

From ANTONIO GRAMSCI, SELECTIONS From Prison Notebooks

THE INTELLECTUALS

INTRODUCTION

The central argument of Gramsci's essay on the formation of the intellectuals is simple. The notion of "the intellectuals" as a distinct social category independent of class is a myth. All men are potentially intellectuals in the sense of having an intellect and using it, but not all are intellectuals by social function. Intellectuals in the functional sense fall into two groups. In the first place there are the "traditional" professional intellectuals, literary, scientific and so on, whose position in the interstices of society has a certain inter-class aura about it but derives ultimately from past and present class relations and conceals an attachment to various historical class formations. Secondly, there are the "organic" intellectuals, the thinking and organising element of a particular fundamental social class. These organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong.

The implications of this highly original schema bear on all aspects of Gramsci's thought. Philosophically they connect with the proposition (p. 323) that "all men are philosophers" and with Gramsci's whole discussion of the dissemination of philosophical ideas and of ideology within a given culture. They relate to Gramsci's ideas on Education (pp. 26-43) in their stress on the democratic character of the intellectual function, but also on the class character of the formation of intellectuals through school. They also underlie his study of history and particularly of the *Risorgimento*, in that the intellectuals, in the wide sense of the word, are seen by Gramsci as performing an essential mediating function in the struggle of class forces.

Most important of all, perhaps, are the implications for the political struggle. Social Democracy, following Kautsky, has tended to see the relationship between workers and intellectuals in the Socialist movement in formal and mechanistic terms, with the intellectuals—refugees from the bourgeois class—providing theory and ideology (and often leadership) for a mass base of non-intellectuals, i.e. workers. This division of labour within the movement was vigorously contested by Lenin, who declares, in *What is to be Done*, that in the revolutionary party "all distinctions as

between workers and intellectuals . . . must be obliterated". Lenin's attitude to the problem of the intellectuals is closely connected with his theory of the vanguard party, and when he writes about the need for socialist consciousness to be brought to the working class from outside, the agency he foresees for carrying this out is not the traditional intelligentsia but the revolutionary party itself, in which former workers and former professional intellectuals of bourgeois origin have been fused into a single cohesive unit. Gramsci develops this Leninist schema in a new way, relating it to the problems of the working class as a whole. The working class, like the bourgeoisie before it, is capable of developing from within its ranks its own organic intellectuals, and the function of the political party, whether mass or vanguard, is that of channelling the activity of these organic intellectuals and providing a link between the class and certain sections of the traditional intelligentsia. The organic intellectuals of the working class are defined on the one hand by their role in production and in the organisation of work and on the other by their "directive" political role, focused on the Party. It is through this assumption of conscious responsibility, aided by absorption of ideas and personnel from the more advanced bourgeois intellectual strata, that the proletariat can escape from defensive corporatism and economism and advance towards hegemony.

THE INTELLECTUALS

THE FORMATION OF THE INTELLECTUALS

Are intellectuals an autonomous and independent social group, or does every social group have its own particular specialised category of intellectuals? The problem is a complex one, because of the variety of forms assumed to date by the real historical process of formation of the different categories of intellectuals.

The most important of these forms are two:

1. Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata¹ of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organisers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc. It should be noted that the entrepreneur himself represents a higher level of social elaboration, already characterised by a certain directive [*dirigente*]² and technical (i.e. intellectual) capacity: he must have a certain technical capacity, not only in the limited sphere of his activity and initiative but in other spheres as well, at least in those which are closest to economic production. He must be an organiser of masses of men; he must be an organiser of the "confidence" of investors in his business, of the customers for his product, etc.

If not all entrepreneurs, at least an *élite* amongst them must have the capacity to be an organiser of society in general, including all its complex organism of services, right up to the state organism, because of the need to create the conditions most favourable to the

¹ The Italian word here is "*celi*" which does not carry quite the same connotations as "strata", but which we have been forced to translate in that way for lack of alternatives. It should be noted that Gramsci tends, for reasons of censorship, to avoid using the word *class* in contexts where its Marxist overtones would be apparent, preferring (as for example in this sentence) the more neutral "social group". The word "group", however, is not always a euphemism for "class", and to avoid ambiguity Gramsci uses the phrase "fundamental social group" when he wishes to emphasise the fact that he is referring to one or other of the major social classes (bourgeoisie, proletariat) defined in strict Marxist terms by its position in the fundamental relations of production. Class groupings which do not have this fundamental role are often described as "castes" (aristocracy, etc.). The word "category", on the other hand, which also occurs on this page, Gramsci tends to use in the standard Italian sense of members of a trade or profession, though also more generally. Throughout this edition we have rendered Gramsci's usage as literally as possible (see note on Gramsci's Terminology, p. xiii).

² See note on Gramsci's Terminology.

expansion of their own class; or at the least they must possess the capacity to choose the deputies (specialised employees) to whom to entrust this activity of organising the general system of relationships external to the business itself. It can be observed that the "organic" intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development, are for the most part "specialisations" of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence.*

Even feudal lords were possessors of a particular technical capacity, military capacity, and it is precisely from the moment at which the aristocracy loses its monopoly of technico-military capacity that the crisis of feudalism begins. But the formation of intellectuals in the feudal world and in the preceding classical world is a question to be examined separately: this formation and elaboration follows ways and means which must be studied concretely. Thus it is to be noted that the mass of the peasantry, although it performs an essential function in the world of production, does not elaborate its own "organic" intellectuals, nor does it "assimilate" any stratum of "traditional" intellectuals, although it is from the peasantry that other social groups draw many of their intellectuals and a high proportion of traditional intellectuals are of peasant origin.⁴

2. However, every "essential" social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression

* Mosca's *Elementi di Scienza Politica* (new expanded edition, 1923) are worth looking at in this connection. Mosca's so-called "political class" is nothing other than the intellectual category of the dominant social group. Mosca's concept of "political class" can be connected with Pareto's concept of the *elite*, which is another attempt to interpret the historical phenomenon of the intellectuals and their function in the life of the state and of society. Mosca's book is an enormous hotch-potch, of a sociological and positivistic character, plus the tendentiousness of immediate politics which makes it less indigestible and livelier from a literary point of view.

* Usually translated in English as "ruling class", which is also the title of the English version of Mosca's *Elementi* (G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, New York 1939). Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) was, together with Pareto and Michels, one of the major early Italian exponents of the theory of political *elites*. Although sympathetic to fascism, Mosca was basically a conservative, who saw the *elite* in rather more static terms than did some of his fellows.

* Notably in Southern Italy. See below, "The Different Position of Urban and Rural-type Intellectuals", pp. 14-23. Gramsci's general argument, here as elsewhere in the *Quaderni*, is that the person of peasant origin who becomes an "intellectual" (priest, lawyer, etc.) generally thereby ceases to be organically linked to his class of origin. One of the essential differences between, say, the Catholic Church and the revolutionary party of the working class lies in the fact that, ideally, the proletariat should be able to generate its own "organic" intellectuals within the class and who remain intellectuals of their class.

of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to the present) categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms.

The most typical of these categories of intellectuals is that of the ecclesiastics, who for a long time (for a whole phase of history, which is partly characterised by this very monopoly) held a monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works, etc. The category of ecclesiastics can be considered the category of intellectuals organically bound to the landed aristocracy. It had equal status juridically with the aristocracy, with which it shared the exercise of feudal ownership of land, and the use of state privileges connected with property.* But the monopoly held by the ecclesiastics in the superstructural field** was not exercised without a struggle or without limitations, and hence there took place the birth, in various forms (to be gone into and studied concretely), of other categories, favoured and enabled to expand by the growing strength of the central power of the monarch, right up to absolutism. Thus we find the formation of the *noblesse de robe*, with its own privileges, a stratum of administrators, etc., scholars and scientists, theorists, non-ecclesiastical philosophers, etc.

