return to work the next day, and realizes a profit through the sale of commodities on the market. Although profit may appear to emerge from the market, or appear as a return to capital invested, its real source is the unpaid labor of the direct producers. The working day of the producer is therefore divided into one portion--V--corresponding to the wage or necessary labor, known as variable capital, and another portion--S--known as surplus labor or surplus value, and representing unpaid labor. The value of any commodity in this scheme is measured by the socially necessary or average labor time embodied in it. Thus, the value of labor power is the amount of labor time that goes into reproducing it--that is, for Marx at least, the amount of labor time congealed in the commodities purchased to maintain the laborer on a day-to-day basis and to renew the "laborer" through the family. Generally, the value of a commodity is composed of three elements: surplus labor (S), variable capital or necessary labor (V), and constant capital--that is, the value of raw materials and wear and tear of machinery--(C). We may then say that the total value of a commodity is:

$$T = C + V + S$$

But capitalism is based on profit: a capitalist survives as such only if s/he makes a profit. Moreover, workers only survive as such insofar as they can find a capitalist to employ them. Indeed, capitalism is distinguished by the fact that the material interests of any group or class in society cannot be satisfied until the interests of capital in making a profit are realized. Profit then becomes the true index of capitalism's well-being, the seismograph of history, as Mandel puts it. But how do capitalists measure profit? In practice, they don't measure it in terms of the quantity of surplus value, since they don't see the origin of profit in unpaid labor. Moreover, they distinguish between mass of profit and rate of profit, or the return to capital invested. It is the latter notion, not

the former, that tells capitalists how they are doing. The behavior of capitalists is therefore governed by the rate of profit:

$$p = \frac{S}{C + V} = \frac{S/V}{1 + C/V}$$

where S/V is known as the rate of surplus value or of exploitation --the ratio of unpaid to paid labor--and C/V is known as the organic composition of capital, which is a measure of the capital intensity of the labor process--that is, the value of machinery and raw materials put into motion by a unit of labor. C differs from C in that it refers to the total advanced constant capital, and not just that constant capital used up in a cycle of production. In other words, C is the value of all machinery, raw materials, etc. invested in by the capitalist, and not just the depreciation C .

Marx not only uses the notion of rate of profit, p , to describe the behavior of the individual capitalist, but also refers to an average rate of profit for the whole society, P , measured as the ratio of the total surplus value produced in a society to the total capital (constant and variable) employed in that society. Thus, P is a measure of the development of capitalism as a whole.

As we have formulated the problem so far, it would appear that capitalists would only invest in those spheres of the economy where the rate of profit is higher--that is, where organic composition of capital is lower--or the labor intensive sectors. It is therefore not at all obvious how capitalism develops at all. Here supply and demand make themselves felt through the market, lowering prices in the spheres of low organic composition of capital and raising them in the spheres of high organic composition, so that the rate of profit is equalized across all sectors of the economy. In effect, there is a transfer of surplus value between sectors, with the result that prices diverge from values in the formation of a general rate of profit:

But capital withdraws from a sphere of a low rate of profit and invades others which yield a higher rate of profit. Through this incessant outflow and influx, or, briefly, through its distribution among the various spheres, which depends on how the rate of profit falls here and rises there,

it creates such a ratio of supply and demand that the average rate of profit in the various spheres of production becomes the same, and values are, therefore, converted into prices of production (Marx, CAPITAL, volume three, p. 195).

What, then, are these prices of production that differ from the values of commodities and which equalize the rate of profit across all sectors of the economy? They are in fact the prices of commodities as shaped by a given return to capital, namely the average or general rate of profit, P , in society.

$T' = C + V + (\underline{C} + V)P$, whereas $T = C + V + (\underline{C} + V)p$.

In other words, the transformation of values (T) into prices (T') is based on a sharing out of the total surplus value in society according to the value of the capital invested by each capitalist.

But as soon as we recognize that the value of a commodity is different from its price, we have to recognize as well that the value of a commodity (i.e., its embodied labor time) is no longer simply the summation of the costs of constant and variable capital plus surplus value, since the constant and variable capital are purchased in the market at "prices of production" and not at their value. So the costs of production as Marx talks about them ($\underline{C} + V$) are not in fact how much the capitalist pays for his constant and variable capital, and this will in turn further affect the discrepancy between prices and values. This is a problem that has consumed the energies of quite a few Marxist economists. However, the kernel of truth behind this transformation problem is that there exists in fact, however complex, some relationship between values and prices, and that although capitalists operate as individuals in terms of prices, the direction of the economy as a whole is shaped behind their backs, and this has to be understood in value terms.

We have seen how supply and demand lead capitalists to experience the average rate of profit as such, as a general rate of profit. But supply and demand are not given exogenously for Marx, but are themselves determined by the relations of production; the relations of production are simultaneously the relations of distribution.

It should be here noted in passing that the "social demand", i.e., the factor which regulates the principle of demand, is essentially subject to the mutual relation-

ship of the different classes and their respective economic position, notably therefore to, firstly, the ratio of total surplus-value to wages, and, secondly, to the relation of the various parts into which surplus-value is split up (profit, interest, ground-rent, taxes, etc.). And this thus again shows how absolutely nothing can be explained by the relation of supply to demand before ascertaining the basis on which this relation rests (Marx, CAPITAL, volume three, pp. 181-82).

Also, the market prices that derive from the value of commodities only represent an equilibrium price around which actual prices will fluctuate according to variations in supply and demand. That is, the price of production is the actual price obtained by a product when supply equals demand. And it is this equilibrium price that generally concerns Marx, since he is interested in the movement of the average itself, not with transient fluctuations around it.

The Falling Rate of Profit

The average rate of profit is not simply some abstract construct that indicates the health of a capitalist economy but, through the action of the market, it is also something experienced directly by the individual capitalist as the general rate of profit. System crisis and social crisis converge in the rate of profit. Marx argues that the pressures of competition force capitalists to continually search for new ways of increasing their individual rates of profit so as to gain a temporary advantage over other capitalists. But this surplus profit soon gives way to the average rate as competitors catch up. Furthermore, the very innovations that capitalists make in order to achieve that surplus profit, when generalized to all capitalists, result in the lowering of the average rate of profit. In particular, Marx claims that the most usual way of generating surplus profit is through mechanization (i.e., substitution of more "valuable" machinery and displacement of labor), which increases the organic composition of capital. But if the organic composition of capital continually increases as capitalism develops, then the average rate of profit must fall.

An example illustrates the dilemma faced by each capitalist. Suppose we have two capitalists, Smith and Brown, who produce

hubcaps. They both have old machines, and they must decide whether to invest in new ones. We will suppose here that prices are equal to values, that the rate of exploitation (S/V) is one, and that there is perfect competition and perfect information. Finally, in the time period we are considering we will assume that constant capital advanced is all used up in wear and tear-- that is, $C = \underline{C}$.

	C	V	S	T	No. of Hubcaps
New Machine	100	25	25	150	200
Old Machine	30	30	30	90	40
Old + New	130	55	55	240	240

The above figures refer to the elements of the value composition of the hubcaps, expressed in hours of labor time, produced with the different techniques. If Smith and Brown each adopt a new machine then the new rate of profit will be $25/100 + 25 = 20\%$. If they each buy an old machine, the rate of profit will continue to be $30/30 + 30 = 50\%$. However, if one decides to stick with the old machine while the other invests in the new one, their individual profits will have to be calculated on the basis of the market value for hubcaps, or the average value of the two techniques. Overall, 240 hubcaps will be produced with a value of 240 hours. That is, each hubcap will have a market value of one hour. So the capitalist with the new machine will realize on the market for his 200 hubcaps 200 hours, while his outlay was 125 hours of capital. This will leave him with a profit of 75 hours, or a surplus profit of 50 hours: his rate of profit is $75/125 = 60\%$. The capitalist with the old machine, on the other hand, will realize 40 hours for his hubcaps. Since they would have cost him 60 hours to produce, this means that he will lose 20 hours where before he made a profit of 30 hours: his rate of profit will be $-20/60 = -33.3\%$. The investment dilemma of the two capitalists is therefore as follows:

SMITH

		Old Machine	New Machine
BROWN	Old Machine	<div>50%</div> <div>50%</div>	<div>60%</div> <div>-33.3%</div>
	New Machine	<div>-33.3%</div> <div>60%</div>	<div>20%</div> <div>20%</div>

Brown thinks as follows: Suppose Smith invests in an old machine. Then if I invest in an old machine too my rate of profit is 50%, but if I invest in a new one it will be 60%. But if Smith invests in a new machine and I invest in an old one, my rate of loss will be 33.3%, whereas if I invest in a new machine my rate of profit will be 20%. Thus, no matter what Smith does, it is better for me to invest in a new machine. The situation from Smith's point of view is, of course, identical. So both invest in new machines, and they share a rate of profit of 20%--considerably less than the 50% they could have secured if they had both invested in old machines.

In effect, there is a conflict between the individual interests of each capitalist and the collective interest of all capitalists. Individual rationality becomes collective irrationality. Without collusion there is no way out of this dilemma. How then is the perfect competition of the market broken down--how do capitalists come to recognize that they have to combine as a class? Do they accomplish this through self-organization, or does the state, acting in the interests of collective capital, come to impose restraints on their competition? For Marx, the emergence of the necessary collusion does eventually occur, but only when it is too late, as the result of the crises produced by the falling rate of profit itself.

Counter-Tendencies and the Production of Crises

In discussing the falling rate of profit we have focused our attention on the rising organic composition of capital, and

have also assumed that the rate of exploitation remains constant. In fact, it is quite possible for S/V to increase without C/V increasing. This can be accomplished through a lengthening of the working day or, where that is not possible, through the intensification of work, e.g. increasing the speed of the assembly line so that the portion of the working day spent on necessary labor is reduced.

An easier way to see the effects of increased productivity on the profit rate is to return to the original formula: $P = S/C + V$. We see from this that any reduction in V that keeps the other factors constant means an increase in P . And V can be reduced by increasing productivity in the wage goods (consumption goods) sector. It is also possible to reduce wages themselves below their value by employing more than one member of the family, by relying on pre-capitalist modes of production to supplement wage labor, or by drawing on labor that is politically weak and therefore cannot resist reductions of wages (minorities, migrants, etc.). Marx suggests that opening new branches of production with relatively low organic composition of capital brings the average rate of profit back up. He also points to foreign trade as a means of cheapening the costs of the necessities of life and of the raw materials that go into constant capital. Finally, he spends half a page on what might be the most crucial counteracting influence: cheapening the costs of constant capital through increases in productivity in the capital goods sector. Although "bigger and better" machines may be introduced continually, it is not obvious that those machines will in fact represent a higher organic composition of capital.

Although Marx recognizes the existence of counteracting tendencies, nonetheless these same tendencies only prepare the ground for a more precipitous decline of the profit rate. And here again the market factors become crucial. The search for an increased rate of profit can only proceed, whatever the means resorted to, by expanding production itself, by increasing the supply of commodities. But profit can only be realized through the sale of those commodities in the market, and for that there must be demand and purchasing power. However, the imperatives of

the profit rate mean that wages are at a minimum, and overproduction thus ensues. Furthermore, all those counter-tendencies to the falling rate of profit, such as reducing C/V or increasing S/V , only exacerbate the problem, either by fostering the further expansion of production or by reducing the purchasing power of the mass of the population. In other words, the counter-tendencies produce crises of overproduction, leading to the closure of factories, the laying off of workers, and the bankruptcy of small capitalists. Therefore, when demand picks up again, it is with capital even more concentrated--that is, capital with a higher organic composition and thus a lower rate of profit.

We see, then, that capitalists are faced with not just one prisoners' dilemma but with two. On the one hand they are compelled to introduce new machinery, etc. in order to give themselves a temporary advantage over other capitalists, which eventually brings down the rate of profit, after other capitalists have caught up. On the other hand, while it is in the interests of each capitalist to cut, or at least refrain from increasing, wages, in order to boost the rate of profit, it is this very process which leads to overproduction and the destruction of small capital, and thus to a further decline in the rate of profit. This second dilemma stems from the necessary expansion of the mass of profit as a result of the search for ever-higher rates of profit. Thus, the contradictory character of the commodity, embodying both exchange and use value, reveals itself in ever-deepening crises of overproduction. The mode of exchange rebels against the mode of production, leading to a situation in which the forces of production can no longer develop: they are fettered by the relations of production, i.e. by the search for higher rates of profit. The capitalist mode of production shows itself to be historically limited: it throws up barriers to its own development.

Capitalist production seeks continually to overcome these immanent barriers, but overcomes them only by means which again place these barriers in its way and on a more formidable scale. The real barrier of capitalism is capital itself. It is that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting point and closing point, the motive and purpose of production; that production is only production for capital and not vice versa, the means of production are not mere means for a constant expansion of the living process of the

society of producers. The limits within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital resting on the expropriation and pauperisation of the great mass of producers can alone move--these limits continually come into conflict with the methods of production employed by capital for its purposes, which drive towards unlimited extension of production, towards production as an end in itself, towards unconditional development of the social productivity of labour. The means--unconditional development of the productive forces of society--comes continually into conflict with the limited purpose, the self-expansion of the existing capital. The capitalist mode of production is, for this reason, a historical means of developing the material forces of production and creating an appropriate world market and is, at the same time, a continual conflict between this its historical task and its own corresponding relations of social production (Marx, CAPITAL, volume three, p. 250).

Just as the development of capitalism eventually confines the expansion of the forces of production, so it simultaneously gives birth to the material requirements of a new and higher mode of production. The joint stock companies that capitalism itself produces through crises and the corresponding concentration of capital become a phase of transition to the society of associated producers.

In stock companies the function [of management] is divorced from capital ownership, hence also labour is entirely divorced from ownership of means of production and surplus-labour. This result of the ultimate development of capitalist production is a necessary transitional phase towards the reconversion of capital into the property of producers, although no longer the private property of the individual producers, but rather as the property of associated producers, as outright social property. On the other hand, the stock company is a transition toward the conversion of all functions in the reproduction process which still remain linked with capitalist property, into mere functions of associated producers, into social functions.... This is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself, and hence a self-dissolving contradiction, which prima facie represents a mere phase of transition to a new form of production. It manifests itself as such a contradiction in its effects. It establishes a monopoly in certain spheres and thereby requires state interference. It reproduces a new financial aristocracy, a new variety of parasites in the shape of promoters, speculators and simply nominal directors; a whole system of swindling and cheating by means of corporation promotion, stock

issuance, and stock speculation. It is private production without the control of private property (Marx, CAPITAL, volume three, pp. 437-38).

Marx also argued that the various cooperative factories springing up at the time he wrote were also embryonic forms of the new mode of production.

The capitalist stock companies, as much as the co-operative factories, should be considered as transitional forms from the capitalist mode of production to the associated one, with the only distinction that the antagonism is resolved negatively in the one and positively in the other (Marx, CAPITAL, volume three, p. 440).

In these ways capitalism lays the basis for and necessitates the transition to socialism.

Enter Politics

For Marx, then, capitalism was necessarily digging its own grave. The rise of monopolies, trusts and cartels and the nationalization of industry were all part of capitalism's last gasp. When Marx refers to the abolition of capitalism within itself we have the basis of a breakdown theory of capitalism. But his analysis of this economic breakdown is sketchy, to say the least, and it might be argued that volume three of CAPITAL only describes the economic basis of the death agonies of capitalism and of the birth of socialism. The dissolution of capitalism and the transition to socialism depended also on political developments which Marx separates from the economic analysis, and to which we will turn in the next two lectures. But the very formulation of the falling rate of profit does in fact logically imply an analysis of state interventions, which become crucial in the restabilization of the economy, in particular the organization and enforcement of a certain compatibility between the expansion of exchange value on the one side and of use value on the other. The state becomes involved in what Offe and Ronge call "administrative recommodification," that is, bringing together surplus capital and surplus labor through subsidies to capital and retraining of labor. Nationalization of industries and the creation of new state industries become another way of responding simultaneously to overproduction and

underconsumption. The warfare/welfare state provides employment, absorbs surplus capital and guarantees demand. To be sure, such state intervention in the economy and the expansion of the state sector itself do not forestall crises, but they do at least soften their impact. They allow large corporations to exist under conditions in which competition no longer forces down the rate of profit in the precipitous manner of nineteenth-century capitalism.

We will discuss these interventionist theories of the state later in the course. I want to dwell here on the implications and possibilities of cheapening constant capital as a means of counteracting the tendency of the profit rate to fall. As I argued earlier, this depends on increasing productivity in the capital goods sector of the economy, to which Marx refers as department I. Increased productivity, however, entails increased accumulation--that is, expansion of the production of machinery, which is reabsorbed in department I, but which also, more significantly, enters the factories of the consumption goods sector, department II. This implies an expansion of the production of consumption goods, which in turn rests on the transformation of the working class's mode of consumption. And it is precisely this transformation, rooted in the car, the television set, the refrigerator and home ownership, that lies at the bottom of the cheapening of constant capital and the maintenance of the rate of profit.

But how, then, is the purchasing power of the working class assured? It is clear that the restructuring of the mode of consumption went hand in hand with certain wage guarantees, albeit of different kinds and degrees in different sectors of the labor force. Systems of social security and pension schemes are, in effect, deferred wages which can be drawn upon in times of economic crisis: they become the very basis of maintaining demand in the face of economic crises produced by capital's attempt to boost the rate of profit. National incomes policy and collective bargaining become mechanisms for securing a certain synchronization between capital accumulation and the growth of demand, mechanisms for containing the contradiction between the search for a higher profit rate and the production of use value. But social security

schemes, collective bargaining, national incomes policies and so on are defining features of new relations between production politics and global politics--the transition from the despotic system to the hegemonic system.

When Marx refers to the joint stock companies, monopolies, etc. as the emergence of the new in the old, he is right. But in identifying the new as the society of associated producers he is wrong, precisely because he does not examine the political dimension of the economic. To be sure, the rise of monopolies brings with it more socialized production, the separation of owners and managers, and so on, but it also brings a new form of production politics which provides the basis of a new form of capitalism. Because production politics are not thematized in his theory of competitive capitalism, the significance of the transformation of market despotism into hegemonic systems is missed.

How was this transformation accomplished? Can it be said to have been inevitable? Here political struggles, against both factory and state apparatuses, play a central role. For Marx, such political class struggle would prove the final force for the transition to socialism--the proletarian seizure of state power. Yet it could be argued quite plausibly that class struggle, instead of being capitalism's grave digger, proved to be its savior: it was the force operating directly or through the state that compelled capitalists to combine and subordinate their individual interests to their collective interest in capitalism's survival. That is, class struggle waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie provided the resolution of the various prisoners' dilemmas in which the capitalists as individuals found themselves. Ironically, Marx prefigured such outcomes in his analysis of the Factory Acts, yet he still concluded that class struggle could only precipitate the deepening of crises. We must turn to Marx's political writings in order to understand the logic and assumptions behind his reasoning.

VI. CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE CAPITALIST STATE

In the last lecture we discussed the dynamics of the capitalist economy, namely the falling rate of profit and its consequences, crises of overproduction and the concentration of capital. The very accuracy of Marx's anticipation that competitive capitalism could not last meant that the conditions presupposed by his analysis would be transformed. But Marx was wrong to equate the transcendence of competitive capitalism with the dissolution of capitalism itself and the rise of socialism. He failed to recognize that, with the rise of joint stock companies, monopolies, etc., there also arose new forms of production politics and of global politics. He missed this partly because of his separation of politics and economics. The notion of production politics, although descriptively present, was theoretically absent. But also his theory of the joint stock companies as capitalism's last gasp was based on a particular theory of class struggle and of the capitalist state, to which we shall now turn.

One of the consequences of the separation of the state and civil society is that in his economic writings and summary statements Marx often presents politics as an epiphenomenon of the economic, trailing behind the economic with very little autonomy. This is implied in the metaphors he uses, which have since gained some currency: base/superstructure, class in itself/class for itself, objective/subjective conditions, etc. But when one examines Marx's political writings with some care, it becomes clear that the political too has an "objective" structure with a dynamic of its own; indeed, Marx says as much in a letter to Weydemeyer in 1852:

What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.

Here is Marx's counterpart in the political realm to the falling rate of profit in the economic realm. But just as in his economic analysis the political is often reduced to a subjective reflex of

the movement of capital, so in the analysis of the political the economic makes its entry in a mechanistic and unexamined manner. Again, it is the inadequate conceptualization of the relationship between the two that accounts for some of the erroneous and optimistic conclusions Marx draws.

Before we can approach this we must reconstruct Marx's analysis of France between 1848 and 1851 as presented in THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE (EB) and CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE (CS). We will approach this in two stages. In this lecture we will summarize some recent debates and apply them to Marx's analysis of the July Monarchy (1830-1848) and the Second Empire (1851-1871). In the next lecture we will develop a more sophisticated set of questions that emerge from the analysis of the transitional forms of the state between 1848 and 1851. Only then can we reconstruct Marx's theory of the state and highlight the assumptions upon which it rests.

Alternative Perspectives on the State

We can begin with the famous passage in THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO where the state is defined as "the executive committee for managing the common affairs of the entire bourgeoisie." During the last decade there has been much debate over the meaning of this passage. The traditional view, following passages in both Engels and Marx, has been that the state is a capitalist machine for keeping exploited classes in conditions of oppression. It is the engine of class despotism, or as Miliband says, "the organized power of one class for oppressing another." In short, the state is an instrument of the ruling class for the oppression of the subordinate classes. In this perspective the state assumes a certain independence only in moments of class balance.

By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both. Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held the balance between the nobility and the class of burghers; such was Bonapartism of the First, and still more of the Second French Empire, which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The latest performance of this kind,

in which ruler and ruled appear equally ridiculous, is the new German Empire of the Bismark nature: the capitalists and workers are balanced against each other and equally cheated for the benefit of the impoverished Prussian cabbage Junkers (Engels, THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE, Tucker, pp. 653-54).

What is this class balance? How do we think about it? One approach might be through the notion of dual power in which the proletariat commands certain institutions, either within or outside the state, while capital controls others. As we shall see, it is not at all clear that the Bonapartism of the Second Empire was in fact a situation of class balance.

This instrumental vision of the state still faces the problem of explaining how the state routinely acts against the economic interests of individual capitalists, fractions of the capitalist class, and also the capitalist class as a whole. The theory can be rescued only by making two further assumptions: that individual capitalists are given as a cohesive class, and that an enlightened fraction of that class is able to direct the state in the interests of the class as a whole.

The second perspective takes this problem of the state routinely acting against the economic interests of capitalists as its point of departure in interpreting what the state must do in order to manage the common affairs of the entire bourgeoisie. But first, what are these common affairs? They are none other than the interests of capitalists in the preservation of capitalism, what we call the political interests of the capitalist class. In order to protect those political interests it is indeed necessary for the state to act against the economic interests of individual capitalists (for example, prosecute those capitalists who don't put real peanuts in peanut butter), fractions of the capitalist class (controlling the price of steel or energy), and the capitalist class itself (factory acts, social security, minimum wage laws, etc.). One has only to read the WALL STREET JOURNAL to know that the state is continually acting against the economic interests of capitalists. But in order to preserve capitalism, capitalist relations of production, it is necessary for the state to assume a certain autonomy and render an appearance of independence for reasons of

legitimacy, grant concessions to the working class, coordinate relations among capitalists, and so on.

The problem then is to explain how the state manages to secure that relative autonomy--that is, the autonomy necessary to guarantee the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. One response is that the state is dependent for its own survival on a healthy economy from which it can draw off revenue. This means that the interests of the state and its various apparatuses are in promoting the reproduction of the relations of production, and for this it is necessary that it be somewhat autonomous from individual capitalists, fractions of the capitalist class, and even the entire capitalist class. Ultimately, this only displaces the problem, since the state is not some monolithic entity whose unity is somehow given, but is itself composed of warring factions. How, then, is the state able to constitute itself as a unity which recognizes in its interventions that its survival depends on making concessions to the working class and orchestrating relations among capitalists so as to preserve the system as a whole?

A second response is that class struggle itself forces the state to be responsive to the needs of the working class and in so doing assume a certain autonomy from the capitalist class. Equally, in arbitrating between the competing demands of opposed fractions of the dominant class the state is inevitably forced into the position of being autonomous from one or another fraction--now this one and now the next.

Another response is that the apparatuses of the state themselves are constituted as autonomous structures which reproduce themselves of themselves. Thus, the legal system operates according to a coherence and logic of its own which cannot be altered arbitrarily: the means of altering the law is itself shaped by laws. The apparatuses of the executive and of the legislature also operate in well-defined ways and develop interests of their own; indeed, these apparatuses can often develop such autonomy that they threaten the reproduction of the relations of production and precipitate crises. Equally, of course, this perspective on the state would claim that when the state is unable to assume an adequate autonomy from the dominant class and becomes the instrument of any one fraction, this too will precipitate a political

crisis. Or it may be argued that when the dominant class is directly threatened, the relative autonomy of the state gives way to a unity of state power and the dominant classes. In other words, the destruction of the relative autonomy of the state may precipitate a crisis, just as a crisis may lead to a direct struggle for state power by warring classes. This third response to the riddle of relative autonomy clearly distinguishes between the reproduction and the genesis of state apparatuses. How is it that state structures often do become relatively autonomous in just the way necessary for the maintenance of capitalism?

What is at stake in this debate? Clearly one's vision of the nature of the relationship between the state and dominant and subordinate classes will shape one's understanding of the transition to socialism. In the case of the instrumental view, the transition to socialism is accomplished by the proletariat seizing and wielding state power, no longer in the interests of capital and capitalism but in those of labor and socialism. It presumes that gaining access to positions of power in the state is sufficient for the inauguration of socialism. It presumes in particular that there is nothing about the state and the structure of its apparatuses which would prevent it from being wielded by the proletariat for the development of socialism.

Rather than talking about the state in capitalist society, the second perspective talks about the capitalist state. Thus, the state assumes a certain structure necessary for the reproduction of capitalist relations of production, and this structure must be transformed before the state can be used to generate a new and higher mode of production. As Marx is at pains to point out:

... the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state-machinery and wield it for their own purposes. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation (second draft of THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, p. 196).

That is, the capitalist state has to be dismantled and a new form of state--the dictatorship of the proletariat--established. In merely occupying positions of power in the capitalist state, the proletariat or its representatives become prisoners of the

logic of the state apparatuses and reproduce capitalism as before. Indeed, socialist parties may reproduce capitalism even more effectively than parties of other classes simply because the state will appear more autonomous. Moreover, if such a socialist government were to endeavor to carry out its promises to the working class and advance its economic interests, the power of capital, with the threat of capital flight, would precipitate an economic crisis, and the standard of living of the working class would necessarily fall. The peaceful transition to socialism would involve economic deprivation for the working class and thus undermine its immediate objectives, unless the proletariat was prepared for such privation.

The July Monarchy: The State as Instrument of a Bourgeois Fraction

We will now examine Marx's political writings on France for the light they may shed on the relationship of the state to different classes. We begin with a prototypical "instrumental" state, the regime that was overthrown on February 24, 1848. The July Monarchy was the rule of the finance aristocracy--bankers, stock exchange kings, railway kings, owners of coal and ironworks and forests, and a section of the landed proprietors. The finance aristocracy "sat on the throne, it dictated laws in the Chambers, it conferred political posts" (CS, p. 34); it was at "the head of the administration of the State, had command of all the organized public powers, dominated public opinion through facts and the press.... The July Monarchy was nothing other than a joint stock company for the exploitation of French national wealth, the dividends of which were divided amongst ministers, Chambers, 240,000 voters and their adherents. Louis Philippe was the director of this company" (CS, p. 36). "A limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king" (EB, p. 23). In short, the state was staffed and directed by a fraction of the French bourgeoisie.

In whose interests did it rule? None other than the finance aristocracy itself! The July Monarchy depended on the finance aristocracy to provide it with loans and credits which increased the state deficit and thereby augmented the power of finance. The industrial bourgeoisie had an interest in cheap government and a balanced budget, but this was precluded under the rule of the finance aristocracy, whose interests lay in expensive

government and unbalanced budgets (CS, pp. 34-35).

The bases of support for the July Monarchy, however, are not clear from Marx's account. With a restricted franchise, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat were all excluded from direct representation in the Chambers, and the majority of the great landowners were likewise condemned to political nullity. The industrial bourgeoisie was the official opposition in the assembly, and a relatively weak opposition it was at that. Struggles had occurred between capital and labor--"the mutinies of 1832, 1834 and 1839 which had been drowned in blood" (CS, p. 34)--and between the industrial bourgeoisie and the finance aristocracy, crystallizing over the former's attempt to extend the franchise (CS, p. 38; EB, p. 22).

Who bore the burden of the rule of finance, which brought about "the resurrection of the lumpenproletariat at the top of bourgeois society" (CS, p. 37), whose principle was "to get rich not by production, but by pocketing the already available wealth of others" (CS, p. 36)? The July Monarchy sacrificed, to varying degrees, the interests of every class but the finance aristocracy itself. "The industrial bourgeoisie saw its interests endangered, the petty bourgeoisie was filled with moral indignation, and imagination of the people was offended, Paris was flooded with pamphlets ... in which the rule of the finance aristocracy was denounced and stigmatized with greater or less wit" (CS, p. 37). France's national glory was sacrificed on the altar of finance, since war unsettled the stock market. The eruption of general discontent and the overthrow of the July Monarchy were precipitated by two economic crises: the potato blight and bad harvests of 1845 and 1846, and a general industrial and commercial crisis in England in the fall of 1847 (CS, pp. 37-38). During the hand-to-hand fighting between the army and the people that broke out in February, the National Guard--of petty bourgeois background--adopted a passive role, and the July Monarchy had to give way to the Provisional Government.

As a particular state form, the internal contradictions of the July Monarchy lay in the power of the finance aristocracy to subordinate the state apparatus to its own immediate interests. In doing so, it arrayed all classes against itself. Through the direct manipulation of laws, state expenditures, political posts

and so forth, the finance aristocracy was able to pursue its own economic interests at the expense of other fractions of the bourgeoisie, thereby undercutting its own long-term--that is, political--interests. Just as the rule of finance prevented the consolidation of a power bloc among the dominant classes, turning common interests into antagonistic ones, so equally in its relations to the dominated classes it failed to cement alliances or establish support. To the contrary, it turned its potential allies and supporters into its bitter opponents. The finance aristocracy made no attempts--through the dispensation of concessions, for example--to present its own interests as the interests of all. In short, it failed to organize its hegemony in relation either to other fractions of the bourgeoisie or to the dominated classes.

Marx's comments therefore support the conclusion that, because the state was unable to achieve sufficient autonomy from one fraction of the bourgeoisie, it could not protect the common interests of the whole bourgeoisie, and the fate of the July Monarchy was thereby sealed. But history can only partially uphold such a conclusion. For, given the overwhelming discontent with the rule of finance, as depicted by Marx, it is by no means clear how to account for its stability and longevity--eighteen years of uninterrupted rule. Were Marx's descriptions only germane to the later years of the July Monarchy? Did the state have greater autonomy in the early years? Perhaps the more intense struggles between labor and capital provided a basis for the industrial bourgeoisie's support of the finance aristocracy on the one hand and the dispensation of concessions to the working class on the other? There is a hint that ideology played its proper role--that the rule of the bourgeoisie was concealed behind the throne. In contrast to the effects of universal suffrage--how it throws all fractions of the bourgeoisie to the helm of the state and tears from them "their treacherous mask"--Marx points out that "the monarchy with its property qualification only let definite fractions of the bourgeoisie compromise themselves, and let the others lie hidden behind the scenes and surrounded them with the halo of a common opposition" (CS, p. 54).

Notwithstanding these qualifying remarks, we have offered reasons why one particular form, an extreme form, of "instrumentalist

state" might be unstable. Later we shall turn to other forms in which the control of the state by the bourgeoisie or a fraction thereof is mediated not through a monarchy but through a political party. First, we must turn to a fundamentally different form of the state, namely the Second Empire of Louis Bonaparte, which began with the coup d'etat of December 2, 1851.

Bonapartism: The State as Relatively Autonomous from all Classes

Marx talks of two characteristic features of the Bonapartist state: the domination of the executive over the legislative, and the independence or "autonomy" of the state, in particular the executive. He points to

the victory of Bonaparte over parliament, of the executive power over the legislative power, of force without phrases over the force of phrases. In parliament the nation made its general will the law, that is, it made the law of the ruling class its general will. Before the executive power it renounces all will of its own and submits to the superior command of an alien will, to authority (EB, pp. 120-21).

Some twenty years later, writing about the Second Empire and the Paris Commune, Marx summarizes:

The modern bourgeois state is embodied in two great organs, parliament and the government. Parliamentary omnipotence had during the period of the party of order republic, from 1848 to 1851 engendered its own negative--the Second Empire--and imperialism, with its mere mockery of parliament, is the regime now flourishing in most of the great military states of the continent (second draft of THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, p. 196).

The peculiarity of the Bonapartist state--its independence--is captured in relation to its predecessors. The difference is between the "dictatorship of the saber over bourgeois society" and "the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the saber" (CS, pp. 66-67). Or, more explicitly:

... under the absolute monarchy, during the first Revolution, under Napoleon, bureaucracy was only the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Under the Restoration, under Louis Philippe, under the parliamentary republic, it was the instrument of the ruling class, however much it strove for power of its own. Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent. As against civil society, the state machine has consolidated its position so thoroughly

that the chief of the Society of December 10 suffices for its head (EB, pp. 122-23).

Does Marx specify the form of state expressed in this "independence"? He writes of the "executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization" (EB, pp. 121, 129); "the domination of the priests as an instrument of government ... as the annointed bloodhound of the earthly police" (EB, pp. 129-30); "the preponderance of the army" (EB, p. 130); and even hints at a permanent state of siege (EB, p. 35). But the independence of the state is expressed most specifically in its relations with the various classes in society. We have already expressed this in Marx's contrast of Bonapartism with its "instrumentalist" precursors (EB, p. 122)--"the usurpatory dictatorship of the governmental body over society itself, rising alike above and humbling alike all classes" (second draft of THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, p. 196). Marx has a long passage documenting, in his inimitable style, the subjection of the bourgeoisie to the will of the executive, personified in Bonaparte (EB, pp. 118-19).

What does this independence of the state signify? Does Marx regard the Bonapartist state as a form of class balance or of class domination, reflecting a situation of crisis or of stability? It turns out that he offers somewhat different analyses according to the time he was writing. We shall compare his views expressed in 1852 when he wrote THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE with those expressed twenty years later in THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE.

Not surprisingly, in 1852 Marx saw Bonapartism as beset by contradictions. First and foremost, the Bonapartist state, while subordinating all classes to itself, also rested on their support. Above all it relied on the support of the most numerous class, the peasantry:

... the state power is not suspended in midair. Bonaparte represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small-holding peasants.... They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself (EB, pp. 123-24).

But there is a basis to the peasantry's illusions (see also CS, p. 71): the illusion "that the cause of their ruin is to be sought, not in this small holding property itself, but outside it" (EB, p. 127), since the small-holding property had indeed been the condition of the liberation and enrichment of the peasantry; the illusion that their interests are in accord with capital (EB, p. 128), since they clearly were under the first Napoleon, when feudalism was their common enemy; the illusion that imperialism could save them from destitution (in fact accomplished at the hands of the bourgeoisie), since the exploits of the first Napoleon--the plundering of the Continent and the opening of new markets--brought compensations for the imposition of compulsory taxes.

One sees: all "idees napoleoniennes" are ideas of the undeveloped small holding in the freshness of its youth; for the small holding that has outlived its day they are an absurdity. They are only the hallucinations of its death struggle, words that are transformed into phrases, spirits transformed into ghosts. But the parody of the empire was necessary to free the mass of the French nation from the weight of tradition and to work out in pure form the opposition between the state power and society. With the progressive undermining of small-holding property, the state structure erected upon it collapses. The centralization of the state that modern society requires arises only on the ruins of the military-bureaucratic government machinery which was forged in opposition to feudalism (EB, p. 131).

The Bonapartist state rests on the illusions of the most numerous class. Moreover, these illusions must dissolve: they are an anachronism; under the force of material circumstances they must give way to the peasantry's conscious recognition of its "true" interests as the ally of the working class in opposition to capital (EB, p. 128). And this necessarily spells the downfall of the capitalist state. Thus, although Marx claims that Bonapartism represents the general form of the capitalist state--"the centralization of the state that modern society requires"--it is nonetheless doomed. What Marx underestimates, however, is the capacity of the state to reproduce a specific ideology, or what he refers to as the hallucinations of the dominated classes.

If the Bonapartist state **represents not the interests** but the hallucinations of the peasantry, whose interests does it

represent?

As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonaparte feels it to be his mission to safeguard "bourgeois order." But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense.... As against the bourgeoisie, Bonaparte looks on himself, at the same time, as the representative of the peasants and of the people in general, who wants to make the lower classes happy within the frame of bourgeois society (EB, p. 131).

We have here the elements of a theory of the capitalist state, which first and foremost protects the conditions of its own existence--the bourgeois order, as Marx would say, "property, family, religion, order." Within the framework--within the limits imposed by the reproduction of capitalist relations of production--the state will represent or make concessions to all classes. It is a state of a society divided into classes which endeavors to represent the interests of all classes insofar as this is possible without endangering capitalism itself.

What distinguishes Bonapartism from what came before (to be discussed in detail later) is the ability of the state to reproduce and expand its own power independently of, indeed in opposition to, the bourgeoisie. Just as the interests of the Bonapartist state are tied to the preservation of the economic dominance of the bourgeoisie (the protection of the bourgeois order), so these interests are at the same time threatened by the political dominance of the bourgeoisie (the state as an instrument of the bourgeoisie).

Nevertheless, he (Bonaparte) is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of this middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks upon himself as the adversary of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power, he generates its political power anew. The cause must accordingly be kept alive; but the effect, where it manifests itself, must be done away with (EB, pp. 131-32).

How can the state safeguard capitalist relations of production while undermining the political power of the capitalist class? First, Marx points to the class basis of the state apparatuses themselves: "the lumpenproletariat to which he himself, his entourage, his government and his army belong, and whose prime

consideration is to benefit itself and draw California lottery prizes from the state treasury" (EB, p. 132). Here lies the specific "autonomy" of the Bonapartist executive. Second, strong and unlimited government created the circumstances in which "struggle seems to be settled in such a way that all classes, equally impotent and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt" (EB, p. 121). To avert the possibility of all classes arraying themselves against the state, Bonaparte organizes a series of distractions and, by continuously redistributing concessions and expropriations, plays one class off against another (EB, pp. 132-33). But his balancing acts threaten the stability of his rule: "he cannot give to one class without taking from another" (EB, p. 133).

Driven by the contradictory demands of his situation and being at the same time, like a conjurer, under the necessity of keeping the public gaze fixed on himself, as Napoleon's substitute, by springing constant surprises, that is to say, under the necessity of executing a coup d'état en miniature every day, Bonaparte throws the entire bourgeois economy into confusion, violates everything that seemed inviolable to the Revolution of 1848, makes some tolerant of revolution, others desirous of revolution, and produces actual anarchy in the name of order, while at the same time stripping its halo from the entire state machine, profanes it and makes it at once loathsome and ridiculous (EB, p. 135).