Since these various categories of traditional intellectuals experience through an "*esprit de corps*" their uninterrupted historical continuity and their special qualification, they thus put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group. This self-assessment is not without consequences in the ideological and political field, consequences of wide-ranging import. The whole of

* For one category of these intellectuals, possibly the most important after the ecclesiastical for its prestige and the social function it performed in primitive societies, the category of medical men in the wide sense, that is all those who "struggle" or seem to struggle against death and disease, compare the *Storia della medicina* of Arturo Castiglioni. Note that there has been a connection between religion and medicine, and in certain areas there still is: hospitals in the hands of religious orders for certain organisational functions, apart from the fact that wherever the doctor appears, so does the priest (exorcism, various forms of assistance, etc.). Many great religious figures were and are conceived of as great "healers": the idea of miracles, up to the resurrection of the dead. Even in the case of kings the belief long survived that they could heal with the laying on of hands, etc.

** From this has come the general sense of "intellectual" or "specialist" of the word "*cleric*" (clerk, cleric) in many languages of romance origin or heavily influenced, through church Latin, by the romance languages, together with its correlative "*laico*" (lay, layman) in the sense of profane, non-specialist.

idealist philosophy can easily be connected with this position assumed by the social complex of intellectuals and can be defined as the expression of that social utopia by which the intellectuals think of themselves as "independent", autonomous, endowed with a character of their own, etc.

One should note however that if the Pope and the leading hierarchy of the Church consider themselves more linked to Christ and to the apostles than they are to senators Agnelli and Benni,⁵ the same does not hold for Gentile and Croce, for example: Croce in particular feels himself closely linked to Aristotle and Plato, but he does not conceal, on the other hand, his links with senators Agnelli and Benni, and it is precisely here that one can discern the most significant character of Croce's philosophy.

What are the "maximum" limits of acceptance of the term "intellectual"? Can one find a unitary criterion to characterise equally all the diverse and disparate activities of intellectuals and to distinguish these at the same time and in an essential way from the activities of other social groupings? The most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations. Indeed the worker or proletarian, for example, is not specifically characterised by his manual or instrumental work, but by performing this work in specific conditions and in specific social relations (apart from the consideration that purely physical labour does not exist and that even Taylor's phrase of "trained gorilla"⁶ is a metaphor to indicate a limit in a certain direction: in any physical work, even the most degraded and mechanical, there exists a minimum of technical qualification, that is, a minimum of creative intellectual activity.) And we have already observed that the entrepreneur, by virtue of his very function, must have to some degree a certain number of qualifications of an intellectual nature although his part in society is determined not by these, but by the general social relations which specifically characterise the position of the entrepreneur within industry.

⁵ Heads of FIAT and Montecatini (Chemicals) respectively. For Agnelli, of whom Gramsci had direct experience during the *Ordine Nuovo* period, see note 11 on p. 286.

⁶ For Frederick Taylor and his notion of the manual worker as a "trained gorilla", see Gramsci's essay *Americanism and Fordism*, pp. 277-318 of this volume.

All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals.*

When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional category of the intellectuals, that is, one has in mind the direction in which their specific professional activity is weighted, whether towards intellectual elaboration or towards muscular-nervous effort. This means that, although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist. But even the relationship between efforts of intellectual-cerebral elaboration and muscular-nervous effort is not always the same, so that there are varying degrees of specific intellectual activity. There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*.⁷ Each man, finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher", an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.

The problem of creating a new stratum of intellectuals consists therefore in the critical elaboration of the intellectual activity that exists in everyone at a certain degree of development, modifying its relationship with the muscular-nervous effort towards a new equilibrium, and ensuring that the muscular-nervous effort itself, in so far as it is an element of a general practical activity, which is perpetually innovating the physical and social world, becomes the foundation of a new and integral conception of the world. The traditional and vulgarised type of the intellectual is given by the man of letters, the philosopher, the artist. Therefore journalists, who claim to be men of letters, philosophers, artists, also regard themselves as the "true" intellectuals. In the modern world, technical education, closely bound to industrial labour even at the most primitive and unqualified level, must form the basis of the new type of intellectual.

On this basis the weekly *Ordine Nuovo*⁸ worked to develop certain

* Thus, because it can happen that everyone at some time fries a couple of eggs or sews up a tear in a jacket, we do not necessarily say that everyone is a cook or a tailor.

⁷ I.e. Man the maker (or tool-bearer) and Man the thinker.

⁸ The *Ordine Nuovo*, the magazine edited by Gramsci during his days as a

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 a simple orator (but superior at the same time to the abstract mathematical spirit); from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception of history, without which one remains "specialised" and does not become "directive" (specialised and political).

Thus there are historically formed specialised categories for the exercise of the intellectual function. They are formed in connection with all social groups, but especially in connection with the more important, and they undergo more extensive and complex elaboration in connection with the dominant social group. One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer "ideologically" the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals.

The enormous development of activity and organisation of education in the broad sense in the societies that emerged from the medieval world is an index of the importance assumed in the modern world by intellectual functions and categories. Parallel with the attempt to deepen and to broaden the "intellectuality" of each individual, there has also been an attempt to multiply and narrow the various specialisations. This can be seen from educational institutions at all levels, up to and including the organisms that exist to promote so-called "high culture" in all fields of science and technology.

School is the instrument through which intellectuals of various levels are elaborated. The complexity of the intellectual function in different states can be measured objectively by the number and

militant in Turin, ran as a "weekly review of Socialist culture" in 1919 and 1920. See Introduction, pp. xxxv ff.

* "Dirigente." This extremely condensed and elliptical sentence contains a number of key Gramscian ideas: on the possibility of proletarian cultural hegemony through domination of the work process, on the distinction between organic intellectuals of the working class and traditional intellectuals from outside, on the unity of theory and practice as a basic Marxist postulate, etc.

gradation of specialised schools: the more extensive the "area" covered by education and the more numerous the "vertical" "levels" of schooling, the more complex is the cultural world, the civilisation, of a particular state. A point of comparison can be found in the sphere of industrial technology: the industrialisation of a country can be measured by how well equipped it is in the production of machines with which to produce machines, and in the manufacture of ever more accurate instruments for making both machines and further instruments for making machines, etc. The country which is best equipped in the construction of instruments for experimental scientific laboratories and in the construction of instruments with which to test the first instruments, can be regarded as the most complex in the technical-industrial field, with the highest level of civilisation, etc. The same applies to the preparation of intellectuals and to the schools dedicated to this preparation; schools and institutes of high culture can be assimilated to each other. In this field also, quantity cannot be separated from quality. To the most refined technical-cultural specialisation there cannot but correspond the maximum possible diffusion of primary education and the maximum care taken to expand the middle grades numerically as much as possible. Naturally this need to provide the widest base possible for the selection and elaboration of the top intellectual qualifications—i.e. to give a democratic structure to high culture and top-level technology—is not without its disadvantages: it creates the possibility of vast crises of unemployment for the middle intellectual strata, and in all modern societies this actually takes place.

It is worth noting that the elaboration of intellectual strata in concrete reality does not take place on the terrain of abstract democracy but in accordance with very concrete traditional historical processes. Strata have grown up which traditionally "produce" intellectuals and these strata coincide with those which have specialised in "saving", i.e. the petty and middle landed bourgeoisie and certain strata of the petty and middle urban bourgeoisie. The varying distribution of different types of school (classical and professional)¹⁰ over the "economic" territory and the varying aspirations of different categories within these strata determine, or give form to, the production of various branches of

¹⁰ The Italian school system above compulsory level is based on a division between academic ("classical" and "scientific") education and vocational training for professional purposes. Technical and, at the academic level, "scientific" colleges tend to be concentrated in the Northern industrial areas.

intellectual specialisation. Thus in Italy the rural bourgeoisie produces in particular state functionaries and professional people, whereas the urban bourgeoisie produces technicians for industry. Consequently it is largely northern Italy which produces technicians and the South which produces functionaries and professional men.