In 1852 Marx does not hold out much hope for the Bonapartist state, which was in fact to last another twenty years. If Marx has any notion of crisis linked to class balance, it is depicted in the final pages of *THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE*: the regime couldn't persist because it could not extend material concessions to warring classes, because the duped peasantry had to give way to the revolutionary peasantry, and because the state daily had to recreate a political threat to its own existence, in the form of the bourgeoisie.

How did Bonapartism look to Marx in 1871? In the second draft of *THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE* Marx writes that Bonapartism had "become the only possible state form in which the appropriating class can continue to sway it over the producing class."

The empire, professing to rest upon the producing majority, the peasants, apparently out of the range of the class struggle between capital and labour (indifferent and hostile to both the contesting social

powers), wielding the state power as a force superior to the ruling and ruled classes, imposing on both an armistice (silencing the political, and therefore revolutionary form of class struggle), divesting the state power from its direct form of class despotism by breaking the parliamentary and, therefore, directly political power of the appropriating classes, was the only possible state-form to secure the old social order a respite of life (second draft of THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, p. 198).

This may indeed have been the only form of state power that could safeguard the bourgeois order, but how was it able to do this? Marx doesn't offer much in the way of an answer to this, because even in 1871 he saw Bonapartism as necessary but nevertheless doomed.

In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation. It was acclaimed throughout the world as the saviour of society. Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself.... Imperialism (i.e. Bonapartism) is, at the same time, the most prostitute and the ultimate form of state power which nascent middle class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labour by capital (CW, p. 56).

Although there is little intimation of "class balance," since labor is directly subordinated to capital, Marx clearly sees the Bonapartist state as a transitional form. The Second Empire had possibly won itself some respite through imperial adventures which offered economic opportunities and growth that could be distributed as concessions to various classes. But it was still the "most prostitute and ultimate form of state power." Thus Bonapartism was to the political realm what the joint stock companies were to the economic realm. Both emerged as necessary consequences of capitalist development, yet both were the termination of capitalist society: the joint stock company was the new higher mode of production in embryo, while the Bonapartist state was the only possible form of the capitalist state which, brought to a head, had to topple over. But why? To understand Marx's analysis of the inevitable destruction or collapse of the capitalist state we must turn to the period between the overthrow of the July Monarchy and the rise of the Second Empire.

VII: THE DYNAMICS OF CAPITALIST POLITICS

In the last lecture we discussed two forms of the state, the July Monarchy and Bonapartism. The first was a bourgeois monarchy acting as an instrument of finance capital, while the second was characterized by its independence from all classes and its subordination of all classes to itself. Three questions emerged from our discussion. Why was Bonapartism bound to collapse? Why was it the last form of the capitalist state? And why was it the inevitable product of capitalist development? We can begin to answer these questions by examining Marx's interpretation of the period between the July Monarchy and the Second Empire.

Overview

The overthrow of the July Monarchy on February 24, 1848 was followed by the period of the "Social Republic" led by the Provisional Government. This was a form of the state in which certain minimal concessions were granted to the working class--concessions which were stripped away in the succeeding period of the "Democratic Republic", or "constituting the republic" (May 1848 to May 1849), dominated by the bourgeois republicans. Their task was to develop the new constitution and defeat the proletariat. Once this was accomplished the bourgeois republicans fell to the party of Order, which represented the combination of the landed aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie.

The party of Order dominated the National Assembly of the "Parliamentary Republic" or "Constitutional Republic" (May 1849 to December 1851). This period was characterized by struggles between the executive, personified by Bonaparte, and the legislature, dominated by representatives of the different fractions of the bourgeoisie. Eventually the bourgeoisie outside the political scene became separated from its representatives inside the Assembly, the party of Order broke up into its competing fractions, and Bonaparte successfully executed his coup d'etat of December 2, 1851.

Marx characterizes the entire period as one in which the state became more and more exclusive, expelling different classes from political participation.

Society is saved just as often as the circle of its rulers contracts, as a more exclusive interest is maintained against a wider one. Every demand of the simplest bourgeois financial reform, of the most ordinary liberalism, of the most formal republicanism, of the most shallow democracy, is simultaneously castigated as an "attempt on society" and stigmatized as "Socialism" (EB, p. 25).

The only way capitalist society could be saved was through the repression of classes and the narrowing of the interests protected by the state. Concessions were not only not granted but were presented as a threat to the social order. In short, the bourgeoisie was unable to present its interests as the interests of all and capitalism would therefore necessarily lose the political support upon which it depends. Bonapartism was the last, but futile, "saviour of society" (EB, p. 26).

Marx contrasts this period with the first French Revolution, when the revolution moved in an ascending line.

It is the reverse with the Revolution of 1848. The proletarian party appears as an appendage of the petty-bourgeois-democratic party. It is betrayed and dropped by the latter on April 16, May 15, and in the June days. The democratic party, in its turn, leans on the shoulders of the bourgeois-republican party. The bourgeois republicans no sooner believe themselves well established than they shake off the troublesome comrade and support themselves on the shoulders of the party of Order. The party of Order hunches its shoulders, lets the bourgeois republicans tumble and throws itself on the shoulders of armed force. It fancies it is still sitting on its shoulders when, one fine morning, it perceives that the shoulders have transformed themselves into bayonets. Each party kicks from behind at that driving forward and in front leans over towards the party which presses backwards. No wonder that in this ridiculous posture it loses balance and, having made the inevitable grimaces, collapses with curious capers. The revolution thus moves in a descending line. It finds itself in this state of retrogressive motion before the last February barricade has been cleared away and the first revolutionary authority constituted (EB, pp. 42-43).

In order to conquer power a class or party strikes an alliance with a subordinate class or party (the petty bourgeoisie with the proletariat, the bourgeois republicans with the petty bourgeoisie, the party of Order with the bourgeois republicans, Bonaparte with the party of Order), but once in power it throws off that class. Its task has been accomplished and it is cast off in its turn by the next class or party, which becomes vulnerable

as soon as it gains power and sluffs off other classes, rather than uniting with them as its subordinate allies--hence the descending line or ever-narrowing circle of political power. This logic of political development rests on the lack of enjoinment of the interests of ruling and ruled classes through the dispensation of concessions. In other words, class struggle is repressed instead of being given elbow room. Once participation in politics offers the possibility of concessions, all classes can then be sucked into a form of politics which doesn't threaten the reproduction of capitalism as a whole.

Curiously, Marx presents the very mechanism through which class struggle would be contained (although not repressed)--universal (male) suffrage--as unchaining class struggle and driving the proletariat from political to social emancipation. Rather than being the means of generating consent to capitalism, according to Marx, universal suffrage could only bring capitalism to its knees. We shall return to this issue in the last section, after we have discussed some of the other assumptions in his political analysis.

The Social Republic

The July Monarchy gave way to the Provisional Government, a compromise among the antagonistic groups that had overthrown the monarchy: the bourgeois republicans, the republican petty bourgeoisie, the working class and the dynastic opposition (the industrial bourgeoisie). The February Republic, declared under pressure from the Paris proletariat, was a bourgeois republic surrounded by social institutions. Although forced to make concessions to the proletariat, it was nevertheless a bourgeois republic. Of all the forms of the state we shall consider, this was the one most closely corresponding to the modern representative state.

In what senses did the February Republic resemble a modern bourgeois democracy? First, the proletariat defended the republic as its own not only because its representatives had been active in establishing it, but also because it was able to extract some minimal concessions: the Luxemburg Commission (an apparent concession which turned out to be a way of nullifying the power of workers' representatives in the Provisional Government), the

ten hours act, and the National Ateliers (while nothing more than workhouses in the open, these were presented as a major concession to the demands of the working class). Finally, of course, there was the reintroduction of universal male suffrage.

The second parallel with the modern democratic state rests on the apparent classlessness of the February Republic and the ideology that surrounded its institutions. No one fraction or class clearly dominated the Provisional Government, although the Provisional Government did begin to strip the republic of its anti-bourgeois appearance. The dynastic opposition, the only clear representative of a fraction of the bourgeoisie, was but a subordinate partner in government. There was no real party of capital.

In the ideas of the proletarians, therefore, who confused the finance aristocracy with the bourgeoisie in general; in the imagination of good old republicans who denied the very existence of classes or, at most, admitted them as a result of the constitutional monarchy; in the hypocritical phrases of the sections of the bourgeoisie up till now excluded from power, the rule of the bourgeoisie was abolished with the introduction of the republic. All the royalists were transformed into republicans and all the millionaires of Paris into workers. The phrase which corresponded to this imagined liquidation of class relations was fraternité, universal fraternization and brotherhood. This pleasant abstraction from class antagonisms, this sentimental equalization of contradictory class interests, this fantastic elevation above the class struggle, fraternité, this was the special catch-cry of the February Republic (CS, pp. 44-45).

How did Marx see these parallels with modern bourgeois democracy? Although he stigmatizes the demands of the Paris proletariat as "utopian nonsense, to which an end must be put" (EB, p. 23), Marx nevertheless claims that those demands indicated "the general content of the modern revolution, a content which was in most singular contradiction to everything that, with the material available, with the degree of education attained by the masses, under the given circumstances and relations, could be immediately realized in practice" (EB, p. 22). The February Revolution was ahead of its time, but it had the advantage of hurling whole classes, hitherto condemned to political nullity, into the "circle of political power" (CS, pp. 40-41), thereby demystifying class struggle. Through the collapse of the February Republic the working class would learn that it could not advance

its interests alongside the bourgeoisie and that the possibility of concessions under a bourgeois republic was a figment of the proletariat's immature imagination.

Just as no amount of scorn can eliminate the real basis of an ideology of "classlessness", both in the Provisional Government and, of course, in the more recent forms of the capitalist state, so no amount of optimism can portray the "illusions" of the Paris proletariat as a temporary aberration. "It is true, given the underdevelopment of the forces of production, the strength and independence of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry standing between capital and labor and the political immaturity of the French working class, the latter was incapable of comprehending let alone accomplishing or staging its own revolution" (CS, p. 55). However, it was not just capital that the Paris workers were defending in the February Republic, but their interests within the framework of capitalist relations of production--a set of interests as real today as they were then, despite the development of the forces of production, a history of class struggles, the virtual elimination of the peasantry and the transformation of the petty bourgeoisie. We see here, as in his analysis of the peasantry under Bonapartism, how Marx underestimates the capacity of the state to organize and reproduce a commitment to particular sets of interests precisely because of the expansion of the forces of production. Far from winning "the terrain for the fight for its revolutionary emancipation" (CS, p. 40), the proletariat had won the terrain of its eventual incorporation within the political structures of capitalism.

That the February Republic contained in embryo certain features of the modern state meant that it was way ahead of its time. The extension of concessions to the proletariat could not, perhaps, be pursued without bringing down the capitalist order itself. And the Provisional Government always acted to defend that order. Indeed, it was ultimately beholden to a particular fraction of the bourgeoisie that wasn't even officially represented in the state, the finance aristocracy.

The Provisional Government, having honored the bill drawn on the state by the old bourgeois society, succumbed to the latter. It had become the hard-pressed debtor of bourgeois society instead of confronting it as the pressing creditor that had to collect the revolutionary debts of many years. It

had to consolidate the shaky bourgeois relationship, in order to fulfill obligations which are only to be fulfilled within these relationships. Credit becomes a condition of life for it and the concessions to the proletariat, the promises made to it, become so many fetters which have to be struck off (CS, p. 49).

Instead of ignoring the Bourse and Bank, the Provisional Government went out of its way to "strengthen and enlarge the bankocracy which it was to have overthrown" (CS, p. 48), at considerable cost to other classes--hence the 45-centime tax on the peasantry and the delivery of the petty bourgeoisie into the hands of its creditors. But this only had the effect of turning all classes against the proletariat, which continued to defend the Provisional Government. The elections of May 4 spelled the demise of the proletariat, culminating in the June massacre.

The Making of the Bourgeois Republic

To bring down the July Monarchy and the direct rule of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie required the support of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. Under the Provisional Government it had to make certain minimal concessions to the working class, which then had to be stripped away under the Constituent National Assembly (CNA)--the period of the republic in the making.

The republic dates from May 4, not from February 25, i.e., the republic recognized by the French people; it is not the republic which the Paris proletariat thrust upon the Provisional Government, not the republic with social institutions, not the dream picture which hovered before the fighters on the barricades. The republic proclaimed by the National Assembly, the sole legitimate republic, is the republic which is no revolutionary weapon against the bourgeois order, but rather its political reconstitution, the political reconsolidation of bourgeois society, in a word the bourgeois republic (CS, p. 54).

The period from May 4, 1848 to May 28, 1849 is the period of the rise and fall of the bourgeois republicans, or as Marx sometimes calls them, the pure republicans.

It was not a faction of the bourgeoisie held together by great common interests and marked off by specific conditions of production. It was a clique of republican-minded bourgeois, writers, lawyers, officers and officials that owed its influence to the personal antipathies of the country against Louis Philippe, to memories of the old republic, to the republican faith of a number of enthusiasts, above all, however, to French Nationalism, whose hatred of

the Vienna treaties and of the alliance with England it stirred up perpetually (EB, p. 27).

With the collapse first of the July Monarchy and then of the Provisional Government, this "clique" was thrown to the helm of the state to defend the republic against its enemies. As midwife of the "true" bourgeois republic, the republican faction of the bourgeoisie signed its own death warrant by delivering the republic to its owner--the big bourgeoisie, organized in the legislature as the party of Order.

The key to this period and the corresponding form of the state, then, lies in their transitional status. Marx recognizes three successive governments dominating the CNA. The life of each was as short as its purpose was limited. The first government, the Executive Commission, lasted from May 4 to June 25 and was charged with severing the republic from its earlier social concessions by destroying the political power of the proletariat. It drove the workers into the streets and crushed them there by force of arms. The June battle inaugurated the second government, the dictatorship of the bourgeois republicans. Their exclusive rule lasted from June 25 to December 10 and, under a permanent state of siege, manufactured the new constitution. The culminating phase of the CNA, from December 20, 1848 to May 28, 1849, saw the conditions of the gestation of the pure bourgeois republic dismantled and replaced by the conditions of its existence and consolidation. During this final phase the power of the bourgeois republicans in the state collapsed, to be replaced by Bonaparte at the head of the executive and the ascendant party of Order in the legislature.

Without a base outside the Assembly the bourgeois republicans fell from power as naturally as they had risen to it. They were "the advance fighters of the old society against the revolutionary proletariat" (CS, p. 70) and could hang onto power only by conjuring up the dilemma of June--the realm of the republic or the realm of anarchy. In successfully repressing all subordinate classes they simultaneously dug their own graves. The changing balance of forces found their clearest expression in the election of May, 1849. The main contenders were the party of Order, proclaiming the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the Red Party, proclaiming the rule of the proletariat and petty bourgeois elements

in coalition. Each sought to put through its interests as the interests of the majority. Marx writes of the party of Order, "Naturally it represented its class rule and the conditions of its class rule as the rule of civilization and as the necessary conditions of material production as well as of the social relations arising from it" (CS, p. 89). The Red Party, or the Mountain, "... which had been brushed aside during the omnipotence of the National (pure republicans), rose and asserted itself as the parliamentary representative of the revolution... The party of the Mountain ... represented a mass wavering between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whose material interests demanded democratic institutions.... The Mountain therefore represented the truth of the revolution" (CS, pp. 92-93). But in the battle of persuasion at the polls, the party of Order commanded far superior resources.

... it organized its branches throughout France; it had all the ideologues in its pay; it had the influence of the existing governmental power at its disposal; it possessed an army of unpaid vassals in the whole mass of petty bourgeois and peasants, who, still far removed from the revolutionary movement, found in the high dignitaries of property the natural representatives of their petty property and petty prejudices. This party, represented throughout the country by countless petty kings, could punish the rejection of their candidates as insurrection, dismiss the rebellious **workers**, the recalcitrant farm hands, servants, clerks, railway officials, penmen, all the functionaries civilly subordinate to it. Finally, here and there, it could maintain the delusion that the republican Constituent Assembly had obstructed the Bonaparte of December 10 in the manifestation of his wonder-working powers (CS, pp. 89-90).

Here Marx shows how outcomes of elections based on universal suffrage can be systematically biased in favor of the dominant class. But universal male suffrage also has the merit of severing subordinate classes from their illusions.

... it possessed the incomparably higher merit of unchaining class struggle, of letting the various middle sections of petty-bourgeois society rapidly live through their illusions and disappointments, of tossing all the fractions of the exploiting class at one throw to the head of the state, and thus tearing from them their treacherous mask, whereas the monarchy with its property qualification only let definite fractions of the bourgeoisie compromise themselves, and let others lie hidden behind the scenes and surrounded them with the halo of a common opposition (CS, p. 54).

To be sure, universal male suffrage did throw the party of Order to the helm of the state and thus unchained class struggle, as we shall see. But obviously this happened only under specific historical circumstances, which will have to be explored.

In another place, Marx argues the apparently opposite--but equally erroneous--case: that universal suffrage propels the proletariat to the helm of the state.

The most comprehensive contradiction of this constitution, however, consisted in the following: The classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasants, petty bourgeois, it puts in possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces its political rule into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society. From the former classes it demands that they should not go forward from political to social emancipation; from the others that they should not go back from social to political restoration (CS, pp. 69-70).

In his analysis of the next period--the period of the parliamentary republic--Marx reconciles these apparently contradictory perspectives, and we will then have to examine why his general conclusions about the consequences of universal suffrage were in fact specific to a certain time and place.

The Parliamentary Republic

We have already investigated the situation in which the state becomes an instrument of one fraction of the bourgeoisie, under the July Monarchy. What happens when the party of the entire bourgeoisie becomes the ruling party? This occurs in the final period--the period of the rise and fall of the dictatorship of the party of Order, the parliamentary republic which lasted from May 28, 1849 to December 2, 1851.

Marx argues that only a republic as a form of direct rule of the bourgeoisie could guarantee the conditions of capitalism.

The bourgeois class fell apart into two big factions, which, alternately, the big landed proprietors under the restored monarchy and the finance aristocracy and the industrial bourgeoisie under the July monarchy, had maintained a monopoly of power. Bourbon was the royal name for the predominant influence of the interests of the one fraction, Orleans the royal name for the predominant influence of the interests of the other

fraction--the nameless realm of the republic was the only one in which both fractions could maintain in equal power the common class interest, without giving up their mutual rivalry. If the bourgeois republic could not be anything but the perfected and clearly expressed rule of the whole bourgeois class, could it be anything but the rule of the Orleanists supplemented by the Legitimists, and of the Legitimists supplemented by the Orleanists, the synthesis of the restoration and the July monarchy? (CS, p. 88.)

It was only through the representation of both factions of the bourgeoisie in a single party that class domination could be secured.

They do their real business as the party of Order, that is, under a social, not under a political title; as representatives of the bourgeois world-order, not as knights of errant princesses; as the bourgeois class against other classes, not as royalists against the republicans. And as the party of Order they exercised more unrestricted and sterner domination over the other classes of society than ever previously under the Restoration or under the July Monarchy, a domination which, in general, was only possible under the form of the parliamentary republic, for only under this form could the two great divisions of the French bourgeoisie unite, and thus put the rule of their class instead of the regime of a privileged faction of it on the order of the day (EB, p. 48).

If the parliamentary republic was the only form of bourgeois rule in which the rivalry of the different fractions could be contained, it was nevertheless bound to threaten the capitalist order by unmasking class struggle.

Instinct taught them that the republic, true enough, makes their political rule complete, but at the same time undermines its social foundation, since they must now confront the subjugated classes and contend against them without mediation, without the concealment afforded by the crown, without being able to divert the national interest by their subordinate struggles among themselves and with the monarchy (EB, p. 49).

"Their republic had the sole merit of being the hot-house of revolution" (CS, p. 131). More generally, the conditions for the emancipation of the bourgeoisie and for the rise of the only possible form of its united power became a fetter to its rule.

The bourgeoisie had a true insight into the fact that all the weapons which it had forged against feudalism turned their points against itself, that all the means of education which it had produced rebelled against its own civilization, that all the gods which it had created had fallen away from it.

It understood that all the so-called bourgeois liberties and organs of progress attacked and menaced its class rule at its social foundation and its political summit simultaneously, and had therefore become "socialistic" (EB, p. 65).

The form of bourgeois democracy forged against feudal absolutism became incompatible, according to Marx, with the capitalist mode of production. Above all, universal male suffrage produces the very forms of disorder which daily threaten the foundations of bourgeois society.

Bourgeois rule as the outcome and result of universal suffrage, as the express act of the sovereign will of the people, that is the meaning of the bourgeois constitution. But from the moment that the content of this suffrage, of this sovereign will, is no longer bourgeois rule, has the constitution any further meaning? Is it not the duty of the bourgeoisie so to regulate suffrage that it wills the reasonable, its rule? By ever and again putting an end to the existing state power and creating it anew out of itself, does not universal suffrage put an end to all stability, does it not every moment question all the powers that be, does it not annihilate authority, does it not threaten to elevate anarchy itself to authority? (CS, p. 130.)

And so the bourgeoisie abolishes universal male suffrage in order to preserve its own rule.

The law of May 31, 1850, was the coup d'état of the bourgeoisie. All its conquests over the revolution hitherto had only a provisional character. They were endangered as soon as the existing National Assembly retired from the stage. They depended on the hazards of a new general election, and the history of elections since 1848 irrefutably proved that the bourgeoisie's moral sway over the mass of the people was lost in the same measure as its actual domination developed (EB, pp. 71-72).

In expelling other classes from the political arena, through restriction of the franchise, in subordinating other classes to its rule, through repression (for example, the defeat of the Red Party in June, 1849), the bourgeoisie lost its support and legitimacy--its hegemony--and thereby threw itself into the hands of the executive.

... every time the royalists in coalition come in conflict with the pretender that confronts them, with Bonaparte, every time they believe their parliamentary omnipotence endangered by the executive power, every time, therefore, that they must produce their political title to their rule, they come forward as republicans and not as royalists (EB, p. 49).

In order to maintain its power the bourgeoisie had to continually resurrect the spectre of a rising proletariat or petty bourgeoisie, which simultaneously threatened the form of the state itself and thus bound the executive to the legislature. By repressing class struggle, the party of Order, like the bourgeois republicans, continually undermined the foundations of its own rule.

Instead of letting itself be intimidated by the executive power with the prospect of fresh disturbances, it ought rather to have allowed the class struggle a little elbowroom, so as to keep the executive power dependent on itself. But it did not feel equal to the task of playing with fire (EB, p. 93).

But how is the bourgeoisie to give class struggle any elbow room without jeopardizing its rule? How can class struggle be organized instead of repressed, in a way that doesn't continually threaten the entire bourgeois order? Furthermore, can the bourgeoisie rise above its narrow economic interests, overcome its "sheer egoism which makes the ordinary bourgeois always inclined to sacrifice the general interest of his class for this or that private motive" (EB, p. 90)?

The bourgeoisie was trapped by its own rule, propelling the party of Order into the arms of Bonaparte as it lost support from outside the political arena, from the bourgeois class itself. The crisis developed as the party of the bourgeoisie became detached from its constituents. It became, like the bourgeois republicans, a coterie, and split up into its competing fractions--the landed aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie--who struggled for the restoration of their respective monarchies. The bourgeoisie longed to rid itself of its rule: "They resemble that old man who, in order to regain his youthful strength, fetched out his boyhood apparel and sought to torment his withered limbs with it" (CS, p. 131).

It [the bourgeoisie] proved that the struggle to maintain its public interests, its own class interests, its political power, only troubled and upset it, as it was a disturbance of private business.... It declared unequivocally that it longed to get rid of its own political rule in order to get rid of the troubles and dangers of ruling (EB, pp. 104-6).

The political power of the bourgeoisie had to be broken because it could not protect its general class interests--its political interests.

Thus, by now stigmatizing as "socialistic" what it

had previously extolled as "liberal," the bourgeoisie confesses that its own interests dictate that it should be delivered from the danger of its own rule; that in order to preserve its social power intact, its political power must be broken; that the individual bourgeois can continue to exploit the other classes and to enjoy undisturbed property, family, religion and order only on condition that their class be condemned along with the other classes to like political nullity; that in order to save its purse, it must forfeit the crown, and the sword that is to safeguard it must at the same time be hung over its own head as a sword of Damocles (EB, p. 67).

Here Marx captures the essence not only of Bonapartism but also of the relative autonomy inscribed in the modern state, which subjects the bourgeoisie to the same rules and laws to which it subjects other classes. The neutrality of the state with respect to class becomes the mechanism through which class domination is perpetuated, obtaining consent and allowing class struggle a certain elbow room. We will explore in greater detail precisely how this works when we come to Gramsci and Poulantzas.

Bonapartism: The Last Form of the Capitalist State?

We must now return to our original questions as to the inevitability and finality of the Bonapartist state. Marx presents the descent from the Social Republic to Bonapartism as inevitable. One class rises to power on the back of another, which it represses, and then itself tumbles in the face of repression by a succeeding class. Indeed, as ever, the logic of Marx's argument is compelling. We have to discover the underlying assumptions which explain why the political dynamics he unveils occur in France during this period but not in England, and why similar dynamics may be discovered in third world countries today but not in advanced capitalist societies. In comparing England and France, at one point (CS, pp. 113-14) Marx points out how strong the industrial bourgeoisie is in the former and how it is subordinated to the landed aristocracy and finance capital in the latter country. And indeed many of the dynamics of the period do revolve around the form of the power bloc of the dominant classes--the antagonistic coalition of landed aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie--and the controlling power of finance, even though it had no official representation in the state. Merchant capital as the leading fraction of

capital subordinates all the forms of the state to the Bourse. And this accounts for the various forms of class struggle that take place and the failure of the state to dispense concessions to subordinate classes. In England, manufacturing interests had already begun to dominate the power bloc at this time, although the landed interests formed the backbone of the state. There the uneven development of capital and landed interests led to a stronger proletariat which was able to wring concessions from the bourgeoisie and the state. In other words, the economic development of France directly shaped the form of its political dynamics, although Marx makes no attempt to theorize about the relationship between the two. He does, however, suggest at another point (CS, pp. 134-35) that economic crises are experienced differently according to the position of a country in the world economic order. In Britain, at the center of world capitalism, economic crises did not directly give rise to political crises insofar as they could be externalized to other countries, where economic crises had immediate destabilizing repercussions for the political order. In short, the logic of political development which Marx expounds as somehow inevitable in a universal sense has to be rooted in the particular combined and uneven development of capitalism in France, as expressed through its place in the world economic system and through the constellation of relations among the dominant classes.

That Bonapartism was to be the last form of the capitalist state, after which no other form could emerge, also rests on certain assumptions about the relationship between the economic and the political. Marx generally saw the conflict between capital and labor as of a zero-sum nature, whereas the expansion of the forces of production was to provide the opportunity for the extension of concessions to subordinate classes. Trade unionism and electoral politics became the very mechanisms for giving class struggle some elbow room without threatening capitalism as a whole. Marx saw no alternative to some form of dictatorship as a means of protecting the bourgeois order, because he saw the proletariat as developing into a class for itself whose interests would lead it to overthrow capitalism. But that interest is imputed to the working class based on its position in the mode of production. It represents a mechanical imposition of the

economic on the political and avoids an examination of the formation of interests in the economic arena itself. There can be little doubt that in talking of the peasantry as a sack of potatoes--a class in itself as opposed to a class for itself--Marx is suggesting that the economic conditions of the factory proletariat lead it to develop a "true" consciousness of its own interests both through struggle and through processes of homogenization and impoverishment. Only later, in CAPITAL, does he begin to examine the ideological effects of the capitalist labor process, and even then, as I have suggested in previous lectures, he doesn't go far enough. Having postulated certain political and ideological effects of the labor process it is necessary to proceed to examine the ideological and political apparatuses of the factory and then their relationship to the apparatuses of the state.

Marx's mistaken conclusions about universal male suffrage are not rooted simply in the possibility of dispensing concessions to subordinate classes, and a failure to examine the relationship between global and production politics. They are also rooted in a certain instrumental view of the state. Although he argues that the bourgeoisie as a class cannot wield the state in its own interests, nevertheless the assumption behind his analysis of suffrage is that if the working class were voted into power it would transform the state into a machine for overthrowing capitalism. The capture of state power through elections would be sufficient for the inauguration of the transition to socialism. We now know this to be wrong. Last time we showed how capturing state power easily turns the workers' party into a prisoner or a security guard of capitalism. It also brings up the dilemma of socialism in one country, which we will discuss later in the course. Capitalists are not going to sit back and merely watch the transition to socialism go on before their eyes. Then there is the fact that very few socialist parties have ever gained the majority in the polls necessary to assume power; when they have it has been through compromising on their socialist programs in order to attract support from "allied" classes. And this is because the proletariat, as Marx understood the term, has not become the numerically preponderant class Marx expected it to be. A wide range of intermediary classes holding "contradictory class locations" have

emerged to complicate the social structure. Finally, there is the question of whether workers evince much interest in socialism. And here we again have to examine Marx's presuppositions about the development of class consciousness, in both economic and political arenas. We have to examine the formation of interests, rather than transplanting some postulate of fundamental interests from the economic to the political arena.

One last point: Marx's claim that the conditions of the emancipation of the bourgeoisie become fetters to its rule, that the pursuit of a bourgeois democracy and bourgeois reforms is in fact a threat to the survival of capitalism, is the basis of much Revisionist and Eurocommunist thinking. The pursuit of popular control and programs for "democratization" is seen as incompatible with the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. This would appear to be a very different perspective from the one Marx lays out in *THE CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT*, in which bourgeois democracy, the state based on citizenry which embodies the particular interest expressed as a general interest, is the most perfect form of the capitalist state. This latter notion of the relationship between state and civil society is more akin to a Leninist perspective which regards bourgeois democracy as capitalism's best shell and a form that must be smashed before the transition to socialism can begin.

VIII. SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

We can now summarize our examination of the relationship between the economic and the political in Marx. In the last two lectures I tried to show that, in his political writings, Marx has a notion of political structures possessing a relatively autonomous dynamic. By this I mean that the various forms of the state are manifestations of an underlying dynamic and that they shape the impact of external factors. In particular the effect of the economic on the political is determined by the structure of the political. We have seen how in France economic crises give rise to political crises; how classes are wheeled into the political arena with certain imputed interests and are there shaped into political actors. We saw also that by regarding the economic as a series of exogenously determined variables Marx fails to examine how the overall form of politics is shaped by the economic: he doesn't examine how the particular combination of modes of production (the social formation) in France led to a succession of forms of state very different from those found in England, for example. Although Marx's critics accuse him of reducing politics to economics, the problem with these political writings on France is that they give too much autonomy to the political. We will return to this problem of the relative autonomy of the political when we examine Gramsci and Poulantzas.

The second conclusion we drew in the last lecture was that Marx sees the instruments of the social emancipation of the bourgeoisie from feudalism, the bourgeois rights formulated in the French revolution, as being turned against the bourgeoisie as soon as it acquired political power. Democratic rights such as civil liberties, freedom of association, speech and the press, and particularly universal (male) suffrage were incompatible with capitalism. The only possible form of the state was thus Bonapartism, a form of dictatorial rule in which powerful apparatuses of the state dominated all classes in order to protect the essential conditions of capital accumulation.

Marx's understanding of the relationship between a bourgeois republic and a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production is based on several assumptions. First, workers will recognize that they have a fundamental interest in overthrowing

capitalism and inaugurating socialism. Second, class struggle will dissolve the illusions and hallucinations of the dominated classes, which will then become conscious of their "true" or "fundamental" interests. Third, capitalism cannot and will not be able to extend the concessions to dominated classes which would foster a class struggle organized within the bounds of capitalism. In other words, class struggle will tend to lead to its own intensification. Fourth, the peasantry and other "transitional" classes will either disappear or recognize the leadership of the proletariat. Thus with universal suffrage workers will obtain the support of the majority of the population and will thereby seize power. Fifth, Marx seems to have an instrumentalist view of the state, in the sense that once workers have seized state power in this way they will be able to wield it for the pursuit of socialism. At the same time he argues that the bourgeoisie can't control the apparatuses of the state directly.

Marx's subsequent work on the capitalist mode of production in CAPITAL modifies many of these assumptions. Let me draw attention to three features of this later work. First, Marx talks about how the very processes of production, circulation and exchange mystify the underlying relations of exploitation: the production of commodities under capitalism creates its own obstacles to the development of class interests. We see this in his analysis of fetishism, the Trinity Formula, the obscuring of surplus value through the system of wage labor and the market, and so on. Second, Marx shows how the exchange of equals in the market underlies the generation of surplus value, because the value of labor power is less than the value of the labor rendered to the capitalist. If equal exchange in the market is the basis of the economy then the form of state that guarantees capitalist relations must enshrine that equality, that is, treat all forms of property and all individuals equally. (Although such a view does appear in THE CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT, it certainly is not present in Marx's analysis of France between 1848 and 1851.) Third, in the third volume of CAPITAL Marx shows how capitalism produces commodities and reproduces relations at the same time that it produces crises and reproduces contradictions, while simultaneously generating the material basis of the next higher mode of production. From this he concludes that capitalism

is historically limited, although he doesn't have a "breakdown" or "final catastrophe" view of the capitalist mode of production.

While I have taken off from the first point to develop notions of relations in production and their reproduction through factory apparatuses, and others, such as Luxemburg and Lenin, have taken off from the second point, scientific socialism concentrates exclusively on the third feature of Marx's theory of the capitalist mode of production, namely its law-like development. But before we can turn to Engels and Kautsky it is important to place their contributions in the context of their times.

Historical Context

Scientific socialism was born during the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism. It was a period of deep crisis in many European countries, epitomized in the economic arena by the Great Depression (1873-1895) and in the political arena by the emergence of socialist parties as a genuine revolutionary force. Germany was the heartland of many of these developments, possessing an anachronistic absolutist form of state alongside a burgeoning capitalist economy. Between 1890 and 1920 the crisis of German society was reflected in a crisis of Marxism and the emergence of three distinct varieties: scientific, evolutionary and revolutionary socialism. We will discuss each in turn as it is linked to the writings of Kautsky, Bernstein and Luxemburg, respectively.

This was a time when socialism was really on the agenda in Europe. It was the period of the Second International, set up in 1889, under whose umbrella socialist parties began to engage in an international discourse. It was a period in which theory and practice did inform each other: theoretical analysis really appeared to be important in the shaping of strategy. It was, as some say, the golden age of Marxism.

The history of socialism in Germany as an organized force among workers goes back to the formation of the General German Workers' Association in 1863. Led by Lassalle, the Association thought to achieve the goal of socialism through the introduction of democracy into the Bismarkian state. It was concerned with the fight for wider franchise, freedom of association, civil liberties, etc. A rival party, much more influenced by Marx's writings, was formed in 1869, led by Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel. In

1875, at Gotha, the two parties merged into what would become the Social Democratic Party. The Gotha Program was subjected to withering criticism from Marx for bowing to the influence of Lassalle. It included little analysis of economic development, no mention of revolution and no clear indication of the class character of the state. The newly formed party, however, captured nearly half a million votes, or 9% of the votes cast in the 1877 elections to the Reichstag. This made the SDP the fourth strongest party in the country, although the class system of representation meant that its votes couldn't be turned into a corresponding number of representatives. Following this electoral success, repressive legislation was introduced: socialist meetings and congresses were outlawed, newspapers were confiscated, and other forms of intimidation were perpetrated against individual social democrats. From 1878 to 1890, while these anti-socialist laws were being enforced, social democrats were driven underground and their mood became more revolutionary. It was during this period that Kautsky became the intellectual leader of the SDP, and he was a principal architect of the Erfurt Program of 1891. THE CLASS STRUGGLE, written in 1892, was a commentary on the Erfurt Program.

Kautsky was undoubtedly the great intellectual father of German social democracy, if not social democracy throughout Europe, particularly after Engels died. Kautsky attempted to hold the SDP together by giving reformist practice a revolutionary idiom. He combined, as Lichteim says, a doctrinal intransigence with a tactical caution. He justified this moderation by claiming that the conditions for more revolutionary steps were not yet ripe. Kautsky's influence was considerable, not least upon Lenin, who owed much of his theoretical development to Kautsky. When Kautsky later subjected the Bolsheviks to virulent attack for their prostitution of democracy, Lenin and Trotsky were to stigmatize him as a renegade. In practice it was they who had changed; Kautsky had from the beginning seen socialism and parliamentary democracy as inextricably linked. To be sure, after 1910 Kautsky's economic prognosis of capitalism's future did become more moderate; his political analysis remained unchanged nonetheless. According to Kautsky, the road to socialism may or may not be violent, but it must be a parliamentary road and may be taken only when the balance of forces allows it. To force the transformation prematurely

would be to court disaster.

Engels

Scientific socialism begins with Engels, in particular with his SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC, which offers an analysis of the dynamics of the capitalist economy, and his introduction to CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE, written in 1895, which is a reassessment of the strategy of the previous fifty years. His economic analysis is straightforward, arguing for the worsening of crises due to the polarization of classes, the displacement of small capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie, the generation of a reserve army of the unemployed, the homogenization of the proletariat, falling wages, and overproduction crises. His analysis of politics emphasizes the new conditions under which class struggle had to be carried out. The period of insurrections and minority revolutions was over, and he and Marx had been mistaken in their analysis of the revolutions of 1848:

The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organization, the masses themselves must also be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for with body and soul. The history of the last fifty years has taught us that. But in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required, and it is just this work which we are now pursuing, and with a success which drives the enemy to despair (Engels, Introduction to CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE, p. 25).

The revolution would have to be majoritarian because, among other factors, the form of struggle has changed. Given the sophistication of the repressive apparatus of the state and the new technology it had at its command, street fighting was no longer to play a dominant role. Legal methods of class struggle were proving to be far more effective than illegal methods:

The irony of world history turns everything upside down. We, the "revolutionaries," the "rebels"--we are thriving far better on legal methods than illegal methods and revolt. The parties of order, as they call themselves, are perishing under the legal conditions created by themselves. They cry despairingly ... legality is the death of us; whereas we, under this legality, get firm muscles and rosy cheeks and look like eternal life (Engels, Introduction to CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE, pp. 28-29).

The "new legal methods" refer, of course, to the extension of suffrage. Franchise is transformed from a "means of deception to a means of emancipation." This happens in two ways. First, suffrage provides a test of the strength of the proletariat, and is a means of conducting class struggle through public discourse.

And if universal suffrage had offered no other advantage than that it allowed us to count our numbers every three years; that by the regularly established, unexpectedly rapid rise in the number of votes it increased in equal measure the workers' certainty of victory and the dismay of their opponents, and so became our best means of propaganda; that it accurately informed us concerning our own strength and that of all hostile parties, and thereby provided us with a measure of proportion for our actions second to none, safeguarding us from untimely timidity as much as from untimely foolhardiness--if this had been the only advantage we gained from the suffrage, then it would still have been more than enough. But it has done much more than this. In election agitation it provided us with a means, second to none, of getting in touch with the mass of the people, where they still stand aloof from us; of forcing all parties to defend their views and actions against our attacks before all the people; and, further, it opened to our representatives in the Reichstag a platform from which they could speak to their opponents in Parliament and to the masses without, with quite other authority and freedom than in the press or at meetings. Of what avail to the government and the bourgeoisie was their Anti-Socialist Law when election agitation and socialist speeches in the Reichstag continually broke through it? (Engels, *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.)

Second, based on the number of votes for the SDP having grown from 100,000 in 1871 to close to two million in 1893, Engels sees victory through the ballot box in the near future.

If it continues in this fashion, by the end of the century we shall conquer the greater part of the middle section of society, petty bourgeois and small peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they like it or not (Engels, *ibid.*, p. 27).