The relationship between the intellectuals and the world of production is not as direct as it is with the fundamental social groups but is, in varying degrees, "mediated" by the whole fabric of society and by the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the "functionaries". It should be possible both to measure the "organic quality" [*organicità*] of the various intellectual strata and their degree of connection with a fundamental social group, and to establish a gradation of their functions and of the superstructures from the bottom to the top (from the structural base upwards). 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. The functions in question are precisely organisational and connective. The intellectuals are the dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government. These comprise:

1. The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.

2. 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.

This way of posing the problem has as a result a considerable extension of the concept of intellectual, but it is the only way which enables one to reach a concrete approximation of reality. It also clashes with preconceptions of caste. The function of organising

social hegemony and state domination certainly gives rise to a particular division of labour and therefore to a whole hierarchy of qualifications in some of which there is no apparent attribution of directive or organisational functions. For example, in the apparatus of social and state direction there exist a whole series of jobs of a manual and instrumental character (non-executive work, agents rather than officials or functionaries).¹¹ It is obvious that such a distinction has to be made just as it is obvious that other distinctions have to be made as well. Indeed, intellectual activity must also be distinguished in terms of its intrinsic characteristics, according to levels which in moments of extreme opposition represent a real qualitative difference—at the highest level would be the creators of the various sciences, philosophy, art, etc., at the lowest the most humble "administrators" and divulgators of pre-existing, traditional, accumulated intellectual wealth.*

In the modern world the category of intellectuals, understood in this sense, has undergone an unprecedented expansion. The democratic-bureaucratic system has given rise to a great mass of functions which are not all justified by the social necessities of production, though they are justified by the political necessities of the dominant fundamental group. Hence Loria's¹² conception of the unproductive "worker" (but unproductive in relation to whom and to what mode of production?), a conception which could in part be justified if one takes account of the fact that these masses exploit their position to take for themselves a large cut out of the national income. Mass formation has standardised individuals both psychologically and in terms of individual qualification and has produced the same phenomena as with other standardised masses: competition which makes necessary organisations for the defence of

¹¹ "funzionari": In Italian usage the word is applied to the middle and higher echelons of the bureaucracy. Conversely "administrators" ("*amministratori*") is used here (end of paragraph) to mean people who merely "administer" the decisions of others. The phrase "non-executive work" is a translation of "[*impiego*] di ordine e non di concetto" which refers to distinctions within clerical work.

* Here again military organisation offers a model of complex gradations between subaltern officers, senior officers and general staff, not to mention the NCO's, whose importance is greater than is generally admitted. It is worth observing that all these parts feel a solidarity and indeed that it is the lower strata that display the most blatant *esprit de corps*, from which they derive a certain "conceit"¹³ which is apt to lay them open to jokes and witticisms.

¹² "Loria". This is a reference to an idea of Vico (see note 41 on p. 151).

¹³ For Loria see note 108 on p. 458. The notion of the "unproductive labourer" is not in fact an invention of Loria's but has its origins in Marx's definitions of productive and unproductive labour in *Capital*, which Loria, in his characteristic way, both vulgarised and claimed as his own discovery.

professions, unemployment, over-production in the schools, emigration, etc.

THE DIFFERENT POSITION OF URBAN AND RURAL-TYPE INTELLECTUALS

Intellectuals of the urban type have grown up along with industry and are linked to its fortunes. Their function can be compared to that of subaltern officers in the army. They have no autonomous initiative in elaborating plans for construction. Their job is to articulate the relationship between the entrepreneur and the instrumental mass and to carry out the immediate execution of the production plan decided by the industrial general staff, controlling the elementary stages of work. On the whole the average urban intellectuals are very standardised, while the top urban intellectuals are more and more identified with the industrial general staff itself.

Intellectuals of the rural type are for the most part "traditional", that is they are linked to the social mass of country people and the town (particularly small-town) petite bourgeoisie, not as yet elaborated and set in motion by the capitalist system. This type of intellectual brings into contact the peasant masses with the local and state administration (lawyers, notaries, etc.). Because of this activity they have an important politico-social function, since professional mediation is difficult to separate from political. Furthermore: in the countryside the intellectual (priest, lawyer, notary, teacher, doctor, etc.), has on the whole a higher or at least a different living standard from that of the average peasant and consequently represents a social model for the peasant to look to in his aspiration to escape from or improve his condition. The peasant always thinks that at least one of his sons could become an intellectual (especially a priest), thus becoming a gentleman and raising the social level of the family by facilitating its economic life through the connections which he is bound to acquire with the rest of the gentry. The peasant's attitude towards the intellectual is double and appears contradictory. He respects the social position of the intellectuals and in general that of state employees, but sometimes affects contempt for it, which means that his admiration is mingled with instinctive elements of envy and impassioned anger. One can understand nothing of the collective life of the peasantry and of the germs and ferments of development which exist within it, if one does not take into consideration and examine concretely and in

depth this effective subordination to the intellectuals. Every organic development of the peasant masses, up to a certain point, is linked to and depends on movements among the intellectuals.

With the urban intellectuals it is another matter. Factory technicians do not exercise any political function over the instrumental masses, or at least this is a phase that has been superseded. Sometimes, rather, the contrary takes place, and the instrumental masses, at least in the person of their own organic intellectuals, exercise a political influence on the technicians.

The central point of the question remains the distinction between intellectuals as an organic category of every fundamental social group and intellectuals as a traditional category. From this distinction there flow a whole series of problems and possible questions for historical research.

The most interesting problem is that which, when studied from this point of view, relates to the modern political party, its real origins, its developments and the forms which it takes. What is the character of the political party in relation to the problem of the intellectuals? Some distinctions must be made:

1. The political party for some social groups is nothing other than their specific way of elaborating their own category of organic intellectuals directly in the political and philosophical field and not just in the field of productive technique. These intellectuals are formed in this way and cannot indeed be formed in any other way, given the general character and the conditions of formation, life and development of the social group.*

2. 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.¹⁴ The party carries out this function in strict dependence on its basic function, which is that of elaborating its own component parts—those elements of a social group which

* Within productive technique those strata are formed which can be said to correspond to NCO's in the army, that is to say, for the town, skilled and specialised workers and, for the country (in a more complex fashion) share-cropping and tenant farmers—since in general terms these types of farmer correspond more or less to the type of the artisan, who is the skilled worker of a mediæval economy.

¹⁴ Although this passage is ostensibly concerned with the sociology of political parties in general, Gramsci is clearly particularly interested here in the theory of the revolutionary party and the role within it of the intellectuals. See Introduction to this Section.

has been born and developed as an "economic" group—and of turning them into qualified political intellectuals, leaders [*dirigenti*] and organisers of all the activities and functions inherent in the organic development of an integral society, both civil and political. Indeed it can be said that within its field the political party accomplishes its function more completely and organically than the State does within its admittedly far larger field. An intellectual who joins the political party of a particular social group is merged with the organic intellectuals of the group itself, and is linked tightly with the group. This takes place through participation in the life of the State only to a limited degree and often not at all. Indeed it happens that many intellectuals think that they *are* the State, a belief which, given the magnitude of the category, occasionally has important consequences and leads to unpleasant complications for the fundamental economic group which *really* is the State.

That all members of a political party should be regarded as intellectuals is an affirmation that can easily lend itself to mockery and caricature. But if one thinks about it nothing could be more exact. There are of course distinctions of level to be made. A party might have a greater or lesser proportion of members in the higher grades or in the lower, but this is not the point. What matters is the function, which is directive and organisational, i.e. educative, i.e. intellectual. A tradesman does not join a political party in order to do business, nor an industrialist in order to produce more at lower cost, nor a peasant to learn new methods of cultivation, even if some aspects of these demands of the tradesman, the industrialist or the peasant can find satisfaction in the party.*

For these purposes, within limits, there exists the professional association, in which the economic-corporate activity of the tradesman, industrialist or peasant is most suitably promoted. In the political party the elements of an economic social group get beyond that moment of their historical development and become agents of more general activities of a national and international character. This function of a political party should emerge even more clearly from a concrete historical analysis of how both organic and traditional categories of intellectuals have developed in the context of different national histories and in that of the development of the various major social groups within each nation, particularly those groups whose economic activity has been largely instrumental.