What Engels leaves quite unclear is how the transition to socialism is to take place. Here Kautsky continues, inheriting Engels' legacy and elucidating the conquest of power through and in parliament.

The Transition to Socialism

In 1892, Kautsky's analysis of the economic replicates Engels' account in SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC. Capitalism cannot

survive:

The capitalist social system has run its course; its dissolution is now only a question of time. Irresistable economic forces lead with the certainty of doom to the shipwreck of capitalist production. The substitution of a new social order for the existing one is no longer simply desirable, it has become inevitable (THE CLASS STRUGGLE /TCS/, p. 117).

But how does the inevitability of capitalism's collapse necessarily mean the rise of socialism? Here Kautsky hedges and, like the true social darwinist that he (and Engels) became, argues that a society that does not adapt becomes extinct.

Today there is no longer any question as to whether the system of private ownership in the means of production shall be maintained. Its downfall is certain. The only question to be answered is: Shall the system of private ownership in the means of production be allowed to pull society with itself down into the abyss; or shall society shake off that burden and then, free and strong, resume the path of progress which the evolutionary law prescribes to it? (TCS, p. 87.)

But we do not mean that the social revolution--the abolition of private property in the means of production--will be accomplished of itself, that the irresistible, inevitable course of evolution will do the work without the assistance of man; nor yet that all social reforms are worthless and that nothing is left to those who suffer from the contradiction between the modern powers of production and the system of property but idly to fold their arms and patiently to wait for its abolition.... We know that this system multiplies the number and the strength of the exploited, and diminishes the number and strength of the exploiting, classes, and that it will finally lead to such unbearable conditions for the mass of the population that they will have no choice but to go down into degradation or to overthrow the system of private property (TCS, pp. 89-90).

What is necessary, then, for the "move forward into socialism" to triumph, rather than the "fall back into barbarism" (TCS, p. 118)? Here Kautsky is clear that immiseration and degradation of the proletariat is not the path to a successful social revolution. He incessantly attacks the thesis of "the worse the better" as a form of primitive socialism.

The worse the condition of the masses, thought these primitive socialists, the clearer must be the moment when their misery would become unbearable and they would rise and topple over the social structure which oppressed them. A struggle for the gradual elevation of the working-class seemed not only hopeless, but harmful. For any slight improvement that might be achieved could only tend

to postpone the moment of their uprising and, therefore, the moment of permanent release from misery. Every form of the class-struggle which was not aimed at the immediate overthrow of the existing order, that is, every serious, efficient sort of effort, seemed to the early socialist as nothing more nor less than a betrayal of humanity (TCS, p. 197).

This victory will not be born out of degradation, as many have believed, no more out of the degradation of the small producers than out of the proletariat. Socialism has as much cause to oppose degradation on the one side as on the other, and it does so to the best of its ability (TCS, p. 215).

The transition to socialism, Kautsky argues, rests on the proletariat being schooled in modern democratic forms of political participation, in particular in the exercise of the vote. The bourgeois freedoms, civil liberties, and rights of association are essential pre-requisites for building a class capable of carrying through a socialist revolution.

On this account, wherever the working-class has endeavored to improve its economic position it has made political demands, especially demands for a free press and the right of assemblage. These privileges are to the proletariat the prerequisites of life; they are the light and air of the labor movement. Whoever attempts to deny them, no matter what his pretensions, is to be reckoned among the worst enemies of the working-class (TCS, p. 185).

Parliament becomes the key locus and focus of proletarian political activity:

Whenever the proletariat engages in parliamentary activity as a self-conscious class, parliamentarism begins to change its character. It ceases to be a mere tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This very participation of the proletariat proves to be the most effective means of shaking up the hitherto indifferent divisions of the proletariat and giving them hope and confidence. It is the most powerful lever that can be utilized to raise the proletariat out of its economic, social and moral degradation. The proletariat has, therefore, no reason to distrust parliamentary action; on the other hand, it has every reason to exert all its energy to increase the power of parliaments in their relation to other departments of government and to swell to the utmost its own parliamentary representation. Besides freedom of the press and the right to organize, the universal ballot is to be regarded as one of the conditions prerequisite to a sound development of the proletariat (TCS, p. 188).

Parliamentary activity builds the strength of the proletariat and makes it conscious of its own strength; it becomes a school for the new men and women who will forge the new society. This is very different from the positions of other radicals such as Luxemburg

and Pannekoek, who viewed the factory as the critical locus of political activity and participation. Kautsky saw the transition to socialism as occurring through the conquest of power in parliament. Parliament was not only the means of power but also the instrument through which power would be exercised under a socialist regime. This was an explicit repudiation of the view that there is an inherent bias lodged in parliament, that it is a form of government best suited to the reproduction of capitalism, irrespective of the class composition of its members. For Kautsky the institution of parliament is itself neutral, and its biases stem from the influence different classes can exercise on its operation:

The power of parliament depends on the energy and courage of the classes behind it and on the energy and courage of the classes on which its will is to be imposed. The influence of a class within a parliament depends, in the first place, on the nature of the electoral law in force. It is dependent, further, upon the influence of the class in question among the voters, and, lastly, upon its aptitude for parliamentary work (TCS, pp. 186-87).

Kautsky's faith in and commitment to the necessity of parliamentary democracy as both a means to and a goal of socialism was to be the basis of his hostility to the new regime in the Soviet Union, to Lenin's notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, that is not to say that Kautsky saw capitalism as able to reform itself--far from it. Once the proletariat had achieved dominance in the state, through the ballot box, it would then have to institute central planning of the economy:

For whatever democracy may be able to accomplish it cannot resolve the antagonisms inherent in a capitalist system of production, so long as it refrains from altering this system. On the contrary, the antagonisms in capitalist society become more acute and tend to provoke bigger conflicts, in this way forcing great problems on the attention of the proletariat, and taking its mind off routine and detail work (DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT, p. 40).

Kautsky envisioned socialism as being directed by a parliamentary or constituent assembly based on universal suffrage. Throughout his life he was opposed to notions of direct legislation.

... small capitalists and farmers have in large numbers lost all faith in legislative action. Some of these have declared in favor of the substitution of direct legislation for legislation by representatives; others have denounced all forms of political activity. This may sound very revolutionary, but in reality it indicates

nothing but the political bankruptcy of the classes involved (TCS, p. 187).

Although his vision of socialism was of a centrally planned society and he continually opposed the council communist vision in which considerable power devolved to the units of production, he was nevertheless concerned with counteracting bureaucratic tendencies with local self-government.

It is ... urgently necessary for the executive to be subjected to public criticism, for free organization of citizens to counterbalance the power of the State, for self-government in municipalities and provinces to be established, for the power of law-making to be taken from the bureaucracy, and put under the control of a central assembly, freely chosen by the people, that is, a Parliament. The control of Government is the most important duty of Parliament (DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT, p. 26).

Not surprisingly, Kautsky sees "emancipation" as taking place outside the labor process. There is little concern with the transformation of the realm of necessity itself, except to reduce the number of hours of necessary labor:

It is not freedom of labor, but the freedom from labor, which in a socialist society the use of machinery makes increasingly possible, that will bring mankind freedom of life, freedom for artistic and intellectual activity, freedom for the noblest enjoyment (TCS, p. 158).

According to Kautsky, the council communist notions of socialism, based on the centrality of production politics, leave an undefined vacuum into which a despotic form of global politics can easily step.

Kautsky's Assumptions

Kautsky's entire argument rests on an increasing numerical, and thus political, strength of the proletariat. Only in this way can workers command a parliamentary majority.

That the number of the proletariat is steadily on the increase is such a palpable fact that no one attempts to deny it, not even those who would make us believe that society today rests on the same basis as it did a hundred years ago, and who try to paint the picture of the small producer in rosy colors (TCS, p. 18).

As the working class grows in strength it becomes a leading class, supported by those classes which are disappearing:

... we have discovered that the proletariat is the only one among the working-classes that grows steadily in energy, in intelligence, and in clear consciousness of its purpose. It is becoming the center about which

the disappearing survivals of the other working-classes group themselves. Its ways of feeling and thinking are becoming standard for the whole mass of non-capitalists, no matter what their status may be (TCS, p. 210).

As it turns out, however, the actual number of industrial wage earners--that is, the proletariat--does increase until 1907, but subsequently reaches a plateau, as can be seen from the table.

MANUAL WORKERS IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE GERMAN ECONOMY
(as percentage of adult population)*

	Manual Workers in Industry			Manual Workers in Industry, Agriculture and Transport			Manual Workers in Non-Productive Sectors		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1882	11.7	1.7	13.4	15.4	3.6	19.0	2.2	0.7	2.9
1895	13.8	2.5	16.3	17.5	4.4	21.9	2.4	1.2	3.6
1907	16.4	3.3	19.7	19.6	5.0	24.6	2.6	1.3	3.9
1925	16.3	4.0	20.3	19.1	5.0	24.1	1.9	1.0	2.9
1933	15.8	3.9	19.7	18.9	4.7	23.6	2.0	1.3	3.3
1950	15.6	3.8	19.4	18.1	4.2	22.3	2.0	1.4	3.4
1961	16.9	5.1	22.0	18.5	5.3	23.8	2.7	3.0	5.7

After 1910, Kautsky does recognize the importance of the old middle classes as well as the creation of "new middle classes." Indeed, this is a major reason for his own moderation, his belief that the time for the socialist revolution is not yet ripe. In practice the size of the proletariat imposed definite constraints on a party determined to win power through the ballot. It meant that the SDP would have to seek the support of allied classes, thus necessarily compromising its own socialist policies, geared to the supposed interests of the proletariat. This becomes particularly clear in the debates within the SDP over support for the rural peasantry and the farmers of the South. Kautsky's program was to try to convince the peasantry that their ultimate interests lay with the proletariat. In practice, their support could only be won by making material concessions and thus supporting reformist policies which would bolster the resistance of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie in the face of encroaching industrial capital. Since the proletariat does not form a majority of the electorate, a socialist party can only win power

*Data from Przeworski, Underhill and Wallerstein, THE EVOLUTION OF CLASS STRUCTURE IN DENMARK, FRANCE, GERMANY AND SWEDEN: BASIC DATA TABLES.

by striking an alliance with other parties or by compromising its revolutionary perspectives in order to seek out a broader electoral base. The logic of electoral politics leads to reformism.

Furthermore, all this assumes that workers' representatives are themselves committed to the transition to socialism, and this is far from clear. As early as 1905 there was strong opposition by trade union leadership to spontaneous initiatives from the working class. As Schorske describes in some detail, the party congresses from 1905 to 1914 were increasingly dominated by the interests of trade union leadership and party bureaucracy, which were threatened by the rising appeal of the mass strike, particularly after the Russian revolution of 1905. Whereas in principle the SDP supported the mass strike, in practice it was to place considerable obstacles in its path. Initially Kautsky was radicalized by the possibilities of the mass strike and its successful adoption in Russia. But in 1910, when the German working class was becoming increasingly restless, he began arguing that the mass strike was a weapon of class warfare only in those countries with relatively weak states. In Germany, with one of the strongest repressive apparatuses, any mass uprising would be easily crushed and would constitute a major setback to the march towards socialism. The contradictions had not yet matured sufficiently; the time was not ripe. Prefiguring Gramsci's analysis, Kautsky argued that whereas in the East, particularly in Russia, the politics of confrontation could bring the state to its knees, the road to socialism in the West had to be pursued through the more gradual politics of attrition. It was over this issue that Luxemburg and Kautsky would part company.

Even though the organizational form of workers' representation, whether through the trade union or party, tended to stifle workers' initiative, it is still not clear that workers themselves were all that interested in socialism. They had won definite and important rights and concessions from the state through long and painful struggles. It was not at all obvious why they should risk losing these gains for some nebulous alternative society. As Claudin has insisted in *THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT*, the revolutionary Marxists (and here he is referring particularly to Lenin and Trotsky) underestimated the reformism deeply embedded in the European working classes, who had a lot to lose in open warfare with the state.

Perhaps, then, the cautious and nationalist policies pursued by the SDP and trade unions were indeed rooted in the constellation of interests that emerged within the proletariat. Kautsky's faith in the parliamentary road to socialism may reflect and correspond to the realities of the history of the German working class, which had to contend with a repressive and uncompromising state machinery. We will have to return to this issue when we read Luxemburg.

The Logic Behind Scientific Socialism

The assumptions behind Kautsky's analysis--the increasing strength of the proletariat, the commitment of party leadership to socialism, and the ultimate interest of the proletariat in overthrowing capitalism--remained an unexamined legacy that he inherited from Engels. What is characteristic of this theory is the separation of the economic and the political. The economic is the realm of scientific laws (polarization, falling rate of profit, overproduction, immiseration, etc.) while the political is the realm of revolution, in which the proletariat tests its strength, enters into class struggle, and so on. Here we have the dichotomization between base and superstructure, between objective conditions and the subjective will, between what is and what ought to be, between a mechanical causality and a teleological causality (see also Colletti, "Bernstein and the Marxism of the Second International" in his FROM ROUSSEAU TO LENIN).

This separation of the "objective" and the "subjective" is at odds with Marx's own analysis. For Marx, the political, like the economic, has both its objective and its subjective moments. Indeed, if we stick to his actual historical analysis of France and to the three volumes of CAPITAL, the very framework--subject/object--appears inapplicable. Marx's analysis of the "economic" realm offers not only a notion of the transformation of raw materials into useful products but also an analysis of the production and reproduction of relations and the generation of a consciousness of those relations. This is not thematized and is perhaps underdeveloped--hence the introduction and centrality of production politics in my own analysis--but it is there. Kautsky, and of course many others, can constitute the economic realm as the "objective" only by ignoring Marx's analysis of the fetishism of commodities, the Trinity Formula, the obfuscating powers of wage

labor, etc.* Equally, Kautsky can constitute the political as the realm of subjectivity only by refusing to develop a theory of the capitalist state and ignoring Marx's somewhat veiled attempts to do so in his analysis of France between 1848 and 1851.

The analysis must shift, then, from an examination of the relationship between "objective" and "subjective" to the relationship between global and production politics on the one hand, and the relationship of the "labor process" in the economic realm to that in the state on the other. We shall see later how Lukacs restores Marx's analysis of the labor process, and Gramsci recovers his analysis of the state, but how neither manages to bridge the relationship between politics and labor: each falls onto one horn of the dilemma we have already pointed to in Marx.

*Kautsky sometimes does discuss the implications of the economic for the development of the proletariat's consciousness:

We have already seen how the modern method of production reacts on the intellectual life of the proletariat, how it has awakened in them a thirst for **knowledge** and given them an understanding of great social problems.... Their conditions of life, moreover, make it possible for them to act together in great numbers for a common end. Their regular forms of activity accustom them to rigid discipline. Their unions are to them an excellent parliamentary school; they afford opportunities for training in parliamentary law and public speaking (TCS, pp. 187-88).

However misconceived Kautsky's analysis is, the consciousness is only examined for its implications in the political realm--the realm of subjectivity, the realm of class struggle.

IX. EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

A democratic Socialist movement that attempts to transform a capitalist into a Socialist order is necessarily faced with the choice between two incompatibles--principles and power. Socialist parties that are dedicated to democracy proceed on the fundamental assumption that their enemies are human, too, an assumption that limits the range of their weapons. Discussion, vote-getting, parliamentarism--rather than terrorism, violence, revolution--constitute the arsenal of the democratic Socialist. Again, the Socialist who is also a democrat will eschew dictatorship to maintain himself in power and rely instead on persuasion.

But a democratic Socialist movement that remains faithful to its principles may never achieve power. Or, if an accident should put control into its hands, it may soon lose it to less scrupulous adversaries. Is democratic Socialism, then, impossible? Or can it be achieved only if the party is willing to abandon the democratic method temporarily to attain power by violence in the hope that it may return to parliamentarism as soon as control is secure? Surely this second alternative contains tragic possibilities: a democratic movement that resorts to authoritarian methods to gain its objective may not remain a democratic movement for long. Still, the first alternative--to cling to democratic procedures under all circumstances--may doom the party to continual political impotence (Gay, *THE DILEMMA OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM*, p. ix).

Karl Kautsky sat firmly between the horns of this dilemma, repudiating neither the possibility of violence nor the necessity of democracy in the transition to socialism. To the extent that he and the SDP embraced the democratic road in their praxis they were ultimately forced to compromise their socialist principles and Marxian visions. It was Bernstein who represented and codified their reformist practices in his formulation of evolutionary socialism. His basic point of confrontation with the dominant orthodoxy of Kautsky and with the theoretical part of the Erfurt Program was his denial of the inevitability of capitalism's breakdown.

The Significance of Breakdown Theory

In Kautsky's formulation, capitalism tends towards its own destruction by virtue of its inherent laws. Capitalism is not merely a historically limited mode of production, but ineluctably, in the very process of its reproduction, sows the seeds of its own destruction. With history on his side Kautsky could advocate reformist practices without endangering the ultimate transition to socialism.

Both Bernstein and Luxemburg, in opposite ways, would remove the ground from beneath Kautsky's feet. Bernstein questioned breakdown theory, arguing that capitalism has a capacity for its gradual self-transformation into socialism. This makes revolutionary practice unnecessary and gives support to the actual strategy and tactics of the SDP: working through existing institutions inside the framework of capitalism. Luxemburg, however, would insist on breakdown theory, indeed, would develop her own version, but would also distinguish between the logical necessity of the end of capitalism and the creation of socialism. The latter can only be achieved through a revolutionary praxis.

The theory of crash or its denial in each instance was an essential basis for political practice.

If the end of capitalism cannot be scientifically demonstrated, then the foundation of the socialist program falls back on subjective ideals. In other words, it becomes an idealistic foundation and there is no longer any objective necessity, i.e., the foundation based on the material-social process. On the other hand, if that end is scientifically demonstrated as the unavoidable outcome of objective laws, then we somehow end up in the theory of the crash; and the subjective intervention, the consciousness of the participants, while it "can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs" of the new society, can, as Marx put it in the Preface to Capital, "neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development" (Colletti, "The Theory of the Crash," TELOS No. 13, pp. 15-16).

Perhaps Colletti overstates the significance of the crash by conflating the dissolution of capitalism and the rise of socialism. Thus, the difference between Kautsky and Luxemburg in 1910 would be precisely over the practice necessary for the creation of socialism, given capitalism's inevitable demise. Equally, Bernstein's "subjectivism" is very different from that of Gramsci, yet both repudiate the idea of breakdown. Where socialism is more or less spawned in the womb of a declining capitalism, as in Kautsky and Bernstein, we find a reformist practice. Where the genesis of the new mode of production is separated from the demise of the old, a revolutionary practice is called for. In other words, the link between theory and practice is not quite as simple as Colletti implies.

Bernstein and Evolutionary Socialism

Bernstein and Kautsky were part of the Marxist Eisenacher group which joined with Lasalle's party in 1875 at Gotha. Following the enactment of the anti-socialist laws of 1878, Bernstein left for Switzerland, where he soon became editor of SOZIALDEMOKRAT, the official party organ. Pressure from Germany led to Switzerland exiling the coterie of social democrats ten years later. Bernstein then went to England, where he became very close to Engels and to the Fabian society. When Engels died in 1893, Bernstein inherited Engels' mantle as intellectual leader and tactical adviser to German social democracy. However, it was not long after Engels' death that Bernstein began publishing his critiques of Marxist orthodoxy as laid down in the scientific socialism of the Erfurt Program, to which he had contributed the second section on tactics. Influenced by the Fabians and by the Lasallean tradition, Bernstein began to question the idea of capitalism's inevitable breakdown and to advocate a gradualist transition to socialism based on democratization. His articles occasioned bitter responses from Kautsky and Bebel and became the subject of great controversy at SDP conventions. He was eventually persuaded to put his ideas down in a more extended form. The result, his book EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM, is now a classic formulation of revisionism.

Why has this book created such controversy? Given Bernstein's prestige in the social democratic movement and the confidence expressed in him by Marx and Engels, his critique clearly could not be ignored by the more orthodox defenders of Marxist conventional wisdom. Moreover, he was the first major Marxist to question the inevitability of the rise of socialism in a period when competitive capitalism was already beginning to restructure itself in fundamental ways. But the power of revisionism is perhaps rooted more in the dilemmas facing a social democratic party in a capitalist society that protects basic bourgeois rights and organizes representation through electoral politics. In order for such a party to gain the support of the proletariat it must try to advance the material interests of that class, which requires active participation in electoral politics, union struggles and so forth. But once sucked into the logic of capitalist institutions it necessarily supports and reproduces those institutions. To the extent that the proletariat does not form a majority, it has to form alliances with

other classes, in particular the peasantry, and this in turn means supporting the extension of material concessions to those allied classes and, as it turns out historically, compromising socialist principles. Finally, as a consequence of participation in capitalist institutions, workers themselves struggle to realize their interests within capitalism's framework, rather than through its demolition and the creation of an alternative society. These are the real material bases of revisionism, which correspond to the practice of the SDP and to which Bernstein gave official theoretical recognition. Thus, Bernstein advocated trimming theory to practice:

Their influence would be much greater than it is to-day if the social democracy could find the courage to emancipate itself from phraseology which is actually outworn and if it would make up its mind to appear what it is in reality to-day: a democratic, socialistic party of reform (EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM [ES], p. 197).

In his critique of orthodoxy Bernstein was concerned with separating the kernel of historical accuracy from the strictures of a philosophical husk drawn from Hegel. Bernstein attempted to strip Marxism, including Marx's own analysis, of an artificially imposed logic which rendered socialism inevitable.

For the general sympathy with the strivings for emancipation of the working classes does not in itself stand in the way of the scientific method. But, as Marx approaches a point when that final aim enters seriously into the question, he becomes uncertain and unreliable.... It thus appears that this great scientific spirit was, in the end, a slave to doctrine. To express it figuratively, he has raised a mighty building within the framework of a scaffolding he found existing, and in its erection he kept strictly to the laws of scientific architecture as long as they did not collide with the conditions which the construction of the scaffolding prescribed, but he neglected or evaded them when the scaffolding did not allow of their observance. Where the scaffolding put limits in the way of the building, instead of destroying the scaffolding, he changed the building itself at the cost of its right proportions and so made it all the more dependent on the scaffolding. Was it the consciousness of this irrational relation which caused him continually to pass from completing his work to amending special parts of it? (ES, pp. 210-11.)

So, according to Bernstein, what can be retained of Marx's analysis and Marxist orthodoxy and what must be shed?

The fall of profit is a fact, the advent of over-production and crises is a fact, periodic diminution of capital is a fact, the concentration and centralisation of industrial capital is a fact, the increase of the rate of surplus value is a fact. So far we are, in principle, agreed in the statement. When the statement does not agree with reality

it is not because something false is said, but because what is said is incomplete. Factors which influence the contradictions described by limiting them, are in Marx either quite ignored, or are, although discussed at some place, abandoned later on when the established facts are summed up and confronted, so that the social result of the conflicts appear much stronger and more abrupt than it is in reality (ES, p. 42).

If Marx was right about much he was wrong in suggesting that the number of people in the "possessing classes" was shrinking and that there would be a polarization of classes into proletariat and bourgeoisie. As Bernstein shows empirically, shareholders were increasing in number and a new middle class was emerging between capital and labor. Small-scale capital was being reproduced for a variety of reasons, including the advantages of small size in trade, the absence of economies of scale in many industries, the creation of competitive capital by large-scale capital, and the dependence of the rich on luxury goods that could be produced only in small quantities. Finally, in a polemic against Luxemburg Bernstein argued that crises don't lead to breakdown because capitalism is capable of self-regulation through international expansion of the market and the development of cartels.

Political Implications

Bernstein's refutation of orthodoxy is that the unfolding of history conflicts with some of Marx's predictions. This becomes a fundamental critique only when Marxism is understood in terms of iron laws of development. One should recall that, at least for many, Marx's predictions are less important than his method and the underlying structure of his theory, which can be adjusted to suit different empirical outcomes. Thus, Lukacs writes emphatically in opposition to the scientific Marxism of the Second International:

Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the "belief" in this or that thesis, not the exegesis of a "sacred" book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method (HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, p. 1).

On the terrain of scientific Marxism--the belief in immutable laws of capitalism--Bernstein's challenge, although threatening, was unsatisfactory. The empiricist refutation of breakdown theory turned out at first blush to be a denial of laws altogether rather

than the creation of new laws. His empirical analysis offered no explanation, no theory of the changes he observed in the distribution of people into classes. He reduced "Marxism" to a raw empiricism; he reduced Marxism to the confirmation of what actually exists and to the impossibility of the appearance of something new. By not going beyond empirical refutation he was riveted to the present: the future could only be seen as some linear extrapolation of the present. His reformulation of Marxism was therefore atheoretical and inevitably reformist, gradualist and evolutionary. Socialism becomes a null set which cannot be incorporated into his analysis because it doesn't actually exist. Or, as Bernstein himself put it: "To me that which is generally called the ultimate aim of socialism is nothing, but the movement is everything" (ES, p. 202).

Meantime we are not yet so far on, and it is not my intention to unfold pictures of the future. I am not concerned with what will happen in the more distant future, but with what can and ought to happen in the present, for the present and the nearest future (ES, p. 163).

By subordinating the goal of socialism to the means Bernstein was able to justify powerful strains in German social democracy. He was prepared to strike alliances with classes such as the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and liberal bourgeoisie in order to achieve electoral victory. In order to avert catastrophic crises he was even prepared to support colonialism.

However speedy socialists may imagine the course of development in Germany towards themselves to be, yet we cannot be blind to the fact that it will need a considerable time before a whole series of other countries are converted to socialism. But if it is not reprehensible to enjoy the produce of tropical plantations, it cannot be so to cultivate such plantations ourselves. Not the whether but the how is here the decisive point. It is neither necessary that the occupation of tropical lands by Europeans should injure the natives in their enjoyment of life, nor has it hitherto usually been the case. Moreover, only a conditional right of savages to the land occupied by them can be recognised. The higher civilisation ultimately can claim a higher right. Not the conquest, but the cultivation, of the land gives the historical legal title to its use (ES, pp. 178-79).

Bernstein buttresses his gradualist program with an unexplained and unexamined assumption that the working class itself is essentially reformist:

One has not overcome Utopianism if one assumes that there is in the present, or ascribes to the present, what is to be in the future. We have to take working men as they are. And they are neither so universally pauperised as was set out in the Communist Manifesto, nor so free from prejudices and weaknesses as their courtiers wish to make us believe. They have the virtues and failings of the economic and social conditions under which they live.... We cannot demand from a class, the great majority of whose members live under crowded conditions, are badly educated, and have an uncertain and insufficient income, the high intellectual and moral standard which the organisation and existence of a socialist community presupposes (ES, pp. 219, 221).

Not only are workers hemmed in by "their conditions" and likely to pursue their interests without class struggle, but democratic development can actually serve "gradually as a substitute for class war" (ES, p. 164). What is this "democratic development" which lies at the root of Bernstein's political analysis?

Socialism and Democracy

Bernstein, Kautsky and Luxemburg all share a belief that capitalism and parliamentary democracy are inimical, although the way this appears in their theories differs considerably. Of course, this is a heritage deeply rooted in the German socialist movement as well as in Marx's own writings on France. It also reflects the historical reality of the Bismarkian state, which consistently showed itself to be opposed to non-class parliamentary representation based on universal suffrage. The fight for democracy in Germany did indeed appear as a revolutionary and transformative struggle. But where Luxemburg saw that struggle as but a moment in the overall struggle for socialism, and Kautsky saw it only as a necessary condition for the transition to socialism, Bernstein saw the extension of democratic rights as both a necessary and a sufficient condition for socialism: "As shown above, democracy is a condition of socialism to a much greater degree than is usually assumed, i.e., it is not only the means but also the substance" (EX, p. 166).

What is this democracy? The bases of democracy are those bourgeois rights associated with the bourgeois revolution and the liberalism it spawned. Bernstein defines democracy as "an absence of class government, as the indication of a social condition where a political privilege belongs to no one class as opposed to the

whole community" (ES, p. 142). Universal suffrage is its basis:

The right to vote in a democracy makes its members virtually partners in the community, and this virtual partnership must in the end lead to real partnership. With a working class undeveloped in numbers and culture the general right to vote may long appear as the right to choose "the butcher"; with the growing number and knowledge of workers it is changed, however, into the implement by which to transform the representatives of the people from masters into real servants of the people.... Universal franchise is, from two sides, the alternative to violent revolution. But universal suffrage is only a part of democracy, although a part which in time must draw the other parts after it as the magnet attracts to itself the scattered positrons of iron. It certainly proceeds more slowly than many would wish, but in spite of that it is at work. And social democracy cannot further this work better than by taking its stand unreservedly on the theory of democracy--on the ground of universal suffrage with all the consequences resulting therefrom to its tactics (ES, pp. 144, 145).

Social democracy aims to turn all proletarians into universal citizens. Rather than seeing the future in terms of the increasing degradation of middle strata of society and their descent into the ranks of the proletariat, Bernstein sees the latter class rising to join the middle classes in the celebration of a civic society.

... social democracy does not wish to break up this society and make all its members proletarians together; it labours rather incessantly at raising the worker from the social position of a proletarian to that of a citizen, thus to make citizenship universal. It does not want to set up a proletarian society instead of a civic society, but a socialist order of society instead of a capitalist one (ES, p. 148).

Socialism becomes the realization of the liberalism which the bourgeois revolutions unfurled.

Liberalism had historically the task of breaking the chains which the fettered economy and the corresponding organisations of law of the middle ages had imposed on the ~~further~~ development of society. That it at first strictly maintained the form of bourgeois liberalism did not stop it from actually expressing a very much wider-reaching general principle of society whose completion will be socialism.... In this sense one might call socialism "organising liberalism," for when one examines more closely the organisations that socialism wants and how it wants them, he will find that what distinguishes them above all from the feudalistic organisations, outwardly like them, is just their liberalism, their democratic constitution, their accessibility (ES, pp. 153-54).

Bernstein's socialism, then, will emerge gradually from capitalism as

a practical activity "directed towards creating circumstances and conditions which shall render possible and secure a transition (free from convulsive outbursts) of the modern social order into a higher one" (ES, p. 146). This is contrasted to the violence of the bourgeois revolutions:

Feudalism, with its unbending organisations and corporations, had to be destroyed nearly everywhere by violence. The liberal organisations of modern society are distinguished from those exactly because they are flexible, and capable of change and development. They do not need to be destroyed, but only to be further developed. For that we need organisation and energetic action, but not necessarily a revolutionary dictatorship (ES, pp. 163-64).

How is all this to happen? How is it that Bernstein does not anticipate nay resistance from capitalists?

In all advanced countries we see the privileges of the capitalist bourgeoisie yielding step by step to democratic organisations. Under the influence of this, and driven by the movement of the working classes which is daily becoming stronger, a social reaction has set in against the exploiting tendencies of capital, a counteraction which, although it still proceeds timidly and feebly, yet does exist, and is always drawing more departments of economic life under its influence (ES, p. xxv).

What Bernstein offers is the infusion of democracy into all arenas of life--an expressive totality in which civic rights emanate from the political arena and flower into the economic.

Adulterating Marx's reference in CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE to the proletariat moving from its political emancipation to its social emancipation under a regime of universal suffrage, Bernstein writes:

... in the Civil War we find that "the political sovereignty of the producers cannot exist with the perpetuation of their social slavery," we read in the Capacite Politique (Proudhon): "When political equality is once given by means of universal suffrage, the tendency of the nation will be towards economic suffrage." That is just how the workmen's candidates understood the thing. But this is what their bourgeois rivals do not want (ES, pp. 158-59).

If the bourgeoisie doesn't want it, why shouldn't it fight against it? What sort of bourgeoisie is this that sits back and quiescently watches the "democratization" of capitalism? And what sort of "democratization" is this? These questions will each be considered in turn.

In the discussion of scientific socialism I tried to show how

the political and ideological realms are seen as reflections of, and move with a momentum given to them by, the inexorable laws of the economic. Economic crises become the transmission belt from the economic to the political. "Superstructure" becomes the emanation of a "base" and the state is wielded in the interests of the dominant class as a machine for suppressing the proletariat. Hence, Kautsky is quite sanguine about the possibility of the proletariat seizing power without a period of intense class struggle.

If Bernstein believes that we must have democracy first, so that we may lead the proletariat to victory step by step, I say that the matter is just the other way around with us: the victory of the proletariat is the precondition of the victory of democracy... Does anyone believe that this victory is possible without catastrophe? I desire it, but I don't believe it (cited in Gay, *THE DILEMMA OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY*, pp. 64-65).

Although in content the arguments of Bernstein and Kautsky are opposed, in form they are identical. Both adopt the metaphor of base and superstructure, simply reversing the relationship between the two: for Bernstein it is the economic which reflects the political. The inexorable law of increasing democratization in the political arena imposes itself on the economic order. The linear tendencies of ever worsening crises, polarization and a falling rate of profit are replaced with a linear tendency towards "political equality." In both scientific and evolutionary socialism the relationship between the political and the economic becomes the subordination of one to the imminent tendencies of the other. Contrary to his own claims, Bernstein opposes the laws of CAPITAL with his own, more arbitrary logic--a logic which has neither empirical nor theoretical basis. Neither Kautsky nor Bernstein begins to understand the relationship between labor and politics, between factory apparatuses and the state.

Bernstein's formulations rest on a particular conceptualization of the economic and a particular meaning of democratization within the economic. It turns out (ES, p. 152) that economic equality refers to the right to work, security of existence, choice of employer and democratic self-government based on trade unions and industrial courts. There is nothing about changing the labor process or about workers transforming production politics into collective self-management. To the contrary, Bernstein goes to great lengths to point out that cooperative production cannot work.

He refers to Beatrice Webb's study of the British cooperative movement, saying: "For Mrs. Webb, as for the great majority of English co-operators, the society belonging to the workmen engaged in it is not socialistic but 'individualistic'" (ES, p. 115). For Bernstein, equality in the work place is impossible for technical reasons:

... it is quite a mistake to believe that the modern factory produces in itself a considerable disposition for associated work. And likewise the republic in the workshop becomes a more difficult problem as the undertaking becomes greater and more complicated. For exceptional objects it may answer for men themselves to name their immediate leaders and to have the right to remove them. But for the tasks which the management of a great factory brings with it, where day by day and hour by hour prosaic decisions are to be taken which always give an opportunity for friction, it is simply impossible that the manager should be the employee of those he manages, that he should be dependent for his position on their favour and their bad temper. It has always proved impossible to continue this, and in all cases it has led to a change in the forms of the associated factory. The desire of the workers to take in hand new undertakings where they are employed as an associated manufactory and are bearing corresponding responsibilities and risks, stands in an inverse ratio to the size of their undertaking.... All these and similar large industrial undertakings can certainly be quite well carried on by cooperative associations, to which also all the employees may belong, but they are absolutely unfit for the associated management of the employees themselves (ES, pp. 119-20).

So what is this socialism of which Bernstein speaks? How does it surpass capitalism? If there is no possibility of workers' control of production, what role can they play in the direction of society? Significantly, Bernstein considers the passages in Marx's preface to THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, which refer to capitalism as the last antagonistic form of production and the end of prehistory, as "not essential to the theory;" they "may therefore be passed over" (ES, pp. 8-9). In other words, the very notion of a society in which history is made collectively and self-consciously is peripheral to Marx's work.

Are there in Bernstein any notions of increased freedom in leisure due to the reduction of necessary labor, such as we found in Kautsky? At best, Bernstein consigns the possibility of shortening the working day to some dim and distant future (ES, pp. 219-20). There is no emancipation, therefore, either in the "realm of neces-

sity" or in the "realm of freedom." Indeed, it is not at all clear that the system of wage labor itself will disappear under Bernstein's "socialism."

Conclusion

In moving "beyond" Marx, Kautsky reduced the economic realm to three components--the technical forces of production, a set of laws or dynamics, and the production of crises. Bernstein largely reduces the economic to a mere technical factor. There is progressive chipping away at the foundations of the Marxian edifice, namely the analysis of the production of surplus value in the labor process. We hear little of the political and ideological dimensions of work, ubiquitous if unthematized in CAPITAL. Only through such avoidance can both Bernstein and Kautsky cling to their mechanical relations between "base" and "superstructure." Only then can Bernstein talk of the growing political equality penetrating all arenas of society and at the same time speak of the continuation of wage labor; only then can he present socialism as the realization of bourgeois liberalism; only then can he present Marx's anticipations of the polarization of classes and worsening of crises as a falsification of the Marxian analysis. Bernstein's critique only touches Marx's analysis at the most superficial level, the level of appearances, and leaves the underlying theoretical and methodological structure unexamined.

For a Marxist, moving beyond Marx must mean a reexamination of the essence of Marx's analysis of competitive capitalism, a return to the study of the labor process which is at the heart of CAPITAL. It means doing precisely what Harry Braverman recently did: reconceptualizing the labor process in ways that explain the growth of the "middle classes" and of the service sector, the reproduction of competitive capital, and so on. It involves reconceptualizing the relationship between the labor process and the state in other than mechanical terms--that is, it involves an attempt to understand the relationship between production politics and global politics in both capitalism and socialism. And, as we shall see, Rosa Luxemburg makes some preliminary steps in that direction.

X. REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

Scientific socialism has taught us to recognize the objective laws of historical development. Man does not make history of his own volition, but he makes history nevertheless. The proletariat is dependent in its actions upon the degree of righteousness to which social evolution has advanced. But again, social evolution is not a thing apart from the proletariat; it is in the same measure its driving force and its cause as well as its product and its effect. And though we can no more skip a period in our historical development than a man can jump over his shadow, it lies within our power to accelerate or to retard it.

Socialism is the first popular movement in the world that has set itself a goal and has established in the social life of man a conscious thought, a definite plan, the free will of mankind.... But it will never be accomplished, if the burning spark of the conscious will of the masses does not spring from the material conditions that have been built up by past development. Socialism will not fall as manna from heaven. It can only be won by a long chain of powerful struggles, in which the proletariat, under the leadership of the social democracy, will learn to take hold of the rudder of society to become, instead of the powerless victim of history, its conscious guide....

The triumph of imperialism leads to the destruction of culture, sporadically during a modern war, and forever, if the period of world wars that has just begun is allowed to take its damnable course to the last ultimate consequence. Thus we stand today, as Friedrich Engels prophesied more than a generation ago, before the awful proposition: either the triumph of imperialism and the destruction of all culture, and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a vast cemetery; or, the victory of socialism, that is, the conscious struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism, against its methods, against war. This is the dilemma of world history, its inevitable choice, whose scales are trembling in the balance awaiting the decision of the proletariat ("The Junius Pamphlet" in ROSA LUXEMBURG SPEAKS, edited by Mary-Alice Waters, pp. 268-69).

Here are the ideas that dominate the thinking of Rosa Luxemburg: a commitment to scientific socialism and the belief in the ultimate impossibility of capitalism (more fully worked out in her ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL); the historic choice of advancing to socialism or regressing to barbarism; the necessity of the mass involvement of the proletariat in the overthrow of capitalism and the inauguration of socialism. For a long time Luxemburg worked closely with Kautsky, but they finally parted company over the necessity and possibility

of the revolutionary role to be played by the proletariat.

However wrong Luxemburg turned out to be, her analysis and her attempt to link objective laws and subjective struggles carries her beyond the more prosaic analyses of Kautsky and Bernstein. She begins to restore Marx's analysis of the economic, to develop a theory of the capitalist state, to distinguish between normal and crisis times, and to unveil the distinctiveness of the German and Russian revolutions, even while insisting on their similarity. Dogmatic though she was in asserting her theory of collapse and her faith in the proletariat, this in no way impaired her immense contributions both in theory and in practice to the transition to socialism. We will examine these contributions in four of her major works (all of which are found in ROSA LUXEBURG SPEAKS [RLS]): "Reform or Revolution," a critique of revisionism; "The Mass Strike," a critique of reformism and bureaucratism within the SDP and a development of alternative strategies in the prosecution of the class struggle; "The Junius Pamphlet," an attempt to come to terms with the SDP's support for Germany's entry into World War I; and "The Russian Revolution," a critique of the Bolshevik road to socialism as a universal model.

The Critique of Bernstein's Economic Analysis

Luxemburg characterizes Bernstein's economic analysis as reflecting the point of view of the individual capitalist:

The isolated capitalist sees each organic part of the whole of our economy as an independent entity. He sees them as they act on him, the single capitalist. He therefore considers these [economic] facts to be simple "derangements" of simple "means of adaptation" (RLS, p. 62).

Thus, where Bernstein insists that cartels and credit are the means of capitalism's survival, Luxemburg argues that they are only means of adaptation of the individual capitalist. For the capitalist system cartels and credit lead to the exacerbation of crises (RLS, pp. 42-45). Moreover, although crises themselves may threaten the individual capitalist, they are nevertheless the very mechanism through which capitalism is able to restructure itself and thereby continue to exist. Bernstein's theory of the decline of economic crisis in fact is a theory of capitalist standstill: "In short, the general condition of Bernstein's theory is the cessation of capitalist development" (RLS, p. 60). Just as Bernstein does not

understand the necessity of crises for capitalist development, he does not understand that small capitalists, as the source of innovation, are essential in counteracting the falling rate of profit (RLS, p. 48). Thus, Bernstein sees the reproduction of small-scale capital as mitigating the polarization of classes, but does not see that it is an essential component of economic development. According to Bernstein, joint stock companies, the armies of shareholders, trade unions and labor legislation are all harbingers of socialism. And indeed from the point of view of the individual capitalist all these developments do appear "socialistic"; in practice, however, they are also the perfection of the capitalist system: they are the reforms without which capitalism would become intolerable to the working class. In seeing the expansion of shareholding as a redistribution of income, Bernstein takes the view that capital is a property right rather than a relationship. He speaks of individual shareholders, not of entrepreneurs. He renders the mode of circulation and distribution independent of the mode of production. Again, to the individual capitalist the market does appear autonomous from the labor process. But from the point of view of the capitalist system, the mode of production determines the overall supply and demand, that is, the mode of exchange. To transform the latter without the former, as Bernstein advocates, is to attempt the impossible. Although to the individual capitalist profit appears to emerge from the market and the labor theory of value appears to be an "abstraction", the dynamics of capitalism can only be understood through this "abstraction": the historically limited nature of capitalism can only be grasped as an expression of the law of value.

Because his perspective is that of the individual capitalist, Bernstein's analysis is empiricist, riveted in the inevitability of the present and the impossibility of capitalism's transformation. Luxemburg returns to Marx by moving to the plane of systemic analysis. But she goes further than Marx in an unambiguous insistence on the collapse, even the imminent collapse, of capitalism, due to the barriers it sets up against its own expansion. Her theory of collapse is an essential part of her political theory, since the impossibility of the continued accumulation of capital sets up the objective conditions for the transition to socialism (RLS, pp. 39, 40, 41, 63).

The Critique of Bernstein's Political Analysis

Luxemburg makes short shrift of Bernstein's arguments for the linear development of democracy, both as an empirical observation and as leading inevitably to socialism. In the process she develops her own theory of the capitalist state, its historical tendencies and its relationship to the transition to socialism.

Insofar as economic development coincides with the interests of the dominant classes, the state, as an organization of the capitalist class, fosters that development.

The present state is, first of all, an organization of the ruling class. It assumes functions favoring social development specifically because, and in the measure that, these interests and social development coincide, in a general fashion, with the interests of the dominant class (RLS, p. 53).

But this harmony between the state and economic development "endures only up to a certain point.... When capitalist development has reached a certain level, the interests of the bourgeoisie, as a class, and the needs of economic progress begin to clash even in the capitalist sense" (RLS, p. 54). The state then becomes a hindrance to the general expansion of society and becomes a "pure class state."

In the clash between capitalist development and the interests of the dominant class, the state takes a position alongside of the latter. Its policy, like that of the bourgeoisie, comes into conflict with social development. It thus loses more and more its character as a representative of the whole of society and is transformed at the same rate, into a pure class state (RLS, p. 55).

But Luxemburg's theory of the capitalist state is not a crude form of instrumentalism. She recognizes that the democratic form of the state conceals its capitalist content.

Indeed, in accordance with its form, parliamentarism serves to express, within the organization of the state, the interests of the whole of society. But what parliamentarism expresses here is capitalist society, that is to say, a society in which capitalist interests predominate. In this society, the representative institutions, democratic in form, are in content the instruments of the interests of the ruling class. This manifests itself in a tangible fashion in the fact that as soon as democracy shows the tendency to negate its class character and become transformed into an instrument of the real interests of the population, the democratic forms are sacrificed by the bourgeoisie and by its state representatives. That is why the idea of the conquest of a parliamentary reformist majority is a

calculation which, entirely in the spirit of bourgeois liberalism, preoccupies itself only with one side--the formal side--of democracy, but does not take into account the other side, its real content. All in all, parliamentarism is not a directly socialist element impregnating gradually the whole capitalist society. It is, on the contrary, a specific form of the bourgeois class state, helping to ripen and develop the existing antagonisms of capitalism (RLS, p. 56).

At another point Luxemburg goes even further in suggesting how the democratic form of the state camouflages and protects the underlying economic relations through its apparent autonomy and through the absence of class in the apparatuses of the state.

... class domination does not rest on "acquired rights" but on real economic relations--the fact that wage labor is not a juridical relation, but purely an economic relation. In our juridical system there is not a single legal formula for the class domination of today. The few remaining traces of such formulas of class domination are (as that concerning servants) survivals of feudal society (RLS, p. 78).

It is thus impossible to legislate socialism as Bernstein would wish: it is necessary to seize power. Only in this way can capitalist economic relations be transformed. Luxemburg also argues that social reforms such as labor legislation strengthen capitalism and are pushed through by the dominant class in its own interests (RLS, p. 51).

The production relations of capitalist society approach more and more the production relations of socialist society. But on the other hand, its political and juridical relations established between capitalist society and socialist society a steadily rising wall. This wall is not overthrown, but is on the contrary strengthened and consolidated by the development of social reforms and the course of democracy. Only the hammer blow of revolution, that is to say, the conquest of political power by the proletariat, can break down this wall (RLS, p. 57).

In all these arguments Luxemburg identifies the class nature of the capitalist state and makes clear the impossibility of a peaceful road to socialism.

The capitalist class will not sit back and watch the collective appropriation of the means of production. Far from unchaining class struggle, the capitalist class will endeavour to protect its narrow material interests by undermining the democratic forms of the state. As Marx tried to demonstrate in CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE, when the proletariat threatens to move forward from its political

emancipation to its social emancipation under the tutelage of bourgeois democracy, the capitalist class withdraws such basic rights as universal suffrage and freedom of speech. Luxemburg also sees the necessary erosion of democratic rights as a result of the militarism that will inevitably accompany increased imperial rivalry for world markets (RLS, p. 75). The content of state policies will increasingly represent the narrow economic interests of the capitalist class at the expense of the more general interest (RLS, p. 54).

Luxemburg's analysis of the decline of bourgeois democracy as antagonisms accumulate within the economic realm is much more than a refutation of Bernstein's optimism in the ineluctable growth of democracy: it also represents the decline of the only possibility of socialism.

But capitalism furnishes besides the obstacles also the only possibilities of realizing the socialist program. The same can be said about democracy. If democracy has become superfluous or annoying to the bourgeoisie, it is on the contrary necessary and indispensable to the working class. It is necessary to the working class because it creates the political forms (autonomous administration, electoral rights, etc.) which will serve the proletariat as fulcrums in its task of transforming bourgeois society. Democracy is indispensable to the working class, because only through the exercise of its democratic rights, in the struggle for democracy, can the proletariat become aware of its class interests and its historic task. In a word, democracy is indispensable not because it renders superfluous the conquest of political power by the proletariat, but because it renders this conquest of power both necessary and possible (RLS, pp. 80-81).

Democratic reforms have the same ambiguous quality. They bolster the state, but they can also demonstrate the limits of change under capitalism and help to organize the proletariat into a class (RLS, p. 58). What determines whether reforms are obstacles or possibilities in the development of a social democratic movement? Here Luxemburg is unequivocal: reforms bolster capitalism insofar as the social democratic movement renounces its final aim, the goal of socialism. If "social reforms are made an end in themselves, then such activity not only does not lead to the final goal of socialism but moves in a precisely opposite direction" (RLS, p. 59). Luxemburg thus reverses Bernstein's formula and subordinates the movement to the goal. Only when fighting for reforms as a means to the ultimate goal of socialism do such struggles lead to a

"socialistic awareness" and a confrontation with capitalism.

The Mass Strike

The link between reform and revolution rests on class consciousness, and it is the task of the party to forge that link by interpreting parliamentary and trade union struggles in terms of the goal of socialism.

The union of the broad popular masses with an aim reaching beyond the existing social order, the union of the daily struggle with the great world transformation, this is the task of the social democratic movement, which must logically grope on its road of development between the following two rocks: abandoning the mass character of the party or abandoning its final aim, falling into bourgeois reformism or into sectarianism, anarchism or opportunism (RLS, pp. 88-89).

Here, at the turn of the century, Luxemburg was still following the Erfurt Program in opposing Bernstein's revisionism. But as the "reformist" currents within the Social Democratic Party became stronger and the trade union leadership became the prevailing force on critical issues, Luxemburg began to seek an alternative strategy for linking mass support and socialist aims. Of all the eminent leaders of the social democratic movement it was Rosa Luxemburg who heralded the "mass strikes" occurring in a number of European countries, and particularly in Russia, as the new revolutionary weapon of the working class.

The mass strike took much of the initiative away from the union and party leadership and restored it to rank and file workers. It therefore met with considerable caution and suspicion from the social democratic bureaucracy. But Luxemburg insisted that the mass strike as the "proletariat in motion" was the most effective means of developing class consciousness and linking mass participation to revolutionary goals.

The mass strike is merely the form of the revolutionary struggle and every disarrangement of the relations of the contending powers, in party development and in class division, in the position of the counterrevolution--all this immediately influences the action of the strike in a thousand invisible and scarcely controllable ways.... It is the living pulsebeat of the revolution and at the same time its most powerful driving wheel. In a word, the mass strike, as shown to us in the Russian Revolution (of 1905), is not a crafty method discovered by subtle reasoning for the purpose of making the proletarian struggle more effective, but the method of motion of

the proletarian mass, the phenomenal form of the proletarian struggle in the revolution (RLS, p. 182).

Luxemburg sees the mass strike as bursting the strictures of organization so that the working class itself becomes a leading element in the struggle. Rather than resting on the prior organization of the working class, the mass strike produces new forms of organization. To hold back the mass strike as a weapon of struggle until the working class has become more fully organized, as the SDP leadership urged, is to place the cart before the horse. The proletariat in motion becomes the most effective school of class consciousness, far more effective than the cold, detached dissemination of a revolutionary program. The task of the party lies not only in preparation for coming struggles but in political direction of the whole movement once it has been set in motion (RLS, p. 200). Behind Luxemburg's eulogy of the mass strike is the assumption, found in CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE, that intensive struggles can only strengthen the working class (RLS, p. 197) and invigorate future struggles. Like Marx, Luxemburg argues that premature conquests of power are both inevitable and necessary if the working class is to feel its potential strength and consolidate its power (RLS, p. 83).

Crisis Times and Normal Times

The mass strike cannot be arbitrarily summoned up at the will of the party. It is not a weapon that can be called upon by party leadership when, for example, the government of the day decides to withdraw the right to vote. Rather, the mass strike is a product of historical circumstances: it develops in periods of crisis, when political and economic structures are thrown aside and political and economic struggles become one.

As a matter of fact the separation of the political and the economic struggle and the independence of each is nothing but an artificial product of the parliamentary period, even if historically determined. On the one hand in the peaceful, "normal" course of bourgeois society, the economic struggle is split into a multitude of individual struggles in every undertaking and dissolved in every branch of production. On the other hand the political struggle is not directed by the masses themselves in a direct action, but in correspondence with the form of the bourgeois state, in a representative fashion, by the presence of legislative representation. As soon as a period of revolutionary

struggles commences, that is, as the masses appear upon the scene of conflict, the breaking up of the economic struggle into many parts, as well as the indirect parliamentary form of the political struggle ceases; in a revolutionary mass action the political and the economic struggle are one, and the artificial boundary between trade union and social democracy as two separate, wholly independent forms of the labor movement, is simply swept away (RLS, pp. 207-8).

Although Luxemburg does make the distinction between production politics (economic struggles) and global politics (political struggles), she reduces their relationship to one of fusion or separation, as determined by the presence or absence of the revolutionary situation which is the inevitable product of the heightening of economic crises. The abrupt separation of normal and crisis times derives from her theory of collapse and a mechanical transposition of economic crisis into the political arena. A deeper understanding of the emergence of the mass strike depends on grasping the more variegated relationship of production politics and global politics in normal times. In particular it becomes important to identify the roots of the mass strike in the form of absolutism found in Russia.

Indeed, the debates over the mass strike in the SDP revolved around precisely the issue of whether or not the mass strike could be adopted as a weapon of class struggle in any capitalist context: was it a universal form of struggle, or was it particular to Russian absolutism? Luxemburg has no doubts about its universality:

The present revolution realizes in the particular affairs of absolutist Russia the general results of international capitalist development, and appears not so much as the last successor of the old bourgeois revolutions as the forerunner of the new series of proletarian revolutions of the West. The most backward country of all, just because it has been so unpardonably late with its bourgeois revolution, shows ways and methods of further class struggle to the proletariat of Germany and the most advanced capitalist countries (RLS, p. 203).

Yet Luxemburg does provide much ammunition for the suggestion that the mass strike was the product of a crisis situation under conditions of political absolutism:

At first sight the inner law of the Russian mass strikes as sketched above may appear to be solely the product of specifically Russian conditions which need not be taken into account by the German proletariat. Between the political and the economic struggle in the Russian

Revolution there is a very close internal connection; their unity becomes an actual fact in the period of mass strikes. But is not that simply a result of Russian absolutism? In a state in which every form and expression of the labor movement is forbidden, in which the simplest strike is a political crime, it must logically follow that every economic struggle will become a political one.

Further, when, contrariwise, the first outbreak of the political revolution has drawn after it a general reckoning of the Russian working class with the employers, that is likewise a simple result of the circumstances that the Russian worker has hitherto had a very low standard of life, and has never yet engaged in a single economic struggle for an improvement of his condition....

And finally, the stormy revolutionary course of the Russian mass strike as well as their preponderant spontaneous, elementary character is explained on the one hand by the political backwardness of Russia, by the necessity of first overthrowing the oriental despotism, and on the other, by the want of organization and of discipline of the Russian proletariat (RLS, pp. 190-91).

Luxemburg then argues that there were economic struggles before 1905 which did not lead to mass strikes, and which must therefore be a product of a crisis situation; that Russian workers are not that badly off compared to German workers; and that German workers are in many ways as politically backward as Russian workers (RLS, pp. 191-95). But this hardly amounts to a convincing refutation of the importance of absolutism as a particular linkage of global and production politics. Furthermore, why have there been no mass strikes on the scale of the Russian Revolution in the West? Again, Luxemburg appears to offer ammunition to her opponents when she argues that "the class instinct of the youngest, least trained, badly educated and still worse organized Russian proletariat is immeasurably stronger than that of the organized, trained and enlightened working class of Germany or of any other west European country" (RLS, p. 199). This she attributes to "direct revolutionary mass action," which is later linked to the specific circumstances of Russia.

The Russian proletariat, however, who are destined to play the leading part in the bourgeois revolution, enter the fight free from all illusions of bourgeois democracy, with a strongly developed consciousness of their own specific class interests, and at a time when the antagonism between capital and labor has reached its height. This contradictory situation finds expression in the fact that in this formally bourgeois revolution, the antagonism of the bourgeois society to absolutism is governed by the antagonism of the proletariat to bourgeois society, that the struggle of the proletariat

is directed simultaneously and with equal energy against both absolutism and capitalist exploitation, and that the program of the revolutionary struggle concentrates with equal emphasis on political freedom, the winning of the eight-hour day, and a human standard of material existence for the proletariat. This twofold character of the Russian Revolution is expressed in that close union of the economic with the political struggle and in their mutual interaction which we have seen is a feature of the Russian events and which finds its appropriate expression in the mass strike (RLS, pp. 201-2).

Despite her insistence on the universal validity of the mass strike, in the interstices of her discussion Luxemburg begins to develop a theory of the specificity of the Russian revolution. In fact, she offers many of the ingredients which Parvus and Trotsky would bring together in the theory of the permanent revolution. However, Luxemburg never went as far as Trotsky in claiming that the proletariat, having forced through a bourgeois revolution, would be compelled to carry out a socialist revolution without further consolidation of Russian capitalism.

War and Class Struggle

Luxemburg's confidence in the "elemental energy" and revolutionary instincts of the proletariat was rudely upset by the events of World War I. August 4, 1914 has been claimed as the most ignominious moment in the history of social democracy: it was then that the parliamentary representatives of the SDP voted in favor of Germany's entry into the war. This was a direct and flagrant violation of the edicts of the Second International. In "The Junius Pamphlet," written in 1915, Luxemburg attempts to come to terms with the tragedy that had struck the social democratic movement. She demolishes the SDP's justification for entering a war against Czarist Russia, showing that it was a war not of defence but of aggression; that its roots lay in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and in imperialist rivalries; that the SDP leadership was calling for a suspension of class struggle, acting in accordance with Kautsky's later view that the Second International was an instrument applicable only in times of peace; that such a policy was disastrous from all points of view, not least from the point of view of defending Germany against invasion; and that the proletariat would lose no matter what the outcome of the war. What is of

interest to us here is how Luxemburg explains the workers' willingness to suspend class struggle for the war's duration.

Her vocabulary in itself suggests an unwillingness to give up her faith in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. She sees the working class as being in a "drunken sleep" (RLS, p. 328), referring to its apathy, silent consent and demoralization (RLS, pp. 298-99), and compares it to the "naive Parisian proletariat" of the February Republic (RLS, p. 296). How does she explain this supposed transformation of working class consciousness? First, she refers to the penetration of capitalist ideology, which acts as a "narcotic for the proletariat" (RLS, p. 271): "the tutelage of the bourgeoisie expresses itself through nationalist ideology" (RLS, p. 331). Second, she points to the socialist and union leadership "delivering the working class without struggle into the hands of the enemy for the duration of the war" (RLS, p. 296). She describes the SDP as a "gendarme over the proletariat" (RLS, p. 297). Third, a regime of military dictatorship withdrew the existing freedoms of protest and struggle. But that this could happen at all requires an explanation. Perhaps the most significant and ominous explanation she offers stresses the very weak foundation of bourgeois rights in Germany. Because they were not won through struggle they could be suspended easily by government decree.

That such a thing is possible in Germany today, that not only the bourgeois press, but the highly developed and influential socialist press as well, permits these things without even the pretense of opposition bears a fatal significance for the future of German liberty. It proves that society in Germany today has within itself no foundation for political freedom, since it allows itself to be thus lightly deprived of its most sacred rights.

Let us not forget that the political rights that existed in Germany before the war were not won, as were those of France and England, in great and repeated revolutionary struggles, are not firmly anchored in the lives of the people by the power of revolutionary tradition. They are the gift of Bismarckian policy granted after a period of victorious counterrevolution that lasted over twenty years (RLS, pp. 298-99).

Although her remarks on the implications of the "silent consent" to repressive rule were remarkably prophetic, Luxemburg was unable to offer more than the most superficial explanation for the failure of the proletariat to live up to her expectations. Her analysis has an arbitrary, makeshift character, and is profoundly inadequate

as a theory of the production of consciousness. She never came to terms with the paradox that struggle renders strength but not radicalism; that by virtue of its immaturity a youthful working class is both weak and volatile. In other words, working class strength and revolutionary initiative may be inversely related. Indeed, this was ultimately the tragedy of the Russian revolution--a tragedy which Luxemburg anticipated as early as 1918.

The Russian Revolution

Throughout German social democracy, from its most revisionist to its most revolutionary wings, we have seen a concern with democratic rights as an essential component of working class struggle. Even in Luxemburg, bourgeois democracy is seen as both an obstacle to and the only possible basis for revolutionary struggles. Although the views of the social democratic theorists were expressed in trans-national terms, in practice they all reflected the fragility of democratic rights in Germany and the radicalizing effect of their defence in general. What Luxemburg presents as a general theory of capitalist democracy must be carefully rooted in the historical context of its production, must be seen first and foremost as a theory of the German state.

It is not surprising that all three theorists--Kautsky, Bernstein and Luxemburg--should be critical of the Bolshevik revolution, given their concern for the preservation of certain minimal democratic freedoms as a necessary condition for the transition to socialism. But Luxemburg offered the most sympathetic critique and was most able to extricate herself from her roots in German social democracy, perhaps in part because of her own familiarity with the Polish and Russian situations.

Given the specific circumstances under which the Bolsheviks came to power--the peasant problem, the civil war, the international context, the failure of the revolution in the West, and so on--the dictatorial methods deployed were largely inevitable. The Bolsheviks had rendered the greatest service to international socialism by putting socialism on the map, by posing the problem of socialism. "In Russia the problem could only be posed. It could not be solved in Russia. And in this sense the future everywhere belongs to 'bolshevism'" (RLS, p. 395). But Luxemburg cautions against the adoption of the Bolshevik revolution as the model of the socialist

revolution.

The danger begins only when they make a virtue of necessity and want to freeze into a complete theoretical system all the tactics forced upon them by these fatal circumstances, and want to recommend them to the international proletariat as a model of socialist tactics. When they get in their own light in this way and hide their genuine, unquestionable historical service under the bushel of false steps forced upon them by necessity, they render a poor service to international socialism for the sake of which they have fought and suffered; for they want to place in its storehouse as new discoveries all the distortions prescribed in Russia by necessity and compulsion--in the last analysis only by-products of the bankruptcy of international socialism in the present world war (RLS, pp. 394-95).

The preeminent distortion thrust upon the Russian revolution by the circumstances of history is the denial of basic democratic freedoms in favor of a dictatorship:

To be sure, every democratic institution has its limits and shortcomings, things which it doubtless shares with all other human institutions. But the remedy which Trotsky and Lenin have found, the elimination of democracy as such, is worse than the disease it is supposed to cure; for it stops up the very living source from which alone can come the correction of all the innate shortcomings of social institutions. That source is the active, untrammelled, energetic political life of the broadest masses of the people (RLS, p. 387).

Like Kautsky, Lenin and Trotsky pose the issue of dictatorship or democracy. The one sides with bourgeois democracy, while the others side with bourgeois dictatorship in the pursuit and prosecution of the socialist revolution. Luxemburg counters both with a socialist dictatorship and a socialist democracy.

We have always distinguished the social kernel from the political form of bourgeois democracy; we have always revealed the hard kernel of social inequality and lack of freedom hidden under the sweet shell of formal equality and freedom--not in order to reject the latter but to spur the working class into not being satisfied with the shell, but rather, by conquering political power, to create a socialist democracy to replace bourgeois democracy--not to eliminate democracy altogether.

But socialist democracy is not something which begins only in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created; it does not come as some sort of Christmas present for the worthy people who, in the interim, have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators. Socialist democracy begins simultaneously with the beginnings of the destruction of class rule and of the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power by the socialist

party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Yes, dictatorship! But this dictatorship consists in the manner of applying democracy, not in its elimination, in energetic, resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society, without which a socialist transformation cannot be accomplished. But this dictatorship must be the work of the class and not of a little leading minority in the name of the class--that is, it must proceed step by step out of the active participation of the masses; it must be under their direct influence, subjected to the control of complete public activity; it must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of the people (RLS, pp. 393-94).

Socialism is not a ready-made formula, it is not a check that is cashed in at will by dedicated revolutionaries. It is a historical process in which the goal becomes defined neither before nor after but in the very process of mass revolutionary struggle. Socialism that is not responsive to the majority of people is no socialism at all.

The socialist system of society should only be, and can only be, a historical product, born out of the school of its own experiences, born in the course of its realization, as a result of the developments of living history, which ... has the fine habit of always producing along with any real social need the means to its satisfaction, along with the task simultaneously the solution (RLS, p. 390).

A fine habit, or wishful thinking?

Luxemburg's insistence on the preservation of democratic forms of global politics is not merely an unexamined premise of socialism. For her it is also a condition for socialist politics, for direct control at the local level. Democratic production politics--that is, collective self-organization--require democratic global politics.

... with the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously--at bottom, then, a clique affair--a dictatorship, to be

sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense, in the sense of the rule of Jacobins (RLS, p. 391).

Where earlier we pointed to democratic production politics--the associated producers--as essential to democratic global politics, we now discover the reverse position in Luxemburg as well. In combining the two perspectives it is critical to examine the limits each form of "democratic" politics imposes on the other. Indeed, it can be argued quite plausibly that the more freedom and responsiveness to public participation there is in one realm, the less will be found in the other. But this problem takes us beyond the Russian revolution.

Conclusion

Rosa Luxemburg is among the first Marxists to link labor and politics. She is the first to point explicitly to the separation of economic and political struggles in normal times and their fusion during crisis times. But this is only a beginning. We must examine much more carefully the relationship between economic and political struggles not only in different conjunctures but in different countries as well. We have to see how the relationship between the two types of struggle is itself shaped by the relationship between apparatuses of the factory and of the state: the relationship between trade union and party is the effect of specific relations of separation and intervention of the state and the factory. I suggested how one might begin this analysis in my third lecture.

The development of the notion of production politics and its link to global politics would also facilitate loosening some of the more awkward assumptions in Luxemburg's analysis, in particular her theory of economic collapse and her view of the underlying revolutionary impetus of the working class. Luxemburg's economic analysis as laid out in *THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL* suggests the imminent collapse of capitalism without making any reference to class struggle. Here she inherits the legacy of Engels and scientific socialism in presenting the dynamics of the capitalist economy as an objective and relatively autonomous force shaping the subjective revolutionary factor. But class struggle does not significantly determine the direction of economic change.

Given Luxemburg's insistence on the centrality of class struggle it is truly strange that she should so separate it from her economic analysis. But even her attempt to understand the impact of economic development on class struggle takes on a mechanistic character. In short, Luxemburg does not examine the way in which economic structures both mold and are molded by economic struggles. Her absent concept is, of course, the politics of production.

By introducing such a concept she could also begin to grasp the formation of class consciousness at the point of production, rather than resting her case on a dogmatic assertion of the revolutionary potential of the working class, explaining the suspension of class struggle by reference to the vocabulary of false consciousness. Whether the working class is instinctively "economistic" as Lenin argues, or spontaneously revolutionary as Luxemburg argues, cannot be resolved by fiat, by arbitrary dictate (see Luxemburg, ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY), but only by understanding the production of consciousness--that is, by examining the labor process in its political and ideological aspects. We need to explain why working class consciousness assumes different forms in different periods; essential to this task is the study of production politics and its relationship to global politics. Like the mass strike and socialism, working class instincts are a product--not a premise--of history.

XI. IMPERIALISM AND REFORMISM

We now possess quite considerable international experience, which shows very definitely that certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance that is not local, or peculiarly national, or Russian alone, but international.... It would also be erroneous to lose sight of the fact that, soon after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries, a sharp change will probably come about: Russia will cease to be the model and will once again become a backward country (in the "Soviet" and the socialist sense). At the present moment in history, however, it is the Russian model that reveals to all countries something--and something highly significant--of their near and inevitable future ("LEFT WING" COMMUNISM--AN INFANTILE DISORDER, in Selected Works of Lenin, volume three, p. 349).

Marxism is the theory and practice of the transition to socialism. As conditions change, Marxism must change. Just as history pushed Marxism beyond Marx during the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism, so the Russian revolution brought about a revolution in Marxist theory and practice. We have already insisted on the importance of rerooting Marxism in the historical context of its production--something easier to do with increasing historical distance, but which is very difficult to accomplish in the analysis of contemporary events. Thus, we have already tried to extract from Marx what is universal by showing how his economic analysis of capitalism is an analysis of competitive capitalism, and his political analysis of the state is an analysis of the French state--that is, a state in the "semi-periphery". I suggested that the very different frameworks and analyses of Bernstein, Kautsky and Luxemburg reflect, in part, different features of German social democracy. The importance which each of these writers attaches to bourgeois democracy corresponds to the fragility of the freedoms that had been won by the German working classes.

Although very influenced by events in Russia, particularly the 1905 mass strikes, the Marxism of the Second International misconceived the explosive implications of an absolutist state fighting for survival in an imperialist world order. Although we can point to the beginnings of a theory of the Russian revolution in Luxemburg and Kautsky, this did not figure prominently in their works. The presumption was that Russia would have to undergo a

bourgeois revolution before it could proceed to a socialist revolution, and the debates largely revolved around who could and should push through the bourgeois revolution. Thus, the October revolution brought about not only a revolution in Marxism: it also brought a crisis of Marxism. The Russian revolution was, in Gramsci's words, a revolution against CAPITAL, against the scientific determinism of the Second International, against the Eurocentrism of Marxist thought.

Lenin was the architect of the transformation of Marxism, but in this transformation he opposed one false universal with another. Thus, while it is possible to show that Marx, Engels, Bernstein, Kautsky and Luxemburg, in their different ways, all engaged in a false universalization of the European experience, it can also be maintained that Lenin develops another false universal, this one based on the Russian revolution: its exigencies become the basis for a general model of socialist revolution. It would be Gramsci, in his prison writings, who would begin to sketch the contours of a theory of politics which restores these false universalizations to their specific context and pays careful attention to the distinctiveness of revolutions in the East and West. Only Trotsky and Parvus had earlier formulated a theory of the transition to socialism which anticipated the Russian revolution--a theory of the combined and uneven development of capitalism (although Trotsky would also later impose the experience of the Russian revolution on the West). Later this quarter I hope to show that, despite diametrically opposed interpretations of the historical circumstances and potentialities of specific countries, a fruitful theory of the transition to socialism can be obtained from a synthesis of Gramsci and Trotsky.

In this lecture I will begin an examination of Lenin. In his early years, Lenin was a firm adherent to the orthodoxies of the Second International, particularly to the teachings of Kautsky. The socialist revolution could only occur after a bourgeois revolution had laid the basis for the development of capitalism. Socialist revolution would first break out in the West. At most, the Russian proletariat could detonate that revolution. In terms of taking power itself, the most that could be expected of the Russian proletariat was to put through the bourgeois revolution on behalf of, or as a substitute for, a weak bourgeoisie. Thus,

Lenin spoke of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry (TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION). However, in April 1917 Lenin shifted his position, arguing for the advance from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution. The proletariat could now take power:

Not a Parliamentary republic--to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step--but a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom. Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy. The salaries of officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker (THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION, volume two, p. 45).

However, this socialist revolution will be successful only on the condition that a revolution breaks out in the West as well. Both Trotsky and Lenin had no doubts that a failure of revolution in the West would spell disaster for any attempt at a transition to socialism in Russia, but both saw a revolution in the West as imminent. What was the analysis, the theory behind this prognosis?

Fernando Claudin argues that Lenin fatally misunderstood the situation in Europe along two dimensions. Like the Second International theorists, Lenin believed that capitalism had entered its terminal stage. There is some version of a theory of collapse. Furthermore, Lenin failed to see how deep-seated reformism was within the European working class. To attribute reformism to the corruption of certain strata of the labor force through the booty of colonialism is to miss the profound impact of the transformation of capitalism on the consciousness of the proletariat, and to underestimate its attachment to national and democratic values as well as to peace (Claudin, THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, pp. 56-62). Claudin's own analysis is that the Communist International was formed on these Leninist premises: that reformism was extensive but weak, and that all that was required for the rise of a revolutionary proletariat was the guidance of a strong, committed party of the Bolshevik type. Built on false premises, the Comintern would become a fetter on the proletariat when it actually did develop into a revolutionary force, in the 1930s. But in asserting that economic crises break down reformism and unfurl revolution, Claudin imposes a mechanical relationship between economic and political crises, making the same mistake that the Marxism of the

Second International made. Moreover, we shall see that Lenin too was unable to develop a true sense of the link between labor and politics in the West, because he unreflexively rendered axiomatic the intimate connection between economic and political struggles as they existed under an absolutist regime. And his implicit misunderstanding of the relationship between production and global politics prior to the revolution reappears in his understanding of socialism itself. Before exploring this, we must first address Lenin's analysis of working class reformism and of capitalism in its monopoly stage.

Moribund Capitalism

Lenin sees imperialism in the 1870s as the emergence of a new, inevitable and "highest" stage of capitalism. Imperialism necessitates socialism by deepening the contradictions of capitalism, and makes socialism possible by socializing production. To argue, as Kautsky did, that imperialism is not a necessary phase but a policy "preferred" by finance capital is to deny the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist economy, to allow the possibility of an "ultra-imperialism" (Kautsky) in which nations are able to conduct their relations peacefully, and therefore to open the doors to reformism and opportunism. In short, to claim the reconciliation of the irreconcilable is to betray the working class.

What, then, is Lenin's theory of capitalism in its imperialist phase? He takes competitive capitalism as his point of departure, pointing to the inevitable concentration of production and accumulation. Monopolies emerge from the ineluctable dynamics of capitalism, described by Marx in CAPITAL, to dominate economic life. Concentration and centralization affect finance as well. A few banks emerge to dominate the dispensation of credit. Where before banks acted as middlemen, they now begin to control relations among capitalists, instigating mergers and deciding bankruptcies. There is a fusion of finance and industrial capital in a financial oligarchy. The rise of finance capital means greater centralized control over investments. Given the opportunities for greater profit in undeveloped areas of the world, the era of monopoly capitalism ushers in a new colonial period, dominated by the export of capital. Where before colonial markets largely existed to absorb commodities produced in the advanced capitalist nations,

they now become the object of capital flows--both direct and indirect investment. The result is the de-industrialization of the leading capitalist nations. With the development of monopolies there also develop international associations of capitalists, cartels, trusts, etc., which share the world, particularly the control over raw materials, among themselves. Division of the world among these associations goes along with the geographical division of the world among the major powers to secure markets and sources of raw materials for national capital. The political--that is, the state--therefore acts in the immediate interests of capital even to the extent of entering world wars. For once the entire world has been divided up, the interests of any given power can only be advanced by a redivision of the world through the acquisition of other nations' spheres of influence. Finally, these economic developments lay the basis for socialism.

When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, for all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organised manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds or thousands of miles from each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (marketing of oil in America and Germany by the American oil trust)--then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere "interlocking"; that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay for a fairly long period (if, at the worst, the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed (IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM, Selected Works, volume one, p. 767).

But why is socialism necessary? Or, to be more precise, why is capitalism necessarily doomed? Here Lenin is much less clear about the precise nature of the supposedly deepening contradictions. He writes of a characteristic tendency of monopoly towards stagnation and decay:

Nevertheless like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency of stagnation and decay. Since monopoly prices are established, even temporarily, the motive cause of technical, and, consequently, of all other

progress disappears to a certain extent and, further, the economic possibility arises of deliberately retarding progress (IMPERIALISM, Selected Works, volume one, p. 745).

Yet it could be argued equally that monopolies are capitalism's savior, not its grave-digger, in that they counteract the falling rate of profit.

A second expression of the deepening of contradictions is the inevitability of international wars for the redivision of the world. Where Kautsky asserts the possibility of peaceful coexistence, Lenin claims that peacetime only lays the basis for another war. The logic behind this analysis is the logic behind an instrumental perspective of the state--that the state pursues the immediate economic interests of national monopoly capital. But as capital becomes internationalized it is no longer clear that national wars are in capital's interests.

A third sign of capitalism's demise is the deindustrialization of advanced capitalist nations.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination and not for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations--all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the "rentier state", the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever-increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by "clipping coupons". It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a greater or less degree, now one and now another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain) (IMPERIALISM, Selected Works, volume one, pp. 764-65).

This uneven development of capitalism gives rise to the fourth expression of capitalism's contradictions: wars of national liberation.

This movement for national independence threatens European capital in its most valuable and most promising fields of exploitation, and European capital can maintain its domination only by continually increasing its military forces (cited approvingly in

IMPERIALISM, p. 762, from Hilferding's FINANCE CAPITAL). There is an assumption that the political subordination of colonized countries is the most effective means of securing their economic subservience. "Of course, finance capital finds most 'convenient', and derives the greatest profit from, a form of subjection which involves the loss of political independence of the subjected countries and peoples" (IMPERIALISM, p. 731). Finally, Lenin argues that finance capital generally engenders not freedom, as with competitive capital, but reaction and domination (IMPERIALISM, p. 754). Presumably, this implies the intensification of political struggles.

Although Lenin makes a powerful case for the inevitability of imperialism, his arguments for it being the highest stage of capitalism, in which contradictions mature and lead to capitalism's overthrow, are less convincing. Many of the characteristic features of imperialism, particularly the rise of monopolies and finance capital, are precisely the features through which capitalism has been able to contain incipient contradictions. Lenin never clarifies by what criterion one is to assess the deepening of contradictions, or, indeed, what their prime mover is. We do not have an elaborate theory like that of Luxemburg or of Marx in volume three of CAPITAL. At best, we have some notion of decay in the advanced capitalist countries; certainly there is not much persuasive argument for capitalism's imminent collapse. Just as Marx thought that the demise of competitive capitalism was equivalent to the demise of capitalism, so Lenin assumes that the demise of imperialism will also be the demise of capitalism. Ernest Mandel has argued that in fact imperialism gives way to yet another form of capitalism--late capitalism--in which the relations among world powers become transformed yet again, powered above all by a third technological revolution.

The Basis of Reformism

Although the contradictions deepen with imperialism, nevertheless reformism spreads. Indeed, imperialism itself provides the ideology and basis for reformism within the Western working classes. Lenin writes of the hegemonic influence wielded by imperialist ideology:

"General" enthusiasm over the prospects of imperialism,

furious defence of it and painting it in the brightest of colours--such are the signs of the times. Imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class. No Chinese Wall separates it from the other classes. The leaders of the present-day, so-called, "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany are justly called "social-imperialists", that is, socialists in words and imperialists in deeds (IMPERIALISM, p. 753).

And the material basis of this hegemonic ideology lies in the possibility of redistributing a portion of the surplus appropriated in the colonial territories in the direction of the labor aristocracy of advanced capitalist countries.

The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie or a given side of industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and most clearly in Great Britain, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much earlier than in other countries (IMPERIALISM, pp. 765-66).

In 1916, then, Lenin is attributing reformism among the working classes of Europe to the dividends of imperialism--dividends that will presumably disappear as the contradictions deepen and war breaks out again. He seems to suggest that reformism is not deep-seated, and largely affects the upper strata of the working class.