* Common opinion tends to oppose this, maintaining that the tradesman, industrialist or peasant who engages in "politicising" loses rather than gains, and is the worst type of all—which is debatable.

The formation of traditional intellectuals is the most interesting problem historically. It is undoubtedly connected with slavery in the classical world and with the position of freed men of Greek or Oriental origin in the social organisation of the Roman Empire.

Note. The change in the condition of the social position of the intellectuals in Rome between Republican and Imperial times (a change from an aristocratic-corporate to a democratic-bureaucratic régime) is due to Caesar, who granted citizenship to doctors and to masters of liberal arts so that they would be more willing to live in Rome and so that others should be persuaded to come there. ("*Omnesque medicinam Romae professos et liberalium artium doctores, quo libentius et ipsi urbem incolerent et coeteri appeterent civitate donavit.*" Suetonius, *Life of Caesar*, XLII.) Caesar therefore proposed: 1. to establish in Rome those intellectuals who were already there, thus creating a permanent category of intellectuals, since without their permanent residence there no cultural organisation could be created; and 2. to attract to Rome the best intellectuals from all over the Roman Empire, thus promoting centralisation on a massive scale. In this way there came into being the category of "imperial" intellectuals in Rome which was to be continued by the Catholic clergy and to leave so many traces in the history of Italian intellectuals, such as their characteristic "cosmopolitanism", up to the eighteenth century.

This not only social but national and racial separation between large masses of intellectuals and the dominant class of the Roman Empire is repeated after the fall of the Empire in the division between Germanic warriors and intellectuals of romanised origin, successors of the category of freedmen. Interwoven with this phenomenon are the birth and development of Catholicism and of the ecclesiastical organisation which for many centuries absorbs the major part of intellectual activities and exercises a monopoly of cultural direction with penal sanctions against anyone who attempted to oppose or even evade the monopoly. In Italy we can observe the phenomenon, whose intensity varies from period to period, of the cosmopolitan function of the intellectuals of the peninsula. I shall now turn to the differences which are instantly apparent in the development of the intellectuals in a number of the more important countries, with the proviso that these observations require to be controlled and examined in more depth.

As far as Italy is concerned the central fact is precisely the international or cosmopolitan function of its intellectuals, which is

both cause and effect of the state of disintegration in which the peninsula remained from the fall of the Roman Empire up to 1870.

France offers the example of an accomplished form of harmonious development of the energies of the nation and of the intellectual categories in particular. When in 1789 a new social grouping makes its political appearance on the historical stage, it is already completely equipped for all its social functions and can therefore struggle for total dominion of the nation. It does not have to make any essential compromises with the old classes but instead can subordinate them to its own ends. The first intellectual cells of the new type are born along with their first economic counterparts. Even ecclesiastical organisation is influenced (gallicanism, precocious struggles between Church and State). This massive intellectual construction explains the function of culture in France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was a function of international and cosmopolitan outward radiation and of imperialistic and hegemonic expansion in an organic fashion, very different therefore from the Italian experience, which was founded on scattered personal migration and did not react on the national base to potentiate it but on the contrary contributed to rendering the constitution of a solid national base impossible.

In England the development is very different from France. The new social grouping that grew up on the basis of modern industrialism shows a remarkable economic-corporate development but advances only gropingly in the intellectual-political field. There is a very extensive category of organic intellectuals—those, that is, who come into existence on the same industrial terrain as the economic group—but in the higher sphere we find that the old land-owning class preserves its position of virtual monopoly. It loses its economic supremacy but maintains for a long time a politico-intellectual supremacy and is assimilated as “traditional intellectuals” and as directive [*dirigente*] group by the new group in power. The old land-owning aristocracy is joined to the industrialists by a kind of suture which is precisely that which in other countries unites the traditional intellectuals with the new dominant classes.

The English phenomenon appears also in Germany, but complicated by other historical and traditional elements. Germany, like Italy, was the seat of an universalistic and supranational institution and ideology, the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and provided a certain number of personnel for the mediaeval cosmopolis, impoverishing its own internal energies and arousing

struggles which distracted from problems of national organisation and perpetuated the territorial disintegration of the Middle Ages. Industrial development took place within a semi-feudal integument that persisted up to November 1918, and the *Junkers* preserved a politico-intellectual supremacy considerably greater even than that of the corresponding group in England. They were the traditional intellectuals of the German industrialists, but retained special privileges and a strong consciousness of being an independent social group, based on the fact that they held considerable economic power over the land, which was more “productive”¹⁵ than in England. The Prussian *Junkers* resemble a priestly-military caste, with a virtual monopoly of directive-organisational functions in political society, but possessing at the same time an economic base of its own and so not exclusively dependent on the liberality of the dominant economic group. Furthermore, unlike the English land-owning aristocracy, the *Junkers* constituted the officer class of a large standing army, which gave them solid organisational cadres favouring the preservation of an *esprit de corps* and of their political monopoly.*

In Russia various features: the political and economico-commercial organisation was created by the Norman (Varangians), and religious organisation by the Byzantine Greeks. In a later period the Germans and the French brought to Russia the European experience and gave a first consistent skeleton to the protoplasm of Russian history. National forces were inert, passive and receptive, but perhaps precisely for this reason they assimilated completely the foreign influences and the foreigners themselves, Russifying them. In the more recent historical period we find the opposite phenomenon. An *élite* consisting of some of the most active, energetic, enterprising and disciplined members of the society emigrates abroad and assimilates the culture and historical experiences of the most advanced

¹⁵ Gramsci is probably using the word “productive” here in the specifically Marxian sense of productive of surplus value or at any rate of surplus.

¹⁶ In Max Weber’s book, *Parliament and Government in the New Order in Germany*,¹⁶ can be found a number of elements to show how the political monopoly of the nobility impeded the elaboration of an extensive and experienced bourgeois political personnel and how it is at the root of the continual parliamentary crises and of the fragmentation of the liberal and democratic parties. Hence the importance of the Catholic centre and of Social democracy, which succeeded during the period of the Empire¹⁷ in building up to a considerable extent their own parliamentary and directive strata, etc.

¹⁸ Max Weber, *Parlament und Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland*. English translation in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.

¹⁷ i.e. up to the formation of the Weimar Republic in 1919.

countries of the West, without however losing the most essential characteristics of its own nationality, that is to say without breaking its sentimental and historical links with its own people. Having thus performed its intellectual apprenticeship it returns to its own country and compels the people to an enforced awakening, skipping historical stages in the process. The difference between this *elite* and that imported from Germany (by Peter the Great, for example) lies in its essentially national-popular character. It could not be assimilated by the inert passivity of the Russian people, because it was itself an energetic reaction of Russia to her own historical inertia.

On another terrain, and in very different conditions of time and place, the Russian phenomenon can be compared to the birth of the American nation (in the United States). The Anglo-Saxon immigrants are themselves an intellectual, but more especially a moral, *elite*. I am talking, naturally, of the first immigrants, the pioneers, protagonists of the political and religious struggles in England, defeated but not humiliated or laid low in their country of origin. They import into America, together with themselves, apart from moral energy and energy of the will, a certain level of civilisation, a certain stage of European historical evolution, which, when transplanted by such men into the virgin soil of America, continues to develop the forces implicit in its nature but with an incomparably more rapid rhythm than in Old Europe, where there exists a whole series of checks (moral, intellectual, political, economic, incorporated in specific sections of the population, relics of past régimes which refuse to die out) which generate opposition to speedy progress and give to every initiative the equilibrium of mediocrity, diluting it in time and in space.