Fourteen years earlier, Lenin locates reformism as intrinsic to the immediate circumstances of the proletariat, taking off from Kautsky's assertion that socialism is a science that can only be brought to the proletariat from without.

But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat but the bourgeois intelligentsia (K.K.'s italics): it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle

where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arose within it spontaneously (WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, Selected Works, volume one, p. 150).

Lenin is clear that workers can themselves achieve only trade union consciousness:

We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass labour legislation, etc.... There is much talk of spontaneity. But the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, to its development along the Credo program; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism and trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie (WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, pp. 143, 151).

The role of the party is to turn trade union consciousness into revolutionary consciousness. But here it is not clear whether the role of the "revolutionary bacilli--the intelligentsia" is to bring to the proletariat "scientific socialism", which can only be developed through an acquaintance with modern economics, or whether the party exists to interpret the totality of struggles to the proletariat, as Lenin suggests in a number of places.

Working class consciousness cannot be a genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter what class is affected--unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social Democratic view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe every other social class in all the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata, and groups of the population (WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, p. 174).

It is only possible to develop political class consciousness in the sphere of the relations of all classes to one another and to the state.

What prevents the proletariat from achieving such political class consciousness? Presumably, one obstacle is the inability of

workers to escape the narrow framework of the factory, of the relations between employer and employee. But that may reflect the specific conditions of the Russian proletariat under a regime of absolutism in which political life is atomized and segregated. How true is this of working class life in advanced capitalist countries? It could be argued that in fact it is even truer there since, as Luxemburg argued, struggles are segregated from one another in normal times in parliamentary regimes, whereas under absolutism an economic struggle becomes a political struggle immediately. In Czarist Russia and the modern bureaucratically administered regimes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the connection between different struggles is rendered transparent by the omnipresence of global politics.

But Lenin offers a more general explanation of why the proletariat can achieve only trade union consciousness, an explanation which points more to the "scientific" role of the party.

But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination.... The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism: nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree (WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, p. 152).

The formation of working class consciousness is the outcome of a struggle between ideologies, between a weak socialism and a strong bourgeois ideology. But why does the working class spontaneously gravitate towards socialism? According to Lenin, it is because socialism explains the misery of the proletariat better--that is, it makes more sense. But also Lenin presumes the Marxist orthodoxies about the impact of advanced industrial production on consciousness. As he writes in 1917:

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organise the proletariat. Only the proletariat--by virtue of the economic role it plays in large scale

production--is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an independent struggle for their emancipation (THE STATE AND REVOLUTION, Selected Works, volume three, p. 304).

The strength of bourgeois ideology, however, can suppress any tendency towards socialist consciousness. Yet bourgeois ideology was in fact so weak in Russia that it is surprising that Lenin should pay so much homage to it. In Europe, on the other hand, where Lenin expected the revolution break out first, it was clearly much stronger. There it would be an effective force in preventing the outbreak of revolution. Indeed, after the Russian revolution Lenin is forced to make the distinction between East and West. In the East it is easier to begin the revolution but harder to carry it through, while the opposite is true in the West, where the hold of the bourgeois order is much more powerful. Criticizing the strategy of abstaining from participation in bourgeois institutions, Lenin writes:

It is far more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary group in a European parliament than it was in Russia. That stands to reason. But it is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia, in the specific and historically unique situation of 1917, to start the socialist revolution, but it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to continue the revolution and bring it to consummation.... In Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and--to an even greater degree--of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia; because of that it is only from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, to dispel and overcome these prejudices ("LEFT-WING COMMUNISM--AN INFANTILE DISORDER, Selected Works, volume three, pp. 384-85).

Ideology and Class Struggle

Throughout, Lenin is operating with the optimistic vocabulary of false consciousness: that the reformist impulses of the working class are extensive but not deep, and that a strong party can remove the pollutant with which the working class has been corrupted. Class struggle is the struggle between ideologies in which, for the time being, the bourgeois ideology, because it is

older, disseminated by more powerful apparatuses, etc., prevails. This is Marx's notion of ideology in THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY: the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. It is also a common interpretation of Gramsci. It is what Poulantzas refers to as a number plate ideology: it is as if each class is attached to its own ideology, like football players carrying numbers on their backs.

There is, however, another view of ideology. According to this perspective, class struggle is not a struggle between ideologies, but a struggle that takes place on the terrain of a single "hegemonic" ideology. It is no longer a matter of the party bringing the true ideology from without and demystifying bourgeois ideology. Rather, ideology springs from the lived experience of the working class, shaped by the organization of concrete practices. Thus, the labor process is a set of activities in which men and women engage in order to transform nature. It is simultaneously the reproduction of relations and a consciousness of those relations--and that consciousness, by virtue of the way production is organized under capitalism, is not, in normal times, a socialist consciousness. This is the production of ideology as Marx presents it in CAPITAL under commodity fetishism, Trinity Formula, etc. In this light, reformism becomes much more deep-seated than in the framework of false consciousness, where it is merely a question of clearing away the dirt. Now we discover that there isn't necessarily a pure consciousness underneath the shell of bourgeois ideology. Such a view of ideology calls for a fundamentally different approach to the transition to socialism, which only Gramsci manages to confront in any systematic manner.

XII. STATE AND REVOLUTION

Lenin's works are political. They were written to combat and defend given political positions in specific historical circumstances. Yet in making his arguments more persuasive, Lenin generates general principles, formulates general "theories" and turns his enemies into expressions of general deviations. For instance, WHAT IS TO BE DONE was written in the specific historical circumstances of a nascent social democratic party under Czarist absolutism, yet it was turned into a program for the development of the revolutionary vanguard party under all historical circumstances. The same may be said of THE STATE AND REVOLUTION: although it was presented as an essential component of a theory of the transition to socialism, it can be seen as an attempt to justify a seizure of power by the Russian proletariat. We have already seen how Luxemburg warned of the danger of making the responses to the specific exigencies of the Russian revolution the basis of a general model of the transition to socialism. There is a risk of justifying extreme and oppressive measures that the situation may or may not have required, but that were in fact introduced, by insisting that they are necessary for the construction of "socialism". Marxism then becomes an ideology of development under a new form of class domination. I will not, therefore, be concerned with pointing to the discrepancy between what Lenin says in THE STATE AND REVOLUTION and what actually occurred, then or later. I am less concerned with showing how history has falsified Lenin's theory of the transition to socialism than with how the history of the Soviet Union has been the realization of that theory. In other words, THE STATE AND REVOLUTION is not simply a utopian tract, but contains within it certain assumptions about socialism which are intimately connected with the subsequent development of the Soviet Union. More precisely, Lenin's conception of the relationship between labor and politics leads towards what I referred to earlier as bureaucratic despotism. The first task, then, is to reconnect Lenin's vision of socialism and the historical trajectory of the Soviet Union, and generate an alternative vision of socialism. The second task is then to examine what alternative strategies were possible in 1917 or subsequently, given the narrow constraints

within which the Russian revolution took place. I shall tackle neither.

Lenin's Theory of the Capitalist State

We have already examined Lenin's theory of the demise of capitalism and the reformist impulses of economic struggles. The role of the party is to take struggles aimed at factory apparatuses--struggles between employer and employee--and turn them into struggles aimed at state apparatuses. According to Lenin, the focus of revolutionary struggles must be the state. So it is Lenin's theory of the capitalist state to which we must turn now.

For Lenin, as for Engels, "the state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms" (THE STATE AND REVOLUTION [SR], Selected Works, volume two, p. 290), although he never clarifies why those antagonisms are irreconcilable. He defines the state in institutional terms as a public power that "consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command" (SR, p. 292). The state apparatuses are thus confined to the repressive apparatuses--although at another point Lenin says that the bureaucracy and the standing army are the two institutions characteristic of the state machinery (SR, p. 307). He defines the state in functional terms as the "instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class" (SR, pp. 294-97). There is no doubt that Lenin sees the capitalist state as being wielded by the bourgeoisie in its own economic interests. He writes repeatedly of the thousands of threads connecting the bourgeoisie to the state (SR, pp. 295, 307, 320). Yet the state cannot simply be seized by the proletariat and turned into an instrument of its own class rule. Rather, the state has a definite class character.

If we argue in a Marxist way, we must say: the exploiters inevitably transform the state (and we are speaking of democracy, i.e., one of the forms of state) into an instrument of the rule of their class, the exploiters, over the exploited. Hence, as long as there are exploiters who rule the majority, the exploited, the democratic state must inevitably be a democracy for the exploiters. A state of the exploited must fundamentally differ from such a state; it must be a democracy for the exploited, and a means of suppressing the exploiters; and the suppression of a class means inequality for that class, its exclusion from "democracy" (THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY, Selected Works, volume three, pp. 86-87).

Clearly, then, the capitalist state cannot be wielded by the proletariat, but must be transformed into a socialist state.

Lenin recognizes different types of capitalist states, but he spends the most time discussing the "democratic republic". Here, however, he is ambiguous. On the one hand, he calls the democratic republic "the best possible shell for capitalism and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of the very best shell, it establishes its power so securely, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it" (SR, p. 296). His reasons are not compelling. He refers to the possibility of "direct corruption of officials," and says that under a democratic republic wealth does not depend on "defects in the political machinery" (SR, p. 295). At other points he refers to parliamentary institutions as "talking shops" that deceive the population and exclude them from participation in politics (SR, pp. 320, 350). On the other hand, Lenin calls the democratic republic the best form of state for the development of class struggle. In the democratic republic, "A wider, freer and more open form of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general" (SR, p. 345).

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents, on the one hand, the organised, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism--the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a more democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population (SR, p. 360).

It is not altogether clear how a form of state can be the best shell for capitalism and at the same time unchain class struggle, unless Lenin means to distinguish between the state as an instrument of exploitation and as an instrument of oppression: that is, the democratic republic may be best suited to the needs of capital as

an instrument for guaranteeing the conditions of accumulation, but as an instrument of domination it only intensifies struggles against itself.

However, Lenin does seem clear about the development of the state from a democratic republic to more authoritarian forms:

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world. Imperialism--the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism--has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries. World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine (SR, pp. 309-10).

The analysis that Lenin offers here has the same optimistic tone as do Marx's writings on France. Luxemburg, who had pointed much earlier to the possibilities and obstacles presented by capitalist democracy, was also less sanguine about the repercussions of the erosion of basic democratic rights. When writing of the crisis of German social democracy in THE JUNIUS PAMPHLET, she already had premonitions of fascism rather than socialism.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

... if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing above society and "alienating itself more and more from it," it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation" (SR, p. 291).

What, then, is to replace the capitalist state? It is the socialist state, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the "proletariat organised as the ruling class" (SR, p. 303). "Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people--this is the change democracy undergoes during the

transition from capitalism to communism" (SR, p. 351).

Simultaneously with an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence (SR, p. 351).

But it is not clear how one is to combine dictatorship against the hitherto exploiting class and democracy for the exploited classes, particularly if the services of the former are required for the survival of the latter.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat is that it is a state that destroys itself: "... a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away" (SR, p. 303). And clearly one reason why the socialist state "withers away" is that the capitalist class also disappears.

And since the majority of the people itself suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is no longer necessary! In this sense, the state begins to wither away. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power (SR, p. 317).

However, just because the basis of the state--the capitalist class--disappears, it does not necessarily follow that the state itself will wither away. Lenin also explains how it will be possible for the mass of the population to conduct the affairs of government. First, socialism will unleash the forces of production, fettered by capitalism. Productivity will increase, allowing the reduction of the working day and so releasing people for participation in government (SR, pp. 357, 373). Second, capitalism has led to the simplification of state functions so that under socialism all people will be well enough equipped to partake in the administration of society. "Capitalism simplifies the functions of 'state' administration; it makes it possible to cast 'bossing' aside and to confine the whole matter to the organisation of the proletarians

(as the ruling class), which will hire 'workers, foremen and accountants' in the name of the whole of society" (SR, p. 321; see also p. 318).

What does the withering away of the state mean? First, it means the replacement of the standing army with the armed proletariat. It also means the destruction of the bureaucracy.

According to Kautsky, since the elected functionaries will remain under socialism, so will officials, so will the bureaucracy! This is exactly where he is wrong. Marx, referring to the example of the Commune, showed that under socialism functionaries will cease to be "bureaucrats", to be "officials", they will cease to be so in proportion as--in addition to the principle of election of officials--the principle of recall at any time is also introduced, as salaries are reduced to the level of the wages of the average workman, and as parliamentary institutions are replaced by "working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time" (SR, p. 372).

This means, then, that the mass of the people will participate in the administration of the state.

Under socialism much of "primitive" democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the mass of the population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state. Under socialism all will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing (SR, pp. 372-73).

And what does governing entail?

Accounting and control--that is mainly what is needed for the "smooth working", for the proper functioning, of the first phase of communist society. All citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. All citizens become employees and workers of a single country-wide state "syndicate". All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay. The accounting and control necessary for this have been simplified by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations--which any literate person can perform--of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts (SR, pp. 360-61).

The functions of the state are reduced to control over production and distribution, and keeping account of labor and products (SR, p. 360). But what happens after the state has withered away?

Communism

Under communism, the state as such disappears; society is reduced to the "elementary rules of social intercourse."

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), only then "the state ... ceases to exist", and "it becomes possible to speak of freedom". Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to wither away, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, without the special apparatus for coercion called the state (SR, pp. 351-52).

Not only the state but politics as well disappear, "since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination" (SR, p. 347). Conflict is reduced to individual deviation.

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is nobody to be suppressed-- "nobody" in the sense of a class, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of individual persons, or the need to stop such excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "wither away" (SR, p. 353).

In communism there are no systematic patterns of conflict. There is only individual "deviance". This presupposes the absence of scarcity; it presupposes that some needs will not systematically interfere with other needs. "There will then be no need for

society, in distributing products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely 'according to his needs'" (SR, p. 357). Lenin excludes the possibility that, for example, there might be a conflict between the interests of consumption and those of production. He also fails to consider the implications of one scarcity that cannot be removed: the scarcity of time. There are only so many hours in each day and so many days in each life, and conflict must inevitably arise over the appropriate allocation of that time between the needs of the individual in the realm of freedom and society's needs in the realm of necessity. If we recognize that the realization of some needs can only be at the expense of other needs, then it is no longer possible to speak of the abolition of politics. It is still necessary to establish mechanisms for resolving such conflicts, mechanisms for articulating, aggregating and meeting needs.

The absence of a concern for the articulation and aggregation of needs in communism is reflected in a similar absence in socialism. Even under the dictatorship of the proletariat Lenin has a very "instrumental" notion of politics: politics are concerned with the administration and organization of a planned society. It is a matter of choosing the appropriate means with which to achieve a given goal. There is no discussion of the way that goal is arrived at. The political processes of articulation and aggregation of needs--that is, the units that should express the people's needs, the types of needs that the political system is prepared to process, and the mechanisms whereby a particular subset of needs is selected from the totality of demands--all these political processes receive little attention in Lenin's formulations. When he refers to political participation, Lenin is considering participation in "accounting and control"--the execution of decisions, not the processes leading to the making of decisions. This one-sided view of politics as orienting means to ends parallels the scientization of politics under advanced capitalism, but is marked in Lenin's scheme of things by an equally inauspicious absence of almost any reference to the party. The two omissions are not coincidental, for presumably it is the party that becomes the agent of aggregation and articulation of needs. But because Lenin's vision fails to examine the mechanisms of representing and resolving conflicting

needs, it can be used to justify the party substituting itself for these mechanisms: the party or its leadership may autonomously decide what's best for the people, who should get what, when and how. Not only that: the consolidation of bureaucracy can also creep back into the organization of society if those decisions concerning aggregation and articulation are dealt with centrally through the party. It is not enough for all to govern in the sense of administering society; all should participate in the formulation of the goals to be administered as well. It is this process that is short-circuited by Lenin's notion of politics.

Global and Production Politics

This instrumental notion of politics is closely tied to the idea of democratic centralism which lies at the heart of Lenin's dictatorship of the proletariat.

Bernstein simply cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary amalgamation of the communes into a nation, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the purpose of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and the military clique (SR, p. 325).

Lenin appeals to history to show that "the greatest amount of local, regional and other freedom was accorded by a centralised and not by a federal republic" (SR, p. 340). But what does this democratic centralism mean in practice? Under socialism "the whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay" (SR, p. 361). (This does indeed bear a close resemblance to Marx's notion of "crude communism" in which the community is simply "a community of labour and equality of wages, which are paid out by the communal capital, the community as universal capitalists"--ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL MANUSCRIPTS.) There will also be strict control over the realization of needs and the appropriation of effort:

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must start with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of armed workers (SR, p. 358).

At other points Lenin does insist on the role of local participation, but its ends are not always clear.

The Soviet government is the first in the world (or strictly speaking the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to enlist the people, specifically the exploited people, in the work of administration.... The Soviets are the direct organisation of the working and exploited people themselves, which help them to organise and administer their own state in every possible way.... Is there a single country in the world, even among the most democratic bourgeois countries, in which the average rank-and-file worker, the average rank-and-file farm labourer, or village semi-proletarian generally (i.e. the representative of the oppressed, of the overwhelming majority of the population, enjoys anything approaching such liberty of holding meetings in the best buildings, such liberty of using the largest printing-plants and biggest stocks of paper to express his ideas and defend his interests, such liberty of promoting men and women of his own class to administer and to "knock into shape" the state, as in Soviet Russia? (THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY, Selected Works, volume three, pp. 84-85; italics added.)

Even in THE STATE AND REVOLUTION Lenin has an explicit notion of workers' control which directs attention to the importance of smashing the political apparatuses of the factory.

In all these enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form a sort of parliament". The whole point, however, is that this "sort of parliament" will not be a parliament in the sense of a bourgeois parliamentary institution. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will not merely "establish the working regulations and supervise the management of the bureaucratic apparatus", as Kautsky ... imagines. In socialist society, the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, "establish the working regulations and supervise the management" of the "apparatus", but this apparatus will not be "bureaucratic". The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees, against whose transformation into bureaucrats the measures will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control and supervision by all, so that all may become "bureaucrats" for a time and that, therefore, nobody may be able to become a "bureaucrat" (SR, p. 367).

Although Lenin here clearly points to the importance of transforming production politics as well as global politics, he does not examine the relationship between the two and the possibility that the transformation of one may impose limits on the transformation of the other. Nor does he attempt to get at the distinctive role of the factory apparatuses as reproducing relations in production, as opposed to state apparatuses, which reproduce relations of production.

Lenin also insists that enterprises must be run with "the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task" (SR, p. 367). Lenin subsequently elaborates on the combination of "iron discipline at work" and "meetings outside work".

And our whole task, the task of the Communist Party ... is to appreciate this change, to understand that it is necessary, to stand at the head of the exhausted people who are wearily seeking a way out and lead them along the true path, along the path of labour discipline, along the path of coordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings about the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator, during the work.... But without the discussions at public meetings the mass of the oppressed could never have changed from the discipline forced upon them by the exploiters to conscious, voluntary discipline.... We must learn to combine the "public meeting" democracy of the working people--turbulent, surging, overflowing its banks like a spring flood--with iron discipline while at work, with unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work (THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, Selected Works, volume two, pp. 672-73).

But what are these meetings going to accomplish? What will they decide? What is the true character of this new form of production politics? At this point Lenin is already moving towards one-person management of firms, so what role can factory committees play in the supervision of management?

More significantly, Lenin does not examine two fundamental constraints on the operation of workers' self-management. First, inasmuch as the economy is centrally planned, what is to be produced, with what materials and what labor, and for which consumer, will all be predetermined by the apparatuses of "accounting and control". What will be left over for the factory committees to decide? Meetings will be convened to ratify decisions that have already been made.

Second, there are a number of conditions for effective participation in decision making, particularly the availability of time and the acquisition of knowledge. Making time for participation hinges on shortening the working day, which depends in turn on the expansion of the forces of production. Acquiring knowledge of the factory and its operation requires time too, as well as the possibility of seeing the factory operate as a unit. This presupposes a type of labor process that doesn't fragment the work experience, as the labor process of advanced capitalism does. The form of the labor process has not only economic effects--increasing the productivity of labor and thus shortening the working day--but also political and ideological effects which shape limits on collective decision making. In maximizing productivity the possibilities of participation may simultaneously be minimized.

Indeed, by advocating the adoption of Taylorism--the most "advanced" form of the capitalist labor process at the time--Lenin was also imposing definite limits on the realm of worker control.

The Taylor system, the last word of capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work, the introduction of the best system of accounting and control, etc. The Soviet Republic must at all costs adopt all that is valuable in the achievements of science and technology in this field. The possibility of building socialism depends exactly upon our success in combining the Soviet organisation of administration with the up-to-date achievements of capitalism. We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends. At the same time, in working to raise the productivity of labour, we must take into account the specific features of the transition period from capitalism to socialism, which, on the one hand, require that the foundations be laid of the socialist organisation of competition, and, on the other hand, require the use of compulsion, so that the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat shall not be desecrated by the practice of a lily-livered proletarian government (THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, Selected Works, volume two, p. 663).

Advocating Taylorism raises many issues. First, given the economic situation of 1918, was the adoption of draconian measures of labor

discipline necessary for survival? Could the same levels of productivity have been reached by other means? Second, it is one thing for workers themselves to decide collectively that they will adopt Taylorism; it is quite another thing for Taylorism to be imposed by central edict. Finally, irrespective of whether it was necessary or freely chosen, the question remains: is Taylorism compatible with the transition from capitalism to socialism? Or does Taylorism impose such constraints on production politics that only a form of bureaucratic despotism can emerge?

Conclusion

We have seen how Lenin's analysis of capitalism dislocates the structures, struggles and dynamics of the economic from those of the political. Reformist struggles in the economic arena are turned into revolutionary struggles in the political arena only through the party--a distinctly voluntaristic link. Similarly, Lenin's account of socialism makes no serious attempt to examine the relationship between the economic and the political. Here we discover that the party becomes the mechanism through which centrally determined decisions are imposed on local economic units. Society becomes a gigantic factory. Although Lenin stresses the importance of all producers participating in the administration of society, he has little to say about popular participation in the determination of society's goals. His view of socialism, which lays the basis of bureaucratic despotism, is closely tied to his image of communism, in which all forms of scarcity and therefore social conflict melt away. With the elimination of conflict, politics also disappear and the principle of "from each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her needs" becomes an elementary rule of discourse, a habit. In neither communism nor socialism is the aggregation and articulation of needs regarded as problematic, leaving ample room for the party to substitute itself for the "general will" of the proletariat. We can see how a particular image of the final goal, communism, directly shapes the image of the preceeding stage, socialism, and therefore of the strategy for the transition to socialism.

While the first dislocation in Lenin's analysis is between the economic and the political, the second dislocation separates the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods. To be sure, Lenin

continually emphasizes the legacy of Russia's backwardness, the enormous difficulties inherent in being the first society to attempt the transition to socialism in a capitalist world order, etc., but there is little discussion of the implications of seizing power with the aid of a "vanguard party" for the subsequent inauguration of socialism. There is no systematic discussion of the relationship between means and ends, of the way in which the latter may be shaped by the former. Which is not to say that the violent seizure of power inevitably reproduces itself in the new society, but rather to raise the dilemma that the means necessary for destroying capitalism may not be the most congenial to the inauguration of socialism. Obviously, Lenin and Trotsky could not spend time wondering about whether or not they should have taken power, whether the revolution was premature, and so on. But neither do we have to make a virtue of a necessity.

XIII. THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

We can appreciate only dimly the revolution that Lenin brought to Marxism. However insistent he was on rooting the ideas of the vanguard party and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the writings of Marx and Engels, no one had thematized so trenchantly the transition to socialism--the necessity of smashing the capitalist state and establishing a post-revolutionary proletarian dictatorship. But Lenin's theory of revolution was presented as a general theory, applicable to advanced and backward countries alike. This was both its strength and its weakness. For in thematizing what was essential to all revolutionary transitions to socialism, Lenin lost sight of the specific conditions which may facilitate the process here and obstruct it there. Thus, his view of where and how revolution would break out was somewhat orthodox and vague. Imperialism was capitalism's last gasp, and revolution would strike first where capitalism was most advanced. Underdeveloped countries had to go through nationalist bourgeois or anti-colonial revolutions before they could proceed to socialist revolution. A certain Eurocentrism pervaded Lenin's economic and political analyses--a Eurocentrism that dominated the Marxism of the time and which, of course, the Russian and Chinese revolutions have helped to subvert. If Lenin himself did not make great contributions to the specificity of revolutions in East and West, he did influence both Trotsky's and Gramsci's contributions. To put the difference between these two theorists very crudely, whereas Trotsky began to explain the development of different social formations and states, Gramsci made his greatest contribution in explaining the different implications of those social formations and states for revolutionary struggles.

Combined and Uneven Development

Trotsky's analysis in RESULTS AND PROSPECTS (RP) is a truly remarkable attempt to anticipate the unfolding of the Russian revolution twelve years before it actually took place. His view that the socialist revolution was not only possible but inevitable was something that even Lenin accepted only in 1917. But RESULTS AND PROSPECTS is more than an amazing prophecy: it is a full-fledged

theory of the significance of international capitalism for the socialist revolution. Trotsky explicitly rejects Marx's idea that all nations will recapitulate the development of the most advanced nations and that capitalism mimics itself as it spreads from the center to the periphery. Rather, he argues, it is one thing to undergo primitive accumulation as one of the first capitalist nations; it is quite another thing to engage in primitive accumulation when advanced capitalist societies already exist. The development of capitalism in the center has a different transformative impact on peripheral economies at different stages in history. And in colliding with pre-capitalist modes of production, advanced capitalism can create revolutionary conditions in the periphery that can be resolved only through a transition to socialism.

The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of combined development--by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class (HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION [HRR], pp. 27-28).

One might add that it is also impossible to understand the history of a country of "the first cultural class" without reference to the theory of combined and uneven development of capitalism. England, the first industrial nation, soon becomes a backward country as other countries graft onto their "traditional" economies the most advanced forms of capital available. England in turn starts to borrow from Japan, and the cycle is renewed.

The Peculiarities of Russian Development

How did the uneven development of capitalism affect Russia's historical trajectory? Czarist Russia found itself fighting for material and military survival in the context of international rivalry among advanced capitalist nations. The Russian absolutist state had to rebuild its primitive economic underpinning by

sponsoring capitalist development.

Thus, the Russian State, erected on the basis of Russian economic conditions, was being pushed forward by the friendly, and even more by the hostile, pressure of the neighbouring State organizations, which had grown up on a higher economic basis. From a certain moment--especially from the end of the seventeenth century--the State strove with all its power to accelerate the country's natural economic development. New branches of handicraft, machinery, factories, big industry, capital, were, so to say, artificially grafted on the natural economic stem. Capitalism seemed to be an offspring of the State.... In order to be able to survive in the midst of better-armed hostile countries, Russia was compelled to set up factories, organize navigation schools, publish textbooks on fortification, etc. (RP, pp. 42-43).

On the other hand, the state couldn't foster substantial economic growth because it stifled the development of the bourgeoisie by skimming off its life blood: surplus.

Under pressure from richer Europe the Russian State swallowed up a far greater relative part of the people's wealth than in the West, and thereby not only condemned the people to a twofold poverty, but also weakened the foundations of the possessing classes. Being at the same time in need of support from the latter, it forced and regimented their growth (HRR, p. 28).

In short, the absolutist state was incapable of giving the bourgeoisie enough freedom for the capitalist economy to take root.

At the moment when developing bourgeois society began to feel a need for the political institutions of the West, the autocracy proved to be armed with all the material might of the European states. It rested upon a centralized bureaucratic machine which was quite useless for establishing new relations but was able to develop great energy in carrying out systematic repressions (RP, p. 43).

The state necessarily undermined the conditions of its own existence and, under pressure from other nations, the contradictions between the state and the economy deepened. A revolutionary overthrow of absolutism was the only way out.

The longer such a state of affairs dragged on, the greater became the contradiction between the needs of economic and cultural development and the policy of the Government, which had developed its mighty "milliard-fold" inertia. After the epoch of the "great patchwork reforms"--which not only did not eliminate these contradictions but on the contrary for the first time vividly revealed them--had been

left behind, it became ever more difficult, and psychologically ever more impossible, for the Government voluntarily to take the path of parliamentarism. The only way out of these contradictions which its situation indicated to society was through the accumulation of sufficient steam within the boiler of absolutism to burst it. Thus, the administrative, military and financial power of absolutism, thanks to which it could exist in spite of social development, not only did not exclude the possibility of revolution, as was the opinion of the liberals, but, on the contrary, made revolution the only way out; furthermore, this revolution was guaranteed in advance an all the more radical character in proportion as the great might of absolutism dug an abyss between itself and the nation (RP, p. 44).

We notice here, as in Lenin, an unelaborated presumption that parliamentarism is the best shell and absolutism the worst shell for capitalist development.

But who was to make this bourgeois revolution? In 1789 it had been made by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. In Germany in 1848 both of these classes were weaker and no longer capable of representing the nation as a whole, while the proletariat, an insignificant factor in 1789, was by then a major force. The result was a stalemate in which the bourgeoisie forged a reactionary coalition with the landed classes. In 1905, however, after a century of capitalist development in Europe, Russian absolutism had to contend with a very different correlation of forces, in which petty bourgeois and bourgeois classes were relatively weak while the proletariat, by virtue of the advanced capital imported into the country, was significantly stronger. In other words, staging a bourgeois revolution in 1905 was entirely different from staging one in 1789. History does not repeat itself. In 1905 there was no alternative but for the proletariat itself to put through the bourgeois revolution by overthrowing absolutism.

More concretely, how did the combined and uneven development of capitalism work itself out to produce this correlation of forces? First, the bourgeoisie was particularly weak because, rather than developing alongside and with the absolutist state, as in the West, it had been sponsored by and subordinated to that state. Second, since advanced capital was grafted straight onto the natural economy, the bourgeoisie did not go through the struggles with the proletariat associated with the movement from handicrafts to manufacture to modern industry. The absence

of such struggles meant that capitalists were not forged into a powerful class.

By economically enslaving this backward country, European capital projected its main branches of production and methods of communication across a whole series of intermediate technical and economic stages through which it had had to pass in its countries of origin. But the fewer obstacles it met with in the path of its economic domination, the more insignificant proved to be its political role (RP, p. 50).

Third, Russian capital found itself to be an appendage of foreign capital, particularly French finance capital. This only further compounded its weakness.

Russian capitalism did not develop from handicraft through manufacture to the factory, because European capital, at first in the trade form and afterwards in the finance and industrial form, poured down on us during that period when Russian handicraft had not in the mass divided itself from agriculture. Hence the appearance among us of the most modern capitalist industry in an environment of economic primitiveness: the Belgian or American factory, and round about it settlements, villages of wood and straw, burning up every year, etc. The most primitive beginnings and the latest European endings. Hence the mighty role of West European capital in Russian industry; hence the political weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie; hence our further difficulties when the European bourgeoisie interfered (HRR, p. 476).

For all these reasons the bourgeoisie was not a "class for itself;" it was "very small in numbers, isolated from the 'people', half-foreign, without historical traditions, and inspired only by the greed for gain" (RP, p. 51); it could not put through a bourgeois revolution.

The same factors that determined the weakness of the bourgeoisie also determined the revolutionary character of the proletariat. The combined development of capitalism, the skipping of stages, meant the absence of those radical craft traditions which dominated the most revolutionary quarters of Paris during the French Revolution. But, on the other hand, the absence of urban crafts also meant the absence of those conservative traditions that weighed down the proletariats of the West.

Moreover, in Russia the proletariat did not arise gradually through the ages, carrying with itself the burden of the past as in England, but in leaps involving sharp changes of environment, ties, relations, and a sharp break with the past. It is just this

fact--combined with the concentrated oppressions of czarism--that made the Russian workers hospitable to the boldest conclusions of revolutionary thought--just as the backward industries were hospitable to the last word in capitalist organisation (HRR, p. 33).

Moreover, the skipping of stages meant the absence of intermediary classes between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: "The extreme concentration of this industry alone meant that between the capitalist leaders and the popular masses there was no hierarchy of transitional layers" (HRR, p. 32).

And our proletariat? Did it pass through the school of the medieval apprentice brotherhoods? Has it the ancient tradition of the guilds? Nothing of the kind. It was thrown into the factory cauldron snatched directly from the plough. Hence the absence of conservative traditions, absence of caste in the proletariat itself, revolutionary freshness; hence--along with other causes--October, the first workers' government in the world. But hence also illiteracy, backwardness, absence of organisational habits, absence of system in labour, of cultural and technical education. All these minuses in our cultural economic structure we are feeling at every step (HRR, p. 476).

In other words, the same conditions which fostered the revolution also impeded the transition to socialism after the revolution. Yet the workers' state inaugurated after the overthrow of absolutism had no alternative but to attempt to push forward to socialism.

The Permanent Revolution

While the proletariat is the only class capable of taking power and putting through a bourgeois revolution, it cannot stop there: it must ineluctably continue to put through socialist measures.

Immediately, however, that power is transferred into the hands of a revolutionary government with a socialist majority, the division of our programme into maximum and minimum loses all significance, both in principle and in immediate practice. A proletarian government under no circumstances can confine itself within such limits (RP, p. 78).

Thus, the workers' government will have no alternative but to bend before the demand for the eight-hour day, the demand for the support of strikers and of the unemployed. And insofar as capital itself resists the demands of workers, there will be no alternative but to expropriate the factories and organize production on a socialized basis. In other words, to fail to put through socialist

measures would mean losing the support of the class upon which the state depends, the proletariat.

The very fact of the proletariat's representatives entering the government, not as powerless hostages, but as the leading force, destroys the border-line between maximum and minimum programme; that is to say, it places collectivism on the order of the day. The point at which the proletariat will be held up in its advance in this direction depends upon the relation of forces, but in no way upon the original intentions of the proletarian party (RP, p. 80).

But what is this "relation of forces" that can hold up the revolution? What are the prerequisites for the development of socialism once absolutism has been overthrown?

Trotsky offers three sets of general conditions for the development of socialism. The first is the development of the forces of production to the degree that planned production becomes possible.

Socialism is not merely a question of equal distribution but also a question of planned production. Socialism, that is, cooperative production on a large scale, is possible only when the development of productive forces has reached the stage at which large enterprises are more productive than small ones. The more the large enterprises outweigh the small, i.e., the more developed technique has become, the more advantageous economically does socialized production become, and, consequently, the higher must the cultural level of the whole population be as a result of equal distribution based upon planned production (RP, pp. 88-89).

The second condition is that the proletariat itself be sufficiently strong. In this Trotsky is referring not simply to numbers but to the role of the proletariat in large-scale production: "Its social power comes from the fact that the means of production which are in the hands of the bourgeoisie can be set in motion by the proletariat" (RP, p. 93).

Finally, there are the political prerequisites of socialism. Here the proletariat faces certain objective constraints: the policy of the ruling classes, existing state institutions and international relations (RP, pp. 96-97). But it is further necessary that the proletariat "be conscious of its objective interests; it is necessary that it should understand that there is no way out for it except through socialism" (RP, p. 97). Here Trotsky is confusing or compounding conditions for taking power

and the conditions necessary for the realization of socialism once power has been seized. That question apart, Trotsky claims that the objective conditions for a socialist revolution have been created by the economic development of advanced capitalist countries (RP, p. 100).

But what can we say about Russia? What happens if a workers' government does take power; can it then put through the socialist revolution? Here Trotsky emphasizes the critical role of the peasantry, who are allies of the proletariat in making the revolution but who will present serious obstacles to the collectivization of the economy, particularly in agriculture. Given the strength of counterrevolutionary forces both within and outside the country, Trotsky maintains that the Russian proletariat could only be successful in achieving the transition to socialism if there were also a revolution in Europe.

Without the direct State support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship. Of this there cannot for one moment be any doubt. But on the other hand there cannot be any doubt that a socialist revolution in the West will enable us directly to convert the temporary domination of the working class into a socialist dictatorship (RP, p. 105).

Socialism in one country is impossible. So on what basis did Trotsky anticipate a revolution in the West?

Revolution in Europe

Already in 1906 Trotsky offers a variety of reasons why the proletariat in the West will rise up and overthrow capitalism under the stimulus of a workers' state in Russia. He talks of how the Russian working class, having been raised to "a height as yet unknown in history," will be the initiator of "the liquidation of world capitalism" (RP, p. 108). "If the Russian proletariat having temporarily obtained power does not on its own initiative carry the revolution on to European soil, it will be compelled to do so by the forces of European feudal-bourgeois reaction" (RP, p. 108). Trotsky also anticipates that a revolution in Russia will lead to revolution in Poland; and, if this should lead to military intervention by Germany or Austria, the working class in these countries will rise up as well (RP, p. 109).

Generally Trotsky argues that an international war is economically inevitable in the age of imperialism, but that war will not receive the support of the people. To the contrary: "A European war inevitably means a European revolution" (RP, p. 112). Another possibility is that state bankruptcy in Russia will trigger a major political crisis in France, ending in the transfer of power to the French proletariat. "But even without the outside pressure of events such as war or bankruptcy, revolution may arise in the near future in one of the European countries as a consequence of the extreme sharpening of the class struggle" (RP, p. 113). At the same time, Trotsky is quite clear about the obstacles to a proletarian revolution posed by the conservatism of socialist parties that oppose open conflict between labor and capital. But, "the tremendous influence of the Russian revolution indicates that it will destroy party routine and conservatism" (RP, p. 114).

The revolution in the East will infect the Western proletariat with a revolutionary idealism and rouse a desire to speak to their enemies "in Russian". Should the Russian proletariat find itself in power, if only as the result of a temporary conjuncture of circumstances in our bourgeois revolution, it will encounter the organized hostility of world reaction, and on the other hand will find a readiness on the part of the world proletariat to give organized support. Left to its resources, the working class of Russia will inevitably be crushed by the counter-revolution the moment the peasantry turns its back on it. It will have no alternative but to link the fate of its political rule, and, hence, the fate of the whole Russian revolution, with the fate of the socialist revolution in Europe (RP, p. 115).

Behind the inevitability of the revolution in the West lies the assumption that the proletariat's attachment to capitalism is only skin deep. Trotsky misses the reformist traditions as well as the nationalist impulses that profoundly shape working class reaction to capitalism. He does not take his own argument about the distinctiveness of the Russian proletariat, resulting from the combined and uneven development of capitalism, seriously enough.

It is interesting to examine Trotsky's view of revolution in the West fourteen years later--three years after the Russian revolution. The arguments are similar: The objective conditions are still ripe, but the subjective conditions are contaminated by the deceptions of socialist parties and trade unions.

... the development of the technical command of men over nature has long ago grown ripe for the socialization of economic life. The proletariat has occupied a place in production which completely guarantees its dictatorship, while the most intelligent forces in history--the parties and their leaders--have been discovered to be still under the yoke of the old prejudices, and only fostered a lack of faith among the masses in their own power (TERRORISM AND COMMUNISM [TC], p. 17).

We are now in a period in which the forces of production have outgrown the framework of the bourgeois state and the consciousness of the people has been shaken by crises and convulsions. In connection with this Trotsky refers with approval to Kautsky's work.

The routine and stagnation of its mode of living, the hypnotic suggestion of peaceful legality, had already ceased to dominate the proletariat. But it had not yet stepped, consciously and courageously, on to the path of open revolutionary struggle. It wavered, passing through the last moment of unstable equilibrium. At such a moment the psychological change, the part played by the summit--the State, on the one hand, and the revolutionary Party on the other--acquires a colossal importance. A determined push from left or right is sufficient to move the proletariat, for a certain period, to one or the other side (TC, p. 18).