One can note, in the case of the United States, the absence to a considerable degree of traditional intellectuals, and consequently a different equilibrium among the intellectuals in general. There has been a massive development, on top of an industrial base, of the whole range of modern superstructures. The necessity of an equilibrium is determined, not by the need to fuse together the organic intellectuals with the traditional, but by the need to fuse together in a single national crucible with a unitary culture the different forms of culture imported by immigrants of differing national origins. The lack of a vast sedimentation of traditional intellectuals such as one finds in countries of ancient civilisation explains, at least in part, both the existence of only two major political parties, which could in fact easily be reduced to one only (contrast this

with the case of France, and not only in the post-war period when the multiplication of parties became a general phenomenon), and at the opposite extreme the enormous proliferation of religious sects.*

One further phenomenon in the United States is worth studying, and that is the formation of a surprising number of negro intellectuals who absorb American culture and technology. It is worth bearing in mind the indirect influence that these negro intellectuals could exercise on the backward masses in Africa, and indeed direct influence if one or other of these hypotheses were ever to be verified: 1. that American expansionism should use American negroes as its agents in the conquest of the African market and the extension of American civilisation (something of the kind has already happened, but I don't know to what extent); 2. that the struggle for the unification of the American people should intensify in such a way as to provoke a negro exodus and the return to Africa of the most independent and energetic intellectual elements, the ones, in other words, who would be least inclined to submit to some possible future legislation that was even more humiliating than are the present widespread social customs. This development would give rise to two fundamental questions: 1. linguistic: whether English could become the educated language of Africa, bringing unity in the place of the existing swarm of dialects? 2. whether this intellectual stratum could have sufficient assimilating and organising capacity to give a "national" character to the present primitive sentiment of being a despised race, thus giving the African continent a mythic function as the common fatherland of all the negro peoples? It seems to me that, for the moment, American negroes have a national and racial spirit which is negative rather than positive, one which is a product of the struggle carried on by the whites in order to isolate and depress them. But was not this the case with the Jews up to and throughout the eighteenth century? Liberia, already Americanised and with English as its official language, could become the Zion of American negroes, with a tendency to set itself up as an African Piedmont.¹⁸

In considering the question of the intellectuals in Central and South America, one should, I think, bear in mind certain funda-

* More than two hundred of these have, I think, been counted. Again one should compare the case of France and the fierce struggles that went on to maintain the religious and moral unity of the French people.

¹⁸ The reference here is to the role of leadership among the Italian States assumed by Piedmont during the Risorgimento. For Gramsci's analysis of this phenomenon, see "The Function of Piedmont", pp. 104-106.

mental conditions. No vast category of traditional intellectuals exists in Central or South America either, but the question does not present itself in the same terms as with the United States. What in fact we find at the root of development of these countries are the patterns of Spanish and Portuguese civilisation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, characterised by the effects of the Counter Reformation and by military parasitism. The change-resistant crystallisations which survive to this day in these countries are the clergy and a military caste, two categories of traditional intellectuals fossilised in a form inherited from the European mother country. The industrial base is very restricted, and has not developed complicated superstructures. The majority of intellectuals are of the rural type, and, since the latifundium is dominant, with a lot of property in the hands of the Church, these intellectuals are linked with the clergy and the big landowners. National composition is very unbalanced even among the white population and is further complicated by the great masses of Indians who in some countries form the majority of the inhabitants. It can be said that in these regions of the American continent there still exists a situation of the *Kulturkampf* and of the Dreyfus trial,¹⁹ that is to say a situation in which the secular and bourgeois element has not yet reached the stage of being able to subordinate clerical and militaristic influence and interests to the secular politics of the modern State. It thus comes about that Free Masonry and forms of cultural organisation like the "positivist Church" are very influential in the opposition to Jesuitism. Most recent events (November 1930), from the *Kulturkampf* of Calles in Mexico²⁰ to the military-popular insurrections in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Chile and Bolivia, demonstrate the accuracy of these observations.

Further types of formation of the categories of intellectuals and of their relationship with national forces can be found in India, China and Japan. In Japan we have a formation of the English

¹⁹ "*Kulturkampf*" was the name given to the struggle waged by Bismarck, in the 1870s, with Liberal support, against Catholic opposition to Prussian hegemony. The Dreyfus case in France, which lasted from Dreyfus' first condemnation in 1894 to his final acquittal in 1906, coincided with a major battle fully to laicise the French educational system and had the effect of polarising French society into a militaristic, pro-Catholic, anti-Semitic Right, and an anti-Catholic Liberal and Socialist Left. Both *Kulturkampf* and Dreyfus case can also be seen as aspects of the bourgeois-democratic struggle against the residues of reactionary social forces.

²⁰ Plutarco Elias Calles was President of Mexico from 1924-28. It was under his Presidency that the religious and educational provisions of the new constitution were carried through, against violent Catholic opposition.

and German type, that is an industrial civilisation that develops within a feudal-bureaucratic integument with unmistakable features of its own.

In China there is the phenomenon of the script, an expression of the complete separation between the intellectuals and the people. In both India and China the enormous gap separating intellectuals and people is manifested also in the religious field. The problem of different beliefs and of different ways of conceiving and practising the same religion among the various strata of society, but particularly as between clergy, intellectuals and people, needs to be studied in general, since it occurs everywhere to a certain degree; but it is in the countries of East Asia that it reaches its most extreme form. In Protestant countries the difference is relatively slight (the proliferation of sects is connected with the need for a perfect suture between intellectuals and people, with the result that all the crudity of the effective conceptions of the popular masses is reproduced in the higher organisational sphere). It is more noteworthy in Catholic countries, but its extent varies. It is less in the Catholic parts of Germany and in France; rather greater in Italy, particularly in the South and in the islands; and very great indeed in the Iberian peninsula and in the countries of Latin America. The phenomenon increases in scale in the Orthodox countries where it becomes necessary to speak of three degrees of the same religion: that of the higher clergy and the monks, that of the secular clergy and that of the people. It reaches a level of absurdity in East Asia, where the religion of the people often has nothing whatever to do with that of books, although the two are called by the same name.

2
ON EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

In 1923 the Mussolini government put through the first major reform of Italian education since the unification of the country sixty years earlier and the adoption of the Piedmontese educational system, as laid down by the Casati Act of 1859. The reform was drafted by, and named after, the idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile, who was Mussolini's Minister of Education; but its main lines had in fact been worked out by Croce, who had held the same post in the Giolitti government of 1921. In the first decades of this century, Gentile and Croce had developed a wide-ranging critique of the existing school system, stigmatising it as "instruction" not "education", and as narrow, formal and sterile. They particularly attacked the learning by heart of Latin grammar and of philosophy and literature manuals. The watchwords of the Gentile reform were "educativity" and "active education", and Gramsci's object in his writing on education was in part to expose the rhetorical character of these slogans, and to show the practice which lay behind them.

Gramsci's preoccupations in his writing on education are still at the centre of educational debate today: the relations between education and class; vocationalism; the ideology of education; the "comprehensive" school. Moreover, the positions which emerge from his criticisms of the Gentile reform should be seen in the light of his personal situation. The apparently "conservative" eulogy of the old curriculum in fact often represents a device which allowed Gramsci to circumvent the prison censor, by disguising the future (ideal system) as the past in order to criticise the present. In a different way, Gramsci's insistence on the values of discipline and work in education must also be seen in terms of his own history. He was far from being hostile to the Rousseauesque tradition in education, though he was critical of it. His attitude is best suggested in his comment: "The active school is still in its romantic phase, in which the elements of struggle against the mechanical and Jesuitical school have become unhealthily exaggerated—through a desire to distinguish themselves sharply from the latter and for polemical reasons. It is necessary to enter the 'classical', rational phase, and to find in the ends to be attained the natural source for developing the appropriate methods and forms." But born into

a backward peasant environment and deprived of either an adequate or a continuous education, Gramsci's success in school and university despite constant ill-health, under-nourishment and over-work was a triumph of intellectual purpose. Something of his individual experience is thus carried over into his repeated emphasis on learning as work. (Just as his childhood experience led him to value so highly an education which combated "folklore" and "magic".)

The relation between autobiography and sociological reflection in Gramsci's thought is, however, more intimate and complex even than this would suggest. For, as the last sentence of the second of these notes shows, it is with the creation of intellectuals from the working class that he is ultimately concerned, and his life was precisely the history of the formation of such an intellectual. In perhaps the key passage of his analysis, he wrote: "It was right to struggle against the old school, but reforming it was not so simple as it seemed. The problem was not one of model curricula but of men, and not just of the men who are actually teachers themselves but of the entire social complex which they express." This judgement sums up the whole dialectical character of education which it was the object of the preceding notes to suggest. The reference to the future, creating intellectuals from the working class, is fundamental to Gramsci's thought. It is the revolutionary perspective which structures his whole analysis. In the last resort, the work involved in education which Gramsci emphasises so much is at one and the same time the work by means of which he personally transcended his environment and the work required in the forging of a revolutionary party of the working class—the latter's "organic intellectuals".

ON EDUCATION

THE ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION AND OF CULTURE

It may be observed in general that in modern civilisation all practical activities have become so complex, and the sciences¹ so interwoven with everyday life, that each practical activity tends to create a new type of school for its own executives and specialists and hence to create a body of specialist intellectuals at a higher level to teach in these schools. Thus, side by side with the type of school which may be called "humanistic"—the oldest form of traditional school, designed to develop in each individual human being an as yet undifferentiated general culture, the fundamental power to think and ability to find one's way in life—a whole system of specialised schools, at varying levels, has been being created to serve entire professional sectors, or professions which are already specialised and defined within precise boundaries. It may be said, indeed, that the educational crisis raging today is precisely linked to the fact that this process of differentiation and particularisation is taking place chaotically, without clear and precise principles, without a well-studied and consciously established plan. The crisis of the curriculum and organisation of the schools, i.e. of the overall framework of a policy for forming modern intellectual cadres, is to a great extent an aspect and a ramification of the more comprehensive and general organic crisis.

The fundamental division into classical and vocational (professional) schools was a rational formula: the vocational school for the instrumental classes,² the classical school for the dominant classes and the intellectuals. The development of an industrial base both in the cities and in the countryside meant a growing need for the new type of urban intellectual. Side by side with the classical school there developed the technical school (vocational, but not manual), and this placed a question-mark over the very principle of a concrete programme of general culture, a humanistic programme of general culture based on the Græco-Roman tradition. This programme, once questioned, can be said to be doomed,

¹ "Sciences" in the sense of branches of human knowledge, rather than in the more restricted meaning which the word has taken on since the industrial revolution.

² *Classi strumentali* is a term used by Gramsci interchangeably with the terms *classi subalterne* or *classi subordinate*, and there seems no alternative to a literal translation of each which leaves the reader free to decide whether there is any different nuance of stress between them. See too the final paragraph of "History of the Subaltern Classes" on pp. 52-5 below.

since its formative capacity was to a great extent based on the general and traditionally unquestioned prestige of a particular form of civilisation.

The tendency today is to abolish every type of schooling that is "disinterested" (not serving immediate interests) or "formative"—keeping at most only a small-scale version to serve a tiny élite of ladies and gentlemen who do not have to worry about assuring themselves of a future career. Instead, there is a steady growth of specialised vocational schools, in which the pupil's destiny and future activity are determined in advance. A rational solution to the crisis ought to adopt the following lines. First, a common basic education, imparting a general, humanistic, formative culture; this would strike the right balance between development of the capacity for working manually (technically, industrially) and development of the capacities required for intellectual work. From this type of common schooling, via repeated experiments in vocational orientation, pupils would pass on to one of the specialised schools or to productive work.

One must bear in mind the developing tendency for every practical activity to create for itself its own specialised school, just as every intellectual activity tends to create for itself cultural associations of its own; the latter take on the function of post-scholastic institutions, specialised in organising the conditions in which it is possible to keep abreast of whatever progress is being made in the given scientific field.

It may also be observed that deliberative bodies tend to an ever-increasing extent to distinguish their activity into two "organic" aspects: into the deliberative activity which is their essence, and into technical-cultural activity in which the questions upon which they have to take decisions are first examined by experts and analysed scientifically. This latter activity has already created a whole bureaucratic body, with a new structure; for apart from the specialised departments of experts who prepare the technical material for the deliberative bodies, a second body of functionaries is created—more or less disinterested "volunteers", selected variously from industry, from the banks, from finance houses. This is one of the mechanisms by means of which the career bureaucracy eventually came to control the democratic regimes and parliaments; now the mechanism is being organically extended, and is absorbing into its sphere the great specialists of private enterprise, which thus comes to control both régimes and bureaucracies. What is involved is a necessary, organic development which tends

to integrate the personnel specialised in the technique of politics with personnel specialised in the concrete problems of administering the essential practical activities of the great and complex national societies of today. Hence every attempt to exorcise these tendencies from the outside produces no result other than moralistic sermons and rhetorical lamentations.

The question is thus raised of modifying the training of technical-political personnel, completing their culture in accordance with the new necessities, and of creating specialised functionaries of a new kind, who as a body will complement deliberative activity. The traditional type of political "leader", prepared only for formal-judicial activities, is becoming anachronistic and represents a danger for the life of the State: the leader must have that minimum of general technical culture which will permit him, if not to "create" autonomously the correct solution, at least to know how to adjudicate between the solutions put forward by the experts, and hence to choose the correct one from the "synthetic" viewpoint of political technique.

A type of deliberative body which seeks to incorporate the technical expertise necessary for it to operate realistically has been described elsewhere,³ in an account of what happens on the editorial committees of some reviews, when these function at the same time both as editorial committees and as cultural groups. The group criticises as a body, and thus helps to define the tasks of the individual editors, whose activity is organised according to a plan and a division of labour which are rationally arranged in advance. By means of collective discussion and criticism (made up of suggestions, advice, comments on method, and criticism which is constructive and aimed at mutual education) in which each individual functions as a specialist in his own field and helps to complete the expertise of the collectivity, the average level of the individual editors is in fact successfully raised so that it reaches the altitude or capacity of the most highly-skilled—thus not merely ensuring an ever more select and organic collaboration for the review, but also creating the conditions for the emergence of a homogeneous group of intellectuals, trained to produce a regular and methodical "writing" activity (not only in terms of occasional publications or short articles, but also of organic, synthetic studies).

Undoubtedly, in this kind of collective activity, each task produces new capacities and possibilities of work, since it creates ever

³ Int., pp. 137 ff.

more organic conditions of work: files, bibliographical digests, a library of basic specialised works, etc. Such activity requires an unyielding struggle against habits of dilettantism, of improvisation, of "rhetorical" solutions or those proposed for effect. The work has to be done particularly in written form, just as it is in written form that criticisms have to be made—in the form of terse, succinct notes: this can be achieved if the material is distributed in time, etc.; the writing down of notes and criticisms is a didactic principle rendered necessary by the need to combat the habits formed in public speaking—prolixity, demagoguery and paralogism. This type of intellectual work is necessary in order to impart to autodidacts the discipline in study which an orthodox scholastic career provides, in order to Taylorise⁴ intellectual work. Hence the usefulness of the principle of the "old men of Santa Zita" of whom De Sanctis speaks in his memoirs of the Neapolitan school of Basilio Puoti:⁵ i.e. the usefulness of a certain "stratification" of capabilities and attitudes, and of the formation of work-groups under the guidance of the most highly-skilled and highly-developed, who can accelerate the training of the most backward and untrained.