As for the subjective factor, the proletariat, lifted out of the routine of everyday life, can be mobilized for either revolution or imperialist war, according to the strength of the contending ideologies and political institutions.

How does Trotsky see the role of the bourgeois democracy in shaping the balance of class forces? Democracy carries the formation of the proletariat to a certain point, but then has a counter-revolutionary impact.

The class state at the moment when, thanks to its machinations, the war broke out, succeeded in enlisting the assistance of the guiding organization of Social-Democracy to deceive the proletariat and draw it into the whirl-pool. So that, taken as they stand, the methods of democracy, in spite of the incontestable benefits which they afford at a certain period, displayed an extremely limited power of action; with the result that two generations of the proletariat, educated under conditions of democracy, by no means guaranteed the necessary political preparation for judging accurately an event like the world imperialist war.... The bourgeois democratic state not only creates more favorable conditions for the political education of the workers, as compared with absolutism, but also sets a limit to that development in the

shape of bourgeois legality, which skillfully accumulates and builds on the upper strata of the proletariat opportunist habits and law-abiding prejudices. The school of democracy proved quite insufficient to rouse the German proletariat to revolution when the catastrophe of the war was at hand. The barbarous school of war, social-imperialist ambitions, colossal military victories, and unparalleled defeats were required (TC, pp. 29-30).

Arguing against the parliamentary road to socialism, Trotsky begins to develop a theory of parliamentary democracy. Against Kautsky he argues that parliament is not a measure of the balance of class forces, that the strength of the proletariat cannot be reduced to a question of numbers. Parliamentary representation gives undue preponderance to declining intermediate classes--strata which the capitalist class is able to subordinate to itself. Because parliament is out of phase with the tempo of class struggle it becomes irrelevant to the prosecution of the socialist revolution.

The proletariat [which the bourgeoisie] have deceived is turning against them more and more every day, and is becoming strengthened in its revolutionary convictions as the only power that can save the peoples from savagery and destruction. However, history has not at all secured, just at this moment, a formal parliamentary majority on the side of the party of the social revolution. In other words history has not transformed the nation into a debating society solemnly voting the transition to the social revolution by a majority of votes. On the contrary, the violent revolution has become a necessity precisely because the imminent requirements of history are helpless to find a road through the apparatus of parliamentary democracy (TC, pp. 35-36).

Even if the proletariat were able to win a parliamentary majority the bourgeoisie would still retain all the apparatuses of power. He who denies violence and terrorism denies socialism as well. Although Trotsky does begin to develop a theory of the capacity of bourgeois democracy to enlist the support of the proletariat, this theory is still quite rudimentary. Like Lenin and others, Trotsky sees parliament as moribund; imperialism will compel its destruction (TC, p. 34). It is therefore not so important to develop an understanding of the way bourgeois democracy organizes struggle, since it is becoming increasingly irrelevant to class struggles.

Behind Trotsky's revolutionary optimism are certain assumptions

about the consciousness of the working class. On the one hand, the entire development of capitalism drives the proletariat towards socialism; "the doctrine of socialism cannot but become in the long run the ideology of the proletariat" (RP, p. 92). On the other hand, the appreciation of the inevitability and necessity of socialism is a cognitive process: "the average worker knows from experience that his simplest requirements and natural desires can be satisfied only on the ruins of the capitalist system" (RP, p. 98). False consciousness emerges as a result of deception by parties, trade unions and political institutions. Class struggle is a struggle between ideologies which socialism must eventually win. The subjective factors may lead the proletariat astray for a time, but the objective forces will ultimately compel the proletariat to recognize its own true interests, its interest in socialism.

The Organization of Bureaucratic Despotism

Be that as it may, in 1920 there was still no revolution in the West. It then became urgently necessary to confront the problems of building socialism in a "backward" country that had been devastated by world war and civil war. What was to be done? Here Trotsky takes an even more centralist position than does Lenin.

Just as a lamp, before going out, shoots up in a brilliant flame, so the State, before disappearing, assumes the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the most ruthless form of State, which embraces the life of citizens authoritatively in every direction (TC, p. 170).

The dictatorship of the proletariat is based on the supremacy of the party in all arenas of life. "The revolutionary supremacy of the proletariat presupposes within the proletariat itself the political supremacy of a party with a clear programme of action and a faultless internal discipline" (TC, p. 108).

We have more than once been accused of having substituted for the dictatorship of the Soviets the dictatorship of our party. Yet it can be said with complete justice that the dictatorship of the Soviets became possible only by means of the dictatorship of the party. It is thanks to the clarity of its theoretical vision and its strong revolutionary organization that the party has afforded to the Soviets the possibility of becoming transformed from shapeless parliaments of labor into the apparatus of the supremacy of labor. In this "substitution" of the power of the party for the power

of the working class there is nothing accidental, and in reality there is no substitution at all. The Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class. It is quite natural that, in the period in which history brings up those interests, in all their magnitude, on to the order of the day, the Communists have become the recognized representatives of the working class as a whole (TC, p. 109).

"All power to the Soviets," to be sure, but as organs of power they administer and execute decisions made by the party, the infallible representative of the fundamental interests of the proletariat. The independence of trade unions in the period of the proletarian revolution is as impossible as it is unnecessary. Unions become organs of the state, apparatuses of revolutionary repression against "undisciplined, anarchical, parasitic elements in the working class" (TC, p. 111). The deployment of labor requires extreme measures--the militarization of labor. Registration, mobilization and utilization of labor is centrally determined through a system of compulsory labor service. On the one hand this is a necessity in a situation of economic ruin; on the other hand it is the necessary basis of a planned economy.

For it is beyond question that to step from bourgeois anarchy to Socialist economy without a revolutionary dictatorship, and without compulsory forms of economic organization, is impossible.... But obligation, and, consequently, compulsion, are essential conditions in order to bind down the bourgeois anarchy, to secure socialization of the means of production and labor, and to reconstruct economic life on the basis of a single plan (TC, pp. 139-40).

Such draconian measures are justified not only by the need for survival, the organization of a plan and the nature of all transitions between forms of production, but also by reference to the general will of the proletariat. This is now a workers' state; workers therefore should be and are prepared to make additional sacrifices. Trotsky talks of the voluntary unpaid weekend labor that workers render to the new regime. He contrasts the system of piece rates under capitalism, where it is a means of capitalist appropriation of surplus value, with the socialist piece rate system, which is a means of expanding the social product and improving the general well-being. Militarization of labor is itself an expression of the proletariat's will.

General labor service has an obligatory character; but this does not mean at all that it represents

violence done to the working class. If compulsory labor came up against the opposition of the majority of the workers it would turn out to be a broken reed, and with it the whole of the Soviet order. The militarization of labor, when the workers are opposed to it, is the State slavery of Arakeheyev. The militarization of labor by the will of the workers themselves is the Socialist dictatorship (TC, p. 147).

It is interesting to contrast Trotsky's imagery of "socialist measures" of the first workers' government as he anticipated it in 1906--the eight-hour day, paying striking workers and the unemployed, etc.--with the view he expresses in 1920 when faced with the realities of Soviet power. However, in neither instance does he work out a system through which workers can express their political demands, a system of articulating and aggregating needs.

Determinism in Historical Analysis

Even in his critique of Stalinism in THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED (RB) Trotsky gives a central role to the underdeveloped forces of production and the necessity of dictatorial methods in order to promote economic development. Indeed, the entire work revolves around Marx's statement that "law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural level conditioned by it" (RB, pp. 53, 61). It is necessary to use "socialist methods for the solution of pre-socialist problems" (RB, p. 57). But this risks the dictatorship of the proletariat becoming a dictatorship over the proletariat, and the bureaucracy transforming itself from society's servant into its lord (RB, p. 113). An ambiguity threads throughout THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED about whether or not the degeneration of the workers' state was inevitable. To be sure, Trotsky points to mistakes that were made: the failure to promote revolution in other countries, the tardiness with which plans were introduced, the unwillingness to introduce draconian labor measures, soft peddling on the peasant question, and so on--policies that were reversed after the elimination of the Left Opposition. But it is not clear from Trotsky's own account to what extent the balance of class forces permitted the pursuit of alternative measures at any point. Sometimes Trotsky presents Stalin as the personification of a growing independence of the petty bourgeoisie; at other times Stalin himself is seen

as being responsible for the degeneration of the bureaucracy. Although Trotsky always insists on the critical role of initiatives by leaders and parties in the making of history, he leaves to intuition the realm of possibilities present in any one conjuncture. In this connection it is interesting to see what Trotsky has to say about Lenin's role in the Russian revolution.

It remains to ask--and this is no unimportant question, although easier to ask than answer: How would the revolution have developed if Lenin had not reached Russia in April 1917? If our exposition demonstrates and proves anything at all, we hope it proves that Lenin was not a demiurge of the revolutionary process, that he merely entered into a chain of objective historic forces. But he was a great link in that chain. The dictatorship of the proletariat was to be inferred from the whole situation, but it had still to be established. It could not be established without a party. The party could fulfil its mission only after understanding it. For that Lenin was needed. Until his arrival, not one of the Bolshevik leaders dared to make a diagnosis of the revolution.... Dialectical materialism at any rate has nothing in common with fatalism. Without Lenin the crisis, which the opportunist leadership was inevitably bound to produce, would have assumed an extraordinarily sharp and protracted character. The conditions of war and revolution, however, would not allow the party a long period of fulfilling its mission. Thus it is by no means excluded that a disoriented and split party might have let slip the revolutionary opportunity for many years. The role of personality arises before us here on a truly gigantic scale. It is necessary only to understand that role correctly, taking personality as a link in the historic chain.... From the extraordinary significance which Lenin's arrival received, it should only be inferred that leaders are not accidentally created, that they are gradually chosen out and trained up in the course of decades, that they cannot be capriciously replaced, that their mechanical exclusion from the struggle gives the party a living wound, and in many cases may paralyse it for a long period (HRR, pp. 343-44).

From Trotsky to Gramsci

Trotsky is the first major Marxist to attempt a systematic explanation of why socialist revolutions break out first in "backward" countries. His theory of combined and uneven development is an explicit repudiation of the Marxist orthodoxy which makes the "forces of production" the unmediated prime mover of history.

... the day and the hour when power will pass into the hands of the working class depends directly not

upon the level attained by the productive forces but upon relations in the class struggle, upon the international situation, and, finally, upon a number of subjective factors: the traditions, the initiative and readiness to fight of the workers.... To imagine that the dictatorship of the proletariat is in some way automatically dependent on the technical development and resources of a country is a prejudice of "economic" materialism simplified to absurdity. This point of view has nothing in common with Marxism (RP, pp. 62-63).

Contrasting Russia and the United States, Trotsky writes:

Between the productive forces of a country and the political strength of its classes there cut across at any given moment various social and political factors of a national and international character, and these displace and sometimes completely alter the political expression of economic relations. In spite of the fact that the productive forces of the United States are ten times as great as those of Russia, nevertheless the political role of the Russian proletariat, its influence on the politics of its own country and the possibility of its influencing the politics of the world in the near future are incomparably greater than in the case of the proletariat of the United States (RP, p. 65).

The effect of the forces of production is mediated by other factors, but one is still left with the clear impression that the forces of production are the key underlying force, the determinant in the last instance.

The balance of political power at any given moment is determined under the influence of fundamental and secondary factors of differing degrees of effectiveness, and only in its most fundamental quality is it determined by the stage of the development of production. The social structure of a people is extraordinarily behind the development of its productive forces. The lower middle classes, and particularly the peasantry, retain their existence long after their economic methods have been made obsolete, and have been condemned, by the technical development of the productive powers of society. The consciousness of the masses, in its turn, is extraordinarily behind the development of their social relations, the consciousness of the old Socialist parties is a whole epoch behind the state of mind of the masses, and the consciousness of the old parliamentary and trade union leaders, more reactionary than the consciousness of their party, represents a petrified mass which history has been unable hitherto either to digest or reject (TC, pp. 15-16).

In other words, although social and political factors are not directly shaped by the forces of production, they still lag behind the productive forces. The degree of this lag is determined by

the historical development of class struggle, international factors and subjective factors. Ultimately Trotsky is only modifying the Marxist orthodoxy concerning the centrality of the forces of production in historical development. In concentrating and homogenizing the proletariat, the advance of the forces of production still lays the ground for revolution. And here lie the roots of Trotsky's false optimism concerning the imminent outbreak of revolution in Europe. The objective conditions, being ripe, are bound to push aside the retarding subjective factors.

I have been suggesting throughout this course that the whole problematic of forces of production, objective and subjective factors and false consciousness has to be abandoned. We must not only examine the factors that mediate the impact of the "forces of production" but disaggregate the notion of forces of production itself, particularly at the level of the factory. We have to examine the precise political and ideological effects of the labor process itself as well as the emergence of a specific production politics which mediates those effects on the arena of global politics. We have to entertain the possibility that the development of the "forces of production" represents an obstacle to revolutionary struggle. For Trotsky's shopping list of factors that link the development of the forces of production to the level of class struggle we must substitute an analysis of the relationship between apparatuses of the factory and of the state.

Although the combined and uneven development of capitalism shapes the adoption of new machine and organizational technologies, these were no different in Russia than they were in the West at that time. What was different was the formation of distinctive factory apparatuses, distinctive production politics, as a result of the juxtaposition of a working class recently uprooted from a peasant economy and a weak dependent bourgeoisie utilizing advanced technology--all taking place in the context of an absolutist state. The development of factory committees was but a sign that production politics were more volatile and less constraining to struggles developing on the shop floor. Equally, their volatility and newness made them particularly weak in the face of the centralizing onslaught that occurred after the revolution. In the West, where the struggle between capital and labor

emerged through the familiar stages of capital accumulation, the forms of factory apparatuses were able to repress or organize struggles in ways that contained them in the factory, without totally undermining production. At the same time, the more "backward" the country the more production politics resembled the Russian models.

The combined and uneven development of capitalism shapes the factory apparatuses, which in turn shape factory struggles; even more important, combined and uneven development shapes struggles at the level of global politics--the overthrow of the absolutist state and the inauguration of the Soviet state, for example. As a result, very different forms of the state emerge in the East and the West, and no amount of revolutionary optimism or faith in the fettering of the productive forces can replace a careful examination of how these various forms of the state organize and repress struggles and at the same time enlist the support of subordinate classes in the preservation of capitalism.

There are many reasons why Trotsky might have hit so wide of the mark in his assessment of the revolutionary potential of the Western proletariats. One, obviously, is the desperate need for such a revolution as a basis for the transition to socialism in Russia. Another reason is that Trotsky mechanically applied the idea of the uninterrupted revolution that might occur in a single country to relations among countries without enough attention to such issues as nationalism (but see, for example, Tom Nairn's application of Trotsky's theories to the analysis of nationalism). A third reason for Trotsky's error brings us back to the problems we faced with Marx's analysis of France between 1848 and 1851--how much of Marx's theory of capitalist politics was specific to France and how much had a more general validity. In what ways was Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution rooted in unexplored assumptions that were in fact specific to Russia?

There is also the possibility that Trotsky was right, for the wrong reasons; this is what I have been suggesting. Trotsky did not go far enough in the repudiation of Marxist orthodoxy, particularly the leading role of the forces of production. Be that as it may, Trotsky's attempt to appreciate the significance of relations among nations for political struggle through an

examination of the combined and uneven development of capitalism provides the developmental context for the emergence of different forms of global and production politics in the East and the West. But it is Gramsci who reaches a more profound and realistic understanding of the working of these institutions--the factory apparatuses in his early works and the state apparatuses in his prison writings--although he never successfully connects these two arenas of struggle.

XIV. COUNCIL COMMUNISM

During the last three weeks we have accumulated a number of problems in developing an understanding of the transition to socialism. We began by formulating the question of the specificity of the revolution in East and West. Although Lenin did not offer much here in the way of systematic theory, Trotsky's theories of combined and uneven development and permanent revolution did. On the other hand, Lenin's great contribution was an elaboration of the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the two-stage revolution: first seize power and smash the capitalist state, then begin the inauguration of socialism. But this left open the issue of the compatibility of the mode of conquering power with the development of socialism. A third set of problems revolved around the meaning of socialism itself. Two distinct interpretations of people "making history themselves" have emerged: either a very centralist view in which making history means constructing and imposing a plan on society, or the alternative view in which local autonomy and workers' control become the axis around which the new society is forged. The two are necessarily incompatible, since a centralized plan dictates precisely how, when and who shall produce what, thus precluding local autonomy. On the other hand, democratic participation by local units could be incorporated into the shaping of the contents of the plan. Neither Trotsky nor Lenin had much to say about such articulation and aggregation of needs. Korsch has presented this problem as the clash between two principles of socialism: producer socialism and consumer socialism. To the extent that workers exercise autonomy and control over production, consumer interests become secondary; and vice versa. A fourth and related issue is the relationship between party and people. In Trotsky we found the extreme position of the party substituting itself for the proletariat. In this formulation, organized channels through which the party is responsive to the changing needs and interests of the proletariat become unnecessary. Lenin was more cautious, while Luxemburg saw the party as guiding and interpreting the spontaneous movement of the working class. The final issue is that of determinism in history. What room is there for individuals

or parties to make history, particularly to make the socialist revolution? To what extent is the development of different forms of capitalism predetermined? There is an ambiguity throughout the Marxist literature of the period, in that social analysis points to the inevitability of certain trajectories of change, while all these writers, as Marxists, saw themselves as actively intervening in the course of history. Indeed, why else would they have dedicated their lives to revolutionary activity? Certainly Trotsky did not see his own life, his own writings, as preordained, but ^{now} ~~as~~ the effect of the inevitability of the Russian revolution. At the same time, there was no self-conscious attempt to grapple with the problem of the realm of freedom within a theory of constraints, the problem of the relationship between theory and practice.

Antonio Gramsci gives all these problems sustained and penetrating attention. But, as we shall see, there is a marked difference between his responses during his political activity in the Turin council movement and his later, more reflective and analytical writings in prison. In this lecture I shall confine myself to his early writings in L'ORDINE NUOVO. Although Gramsci presents the Russian revolution as having universal validity, he rejects the idea of a two-stage revolution in favor of a single "dialectical" process, in which socialism begins to develop in the womb of capitalism. Socialism itself is based on ideas of local control, of factory councils responsive to deeply rooted needs of proletarians as producers. Although his view of the role of the party shifts quite dramatically, it is always responsive to the spontaneous organization of the working class. He is unreservedly opposed to "vanguard" notions of the party in which an alien will is imposed on the rank and file.* Throughout his early writings, Gramsci offers a voluntaristic view of history, emphasizing the formation of a "collective will". Here he draws inspiration from Sorel on the one hand and the Russian Revolution on the other.

*There are, however, moments of extreme arrogance in Gramsci: "the revolution finds the broad masses of Italian people still shapeless, still atomized into an animal-like swarm of individuals lacking all discipline and culture, obedient only to the stimuli of their bellies and their barbarian passions" (SPW, p. 128).

This is the revolution against Karl Marx's CAPITAL. In Russia, Marx's CAPITAL was more the book of the bourgeoisie than of the proletariat. It stood as the critical demonstration of how events should follow a predetermined course: how in Russia a bourgeoisie had to develop, and a capitalist era had to open, with the setting-up of a Western-type civilization, before the proletariat could even think in terms of its own revolt, its own class demands, its own revolution. But events have overcome ideologies. Events have exploded the critical schema determining how the history of Russia would unfold according to the canons of historical materialism. The Bolsheviks reject Karl Marx, and their explicit actions and conquests bear witness that the canons of historical materialism are not so rigid as might have been and has been thought.

And yet there is a fatality even in these events, and if the Bolsheviks reject some of the statements in CAPITAL, they do not reject its invigorating, immanent thought. These people are not "Marxists", that is all; they have not used the works of the Master to compile a rigid doctrine of dogmatic utterances never to be questioned. They live Marxist thought--that thought which is eternal, which represents the continuation of German and Italian idealism, and which in the case of Marx was contaminated by positivist and naturalist encrustations. This thought sees as the dominant factor in history, not raw economic facts, but man, men in societies, men in relation to one another, reaching agreements with one another, developing through these contacts (civilization) a collective, social will; men coming to understand economic facts, judging them and adapting them to their will until this becomes the driving force of the economy and moulds objective reality, which lives and moves and comes to resemble a current of volcanic lava that can be channelled wherever and in whatever way men's will determines (SELECTIONS FROM POLITICAL WRITINGS 1910-1920 [SWP], pp. 34-35).

This commentary on the significance of the Russian revolution reflects the optimism that pervades Gramsci's early writings, an optimism that comes to be embodied in the factory councils that sprang up in Turin after World War One. The writings are largely journalistic in nature, marked by an absence of concrete analysis of the particular historical conjuncture and balance of class forces. Only with the collapse of the council movement does Gramsci begin to undertake an examination of the constraints on the shaping of a collective will, a revolutionary proletariat. Social and political analysis set limits on the possible and therefore would have been inhospitable to Gramsci's early revolutionary idealism. But even in the period of 1919-1920 Gramsci's idealism becomes tempered

by his experience of the constraints on revolutionary intervention; his writings reflect the changing fortunes of the council movement.

Movements for Workers' Democracy

The movements for workers' control and industrial democracy which sprang up all over Europe after World War One can be interpreted as the product of two contexts: the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism and the legacy of war. Associated with the transition to monopoly capitalism was a deskilling of the labor process, the rise of hegemonic production politics involving collaborationist policies of the trade unions, the development of large corporations, and the shift of the locus of decision-making away from the firm. The impetus to workers' democracy and control sprang from all these forms of withdrawal of power. During the war, European governments had pursued policies which combined the stifling and repression of class struggle and, where this proved to be impossible, the granting of immediate concessions to labor. Thus, while those sections of the labor force which were structurally weak lost power, the stronger sections--for instance, craft workers in war industries--consolidated their power. It was the latter, often metal workers, who led the various struggles for factory control. Also, as Gramsci himself suggests (SPW, p. 86), the war was instrumental in forging a collective will within the proletariat and provided the basis for intensified class struggles after the war.

Struggles for workers' control, for the autonomous management by workers of the factory, took different forms in different countries. Thus, in England the shop stewards' movement was firmly rooted in skilled workers defending their control over the labor process and opposing the collaborationist policies of the engineering unions. Rank and file resistance on the shop floor was entrenched in the British labor movement, and was to remain so even when the shop stewards' movement lost momentum. In Russia, by contrast, factory committees were thrown up not in opposition to a powerful union bureaucracy but as a substitute for unionism. The fledgling committees were engaged not so much in resisting changes in the labor process itself as in asserting themselves against dictatorial management. Their weakness made them an easy target for demolition after the revolution. Italy shared

certain characteristics of both these extreme types of production politics. Thus, Turin had become the center of the new engineering industries, particularly automobile manufacture. Advanced capital had been used to set up the industry, and although metal workers were organized into a strong union, they lacked the militant traditions of the British workers. As a result of a three-way struggle between workers, union and management, internal commissions emerged as means of regulating relations on the shop floor. Each force wished to use the new factory apparatuses to advance its own interests; the apparatuses thus became the focus of intense struggles in 1919 and 1920, leading to the occupation of the factories in September, 1920. Gramsci and the weekly paper L'ORDINE NUOVO would articulate and foster struggles aimed at turning the internal commissions into factory councils--a form of dual power within the factory.

The internal commissions are organs of workers' democracy which must be freed from the limitations imposed on them by the entrepreneurs, and infused with new life and energy. Today the internal commissions limit the power of the capitalist in the factory and perform functions of arbitration and discipline. Tomorrow, developed and enriched, they must be the organs of proletarian power, replacing the capitalist in all his useful functions of management and administration (SPW, p. 66).

The Theory Behind Council Communism

Lenin and Sorel were the intellectual inspiration behind Gramsci's political involvement with the council movement. THE STATE AND REVOLUTION provides the basis for his conception of the transition to socialism, although his interpretation is very much shaped by the Italian experience. In these early writings Gramsci has no doubts that the model of the Russian revolution, as he understood or misunderstood it, was universally applicable. Gramsci therefore seeks out institutions analogous to what he understands to be the Soviets. He finds the Soviets in embryo within the factories, in the transformation of the internal commissions into factory councils.

What is interesting is that Gramsci uses THE STATE AND REVOLUTION to argue for the construction of socialism from the bottom up, through organs of factory power, rather than through first conquering state power. Here Gramsci, consciously or not,

makes much of the silences in THE STATE AND REVOLUTION, in particular Lenin's failure to say much about the seizure of power or the role of the party. Gramsci fills in the blanks with his conception of the transition to socialism, which is very much at odds with what we understand to be the Leninist conception. In his crudest moments Gramsci sees the factory councils as spontaneously growing within capitalism, leading to an automatic erosion of state power and the substitution of a socialist state. Indeed, this is how he conceives the development of the Russian revolution.

In Russia the Soviet State was slowly formed (over the period from March to November 1917) as the reaction of the industrial workers, the poor peasants and the troops against the social hierarchies generated by universal suffrage and bureaucratic careerism. The proletariat became aware of this intrinsic need during the war, and created some rudimentary, experimental organs of self-government. Kerensky's democratic regime allowed the Bolshevik communists to mount a systematic and concentrated propaganda campaign, as a result of which the workers and peasants gradually acquired a precise and lucid awareness of the importance of the new institutions. These institutions grew, they encompassed more and more administrative functions, until finally, upon becoming the constituent organs of the proletarian State, they expressed the sovereign autonomy of labour in the production and distribution of material goods and in all the internal and external relations of the State (SPW, p. 79).

In transplanting this vision of the transition to socialism, Gramsci rests his case on the imminent collapse of capitalism. Here he relies on Lenin's analysis of imperialism. By virtue of the autonomous development of economic forces, the superstructures of the modern state are disintegrating.

The war turned the strategic conditions of the class struggle upside down. The capitalists have lost their pre-eminence; their freedom is limited; their power is reduced to a minimum. Capitalist concentration has reached its maximum possible level, with the achievement of a global monopoly of production and exchange. The corresponding concentration of the working masses has given the revolutionary proletarian class an unprecedented power (SPW, p. 77; see also pp. 84, 155-57, 174-75).

But the expansion of the forces of production not only brings about the downfall of capitalism: it also creates the basis of the new state. Here we have reminiscences of Marx's joint stock companies emerging in the womb of capitalism as the prototype of the

socialization of production. It is then only a matter of throwing off the relations of production, the relations of private property, to inaugurate the new society.

The socialist State already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited working class. To link these institutions, co-ordinating and ordering them into a highly centralized hierarchy of competences and powers, while respecting the necessary **autonomy** and articulation of each, is to create a genuine workers' democracy here and now--a workers' democracy in effective and active opposition to the bourgeois State, and prepared to replace it here and now in all its essential functions of administering and controlling the national heritage (SPW, p. 65).

Gramsci summarizes the implications of the development of the forces of production for revolutionary struggle even more explicitly:

Capitalist concentration, determined by the mode of production, produces a corresponding concentration of working human masses. This is the fact that underlies all the revolutionary theses of Marxism, that underlies the conditions of the new proletarian way of life, the new communist order destined to replace the bourgeois way of life and the disorder of capitalism arising from free competition and class struggle....

The principles of combination and solidarity become paramount for the working class; they transform the mentality and way of life of the workers and peasants. Organs and institutions embodying these principles arise; they are the basis upon which the process of historical development that leads to communism in the means of production and exchange begins (SPW, p. 73; see also pp. 162-66, 260).

Revolutionary communist consciousness is forged at the point of production.

The Factory Council is the model of the proletarian State. All the problems inherent in the organization of the proletarian State are inherent in the organization of the Council. In the one as in the other, the concept of citizen gives way to the concept of comrade. Collaboration in effective and useful production develops solidarity and multiplies bonds of affection and fraternity.... The Council is the most effective organ for mutual education and for developing the new social spirit that the proletariat has successfully engendered from the rich and living experience of the community of labour (SPW, p. 100).

But why should the factory, rather than some other institution such as the family or the party, bear the new consciousness? Here Gramsci is heavily influenced by Sorel and his philosophy of

labor--the view that it is through the transformation of nature that people realize themselves. The eulogy is to the "producer" as creator of history.

Once the Councils exist, they give workers direct responsibility for production, provide them with an incentive to improve their work, instill a conscious and voluntary discipline, and create a producer's mentality--the mentality of a creator of history (SPW, p. 101).

... the right of labour ... has for centuries been an instrument in the hands of its exploiters, but today it is ready to redeem itself and govern itself on its own. Your power, as opposed to that of the bosses and their officials, represents not the forces of the past, but the free forces of the future--which await their hour and are preparing for it, in the knowledge that it will be the hour of redemption from all slavery (SPW, p. 97).

But how is it possible that the atomized labor process of capitalism can turn itself into the crucible of emancipation? Here is Gramsci's romanticization of capitalist relations in production:

The worker can see himself as a producer only if he sees himself as an inseparable part of the whole labour system which is concentrated in the object being manufactured, and only if he experiences the unity of the industrial process which in toto demands collaboration between manual workers, skilled workers, administrative employees, engineers and technical directors. The worker will see himself as a producer if--after he has become psychologically part of a particular productive process in a particular factory (e.g. in a car plant in Turin) and has come to think of himself as a necessary and indispensable factor in the activity of the social complex producing the car--he can now go one stage further and comprehend the whole of the Turin car-manufacturing process. If he can comprehend Turin as one production unit characterized by the car; see a large part of the general productive activity of Turin as existing and developing simply as a result of the existence and development of the car industry; and so see the workers in these general productive activities as themselves belonging to the car industry, for the simple reason that they create the necessary and sufficient conditions for that industry's existence (SPW, p. 110).

And all this is the result of the factory council--a form of democratic production politics. The fragmentation of capitalist work is overcome through an effort of cognition, which gives individuals a sense of their indispensability in the operation of the totality. This is precisely Durkheim's "organic solidarity." Furthermore, just like Durkheim, Gramsci sees the somehow spontaneous

evaporation of the conditions which frustrate the development of the producer society (organic solidarity):

At this point the worker has become a producer, for he has acquired an awareness of his role in the process of production, at all its levels, from the workshop to the nation and the world. At this point he is aware of his class; he becomes a communist, because productivity does not require private property; he becomes a revolutionary, because he sees the capitalist, the private property owner, as a dead hand, an encumbrance on the productive process, which must be done away with (SPW, p. 111).

Only later does Gramsci develop a theory of the conquest of state power as a necessary precursor to the crumbling of the capitalist crust.

Factory Councils and Capitalist Organizations

But what is this new productive process? It turns out that Gramsci has virtually nothing to say about the transformation of the relations in production. The factory councils are in fact just a new way of reproducing those relations and organizing workers' self-management of an advanced capitalist labor process. The factory councils are indeed Lenin's "meetings outside work" combined with "iron discipline at work." This becomes particularly clear in the program adopted by the first assembly of the Turin factory delegates. The most important duties of the delegates, elected on a workshop basis and subject to instant recall, are those of surveillance and representation inside the factory. But also:

The delegate should study and encourage his comrades to study the bourgeois systems of production and work processes, inviting criticisms and suggestions that will facilitate work by speeding up production. It must be driven home to all that communist equality can be won only through an intensive productive effort, and that higher living standards will flow not from disorder in production and a relaxation of work discipline, but rather from an improved and more equal distribution of social obligations and rewards, obtained through making labour compulsory and equalizing rates of pay (SPW, p. 121).

There is little sense of the factory councils being a vehicle for the reorganization of the labor process in ways that might facilitate a certain producer consciousness rather than a fragmented consciousness. Workers' control of the factory apparatuses is

in itself sufficient to guarantee the producer society. The concern with capitalist efficiency and rationality is not seen as an impediment to the development of socialism.

In a factory, the workers are producers in so far as they collaborate in the preparation of the object being manufactured; they are ordered in a way that is determined precisely by the industrial technique being used, which in turn is independent (in a certain sense) of the mode of appropriation of the values that are produced (SPW, p. 295).

In short, the transition to socialism involves new relations among new factory apparatuses, but alongside the reproduction of the old capitalist labor process.

Although the capitalist labor process is compatible with socialist global and production politics, the same cannot be said of trade unions and parties. Unlike the factory councils, the trade union and the party are part and parcel of bourgeois society. At best they can serve to defend the interests of the proletariat within capitalism. They can never lay the basis for transcending capitalism.

Trade unionism stands revealed as nothing other than a form of capitalist society, not a potential successor to that society. It organizes workers not as producers, but as wage earners, i.e. as creatures of the capitalist, private property regime, selling the commodity labour. Trade unionism combines workers on the basis of the tools they use or the material they transform; in other words, trade unionism combines workers on the basis of the form that the capitalist regime, the regime of economic individualism, impresses on them. The use of one tool rather than another, and the transformation of one material rather than another, brings to light different capacities and attitudes to work and to earnings; the worker becomes fixed in his particular capacity and attitude, and sees his job not as a moment of production, but simply as a means of earning a livelihood (SPW, p. 110).

Gramsci distinguishes between the negative solidarity of trade unions and the positive solidarity of the Councils.

Whereas in the union, workers' solidarity was developed in struggle against capitalism, in suffering and sacrifice, in the Council this solidarity is a positive, permanent entity that is embodied in even the most trivial moments of industrial production. It is a joyous awareness of being an organic whole, a homogeneous and compact system which, through useful work and the disinterested production of social wealth, asserts its sovereignty, and realizes its power and its freedom to create history (SPW, pp. 100-1).

Gramsci goes even further, arguing that the more successful unions are in defending the interests of the working class, the more they undermine the proletariat's revolutionary potential.

The union's normal course of development is marked by a continuous decline in the revolutionary spirit of the masses. The union increases their material strength, but weakens or completely destroys their appetite for conquest; their élan vital wilts, and heroic intransigence is succeeded by the practice of opportunism--"bread and butter" demands. An increase in quantity results in a decrease in quality, and a facile accommodation to capitalist forms; it results in the workers acquiring a stingy, narrow, petty- and middle-bourgeois mentality (SPW, p. 109).

At the same time, the trade unions are the "rigid backbone of the great proletarian body," and the Councils should make every effort to "imprint on the unions this positive class and communist direction" (SPW, p. 102).

In summary, then, capitalism produces new forces of production which lay the basis for new institutions, embryonic forms of the socialist state. These factory councils are rooted in the self-realization of workers through the collective and self-conscious transformation of nature. With the deterioration of capitalism, the councils spread and blossom forth until the capitalist shell itself is destroyed. What is obviously missing from Gramsci's analysis at this point is an understanding of the resilience of capitalism, of the strength of the capitalist state. It is possible that the councils will be still-born, like the chicken that fails to crack the shell. Gramsci actually anticipates this problem of power before the fateful general strike in Turin, which eventually fizzled out for lack of support from sections of the labor movement outside Turin, from the labor federation (CGL) and the socialist party (PSI).

Towards a Renewal of the Party

As the council movement gained strength, particularly in Turin, Gramsci's writing began to deal more with issues of political power. In late 1919 Gramsci is already directing articles to the PSI. There were a number of reasons for this shift in emphasis. First, the PSI was responding to rank and file militance by proposing its own form of council. Gramsci fought against attempts to incorporate the councils in the party structure and other

attempts to turn them into instruments of industrial collaboration. Second, Gramsci saw the need for support of other organizations if the council movement was ever to grapple successfully with the state. And third, the council movement would need considerable support after the revolution if power were to be retained at the level of the factory.

Gramsci sets up the problem of the organization of the socialist party as follows:

... the immediate, concrete problem confronting the Socialist Party is the problem of power; the problem of how to organize the whole mass of Italian workers into a hierarchy that reaches its apex in the Party; the problem of constructing a State apparatus which internally will function democratically, i.e. will guarantee freedom to all anti-capitalist tendencies and offer them the possibility of forming a proletarian government, and externally will operate as an implacable machine in crushing the organs of capitalist industrial and political power (SPW, p. 133).

We note already a shift in Gramsci's attitude towards the party and trade unions. They are no longer solely negative influences on the development of revolutionary consciousness: Gramsci is now trying to make room for them in the struggle for socialism, albeit in a role subordinate to the councils.

The Councils, historical products of society, brought into being by the need to master the apparatus of production; products born of the newly achieved self-awareness of the producers. The trade unions and the Party, voluntary associations, driving forces of the revolutionary process, the "agents" and "administrators" of the revolution: the trade unions coordinating the productive forces and impressing a communistic form on the industrial apparatus; the Socialist Party, the living and dynamic model of a social system that unites discipline with freedom and endows the human spirit with all the energy and enthusiasm of which it is capable (SPW, p. 146).

The Socialist Party becomes the guardian of the new proletarian order, made up of councils. The Socialist Party embodies the historical consciousness that is rooted in the factory councils. As soon as the party no longer recognizes the centrality of the organs of proletarian self-government, it tends to degenerate. Gramsci warns against the fossilization of the party:

The Party remains the leading apparatus within this irresistible mass movement, and exercises the most effective of dictatorships, a dictatorship based

on prestige, on the conscious and spontaneous acceptance of an authority that workers see as indispensable if their mission is to be accomplished. It would be disastrous if a sectarian conception of the Party's role in the revolution were to prompt the claim that this apparatus had actually assumed a concrete form, that the system for controlling the masses in movement had been frozen in mechanical forms of immediate power, forcing the revolutionary process into the forms of the Party. The result would be to successfully divert a number of men, to "master" history: but the real revolutionary process would slip from the control and influence of the party, which would unconsciously become an organ of conservatism (SPW, p. 144).

The task of the party is not only to defend and nurture the councils under capitalism but to foster their development under socialism as well.

The proletarian dictatorship, the workers' State, has the task of providing the conditions needed for the development of the institutions created by the working class to control production for its own benefit and to govern itself directly. Here and now, the Party is fulfilling this task within the working class: the Party today is a model of what the workers' State will be tomorrow (SPW, p. 176).

At one point (SPW, p. 167) Gramsci distinguishes between the Socialist Party, whose role is to conquer state power, and the Communist Party, which will exercise power under socialism.

Finally, in this period before the April strike Gramsci begins to talk more about the importance of workers forming alliances with other subordinate classes, particularly the peasantry. In fact, he awards the peasantry a central role in the conquest of state power--a task the workers cannot carry out by themselves.

If the workers, concentrated in the industrial cities, are to be the principal actors in the communist revolution, the principal actors in the pre-revolutionary action will instead be the peasant masses. Rural mass movements will smash the power of the bourgeois State once and for all, because they will smash its military might. No army is enough to subdue the countryside when it is up in arms: regiments that seem invincible when lined up in the streets of a city, become a plaything in the wide open fields; the canons, machine-guns and flame-throwers that would scythe down crowds of workers in closed streets and squares, are impotent in the immensity of the open spaces of the countryside (SPW, p. 180).

Gramsci is already anticipating the importance of guerrilla

warfare in combatting the modern state, although he is still exaggerating the weakness of the capitalist state and the willingness of the peasantry to fight against capitalism.

Analysis of Defeat

Although the April strike was one of the very few general strikes that have ever emerged from a council movement, it did not have much support outside Turin. Recriminations were severe after its defeat, with Gramsci accusing the PSI and CGL of betrayal. Heated debates followed. Bordiga, leader of the abstentionist left and theorist of the vanguard party, presented the council movement as utopian. Rather than seizing the factory, Bordiga urged that the first task must be to smash the state. Global politics must take precedence over production politics. Tasca, on the other hand, refused to single out the councils as a special organ of struggle--for him the trade unions were as important, if not more important, in fostering the collapse of capitalist society and the transition to socialism. Gramsci responded with a vigorous defense of the councils, maintaining that the revolutionary process is located in the factory and cannot be identified with party or trade union.

The revolutionary process takes place in the sphere of production, in the factory, where the relations are those of oppressor to oppressed, exploiter to exploited, where freedom for the worker does not exist, and democracy does not exist. The revolutionary process takes place where the worker is nothing but intends to become all, where the power of the proprietor is unlimited, where the proprietor has power of life or death over the worker, and over his wife and children (SPW, p. 261).

The party and trade unions should act as protectors of the revolutionary process by preparing the ground for the development of councils, by restoring power to the factory (expropriated under finance capital), and by mounting an assault on the state.

The party and trade unions should not project themselves as tutors or as ready-made superstructures for this new institution, in which the historical process of the revolution takes a controllable historical form. They should project themselves as the conscious agents of its liberation from the restrictive forces concentrated in the bourgeois State. They should set themselves the task of organizing the general (political) external conditions that will allow the revolutionary process to move at maximum speed, and

the liberated productive forces to find their maximum expansion (SPW, p. 264).

The councils and unions have very different functions, but they should influence each other nonetheless. Here Gramsci begins to make a concession to the trade union movement, whose opposition to the councils had been critical in the April defeat.

The Council is the negation of industrial legality: it strives at all times to destroy it, to lead the working class to the conquest of industrial power and make it the source of industrial power. The union represents legality, and must aim to make its members respect that legality. The trade union is answerable to the industrialists, but only in so far as it is answerable to its own members: it guarantees to the worker and his family a continuous supply of work and wages, i.e. food and a roof over their heads. By virtue of its revolutionary spontaneity, the Factory Council tends to spark off the class war at any moment; while the trade union, by virtue of its bureaucratic form, tends to prevent class war from ever breaking out. The relations between the two institutions should be such that a capricious impulse on the part of the Councils could not result in a set-back or defeat for the working class; in other words, the Council should accept and assimilate the discipline of the union. They should also be such that the revolutionary character of the Council exercises an influence over the trade union, and functions as a reagent dissolving the union's bureaucracy and bureaucratism (SPW, p. 266).

The trade unions become crucial, then, in disciplining the councils and choosing the correct moment for engaging in revolutionary struggles (SPW, p. 268). Gramsci, finding himself increasingly marginalized in the workers' movement, moves towards a broader-based revolutionary process in which the centrality of the council is retained but the party and trade union play integral roles.

But in the summer of 1920, before the September occupation of the factories, Gramsci's thinking undergoes further shifts in the light of the shift in the balance of power away from the councils. At the second meeting of the Communist International, Lenin delivers his LEFT-WING COMMUNISM--AN INFANTILE DISORDER, an attack on abstentionism and the council communists. Gramsci now turns against Bordiga in the defense of prefigurative politics--the necessity of building organs of socialism under capitalism. The communist revolution cannot be composed of two stages; rather, it must be one "dialectical" process.

We have therefore maintained: 1. that the revolution is not necessarily proletarian and communist simply because it proposes and achieves the overthrow of the political government of the bourgeois State; 2. nor is it proletarian and communist simply because it proposes and achieves the destruction of the representative institutions and administrative machinery through which the central government exercises the political power of the bourgeoisie; 3. it is not proletarian and communist even if the wave of popular insurrection places power in the hands of men who call themselves (and sincerely are) communists. The revolution is proletarian and communist only to the extent that it is a liberation of the proletarian and communist forces of production that were developing within the very heart of the society dominated by the capitalist class (SPW, p. 305).

But, having attacked the idea of the two-stage revolution, Gramsci gives ground and begins to see the party as the source of revolutionary energy. He has premonitions of future disaster and the development of a certain factory egoism if the councils ever secure power for themselves. He begins to write about the necessity of importing consciousness into the factory.

And since the formation of parties and the rise of real historical forces of which parties are the reflection are events that do not occur at a stroke, out of nothing, but occur in accordance with a dialectical process, should not the major task of the communist forces be precisely that of importing consciousness and organization into the productive forces--communist in essence--which will have to develop and, by their growth, create the secure and lasting economic base of the proletariat's hold on political power? (SPW, p. 307.)

Gramsci now conceives of the revolutionary movement as "a dialectical process, in which political power makes possible industrial power and vice versa" (SWP, p. 308).

From here it is a short step to regarding the communist party as the new source of historical initiative, and the factory councils begin to be eclipsed from Gramsci's thought--just as they are defeated in reality in the September occupations. Spontaneous revolutionary consciousness no longer arises in the productive process.

This miracle of the worker who takes charge each day of his own intellectual autonomy and his own freedom to handle ideas, by struggling against fatigue, against boredom and against the monotony of a job that strives to mechanize and so kill his inner life--this miracle is organized in the Communist

Party, in the will to struggle and the revolutionary creativity that are expressed in the Communist Party....

The Communist Party is the instrument and historical form of the process of inner liberation through which the worker is transformed from executor to initiator, from mass to leader and guide, from brawn to brain and purpose (SWP, p. 333).

Gramsci's interpretation of the Russian revolution shifts accordingly, with a new emphasis on the centrality of the Communist Party: "in the Party they fashioned for themselves a new personality, acquired new sentiments and brought into being a morality whose goal is to become a universal consciousness striven after by all mankind" (SPW, p. 334). From now on, Gramsci will pay increasing attention to the communist party as the source of historical initiative; in the process the factory councils are condemned to oblivion. From an almost exclusive focus on production politics Gramsci turns to an equally exclusive focus on global politics. He never tries to link the two.

Transition to Socialism

Just as Marx was to come to terms with 1848 in his later economic writings, Gramsci's prison notebooks are in large part reflections on the failure of the council movement. In these later writings he begins to examine the limits of the possible. To do that he undertakes an historical and comparative analysis of different revolutionary movements. His Hegelian idealism gives way to concrete social analysis; the arena of voluntarism shrinks before the strength of structures of power and ideology. Yet there are unmistakable traces of his earlier insistence on prefigurative politics, on the importance of constructing the organs of socialism under capitalism and the repudiation of the two-stage revolution, at least in its extreme form. Gramsci refuses to dislocate the genesis of the new from the dissolution of the old mode of production. It is not simply a matter of conquering power and then beginning the inauguration of socialism. Communist consciousness has to be forged under capitalism. In this matter Gramsci is in diametrical opposition to Trotsky, who writes in unequivocal and, one might say, "undialectical" fashion:

If socialism aimed at creating a new human nature within the limits of the old society it would be

nothing more than a new edition of the moralistic utopias. Socialism does not aim at creating a socialist psychology as a prerequisite to socialism but at creating socialist conditions of life as a pre-requisite to socialist psychology (RESULTS AND PROSPECTS, p. 99).

In what sense, then, is council communism a "moralistic utopia"? Is it possible to develop the new within the womb of the old? Does socialism inherit only material conditions from capitalism? If there are embryonic organs of socialism emerging within the womb of capitalism, what are they? Is the labor process one such arena of embryonic socialism, as Gramsci argues, or is it irrevocably contaminated by capitalism? Are there aspects of the labor process that can be rescued for socialism? Are there other institutions around which communist consciousness can develop under capitalism? How do we decide? If we firmly dislocate post-revolutionary and pre-revolutionary periods, are we not risking the subversion of the transition itself? What guarantees do we have that smashing the capitalist state will in fact lead to socialism?

It is interesting to note that the-firmer believers in the two-stage revolution were also the writers with the most undeveloped notion of socialism. Trotsky, for example, usually reduced socialism to "equal distribution and planned production;" indeed, the idea of making history collectively was equated with planning. Council communism, however, in rejecting the two-stage revolution, has paid more attention to the meaning of socialism. (See, for example, the writings of Korsch and Castoriadis.)

This undoubtedly is the strength of Council Communism: its unwillingness to see the revolution fall to the caprice of exigency and its insistence on the centrality of a vision of socialism to the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. Given the history of twentieth-century communism, Council Communism attempts to rectify what is perhaps Marx's greatest ~~dis~~service to the communist movement--his dismissal of "blueprints" for socialism as irrelevant utopias.

XV. CIVIL SOCIETY

There is no pristine Gramsci: just as everyone has their own Marx, everyone now has their own Gramsci. The prison writings are rich, diverse, and ambiguous. They were written in such a way as to avoid the prison censor and, although it is difficult to decipher their chronology, they do have their own internal development. One can spend years studying them profitably.

Perhaps the most popular Gramsci is the theorist of "super-structures". Gramsci's stress on culture, ideology and intellectuals has drawn all sorts of people, Marxists and non-Marxists alike. Even Edward Shils has referred to Gramsci as a long-distance runner with a heavy weight tied around his legs. For Shils at least the heavy weight of Marxism is firmly attached. Other writers dislocate Gramsci from the Marxist tradition; what emerges is often quite banal. It is therefore important to place Gramsci in the context of the Marxist tradition to which he was responding, and to restore the economic that is both implicit and explicit in his analysis.

Gramsci has been called upon in justifying the most diverse strategies for the transition to socialism, although he has been most associated with the anti-Leninist stance of Eurocommunism. Linked to these strategies is a fundamental ambiguity in Gramsci's writings, viz. whether he is talking at any given point about the reproduction of capitalism or the development of socialism. Obviously the two are intimately related, but they are nonetheless separate. For example, when Gramsci talks about hegemony it is not clear whether he is referring to the bourgeoisie exercising hegemony through the state or proletarian hegemony being built up through the party within capitalism. Presumably these hegemonies are constructed in different ways. Taking a cue from his early writings on the factory movement, many of Gramsci's interpreters, such as Carl Boggs, have stressed the emergence of "counter-hegemony" under capitalism as laying the basis for the transition to socialism; others have dwelt on capitalism's ability to absorb all forms of resistance. In this lecture I will stress the latter approach--Gramsci's theory of the reproduction of capitalism--and

will move on next week to his theories of the transition to socialism. In other words, this lecture will focus on the connection between the economic and the political/ideological in Gramsci's theory of capitalism.

From War of Movement to War of Position

One can regard Gramsci's prison writings as reflections on the failed council movement, an attempt to understand capitalism's resilience and the conditions necessary for the formation of a "collective will". This takes Gramsci into a comparative examination of the history of different nations in an effort to gauge the limits of the possible. One can also regard Gramsci's writings as a reexamination of Marx's political writings of 1848-1851. In those writings Marx expresses a youthful optimism in universal (male) suffrage, which unchains class struggle, and in class struggle itself, which dissolves the "hallucinations" and "illusions" of the proletariat. Marx himself responded to these false hopes by turning to an examination of the economic; Gramsci's response was to reassess Marx's theory of the political and the ideological.

In CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE and, to a lesser extent, in THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE, Marx sees the proletariat advancing towards socialism. The 1848 revolutions were the breeding ground of a revolutionary proletariat which was discovering its own potential. The proletariat could only move from strength to more strength; even decisive defeats, as in June 1848, meant that next time the proletariat would rise up even more powerful. This was the theory of permanent revolution. Gramsci held a very different view. The 1848 revolution in France was one convulsion in the consolidation of capitalism, not its overthrow. These convulsions would culminate in the Paris Commune of 1871.

In fact it was only in 1870-71, with the attempt of the Commune, that all the germs of 1789 were finally historically exhausted. It was then that the new bourgeois class struggling for power defeated not only the representatives of the old society unwilling to admit that it had been definitely superseded, but also the still newer groups who maintained that the new structure created by the 1789 revolution was itself already outdated; by this victory the bourgeoisie demonstrated its vitality vis-a-vis both the old and the very new (PRISON NOTEBOOKS [PN], p. 179).

For Gramsci, 1871 marks the end of a period in which the state can be confronted directly through "war of movement". New structures of what he calls "civil society" now emerge to surround the state and make it much less vulnerable to frontal assault. (For a clarification of Gramsci's use of the concept "civil society" and its origins, see Norberto Bobbio, "Gramsci and the Conception of Civil Society" in GRAMSCI AND MARXIST THEORY, edited by Chantal Mouffe.) The development of the institutions of civil society, of trade unions, parties and so forth, requires a shift of strategy from war of movement to war of position.

Political concept of the so-called "Permanent Revolution", which emerged before 1848 as a scientifically evolved expression of the Jacobin experience from 1789 to Thermidor. The formula belongs to an historical period in which the great mass political parties and the great economic trade unions did not yet exist, and society was still, so to speak, in a state of fluidity from many points of view: greater backwardness of the countryside, and almost complete monopoly of political and State power by a few cities or even by a single one (Paris in the case of France); a relatively rudimentary State apparatus, and greater autonomy of civil society from State activity; a specific system of military forces and of national armed services; greater autonomy of the national economies from the economic relations of the world market, etc. In the period after 1870, with the colonial expansion of Europe, all these elements change: the internal and international organisational relations of the State become more complex and massive, and the Forty-Eightist formula of the "Permanent Revolution" is expanded and transcended in political science by the formula "civil hegemony". The same thing happens in the art of politics as happens in military art: war of movement increasingly becomes war of position, and it can be said that a State will win a war in so far as it prepares for it minutely and technically in peacetime. The massive structures of the modern democracies, both as State organisations, and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the "trenches" and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely "partial" the element of movement which before used to be "the whole" of war, etc. (PN, pp. 242-43).

Luxemburg and Trotsky are seen as theorists of the "frontal assault" in periods when such a strategy is doomed to failure. This is Gramsci's assessment of Luxemburg's THE MASS STRIKE, THE POLITICAL PARTY AND THE TRADE UNIONS.

All the same this little book ... is one of the most significant documents theorizing the war of manoeuvre

in relation to political science. The immediate economic element (crises, etc.) is seen as the field artillery which in war opens a breach in the enemy's defences--a breach sufficient for one's own troops to rush in and obtain a definitive (strategic) victory, or at least an important victory in the context of the strategic line. Naturally the effects of immediate economic factors in historical science are held to be far more complex than the effects of heavy artillery in a war of manoeuvre, since they are conceived of as having a double effect: 1. they breach the enemy's defences, after throwing him into disarray and causing him to lose faith in himself, his forces, and his future; 2. in a flash they organise one's own troops and create the necessary cadres--or at least in a flash they put the existing cadres (formed, until that moment, by the general historical process) in positions which enable them to encadre one's scattered forces; 3. in a flash they bring about the necessary ideological concentration on the common objective to be achieved. This view was a form of economic determinism, with the aggravating factor that it was conceived of as operating with lightning speed in time and in space. It was thus out and out historical mysticism, the awaiting of a sort of miraculous illumination (PN, p. 233).

It seems, then, that the rise of "civil society" as a system of trenches which absorb struggles arising from economic crises requires a strategy of building up strength so as to take over the trenches one by one (PN, pp. 238-39).

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is subjected to the same critique to which Luxemburg's theory of the mass strike is subjected. In the last analysis it is "a reflection of the general-economic-cultural-social conditions in a country in which the structures of national life are embryonic and loose, and incapable of becoming 'trench or fortress'" (PN, p. 236). In other words, the theory of permanent revolution was applicable to Russia because the civil society there was weak and undeveloped.

In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous: in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying--but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country (PN, p. 238).

When Gramsci refers to the State here, he clearly means the repressive apparatuses of the state, rather than the institutions of

civil society, the trade unions, educational system, parties, etc. But the placement of the State as the outer ditch rather than the inner castle, as seemed to be implied in previous analogies to military warfare, is ambiguous. The location of the state vis-a-vis the trenches and fortifications of civil society becomes critical in the relationship of war of movement to war of position.

The State

What does Gramsci mean by the "state"? Here he is not always consistent, but it is usually possible to figure out his meaning from the context. Gramsci's contribution to the theory of the state is in his insistence on its positive as well as negative functions--that is, the inclusion of civil as well as "political" society.

This study also leads to certain determinations of the concept of State, which is usually understood as political society (or dictatorship; or coercive apparatus to bring the mass of the people into conformity with the specific type of production and the specific economy at a given moment) and not as an equilibrium between political society and civil society (or hegemony of a social group over the entire national society exercised through the so-called private organisations, like the Church, the trade unions, the schools, etc.); it is precisely in civil society that intellectuals operate especially (PN, p. 56).

At other points Gramsci refers to the integral meaning of the state as "dictatorship + hegemony" (PN, p. 239), or hegemony protected by the armour of coercion (PN, p. 263). (Here, note, the "state", in the narrow sense, again appears as an outer ditch.) If Gramsci sometimes reverts to the more usual notion of the state as the instrument of collective violence, he also has a notion of a socialist state in which the coercive apparatuses wither away, leaving behind the civil society--the "reabsorption of political society into civil society" (PN, p. 253).

In a doctrine of the State which conceives the latter as tendentially capable of withering away and of being subsumed into regulated society, the argument is a fundamental one. It is possible to imagine the coercive element of the State withering away by degrees, as ever-more conspicuous elements of regulated society (or ethical State or civil society) make their appearance (PN, p. 263).

Under capitalism, however, the functions of the state are both educative and repressive: "the State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules" (PN, p. 244).

... the most reasonable and concrete thing that can be said about the ethical State, the cultural State, is this: every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense: but, in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end--initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes. Hegel's conception belongs to a period in which the spreading development of the bourgeoisie could seem limitless, so that its ethnicity or universality could be asserted: all mankind will be bourgeois. But, in reality, only the social group that poses the end of the State and its own end as the target to be achieved can create an ethical State--i.e. one which tends to put an end to the internal divisions of the ruled, etc., and to create a technically and morally unitary social organism (PN, pp. 258-59).

While Gramsci is able to offer an elaborated notion of the functions of the state, he has comparatively little to say about which institutions belong to the state. It is not clear where civil society stops and other institutions begin. Is the family part of civil society, and thus of the state? Does this vary from one country or historical period to another? Although Gramsci does not tell us much about the different arrangements of institutions within civil society, he does have a great deal to say about its importance in regulating struggles. Before we get to that we must understand the limits, defined by the economic, within which struggles normally take place.

Economic Limits on Struggles

One could leave Gramsci's theory of the state as the combination of domination and hegemony organized in political society

and civil society respectively. However, there is much more to it than that. The state does not simply repress class struggles: it organizes them in such a way that capitalism itself is not threatened. In our examination of Marx's political writings we pointed to the importance of the state protecting the political interests of the dominant class even if this meant acting against its immediate economic interests. In other words, the dominant class must make economic sacrifices in order to protect capitalism as a whole. That was one of the reasons why the dominant class in France could not rule directly, through the Party of Order. Gramsci also recognizes the necessity of economic concessions.

In other words, the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of subordinate groups, and the life of the State is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on the juridical plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of subordinate groups--equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e. stopping short of narrowly corporate economic interest (PN, p. 182).

Gramsci here stipulates the existence of a maximum level of exploitation, such that the dominant classes are prevented by "the life of the State" from pursuing their narrow economic interests. The "formation and superseding of unstable equilibria" represents the uncertainty of outcomes of class struggles in civil society and of struggles on parliamentary terrain. It is precisely the uncertainty of the outcomes, the possibility that the dominated classes may indeed improve their material circumstances, that draws them into such struggles. However, it is necessary not only that the subordinate classes be able to pursue their economic interests: they must do this without threatening the interest of capital in profit--that is, the struggles must be contained so as to protect a minimal level of accumulation.

Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed--in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic-corporate kind. But there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function

exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity (PN, p. 161).

In other words, there is not only a maximum level of exploitation which the state must recognize--there is also a minimum level compatible with the reproduction of capitalism. Between these limits Gramsci speaks of the exercise of hegemony. In normal times struggles take place on this terrain of hegemony. In crisis times, when the limits are violated, hegemony can be threatened. There are clearly two kinds of crisis: crises for capital, in which the rate of profit is threatened, and crises for labor, when the confidence of workers in capitalism is undermined. The limits themselves will move; presumably, the closer together they are, the more likely it is that capitalism will fall into some endemic crisis.

The problem, of course, is to develop a theory that explains how the state manages to contain struggles within these limits so that exploitation is neither too high for workers nor too low for capital. At times Gramsci does suggest a notion of an enlightened bourgeoisie which acts in its own political interests through the state (PN, pp. 5-6, 15, 16, 53). Such an instrumental interpretation is most likely to appear in connection with his theory of organic intellectuals who shape and represent the interests of fundamental classes. On the other hand, Gramsci also has a notion of the form of the state itself protecting the political interests of capital.

The historical unity of the ruling class is realised in the State, and their history is essentially the history of States and of groups of States. But it would be wrong to think that this unity is simply juridical and political (though such forms of unity do have their importance too, and not in a purely formal sense); the fundamental historical unity, concretely, results from the organic relations between State or political society and "civil society" (PN, p. 52).

Here is another significant aspect of the metaphor of military warfare: under advanced capitalism, where civil society is strong, class struggles are firmly lodged within "trenches"; only in times of crisis do they move out of the trenches. Critical to this trench warfare is the shaping of struggles in civil society, caught between economic limits and the relations of organized force. These struggles take place on the terrain of ideology.

Ideology and Class Struggle

One of the most frequently repeated citations in THE PRISON NOTEBOOKS is from the PREFACE TO THE CONTRIBUTION TO A CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, to the effect that "men become conscious of fundamental conflicts on the level of ideology" (PN, pp. 138, 162, 164, 365, 371); class struggle takes place on the terrain of ideology. This means, first, that before class struggle becomes a struggle between classes, it is a struggle about the definition of class. It means also that the struggle between classes is not a struggle between ideologies, but takes place within the framework of a single "hegemonic" ideology. This is an explicit attack on the entire problematic of "false consciousness", a problematic in which, first, each class has its own true interests and its own true ideology and, second, class struggle is a struggle between ideologies in which a dominant class manages to superimpose its own view of the world on the world-view of the subordinate classes. This idea of ideological domination is quite foreign to Gramsci, who insists on the importance of ideology as engendering active consent. There is no such thing as class prior to ideology: ideology "interpellates" individuals as members of a class, and ideological struggles forge the "collective will" which is necessary for the very existence of a class. The collective will may encompass or exclude a variety of groups as defined by their relationships to the means of production.

What is ideology? It is, first and foremost, a political force: "Machiavelli's Prince could be studied as an historical exemplification of the Sorelian myth--i.e. of a political ideology expressed neither in the form of a cold utopia nor as learned theorising, but rather by a creation of concrete phantasy which acts on a dispersed and shattered people to arouse and organise its collective will" (PN, pp. 125-26). Prior to ideology there is only "a dispersed and shattered people." For ideology to be effective in galvanizing a collective will, it must resonate with "lived experience": it can be neither an irrelevant utopia nor an abstract theory. Thus, "popular beliefs" easily become ideologies--that is, material forces (PN, p. 165). Ideology must be in accord with the latent aspirations of the people (see also PN, pp. 113, 187, 242).

On this basis the weekly Ordine Nuovo worked to develop certain forms of new intellectualism and to determine its new concepts and this was not the least of the reasons for its success, since such a conception corresponded to latent aspirations and conformed to the development of the real forms of life. The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, "permanent persuader" and not just as simple orator (PN, p. 10).

Gramsci insists on distinguishing between those ideologies that conform to the emerging economic structures in society and those that are arbitrary and therefore ineffectual.

One must therefore distinguish between historically organic ideologies, those, that is, which are necessary to a given structure, and ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic, or "willed". To the extent that ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is "psychological"; they "organise" human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their positions, struggle, etc. To the extent that they are arbitrary they only create individual "movements", polemics and so on (though even these are not completely useless, since they function like an error which by contrasting with truth, demonstrates it) (PN, pp. 376-77).

Can Marxism itself be an organic ideology, a material force with the power to move the proletariat? Gramsci writes of the way the spontaneous development of the council movement was "educated, directed, purged of extraneous contaminations" with the aim of bringing it into line with Marxism in a living and historically effective manner. The leadership gave "the masses a 'theoretical' consciousness of being creators of historical and institutional values, of being founders of a State" (PN, p. 198). He then poses "a fundamental theoretical question":

... can modern theory (Marxism) be in opposition to the "spontaneous" feelings of the masses? ("Spontaneous" in the sense that they are not the result of any systematic educational activity on the part of an already conscious leading group, but have been formed through everyday experience illuminated by "common sense", i.e. by the traditional popular conception of the world--what is unimaginatively called "instinct", although it too is in fact a primitive and elementary historical acquisition.) It cannot be in opposition to them. Between the two there is a "quantitative" difference of degree, not one of quality. A reciprocal "reduction" so to speak, a passage from one to the other and vice versa, must

be possible (PN, pp. 198-99).

Gramsci still roots his optimism in the development of the forces of production, which must lay the basis for the emergence of the "collective worker" and a communist consciousness. The factory movement aimed to render subjective what was given objectively.

For the individual worker, the junction between the requirements of technical development and the interests of the ruling class is "objective". But this junction, this unity between technical development and the interests of the ruling class is only a historical phase of industrial development, and must be conceived in concrete terms, not merely separately from the interests of the ruling class, but in relation to the interests of the class which is as yet still subaltern. A compelling proof that such a "split" and new synthesis is historically mature is constituted by the very fact that such a process is understood by the subaltern class--which precisely for that reason is no longer subaltern, or at least is demonstrably on the way to emerging from its subordinate position. The "collective worker" understands that this is what he is, not merely in each individual factory, but in the broader spheres of national and international division of labour. It is precisely in the organisms which represent the factory as a producer of real objects and not of profit that he gives an external, political demonstration of the consciousness he has acquired (PN, p. 202).

In talking about the development of a new consciousness Gramsci rests his case on the developing contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production. As a leit⁺motif for his own view of the limits imposed by economic development on political and ideological struggles, Gramsci often cites another idea from the PREFACE TO A CONTRIBUTION TO A CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY: "Two principles must orient the discussion: 1. that no society sets itself tasks for whose accomplishment the necessary and sufficient conditions do not either already exist or are not at least beginning to emerge and develop; 2. that no society breaks down and can be replaced until it has first developed all the forms of life which are implicit in its internal relations" (PN, pp. 177, 106, etc.).

Within these limits, however, the form assumed by struggle is very much dependent on the levels of consciousness, homogeneity and organization attained by various classes--that is, the level of ideological development, conceived of as a political force. Gramsci speaks of three levels. The first is the economic-corporate

level: "the members of the professional group are conscious of its unity and homogeneity, and of the need to organise it, but in the case of the wider social group this is not yet so" (PN, p. 181). The second level is the formation of class solidarity at the level of economic interest: "consciousness is reached of the solidarity of interests among all members of a social class--but still in the purely economic field. Already at this juncture the problem of the State is posed--but only in terms of winning politico-juridical equality with the ruling groups: the right is claimed to participate in legislation and administration, even to reform these--but within the existing fundamental structures" (PN, p. 181). The third moment is the purely political phase, in which one becomes aware that "one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too" (PN, p. 181). When a group has achieved this purely political level, it has developed a hegemonic ideology which "marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of superstructures" (PN, p. 181). It is the hegemonic ideology which dominates civil society and molds classes and class struggle.

Hegemonic Ideology

It is not clear whether these are some general characteristics of all hegemonic ideologies or whether Gramsci's elaboration is of the bourgeois hegemonic ideology. He does seem to present it in quite general terms, although its exercise and reproduction must differ widely according to whether the class is already dominant or still subaltern. (The difference between these two hegemonies is a central point of Anderson's "Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci," NEW LEFT REVIEW No. 100, pp. 5-78.) The most fundamental feature of this ideology is the presentation of the interests of the dominant class as the interests--both present and future--of all. The Jacobins of the French Revolution are the exemplary case of the exercise of hegemony.

The Jacobins ... were the only part of the revolution in progress, in as much as they not only represented the immediate needs and aspirations of the actual physical individuals who constituted the French bourgeoisie, but they also represented the revolutionary

movement as a whole, as an integral historical development. For they represented future needs as well, and, once again, not only the needs of those particular physical individuals, but also of all the national groups which had to be assimilated to the existing fundamental group.... They were convinced of the absolute truth of their slogans about equality, fraternity and liberty, and, what is more important, the great popular masses whom the Jacobins stirred up and drew into the struggle were also convinced of their truth (PN, p. 78; see also pp. 120, 184).

The exercise of hegemony involves harnessing all popular energies to the expansion of a society under the moral and intellectual leadership of a dominant class (PN, p. 269).

It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter's maximum expansion. But the development and expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the "national" energies (PN, p. 182).

The exercise of hegemony involves establishing "leadership" prior to the assumption of power. It also involves a class attaching allied groups to itself at the same time as it destroys enemy groups.

The methodological criterion on which our own study must be based is the following: that the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as "domination" and as "intellectual and moral leadership". A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to "liquidate", or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise "leadership" before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for winning such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to "lead" as well (PN, pp. 57-58).

Gramsci draws attention to the specificity of hegemony as part and parcel of bourgeois rule: the capacity of the dominant class to absorb members of other classes.

The previous ruling classes were essentially conservative in the sense that they did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes into their own, i.e. to enlarge their class sphere "technically" and ideologically: their conception was that of a closed caste. The bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. The entire function of the State

has been transformed; the State has become an "educator", etc. (PN, p. 260).

Gramsci assimilates the entire notion of democracy to the fluid relations between leaders and led.

In the hegemonic system, there exists democracy between the "leading" group and the groups which are "led", in so far as the development of the economy and thus the legislation which expresses such development favour the (molecular) passage from the "led" groups to the "leading" group. In the Roman Empire there was an imperial-territorial democracy in the concession of citizenship to the conquered peoples, etc. There could be no democracy under feudalism, because of the constitution of the closed groups (i.e. estates, corporations, etc.) etc. (PN, p. 56).

Under a hegemonic ideology that which exists is presented as natural and inevitable.

Human work cannot be realised in all its power of expansion and productivity without an exact and realistic knowledge of natural laws and without a legal order which organically regulates men's life in common. Men must respect this legal order through spontaneous assent, and not merely as an external imposition--it must be a necessity recognised and proposed to themselves as freedom, and not simply the result of coercion (PN, p. 34; see also p. 158).

But a hegemonic ideology must have a material basis. At the most fundamental level this lies in the fact that under capitalism subordinate classes can realize their economic interests only after the capitalist class has realized its interests. The consolidation of hegemony rests on the possibility of linking the material health of subaltern classes to the level of accumulation of capital (see Adam Przeworski, "Material Bases of Consent," in POLITICAL POWER AND SOCIAL THEORY, Volume One, pp. 21-66).

Perhaps the most significant feature of a hegemonic ideology is its composition: "it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'parties', come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society" (PN, p. 181). The struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is a matter not of substituting one ideology for another but of rearranging the elements of the hegemonic system. The class character of the hegemonic system is to be found in the pattern of the relations among the constituent ideologies.

What matters is the criticism to which such an ideological complex is subjected by the first representatives of the new historical phase. This criticism makes possible a process of differentiation and change in the relative weight that the elements of the old ideologies used to possess. What was previously secondary and subordinate, or even incidental, is now taken as primary--becomes the nucleus of a new ideological and theoretical complex. The old collective will dissolves into its contradictory elements since the subordinate ones develop socially, etc. (PN, p. 195).

A hegemonic ideology under capitalism may contain elements of corporatism, liberalism, reformism and anarcho-syndicalism, as well as a burgeoning socialism, as part of a single complex. As a workers' socialist movement becomes more powerful, the balance among the contending ideologies itself will shift.

The Organization of Classes

The link between the economic and the political shifts dramatically as one moves from competitive to advanced capitalism, as determined by the rise of the institutions of civil society. We have already observed the importance of ideological struggles conducted by "organic intellectuals" in the definition of class and the formation of collective wills. It is also in civil society that classes become organized, particularly into parties. The party system becomes a further barrier to the direct linkage of economic and political struggles, transforming and mystifying relations to the means of production.

Gramsci begins to outline what he sees as the party system typical of Western Europe. Workers and landed classes are organized into parties of their own, while industrialists have no single party.

The problem arises of whether the great industrialists have a permanent political party of their own. It seems to me that the reply must be in the negative. The great industrialists utilise all the existing parties turn by turn, but they do not have their own party. This does not mean that they are in any way "agnostic" or "apolitical". Their interest is in a determinate balance of forces, which they obtain precisely by using their resources to reinforce one party or another in turn from the varied political checkerboard (with the exception, needless to say, only of the enemy party, whose reinforcement cannot be assisted even as a tactical move). It is certain, however, that if this is what happens in "normal"

times, in extreme cases--which are those which count (like war in the life of a nation)--the party of the great industrialists is that of the landowners, who for their part do have their own permanent party (PN, pp. 155-56).

Gramsci also shows how in Germany, France and England, for example, in the transition to capitalism the landowning class maintains its position of political power as a ruling class behind which the interests of the bourgeoisie are protected (PN, pp. 83, 115, 270, 18). The state itself, of course, represents the unity of the capitalist class and its various fractions.

The political party, for all groups, is precisely the mechanism which carries out in civil society the same function as the State carries out, more synthetically and over a larger scale, in political society. In other words it is responsible for welding together the organic intellectuals of a given group--the dominant one--and the traditional intellectuals (PN, p. 15; see also p. 52).

The petty bourgeoisie as a "transitional class" does not normally have a party of its own, but joins many different parties; in times of crisis it comes into its own, because its interests become those of the ruling class and because it is the class base of the military and the bureaucracy (PN, pp. 213-15). Gramsci, following Marx, argues that the peasantry also finds it almost impossible to form a party (PN, p. 75).

In explaining the absence of a working class party in the United States, Gramsci might stress the absence of a feudal past and the strength of petty bourgeois traditions inside the working class. He could also bring in his notion that hegemony is born in the factory and not in what we would normally term civil society. That is, workers are incorporated into capitalism at the level of the economic itself, rather than through the party system. This in turn could be explained as the result of the specific combined and uneven development of capitalism in the United States, the grafting of bourgeois democracy onto a country with no legacy of feudalism.

Crises

At a number of points we have observed how Gramsci distinguishes between normal and crisis times. We know that an economic crisis comes about when the level of exploitation is either too high or

too low. But what is the relationship between this and an historical crisis, a political crisis?

First, a political crisis is a crisis of hegemony, when the dominant class loses its prestige, its ability to coordinate its interests with the interests of subordinate classes. "The bourgeois class is 'saturated': it not only does not expand--it starts to disintegrate; it not only does not assimilate new elements, it loses part of itself" (PN, p. 260).

And the content is the crisis of the ruling class's hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted the consent of the broad masses (war, for example), or because huge masses (especially of peasants and petit bourgeois intellectuals) have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A "crisis of authority" is spoken of: this is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of the state (PN, p. 210).

Such a crisis occurs, as we have already seen, when social classes become detached from their traditional parties, when there is a breach between the represented and the representatives. Civil society is no longer the effective channel between economy and state. Economic crises become political crises.

At a certain point in their historical lives, social classes become detached from their traditional parties. In other words, the traditional parties in that particular organisational form, with the particular men who constitute, represent, and lead them, are no longer recognised by their class (or fraction of a class) as its expression. When such crises occur, the immediate situation becomes delicate and dangerous, because the field is open for violent solutions, for the activities of unknown forces, represented by charismatic "men of destiny" (PN, p. 210).

Equally, a political crisis occurs when social classes become detached from their traditional ideologies:

If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer "leading" but only "dominant", exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born (PN, p. 276).

Gramsci also writes of Caesarism as an expression of an organic crisis in which progressive and reactionary forces balance

each other out in a catastrophic equilibrium. The equilibrium may be either within the dominant classes, in which case there is the possibility of a refusion, or between the dominant and subordinate classes, whose interests are incurably opposed, as in the case of fascism (PN, pp. 221-22).

Having determined the nature of political crises, we must now move on to the relationship between economic and political crises. Gramsci is unequivocal: "It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events" (PN, p. 184).

... the rupture of equilibrium of forces did not occur as the result of direct mechanical causes--i.e. the impoverishment of the social group which had an interest in breaking the equilibrium, and which did in fact break it. It occurred in the context of conflicts on a higher plane than the immediate world of the economy; conflicts related to class "prestige" (future economic interests) and to an inflammation of sentiments of independence, autonomy and power. The specific question of economic hardship or well-being as a cause of new historical realities is a partial aspect of the question of the relations of force, at the various levels (PN, p. 184).

Gramsci emphasizes that civil society has become "a very complex structure and one which is resistant to catastrophic incursions of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.)" (PN, p. 235).

The same thing happens in politics during the great economic crises. A crisis cannot give the attacking forces the ability to organize with lightning speed in time and space; still less can it endow them with fighting spirit. Similarly, the defenders are not demoralised, nor do they abandon their positions, even among the ruins, nor do they lose faith in their own strength or their own future. Of course, things do not remain exactly as they were; but it is certain that one will not find the element of speed, of accelerated time, of the definitive forward march expected by the strategists of political Cardonism (PN, p. 235).

If economic crises do not necessarily lead to political crises, then what is the relationship between the two? They have the effect of unsettling the naturalness of everyday life, thereby creating "a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life" (PN, p. 184). Gramsci provides the example of the crisis

after World War One as being favourable to the dissemination of Marxism.

The problem is the following: can a rift between popular masses and ruling ideologies as serious as that which emerged after the war be "cured" by the simple exercise of force, preventing the new ideologies from imposing themselves? Will the inter-regnum, the crisis whose historically normal position is blocked in this way, necessarily be resolved in favour of a restoration of the old? Given the character of the ideologies, that can be ruled out--yet not in an absolute sense. Meanwhile physical depression will lead in the long run to a widespread scepticism, and a new "arrangement" will be found--in which, for example, catholicism will even more become Jesuitism, etc. From this too one may conclude that highly favourable conditions are being created for an unprecedented expansion of historical materialism. The very poverty which at first inevitably characterises historical materialism as a theory diffused widely among the masses will help it to spread. The death of the old ideologies takes the form of scepticism with regard to all theories and general formulae; of application to the pure economic fact (earnings, etc.), and to a form of politics which is not simply realistic in fact (this is always the case) but which is cynical in its immediate manifestation.... But this reduction to economics and to politics means precisely a reduction of the highest superstructures to the level of those which adhere more closely to the structure itself--in other words, the possibility and necessity of creating a new culture (PN, p. 276).

Economic crises, then, provide the opportunity for the rearticulation of the elements of a hegemonic ideology.

Force and Consent

Even when economic crises turn into political crises it is usually possible for the dominant classes to regain the initiative, if only because they are better prepared and better organized, and have access to the collective means of violence.

The traditional ruling class, which has numerous trained cadres, changes men and programmes and, with greater speed than is achieved by the subordinate classes, reabsorbs the control that was slipping from its grasp. Perhaps it may make sacrifices, and expose itself to an uncertain future by demagogic promises; but it retains power, reinforces it for the time being, and uses it to crush its adversary and disperse its leading cadres, who cannot be very numerous or highly trained (PN, pp. 210-11).

In crisis times force becomes transparent and is wielded in the

immediate interests of the ruling classes; in normal times force lies concealed behind the apparatuses of consent.

The apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed (PN, p. 12).

Indeed, the very use of force, even in normal times, is organized so as to elicit greater popular consent.

The "normal" exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterised by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other out reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion--newspapers and associations--which, therefore, in certain situations are artificially multiplied (PN, p. 80).

Moreover, if consent is to prevail over coercion during normal times it becomes important that the institutions of repression be separated from those of consent--the separation of state and civil society (PN, pp. 169-70).