When one comes to study the practical organisation of the common school, one problem of importance is that of the various phases of the educational process, phases which correspond to the age and intellectual-moral development of the pupils and to the aims which the school sets itself. The common school, or school of humanistic formation (taking the term "humanism" in a broad sense rather than simply in the traditional one) or general culture, should aim to insert young men and women into social activity after bringing them to a certain level of maturity, of capacity for intellectual and practical creativity, and of autonomy of orientation and initiative. The fixing of an age for compulsory school attendance depends on the general economic conditions, since the latter may make it necessary to demand of young men and women, or even of children, a certain immediate productive contribution. The common school necessitates the State's being able to take on the expenditure which

⁴ For Gramsci's analysis of Taylorism, see "Americanism and Fordism", below pp. 302 ff.

⁵ De Sanctis in his memoirs recounts how as a child in Naples he was taken to be taught literary Italian at a school for the aristocracy of the city run in his home by the Marchese Puoti. Puoti used to refer to the elder boys, whose "judgement carried great weight, and when one of them spoke everyone fell silent, the marquis soonest of all, and was filled with admiration", as *gli anziani di Santa Zita*, in reference to Dante, *Inferno* XXI, 38. The "*anziani*" were the magistrates of the city of Lucca, whose patron saint was Zita.

at present falls on the family for the maintenance of children at school; in other words, it transforms the budget of the national department from top to bottom, expanding it to an unheard of extent and making it more complex. The entire function of educating and forming the new generations ceases to be private and becomes public; for only thus can it involve them in their entirety, without divisions of group or caste. But this transformation of scholastic activity requires an unprecedented expansion of the practical organisation of the school, i.e. of buildings, scientific material, of the teaching body, etc. The teaching body in particular would have to be increased, since the smaller the ratio between teachers and pupils the greater will be the efficiency of the school—and this presents other problems neither easy nor quick to solve. The question of school buildings is not simple either, since this type of school should be a college, with dormitories, refectories, specialised libraries, rooms designed for seminar work, etc. Hence initially the new type of school will have to be, cannot help being, only for restricted groups, made up of young people selected through competition or recommended by similar institutions.

The common school ought to correspond to the period represented today by the primary and secondary schools, reorganised not only as regards the content and the method of teaching, but also as regards the arrangement of the various phases of the educational process. The first, primary grade should not last longer than three or four years, and in addition to imparting the first "instrumental" notions of schooling—reading, writing, sums, geography, history—ought in particular to deal with an aspect of education that is now neglected—i.e. with "rights and duties", with the first notions of the State and society as primordial elements of a new conception of the world which challenges the conceptions that are imparted by the various traditional social environments, i.e. those conceptions which can be termed folkloristic. The didactic problem is one of mitigating and rendering more fertile the dogmatic approach which must inevitably characterise these first years. The rest of the course should not last more than six years, so that by the age of fifteen or sixteen it should be possible to complete all the grades of the common school.

One may object that such a course is too exhausting because too rapid, if the aim is to attain in effect the results which the present organisation of the classical school aims at but does not attain. Yet the new organisation as a whole will have to contain within itself the general elements which in fact make the course

too slow today, at least for a part of the pupils. Which are these elements? In a whole series of families, especially in the intellectual strata, the children find in their family life a preparation, a prolongation and a completion of school life; they "breathe in", as the expression goes, a whole quantity of notions and attitudes which facilitate the educational process properly speaking. They already know and develop their knowledge of the literary language, i.e. the means of expression and of knowledge, which is technically superior to the means possessed by the average member of the school population between the ages of six and twelve. Thus city children, by the very fact of living in a city, have already absorbed by the age of six a quantity of notions and attitudes which make their school careers easier, more profitable, and more rapid. In the basic organisation of the common school, at least the essentials of these conditions must be created—not to speak of the fact, which goes without saying, that parallel to the common school a network of kindergartens and other institutions would develop, in which, even before the school age, children would be habituated to a certain collective discipline and acquire pre-scholastic notions and attitudes. In fact, the common school should be organised like a college, with a collective life by day and by night, freed from the present forms of hypocritical and mechanical discipline; studies should be carried on collectively, with the assistance of the teachers and the best pupils, even during periods of so-called individual study, etc.

The fundamental problem is posed by that phase of the existing school career which is today represented by the *liceo*,⁶ and which today does not differ at all, as far as the kind of education is concerned, from the preceding grades—except by the abstract presumption of a greater intellectual and moral maturity of the pupil, matching his greater age and the experience he has already accumulated.

In fact between *liceo* and university, i.e. between the school properly speaking and life, there is now a jump, a real break in continuity, and not a rational passage from quantity (age) to quality (intellectual and moral maturity). From an almost purely dogmatic education, in which learning by heart plays a great part, the pupil passes to the creative phase, the phase of autonomous,

⁶ Perhaps the nearest English-language equivalents of *ginnasio* and *liceo* are the American junior high school and high school, though in the Italian system they are selective schools (like English grammar schools) leading to a university education.

independent work. From the school, where his studies are subjected to a discipline that is imposed and controlled by authority, the pupil passes on to a phase of study or of professional work in which intellectual self-discipline and moral independence are theoretically unlimited. And this happens immediately after the crisis of puberty, when the ardour of the instinctive and elementary passions has not yet resolved its struggle with the fetters of the character and of moral conscience which are in the process of being formed. Moreover, in Italy, where the principle of 'seminar' work is not widespread in the universities, this passage is even more brusque and mechanical.

By contrast, therefore, the last phase of the common school must be conceived and structured as the decisive phase, whose aim is to create the fundamental values of "humanism", the intellectual self-discipline and the moral independence which are necessary for subsequent specialisation—whether it be of a scientific character (university studies) or of an immediately practical-productive character (industry, civil service, organisation of commerce, etc.). The study and learning of creative methods in science and in life must begin in this last phase of the school, and no longer be a monopoly of the university or be left to chance in practical life. This phase of the school must already contribute to developing the element of independent responsibility in each individual, must be a creative school. A distinction must be made between creative school and active school, even in the form given to the latter by the Dalton method.⁷ The entire common school is an active school, although it is necessary to place limits on libertarian ideologies in this field and to stress with some energy the duty of the adult generations, i.e. of the State, to "mould" the new generations. The active school is still in its romantic phase, in which the elements of struggle against the mechanical and Jesuitical school have become

⁷ The Dalton Method, a development of Montessori's ideas, is described elsewhere by Gramsci (Int., p. 122): "the pupils are free to attend whichever lessons (whether practical or theoretical) they please, provided that by the end of each month they have completed the programme set for them; discipline is entrusted to the pupils themselves. The system has a serious defect: the pupils generally postpone doing their work until the last days of the month, and this detracts from the seriousness of the education and represents a major difficulty for the teachers who are supposed to help them but are overwhelmed with work—whereas in the first weeks of the month they have little or nothing to do. (The Dalton system is simply an extension to the secondary schools of the methods of study which obtain in the Italian universities, methods which leave the student complete freedom in his studies: in certain faculties the students sit twenty examinations and their final degree in the fourth and last year, and the lecturer never so much as knows the student.)"

unhealthily exaggerated—through a desire to distinguish themselves sharply from the latter, and for polemical reasons. It is necessary to enter the "classical", rational phase, and to find in the ends to be attained the natural source for developing the appropriate methods and forms.