XVI. FURTHER COMMENTS ON REVOLUTION IN EAST AND WEST

Gramsci has become the father figure and oracle of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The struggle over the appropriate strategy for the transition to socialism, in advanced capitalist countries in general and in Italy in particular, has been taken up on the terrain of Gramsci's prison writings. Those advocating the peaceful or parliamentary road to socialism stress the historical specificity of Leninist ideas on the dictatorship of the proletariat and smashing the state: the concentration of power in the Russian state led to the necessity of building the party as an anti-state with an equally concentrated power. In contemporary advanced capitalist societies, or so the argument goes, power is located not only in the state but is also diffused throughout society, calling for a pluralist politics of socialist transition (see, for example, Biagio de Giovanni, "Lenin and Gramsci: state, politics and party" in *GRAMSCI AND MARXIST THEORY [GMT]*, ed. by Mouffe, pp. 259-88). Others rely more directly on Gramsci's notion of civil society, arguing that its strength calls for a war of position in which the various trenches are captured one by one through ideological or cultural struggles. In advanced capitalist societies it is "cultural hegemony" rather than coercion that becomes the most important factor of cohesion; a transition to socialism is therefore most decisively the building up of a "counter-hegemonic ideology" (for a major inspiration to this interpretation see Norberto Bobbio, "Gramsci and the conception of civil society" in *GMT*, pp. 21-49). In such a vision, electoral politics achieve a certain respectability. Those opposing this position but still fighting on the terrain of Gramsci insist on the centrality of force, concentrated in the repressive apparatuses of the state, and on Gramsci's understanding of the reproduction of capitalist relations. While it is true that the mobilization against the state takes different forms in different countries, nevertheless in no case is there a dispute about the class character of the state and therefore the necessity of smashing it (see, for example, Massimo Salvadori, "Gramsci and the PCI: two conceptions of hegemony" in *GMT*, pp. 237-58).

Within the Italian left Gramsci has become a hegemonic

ideology--a material force which defines a terrain of struggle. It is not possible to bypass Gramsci and turn to other theoreticians of the transition if one wants to be politically effective; one can't simply dismiss Gramsci as a theoretician of "social democratic politics" and return to Lenin. The battle must be fought out over Gramsci's writings, just as the Second International had to fight in terms of the writings of Marx and Engels. Textual analysis is not just an exegetical or philological exercise but a political struggle. Fighting for a "true" Gramsci, a specific definition of the state, of hegemony, etc., becomes politically crucial; it means defending a particular strategy for the transition to socialism.

The Antinomies of Perry Anderson

Standing outside the debate in the PCI, Perry Anderson can adopt a modified Trotskyist position by identifying Gramsci as the father of contemporary social democracy--that is, of Eurocommunism. Rather than arguing that Gramsci is a true Leninist, Anderson agrees with the Eurocommunist reading of Gramsci, and dismisses him accordingly. He does this by trying to show that Gramsci's understanding of the state vacillates between a number of models, all of which miss the specificity of force.

The first and most common model, according to Anderson, is one in which hegemony is born in civil society and domination in the state. Hegemony is linked to the organization of consent, while domination is linked to coercion. Civil society is located outside the state.

What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society", that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private", and that of "political society" or "the State". These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the State and "juridical" government (PN, p. 12).

Inasmuch as civil society comes to dominate the "state", this model can be linked to a parliamentarism in which the road to socialism is a matter of counteracting the dominant ideology which conditions the majority to vote for bourgeois parties. There are passages in Gramsci which might suggest that he considers this a viable

strategy (PN, pp. 192-93).

In the second model, hegemony changes its meaning and becomes consent protected by the armour of coercion. Hegemony is located in both levels of the "superstructure": in civil society there is civil hegemony; in the state there is political hegemony. "The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterised by the combination of force and consent ..." (PN, p. 80). "Naturally all three powers are also organs of political hegemony, but in different degrees: 1. Legislature; 2. Judiciary; 3. Executive" (PN, p. 246). This model is the most tendentious of the three, since it is not at all clear that civil hegemony does in fact involve a combination of force and consent. However, it is a possible and reasonable interpretation of some of Gramsci's notes.

In the first two models, state and civil society are separate. In the third model, the state includes civil society, and becomes "dictatorship + hegemony" (PN, p. 239).

But what does that signify if not that by "State" should be understood not only the apparatus of government, but also the "private" apparatus of "hegemony" or civil society? ... In the (anyway superficial) polemic over the functions of the State (which means here the State as a politico-juridical organisation in the narrow sense), the expression "the State as veilleur de nuit" corresponds to the Italian expression "the State as policeman" and means a State whose functions are limited to the safeguarding of public order and of respect for the laws. The fact is glossed over that in this form of regime (which anyway has never existed except on paper, as a limiting hypothesis) hegemony over its historical development belongs to private forces, to civil society--which is "State" too, indeed is the State itself (PN, p. 261).

Here the problem is in defining the limits of the state. Anderson asks, quite rightly, where does the state stop? Does it include the family, and, one might add, the factory? If "the state" is everything, it loses any meaning. Furthermore, how would one then distinguish between the fascist state, the laissez-faire state, the advanced capitalist state, and so on?

What all these models miss, argues Anderson, is the specificity of the state as a combination of force and consent and of civil society as organizing consent. So Anderson's own model represents an asymmetry between civil society, which constructs consent, and

the state, which combines coercion and consent. The (repressive) apparatuses of the state engender consent through their very operation. According to Anderson, Gramsci slithers around among the first three models and never arrives at the fourth.

Why does Gramsci make this "mistake"? In what sense is the "conceptual slippage neither accidental nor arbitrary" (Anderson, "Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci" [AAG], NEW LEFT REVIEW No. 100, p. 25)? Anderson seems to argue that Gramsci is groping for a gradualist strategy of revolution that would minimize the role of force in the preservation of capitalism. It seems that he wants to argue quite simply that Gramsci is wrong and Trotsky is right. He makes no attempt to resolve the contradictory notions of the relationship between state and civil society found in Gramsci, nor does he try to burrow down to discover the more fundamental problem that Gramsci is grappling with. I will argue that Anderson's conclusions can be reduced to a "misunderstanding" and a "misreading" of Gramsci, each of which I shall deal with in turn.

Functional and Institutional Concepts of the State

Even if it is not always made explicit, all Marxist conceptions of the capitalist state are ultimately functionalist, in that the state assumes significance by virtue of its role in preserving capitalism. This is true whether the state is seen as an instrument of oppression, as "the executive committee for managing the common affairs of the entire bourgeoisie," or as "the factor of cohesion of the entire social formation." On the other hand, the state is often defined in institutional terms as well, as being composed of the apparatuses which have a monopoly of legitimate collective violence. Others go further, identifying both repressive apparatuses (police, military, etc.) and ideological apparatuses (education, legislature, etc.). But underlying any institutional definition of the state is an explicit or implicit functional notion of the state that justifies the particular identification of state institutions. Although Anderson does appear to recognize the problems inherent in adopting a too-broad functional notion of the state without any corresponding restriction on its constituent institutions, he nevertheless fails to identify the mapping of function onto institution as a fundamental problem

in working out theories of the state. He therefore misses the roots of Gramsci's conceptual slippage in the specification of the state. Gramsci is sensitive to the historical variability of the mapping between function and institution, whereas Anderson, who carefully avoids making his functional conception of the state explicit, insists on a single, universal, ahistorical mapping (although he does allow for changing relations among the apparatuses of the state according to normal or crisis times).

Gramsci takes as his point of departure a definite functional concept of the state: it is the "entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules" (PN, p. 244). The slippage to which Anderson points can perhaps be best explained in terms of historical and national variations in the institutions that perform these functions. The different models of the state reflect different situations in different periods and countries. The difficulty with this explanation is that it is not always clear to which situation the particular mapping refers.

If we take the political apparatuses of the factory as operating to reproduce relations in production and therefore as part of Gramsci's civil society, we can historically specify Gramsci's three models as follows. The first and most normal model, in which civil society is the locus of hegemony and the state is the locus of coercion, corresponds to advanced capitalism. Here the factory apparatuses operate predominantly through consent, not force. In the second model, both force and consent are found in the state and in civil society, although civil society is not part of the state. This corresponds to competitive capitalism, in which factory apparatuses operate through the application of coercion rather than consent, but are clearly outside the state. In the third model the state combines both civil society and political society. This corresponds to fascism, in which the apparatuses of the state are expanded to include factory apparatuses: the state enters and controls the factory itself. One could make similar arguments for other institutions, such as education, which are located in civil society. Although these mappings may not fit Gramsci's views perfectly, they do highlight the problem--the extent of the state and the relations among

its institutions are historically variable--and hence the emergence of different institutional models of the state.

Strategies for the Transition to Socialism

Anderson wants to substitute the specific form of state (absolutist as opposed to advanced capitalist) for the relationship between state and civil society as the means of distinguishing between East and West. Presumably, this is linked to the project he began in LINEAGES OF THE ABSOLUTIST STATE. But why is Gramsci's formulation--a war of movement corresponding to a gelatinous civil society and a war of position prevailing where civil society is sturdy--inadequate? According to Anderson, Gramsci minimizes the importance of seizing state power, of force and of the unity of state power.

The theoretical slippage noted earlier thus recurs again in Gramsci's strategic thought, with yet more serious consequences. For in a direct reversal of Lenin's order of battle, Gramsci expressly relegated "war of movement" to a merely preliminary or subsidiary role in the West, and promoted "war of position" to the concluding and decisive role in the struggle between capital and labour (AAG, pp. 71-72).

In other words, the state must first be engaged in struggle; only then can civil society be conquered.

Coming from Gramsci, this doesn't make a great deal of sense. How does Anderson justify such a reading? There are two key passages. The first refers to the state as the outer ditch of a battle line of fortresses and trenches.

In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one state to the next, it goes without saying--but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country (PN, p. 238).

To what is Gramsci referring here? He is not pointing to a new strategy of revolution but rather to the mistakes of an old one, namely the strategy of confronting the state directly, as was attempted by the KPD in 1920-1921. This was the strategy of "teilaktionen", armed insurrection against the state. All Gramsci

is saying is that the strategy of frontal assault, advocated by Trotsky and Lukacs at different times, in which the state is made into an outer ditch, only reveals the sturdy structure of civil society:

... the defenders are not demoralised, nor do they abandon their position, even among the ruins, nor do they lose faith in their own strength, in their own future. Of course, things do not remain exactly as they were; but it is certain that one will not find the element of speed, of accelerated time, of the definitive forward march expected by the strategists of political Cadornism (PN, p. 235).

Far from advocating the war of movement as preliminary, Gramsci highlights the futility of such an approach.

The second key passage is at first more compelling:

The war of position demands enormous sacrifices by infinite masses of people. So an unprecedented concentration of hegemony is necessary, and hence a more "interventionist" government, which will take the offensive more openly against the oppositionists and organise permanently the "impossibility" of internal disintegration--with controls of every kind, political, administrative, etc., reinforcement of hegemonic "positions" of the dominant group, etc. All this indicates that we have entered a culminating phase in the political-historical situation, since in politics the "war of position", once won, is decisive definitively. In politics, in other words, the war of manoeuvre subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive, so that all the resources of the State's hegemony cannot be mobilised. But when, for one reason or another, these positions have lost their value and only the decisive positions are at stake, then one passes over to siege warfare; this is concentrated, difficult, and requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness. In politics, the siege is a reciprocal one, despite all appearances, and the mere fact that the ruler has to muster all his resources demonstrates how seriously he takes his adversary (PN, pp. 238-39).

It is from this passage that Anderson infers that the war of movement is "preliminary and subsidiary" while the war of position is "decisive and concluding." But the passage is decidedly ambiguous. Some have interpreted it as referring not to the formation of a political party to seize power but to the mechanisms of the consolidation of power by fascism. A third interpretation--that the war of position refers not to the final overthrow of capitalism but to the inauguration of socialism--seems even more plausible. Once the state has been conquered through the "preliminary

and subsidiary" war of movement it is then necessary to develop the utmost concentration of hegemony in the construction of socialism--a "decisive and concluding" war of position.

This third interpretation links the criticism of Trotsky as theorist of frontal assault, mentioned at the beginning of the same note, to the criticism of Trotsky as advocate of the militarization of labor under War Communism.

The tendency represented by Lev Davidovitch (Trotsky) was closely connected to this series of problems, a fact which does not seem to me to have been fully brought out. Its essential content, from this point of view, consisted in an "over"-resolute (and therefore not rationalised) will to give supremacy in national life to industry and industrial methods, to accelerate, through coercion imposed from outside, the growth of discipline and order in production, and to adapt customs to the necessities of work. Given the general way in which all the problems connected with this tendency were conceived, it was destined necessarily to end up in a form of Bonapartism. Hence the inexorable necessity of crushing it. The preoccupations were correct, but the practical solutions were profoundly mistaken, and in this imbalance between theory and practice there was an inherent danger--the same danger, incidentally, which had manifested itself earlier, in 1921. The principle of coercion, direct or indirect, in the ordering of production and work, is correct: but the form which it assumed was mistaken. The military model had become a pernicious prejudice and the militarisation of labour was a failure (PN, p. 301).

If neither of the two key passages cited above is incompatible with a strategy in which war of movement follows war of position, there are other passages that directly confirm that Gramsci's was such a strategy. Indeed, as Anderson himself notes, Gramsci refers approvingly to precisely such a strategy which Trotsky proposed at the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern (PN, p. 236). And what could be clearer than the following passage?

A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to "liquidate", or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise "leadership" before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for winning such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to "lead" as well (PN, pp. 57-58).

In a footnote the editors offer an earlier draft of the same note,

in which Gramsci writes that "there can and must be a 'political hegemony' even before the attainment of governmental power" (PN, p. 57). If there should remain any doubt about the centrality of force in the transition to socialism, the following passage should dispel it.

The decisive element in every situation is the permanently organised and long-prepared force which can be put into the field when it is judged that a situation is favourable (and it can be favourable only in so far as such a force exists, and is full of fighting spirit). Therefore the essential task is that of systematically and patiently ensuring that this force is formed, developed and rendered even more homogeneous, compact and self-aware (PN, p. 185; see also p. 243).

If it is true that Gramsci does in fact conceive of the strategy for revolution in the West as a war of position followed by a war of movement, in which both are equally essential, how does this differ from Anderson's own theory of dual power?

The sole way for the victory of socialism to be secured in these societies is for it to represent incontestably more, not less, freedom for the vast majority of the population. It is the untapped store of popular energies that any inception of a real workers' democracy would thereby release, that will provide the explosive force capable of ending the rule of capital. For the exhibition of a new, unprivileged liberty must start before the old order is structurally cancelled by the conquest of the State. The name of this necessary overlap is dual power (AAG, p. 78).

Is dual power anything other than the transformation of production politics prior to the assault on global politics? Is it anything more than the specification of the war of position prior to the war of movement?

Trotsky and Gramsci

Anderson, like Gramsci himself, insists on the distance between Trotsky and Gramsci. Their supposed differences revolve around the appropriate revolutionary program in the West, although Anderson himself points out their remarkable convergence over the adoption of the United Front strategy, even if Gramsci came to it much later, in prison.

Their differences are in fact more fundamental. Trotsky is a thorough-going internationalist, while Gramsci effectively places more emphasis on national movements. Despite Gramsci's

acute consciousness of the specificity of national social formations, he tends to see their development in isolation from each other. Thus, at no point does he try to understand how international relations give rise to different arrangements of institutions within the state or civil society, or to the different relations between the state and civil society. Moreover, Gramsci sometimes sees different capitalist countries as being on an evolutionary continuum, with America as some form of prototype. Thus, just as Marx points to England as the future of more backward capitalist countries, Gramsci does the same with the United States.

What these perspectives miss is the unevenness of development on a world scale and the links between different countries. Thus, one can argue, following Tom Nairn, that nationalism itself is a product of the uneven development of capitalism, that it constitutes a strategy of emergent bourgeoisies in the context of world capitalism attempting to mobilize the essential resource at their disposal--the people. The development of national social formations can only be understood in response to international factors. . We have already seen how uneven development in Russia led to the combination of advanced foreign capital, a weak bourgeoisie, a volatile proletariat and an absolutist state--the major ingredients of the Russian revolution. Similarly, combined and uneven development in the United States led to hegemony being born in the factory, while in Europe hegemony had to be forged outside the factory and in the state.

If Gramsci develops a more profound understanding of the specificity of national social and political structures--both their operation and their configurations--Trotsky provides a framework in which their individual development is shaped by their relationships to one another. However, neither is able to incorporate an understanding of the dynamics of the economic into his analysis of the political and ideological. As with Marx in his political writings, Gramsci's political actors, like his crises, are wheeled in from the economic realm, which itself is never subjected to sustained analysis.

XVII. REIFICATION, POLITICS AND THE PROLETARIAT

Lukács came to Marxism via aesthetics. Art and literature were seen as the sole remaining potential moments of freedom in an age of declining capitalism. This moment of subjectivity, of transcendence, however, was itself receding. Lukács drew much from Simmel and Weber, and his early works are powerfully reminiscent of them both. His turn towards Marxism involved historicizing Weber's "iron cage" and Simmel's "objectification", projecting them as products of capitalism, as well as the search for a subject which would take history beyond capitalism--the proletariat as the identical subject-object of history. That is, the proletariat, produced by capitalism, is seen as the first class that could potentially shape history self-consciously in accordance with the interests of humanity as a whole.*

The turn from aesthetics to politics was prompted by contemporary events which engulfed the intellectual world--first the Russian Revolution, then, even more significantly for Lukács, the Hungarian revolution, and finally the missed opportunities in Germany between 1918 and 1921. Lukács became cultural commissar and military commandant during the 133 days of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919. After the regime was crushed he fled to Austria, where he continued to take part in international communist politics. His stance at this point was very much on the left. He opposed Bela Kun, the Soviet-backed leader of the Hungarian Communist Party, and supported the various movements for Council Communism, the object of Lenin's attack in LEFT-WING COMMUNISM--AN INFANTILE DISORDER in 1920. Lukács was unable to recover the trust of the leaders of the Bolshevik-controlled Comintern for a long time. He was branded at first as an ultra-leftist. His work was suspect for its implicit and sometimes quite explicit critique of what he called "vulgar Marxism."

In HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, which appeared in 1923, Lukács went very much against the stream of contemporary orthodoxy

*For an excellent treatment of Lukács, his life and his work, placed in historical context, see Arato and Breines, THE YOUNG LUKACS AND THE ORIGINS OF WESTERN MARXISM.

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by rehabilitating certain idealist currents in Marx's own work, by placing subjectivity and consciousness at the center of his analysis, and by insisting on the integral role of the spontaneous involvement of the proletariat in the making of the socialist revolution. Lukács was linked to Luxemburg, who was on her way to becoming a heretic in the communist movement for her criticism of the Bolsheviks. Although critical of her work, Lukács did lean in her direction. And even if he quoted Lenin enthusiastically, he was nevertheless subversive of the "automatic, mechanistic" Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals, while warning of the dangers of bureaucratization of communist parties. His reintroduction of the themes of alienation and reification could be used as a powerful weapon against the exigencies of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevikization of the communist movement in general.

The resurrection of the early Marx, a Marxist humanism, would be the legacy of HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS (HCC)--the forerunner of what has come to be known as Western Marxism, associated with the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, the work of Karl Korsch, French Existential Marxism, Council Communism, and the prison writings of Antonio Gramsci, who, like Lukács, restored the Hegelian moment and developed the notion of praxis. Western Marxism would emerge as a somewhat marginal oppositional stream within the communist movement--a response to both the centralization of the communist movement around the Soviet Party and the eclipse of "liberal" capitalism in favor of various forms of monopoly capitalism and fascism. It would reexamine Marxism's premises and offer a powerful critique of scientific Marxism, as itself being bound up with the categories and world-view of bourgeois thought, which leaves the communist movement irretrievably stuck in the present. Countering capitalist society on its own terrain is doomed to failure, for here the bourgeoisie is undeniably stronger.

Ironically, although Lukács was to lay the groundwork for this oppositional current, he was also to take to extremes some of the anachronistic assumptions of the orthodox Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals. HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS retains an unsubstantiated faith in capitalism's inevitable and final economic collapse, in the historic mission of the proletariat as the agent of the transition to socialism, and in a vanguard party

that voluntaristically inserts itself into the revolutionary process. But, at least as far as Western Marxism is concerned, Lukács' contribution ultimately spelled the end of the proletariat as the agent of history. The very force with which he pushed it to the front of the stage brought down the curtain on its subsequent appearances.

Imputed Consciousness and the Totality

Paradoxically, in critiquing orthodox Marxism Lukács took over many of its most problematic features, above all the idea of false consciousness. Following Luxemburg, Lenin, Kautsky and Trotsky, along with Marx and Engels themselves, Lukács made the idea of a true class interest, what he calls "class consciousness," central to his analysis. A fundamental interest is attached to each class, much as a football player carries a number on her/his back. Although the number sometimes gets dirty and one may not see it properly, the dirt can always be cleaned away to reveal the underlying truth.

What is this class consciousness?

Now class consciousness consists in fact of the appropriate and rational reactions 'imputed' to a particular typical position in the process of production. This consciousness is, therefore, neither the sum nor the average of what is thought or felt by the single individuals who make up the class. And yet the historically significant actions of the class as a whole are determined in the last resort by this consciousness and not by the thought of the individual--and these actions can be understood only by reference to this consciousness (HCC, p. 51).

How do we arrive at the imputed class consciousness? Lukács' answer is that we must take the perspective of the totality.

By relating consciousness to the whole of society it becomes possible to infer the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were able to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact on immediate action and on the whole structure of society. That is to say, it would be possible to infer the thoughts and feelings appropriate to their objective situation (HCC, p. 51).

What is the "totality"--the "whole structure of society"? Here Lukács is never particularly clear, but the notion does seem to refer, at a minimum, to a notion of society composed of interdependent institutions whose interrelationship secures a certain coherence.

This dialectical conception of totality seems to have put a great distance between itself and reality, it appears to construct reality very 'unscientifically'. But it is the only method capable of understanding and reproducing reality. Concrete totality is, therefore, the category that governs reality....

We repeat: the category of totality does not reduce its various elements to an undifferentiated uniformity, to identity. The apparent independence and autonomy which they possess in the capitalist system of production is an illusion only in so far as they are involved in a dynamic dialectical relationship with one another and can be thought of as the dynamic dialectical aspects of an equally dynamic and dialectical whole. "The result we arrive at," says Marx, "is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they are all members of one totality, different aspects of a unit.... Thus a definite form of production determines definite forms of consumption, distribution and exchange as well as definite relations between these different elements.... A mutual interaction takes place between these various elements. This is the case with every organic body" (HCC, pp. 10, 12-13).

But why this notion of what we might call a "structured" totality of interdependent parts? In taking a perspective from such a totality, Lukács is attempting to get away from seeing the present as eternal, given and fixed. He wants to unveil "process" and "change" behind the apparently frozen reality.

This image of a frozen reality that nevertheless is caught up in an unremitting, ghostly movement at once becomes meaningful when this reality is dissolved into the process of which man is the driving force (HCC, p. 181).

In constructing a "totality" composed of relations among men and women, Lukács turns the idea of the "persistence" of things into the "reproduction" of relations. Moreover, continuity or change is the direct result of active participation by people in the reproduction of relations.

Thus the knowledge that social facts are not objects but relations between men is intensified to the point where facts are wholly dissolved into processes. But if their Being appears as a Becoming this should not be construed as an abstract universal flux sweeping past, it is no vacuous durée réelle but the unbroken production and reproduction of those relations that, when torn from their context and distorted by abstract mental categories, can appear to bourgeois thinkers as things. Only at this point does the consciousness of the proletariat elevate itself to the self-consciousness of society in its historical development. By becoming aware

of the commodity relationship the proletariat can only become conscious of itself as the object of the economic process. For the commodity is produced and even the worker in his quality as commodity, as an immediate producer is at best a mechanical driving wheel in the machine. But if the reification of capital is dissolved into an unbroken process of its production and reproduction, it is possible for the proletariat to discover that it is itself the subject of this process even though it is in chains and is for the time being unconscious of the fact. As soon, therefore, as the ready-made, immediate reality is abandoned the question arises: "Does a worker in a cotton factory produce merely cotton textiles? No, he produces capital. He produces values which serve afresh to command his labour and by means of it to create new values" (HCC, pp. 180-81).

Things don't just exist: the relations they veil have to be reproduced. Similarly, facts as things have to be dissolved into the processes they conceal.

Thus only when the theoretical primacy of the 'facts' has been broken, only when every phenomenon is recognised to be a process, will it be understood that what we are wont to call 'facts' consists of processes. Only then will it be understood that the facts are nothing but the parts, the aspects of the total process that have been broken off, artificially isolated and ossified (HCC, p. 184).

Facts are a historical product:

Only in this context which sees isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a totality, can knowledge of the facts hope to become knowledge of reality (HCC, p. 8).

Once the "facts" have been dissolved into the relations they hide; once it is understood that relations do not simply persist, but must be reproduced; once it is understood that history is not a succession of events but a process of reproducing and transforming relations--then the historical, and therefore limited, nature of capitalism stands revealed. And the practical recognition of this totality by the proletariat is a necessary condition for its carrying out its historical mission.

But as the proletariat has been entrusted by history with the task of transforming society consciously, its class consciousness must develop a dialectical contradiction between its immediate interests and its long-term objectives, and between the discrete factors and the whole (HCC, p. 71; see also pp. 197-99).

Reification

There is nothing predetermined about the outbreak of revolution. Rather, it is an objective possibility which hinges on the inevitability of deepening crises and the possibility of class consciousness.

When the moment of transition to the 'realm of freedom' arrives this will become apparent just because the blind forces really will hurtle blindly towards the abyss, and only the conscious will of the proletariat will be able to save mankind from the impending catastrophe. In other words, when the final economic crisis of capitalism develops, the fate of the revolution (and with it the fate of mankind) will depend on the ideological maturity of the proletariat, i.e. on its class consciousness (HCC, p. 70).

Depending on the development of class consciousness, we will enter either socialism or barbarism. It therefore becomes imperative to examine the actual consciousness of the working class and its divergence from the imputed consciousness.

This analysis establishes right from the start the distance that separates class consciousness from the empirically given, and from the psychologically describable and explicable ideas which men form about their situation in life. But it is not enough just to state that this distance exists or even to define its implications in a formal or general way. We must discover, firstly, whether it is a phenomenon that differs according to the manner in which the various classes are related to society as a whole and whether the differences are so great as to produce qualitative distinctions. And we must discover, secondly, the practical significance of these different possible relations between the objective economic totality, the imputed class consciousness and the real, psychological thoughts of men about their lives. We must discover, in short, the practical, historical function of class consciousness (HCC, pp. 51-52).

The discrepancy between imputed class consciousness and empirically concrete thoughts, attitudes and activities is largely the result of the phenomenon of reification. Reification is at the heart of the experience of capitalism. As commodification penetrates all spheres of life, turning labor power itself into a commodity, the relations between people take on the character of a thing. Capital, for example, appears as a thing, thus hiding the reality of the relations between capitalist and laborer.

There are two aspects, one objective and one subjective, to reification. The objective side refers to the laws obeyed by these

"things" which dominate the individual, and upon which capitalist and worker alike depend. They lead a life of their own, beyond human control. From the subjective side, the result of individual activity is an object estranged from the actor; people lose control of the objects they produce (HCC, p. 87). Reification spreads throughout society, infecting concrete activities in all institutions--factories, state bureaucracies, the family, etc.--and invading bourgeois forms of thought--the separation of "is" and "ought", "necessity" and "Freedom", etc. Facts reign as inescapable things. Science and philosophy in capitalist society are no longer able to think back on their own presuppositions; they become specializations of formal rationality estranged from their own premises (HCC, pp. 110-49). What emerges here is not a structured totality of interconnected parts but an expressive totality in which a single principle--commodification or reification--comes to dominate all arenas of life.

Above all, reification invades the factory through the rationalization of the labor process. Lukács talks of the destruction of skill, craft, etc. through Taylorization and specialization, with the resulting fragmentation of subjectivity. Here we find Braverman's thesis.

In this respect, too, mechanisation makes of them isolated abstract atoms whose work no longer brings them together directly and organically; it becomes mediated to an increasing extent exclusively by the abstract laws of the mechanism which imprisons them.

The internal organisation of a factory could not possibly have such an effect--even within the factory itself--were it not for the fact that it contained in concentrated form the whole structure of capitalist society (HCC, p. 90).

But the atomization, isolation and fragmentation experienced by the individual are the reflection "in consciousness of the fact that the 'natural laws' of capitalist production have been extended to cover every manifestation of life in society; that--for the first time in history--the whole of society is subjected, or tends to be subjected, to a unified economic process, and that the fate of every member of society is determined by unified laws" (HCC, pp. 91-92). In other words, atomization, fragmentation, isolation and so on are only apparent. But they are necessary illusions, deeply inscribed in the working of capitalist society.

That is to say, the immediate, practical as well as intellectual confrontation of the individual with society, the immediate production and reproduction of life--in which for the individual the commodity structure of all 'things' and their obedience to 'natural laws' is found to exist already in a finished form, as something immutably given--could only take place in the form of rational and isolated acts of exchange between isolated commodity owners. As emphasised above, the worker, too, must present himself as the 'owner' of his labour-power, as if it were a commodity. His specific situation is defined by the fact that his labour-power is his only possession. His fate is typical of society as a whole in that this self-objectification, this transformation of a human function into a commodity reveals in all its starkness the dehumanised and dehumanising function of the commodity relation (HCC, p. 92).

Breaking Through Reification

The proletariat and the bourgeoisie emerge together with the rise of capitalism, and are equally affected by reification. As capitalism develops, however, the responses of these two fundamental classes diverge. The bourgeoisie, on the one hand, remains bound to a fragmented consciousness. Its class interests dictate that it not see beyond its nose, since to grasp the true nature of the totality would be to grasp the inevitability of its own demise.

The fact that it must necessarily remain in ignorance of the objective economic limitations of its own system expresses itself as an internal, dialectical contradiction in its class consciousness (HCC, p. 64).

The fragmented nature of bourgeois thought, its empiricism and individualism, the separation of theory and practice and of "is" and "ought", become necessary components of the dominant ideology. But, by the same token, the proletariat is compelled to go beyond reification to pierce the supposed eternality of what exists.

For the bourgeoisie, method arises directly from its social existence and this means that mere immediacy adheres to its thought, constituting its outermost barrier, one that cannot be crossed. In contrast to this the proletariat is confronted by the need to break through this barrier, to overcome it inwardly from the very start by adopting its own point of view. And as it is the nature of the dialectical method constantly to produce and reproduce its own essential aspects, as its very being constitutes the denial of any smooth, linear development of ideas, the proletariat finds itself repeatedly confronted with the problem of its

own point of departure both in its efforts to increase its theoretical grasp of reality and to initiate practical historical measures. For the proletariat the barrier imposed by immediacy has become an inward barrier (HCC, p. 164).

The possibility of the proletariat transcending reification is no more than just that--a possibility.

The proposition with which we began, viz. that in capitalist society reality is--immediately--the same for both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, remains unaltered. But we may now add that this same reality employs the motor of class interests to keep the bourgeoisie imprisoned within this immediacy while forcing the proletariat to go beyond it (HCC, p. 164).

... it appears that while the bourgeoisie remains enmeshed in its immediacy by virtue of its class role, the proletariat is driven by the specific dialectics of its class situation to abandon it....

For the proletariat the 'same' process means its own emergence as a class. In both cases a transformation from quantity to quality is involved. We need only consider the line of development leading from the mediaeval craft via simple co-operation and manufacture to the modern factory and we shall see the extent to which even for the bourgeoisie the qualitative changes stand out as milestones on the road. The class meaning of these changes lies precisely in the fact that the bourgeoisie regularly transforms each new qualitative gain back on to the quantitative level of yet another rational calculation. Whereas for the proletariat the 'same' development has a different class meaning: it means the abolition of the isolated individual, it means that workers can become conscious of the social character of labour, it means that the abstract, universal form of the societal principle as it is manifested can be increasingly concretised and overcome (HCC, p. 171).

All this is still in the realm of possibility. What are the concrete forces that compel the proletariat to achieve a class consciousness? Lukács argues that the various processes of homogenization of the proletariat (concentration in factories, mechanization and standardization of work processes, and the levelling of the standard of living) are only indispensable preconditions for the emergence of the proletariat as a class (HCC, p. 173). His most original argument is that the proletariat becomes conscious of its own class interests and aspires towards the totality by virtue of its being subjected to an extreme form of commodification.

Above all the worker can only become conscious of his existence in society when he becomes aware of himself as a commodity. As we have seen, his immediate existence integrates him as a pure, naked object into the production process. Once this immediacy turns out to be the consequence of a multiplicity of mediations, once it becomes evident how much it presupposes, then the fetishistic forms of the commodity system begin to dissolve: in the commodity the worker recognises himself and his own relations with capital. Inasmuch as he is incapable in practice of raising himself above the role of object his consciousness is the self-consciousness of the commodity; or in other words it is the self-knowledge, the self-revelation of the capitalist society founded upon the production and exchange of commodities (HCC, p. 168).

It is only the proletariat that achieves class consciousness, because it faces in its work situation the naked and abstract form of the commodity:

He (the worker) is able therefore to objectify himself completely against his existence while the man reified in the bureaucracy, for instance, is turned into a commodity, mechanised and reified in the only faculties that might enable him to rebel against reification (HCC, p. 172).

Lukács also argues that it is in crises, which are but the "heightening of the degree and intensity of the daily life of bourgeois society" (HCC, p. 101), that the "natural laws" which hold society together are revealed for the illusion that they really are. In crises the totality is revealed in all its fragility (HCC, pp. 74-75, 101). Finally, following Marx, Lukács claims that class struggles dissolve the fragmentation and isolation within the proletariat (HCC, p. 65).

The struggle for this society, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is merely a phase, is not just a battle waged against an external enemy, the bourgeoisie. It is equally the struggle of the proletariat against itself: against the devastating and degrading effects of the capitalist system upon its class consciousness. The proletariat will only have won the real victory when it has overcome these effects within itself. The separation of the areas that should be united, the diverse stages of consciousness which the proletariat has reached in the various spheres of activity are a precise index of what has been achieved and what remains to be done (HCC, pp. 80-81).

The Making of the Proletariat: From Self-Realization to the Party
Lukács' earlier messianic optimism, his Luxemburgian faith in

proletarian self-realization, gives way to greater skepticism. With the failure of the German revolution and the Bolshevization of the Comintern, Lukács entrusts the party with safeguarding and advancing the historic mission of the proletariat.

Throughout his essays in HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS Lukács draws attention to other impediments of revolutionary struggles, apart from reification of immediate consciousness: the opportunism of social democratic parties, which fight against revolutionary developments; the risks involved in combatting the bourgeoisie on its own terrain, where it is clearly more powerful; the problems associated with the institutional separation of political and economic struggles; and, linked to that, the connection of short- and long-term goals. In 1922, in his essay "Toward a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation," Lukács adds a few more obstacles, including structural divisions within the proletariat and the counter-revolutionary role of other classes, particularly the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, who support and manage the state. These developments place even greater burdens on the party in its endeavor to forge working class solidarity.

Here Lukács pins his hopes on a "voluntaristic" party as a substitute for the self-realization of the proletariat. The party becomes the carrier of the revolutionary movement, bridging the gap between empirical consciousness and imputed interests. As ever, Lukács insists that the party be responsive to rank and file, that it cannot be the bearer of "true theory" without being in close touch with the living pulse of the proletariat. Nevertheless, it has to be an independent party made up of dedicated revolutionaries. Lukács confronts the question of reification and bureaucratization within the party directly.

The party as a whole transcends the reified divisions according to nation, profession, etc., and according to modes of life (economics and politics) by virtue of its action. For this is oriented towards revolutionary unity and collaboration and aims to establish the true unity of the proletarian class. And what it does as a whole it performs likewise for its individual members. Its closely-knit organisation with its resulting iron discipline and its demand for total commitment tears away the reified veils that cloud the consciousness of the individual in capitalist society. The fact that this is a laborious process and that we are only just beginning cannot be allowed

to prevent us from acknowledging as clearly as we can the principle that we perceive here and demand for the class-conscious worker: the approach of the 'realm of freedom'. Precisely because the rise of the Communist Party can only be the conscious achievement of the class-conscious workers every step in the direction of true knowledge is at the same time a step towards converting that knowledge into practical reality (HCC, p. 339).

An attack on reification, fragmentation and other legacies of capitalism becomes the raison d'être of the party. The party therefore demands the involvement of the total personality under iron discipline. This is indeed a far cry from Lukács' preoccupation with workers' councils two or three years before. Both are bold responses in a period when revolutionary consciousness was not easily forged; both fall into the trap of becoming mythologies in Lukács' sense of the word:

Mythologies are always born where two terminal points, or at least two stages in a movement, have to be regarded as terminal points without its being possible to discover any concrete mediation between them and the movement.

... mythology is simply the reproduction in imagination of the problem in its insolubility (HCC, p. 194).

Conclusion

Lukács is the first major Marxist to return to the examination of the labor process from the point of view of the production of consciousness. His analysis of reification parallels Braverman's analysis of deskilling and objectification. Both ultimately present a view of the destruction of subjectivity, although they part company in their analyses of politics. Braverman omits the political dimension almost entirely, while Lukács straddles the division between production and politics with a messianic party brought in as a deus ex machina. Lukács' one-sided treatment of the labor process as incapable of transcending fragmentation, isolation, atomization, etc. provokes an equally one-sided treatment of the party and politics. His party is a vessel of rationality and discipline fighting in a sea of reification. It is the pure negation of an expressive totality. There is no sense of the party operating in a structured totality comprised of interdependent parts which shape the conditions of its development and the possible forms it can assume.

In other words, although Lukács criticizes bourgeois thought

for its failure to grasp how capitalism works as a system, as a conglomeration of interdependent parts--that is, as a structured totality--in practice he himself clings to an expressive totality dominated by the principle of commodification. The imagery he conjures up is one in which instrumental rationality and reification penetrate all institutions, which are themselves connected through substantively irrational mechanisms. But this disjuncture between arenas of formal rationality and substantive irrationality is too stark. Relations among capitalists cannot be reduced to the blind forces of the market; capitalists can and obviously do begin to develop an understanding of the whole--they begin to tame the market and introduce planning; they begin to contain the crisis tendencies of the system. The final economic catastrophe is therefore another myth in Lukács' carefully constructed scheme.

If the anarchy of the market can be reduced, so can despotism in the factory. Indeed, not only is the reduction of people to things impossible, but its accomplishment would be the surest means of securing capitalism's collapse. Although there are tendencies towards fragmentation, isolation, etc. in the labor process, the latter can only function effectively through the active cooperation of the direct producer. As industrial sociology has demonstrated, rules and regulations, if too tightly enforced, lead to a malfunctioning of the system--to work to rule is to sabotage the system. Any institution requires the creative intervention of all participants in its daily life if it is to survive. However, the arena of subjectivity which Lukács eliminates not only becomes critical for the smooth coordination of activities but also provides a basis from which further resistance can be launched. By insisting on an extreme reification thesis, Lukács' theory has difficulty comprehending how atomization can turn into class struggle, except, of course, as organized by the untainted party. One may argue more realistically that capitalism, as a condition of its own existence, produces arenas of resistance which then become the basis of either incorporation or class struggle.