The creative school is the culmination of the active school. In the first phase the aim is to discipline, hence also to level out—to obtain a certain kind of "conformism" which may be called "dynamic". In the creative phase, on the basis that has been achieved of "collectivisation" of the social type, the aim is to expand the personality—by now autonomous and responsible, but with a solid and homogeneous moral and social conscience. Thus creative school does not mean school of "inventors and discoverers"; it indicates a phase and a method of research and of knowledge, and not a predetermined "programme" with an obligation to originality and innovation at all costs. It indicates that learning takes place especially through a spontaneous and autonomous effort of the pupil, with the teacher only exercising a function of friendly guide—as happens or should happen in the university. To discover a truth oneself, without external suggestions or assistance, is to create—even if the truth is an old one. It demonstrates a mastery of the method, and indicates that in any case one has entered the phase of intellectual maturity in which one may discover new truths. Hence in this phase the fundamental scholastic activity will be carried on in seminars, in libraries, in experimental laboratories; during it, the organic data will be collected for a professional orientation.

The advent of the common school means the beginning of new relations between intellectual and industrial work, not only in the school but in the whole of social life. The comprehensive principle will therefore be reflected in all the organisms of culture, transforming them and giving them a new content.

IN SEARCH OF THE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLE

In the old primary school, there used to be two elements in the educational formation of the children.⁸ They were taught the rudiments of natural science, and the idea of civic rights and duties. Scientific ideas were intended to insert the child into the *societas rerum*, the world of things, while lessons in rights and duties were

⁸ i.e. before the Gentile reform—see introduction to this section, and note 14 on p. 132.

intended to insert him into the State and into civil society. The scientific ideas the children learnt conflicted with the magical conception of the world and nature which they absorbed from an environment steeped in folklore;⁹ while the idea of civic rights and duties conflicted with tendencies towards individualistic and localistic barbarism—another dimension of folklore. The school combated folklore, indeed every residue of traditional conceptions of the world. It taught a more modern outlook based essentially on an awareness of the simple and fundamental fact that there exist objective, intractable natural laws to which man must adapt himself if he is to master them in his turn—and that there exist social and state laws which are the product of human activity, which are established by men and can be altered by men in the interests of their collective development. These laws of the State and of society create that human order which historically best enables men to dominate the laws of nature, that is to say which most facilitates their *work*. For work is the specific mode by which man actively participates in natural life in order to transform and socialise it more and more deeply and extensively.

Thus one can say that the educational principle which was the basis of the old primary school was the idea of work. 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. The idea and the fact of work (of theoretical and practical activity) was the educational principle latent in the primary school, since it is by means of work that the social and State order (rights and duties) is introduced and identified within the natural order. The discovery that the relations between the social and natural orders are mediated by work, by man's theoretical and practical activity, creates the first elements of an intuition of the world free from all magic and superstition. It provides a basis for the subsequent development of an historical, dialectical conception of the world, which understands movement and change, which appreciates the sum of effort and sacrifice which the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present, and which conceives the contemporary world as a synthesis

⁹ See above, p. 30, for Gramsci's use of the term "folklore". See too, note 5 on p. 326.

of the past, of all past generations, which projects itself into the future. This was the real basis of the primary school. Whether it yielded all its fruits, and whether the actual teachers were aware of the nature and philosophical content of their task, is another question. This requires an analysis of the degree of civic consciousness of the entire nation, of which the teaching body was merely an expression, and rather a poor expression—certainly not an *avant-garde*.

It is not entirely true that "instruction" is something quite different from "education".¹⁰ An excessive emphasis on this distinction has been a serious error of idealist educationalists and its effects can already be seen in the school system as they have reorganised it. For instruction to be wholly distinct from education, the pupil would have to be pure passivity, a "mechanical receiver" of abstract notions—which is absurd and is anyway "abstractly" denied by the supporters of pure educativity precisely in their opposition to mere mechanistic instruction. The "certain" becomes "true" in the child's consciousness.¹¹ But the child's consciousness is not something "individual" (still less individuated), it reflects the sector of civil society in which the child participates, and the social relations which are formed within his family, his neighbourhood, his village, etc. The individual consciousness of the overwhelming majority of children reflects social and cultural relations which are different from and antagonistic to those which are represented in the school curricula: thus the "certain" of an advanced culture becomes "true" in the framework of a fossilised and anachronistic culture. There is no unity between school and life, and so there is no automatic unity between instruction and education. In the school, the nexus between instruction and education can only be realised by the living work of the teacher. For this he must be aware of the contrast between the type of culture and society which he

¹⁰ For this distinction, popular with educational thinkers influenced by Gentile and by Croce, see the introduction to this section.

¹¹ This distinction was made by Vico, in his *Scienza Nuova* of 1725. Para. 321: "The 'certain' in the laws is an obscurity of judgement backed only by authority, so that we find them harsh in application, yet are obliged to apply them just because they are certain. In good Latin *certum* means particularised, or, as the schools say, individuated; so that, in over-elegant Latin, *certum* and *commune*, the certain and the common, are opposed to each other." Para. 324: "The true in the laws is a certain light and splendour with which natural reason illuminates them; so that jurisconsults are often in the habit of saying *verum est* for *aequum est*." Para. 137: "Men who do not know what is true of things take care to hold fast to what is certain, so that, if they cannot satisfy their intellects by knowledge (*scienza*), their wills at least may rest on consciousness (*coscienza*)." The New Science, trans. Bergin and Fisch, Cornell, 1968.

represents and the type of culture and society represented by his pupils, and conscious of his obligation to accelerate and regulate the child's formation in conformity with the former and in conflict with the latter. If the teaching body is not adequate and the nexus between instruction and education is dissolved, while the problem of teaching is conjured away by cardboard schemata exalting educativity, the teacher's work will as a result become yet more inadequate. We will have rhetorical schools, quite unserious, because the material solidity of what is "certain" will be missing, and what is "true" will be a truth only of words: that is to say, precisely, rhetoric.

This degeneration is even clearer in the secondary school, in the literature and philosophy syllabus. Previously, the pupils at least acquired a certain "baggage" or "equipment" (according to taste) of concrete facts. Now that the teacher must be specifically a philosopher and aesthete, the pupil does not bother with concrete facts and fills his head with formulae and words which usually mean nothing to him, and which are forgotten at once. It was right to struggle against the old school, but reforming it was not so simple as it seemed. The problem was not one of model curricula but of men, and not just of the men who are actually teachers themselves but of the entire social complex which they express. In reality a mediocre teacher may manage to see to it that his pupils become more *informed*, although he will not succeed in making them better educated; he can devote a scrupulous and bureaucratic conscientiousness to the mechanical part of teaching—and the pupil, if he has an active intelligence, will give an order of his own, with the aid of his social background, to the "baggage" he accumulates. With the new curricula, which coincide with a general lowering of the level of the teaching profession, there will no longer be any "baggage" to put in order. The new curricula should have abolished examinations entirely; for to take an examination now must be fearfully more chancy than before. A date is always a date, whoever the examiner is, and a definition is always a definition. But an aesthetic judgement or a philosophical analysis?

The educational efficacy of the old Italian secondary school, as organised by the Casati Act,¹² was not to be sought (or rejected) in its explicit aim as an "educative" system, but in the fact that its structure and its curriculum were the expression of a traditional mode of intellectual and moral life, of a cultural climate diffused

¹² The Casati Act, passed in 1859, remained the basis of the Italian educational system until the Gentile Reform of 1923.

throughout Italian society by ancient tradition. It was the fact that this climate and way of life were in their death-throes, and that the school had become cut off from life, which brought about the crisis in education. A criticism of the curricula and disciplinary structure of the old system means less than nothing if one does not keep this situation in mind. Thus we come back to the truly active participation of the pupil in the school, which can only exist if the school is related to life. The more the new curricula nominally affirm and theorise the pupil's activity and working collaboration with the teacher, the more they are actually designed as if the pupil were purely passive.

In the old school the grammatical study of Latin and Greek, together with the study of their respective literatures and political histories, was an educational principle—for the humanistic ideal, symbolised by Athens and Rome, was diffused throughout society, and was an essential element of national life and culture. Even the mechanical character of the study of grammar was enlivened by this cultural perspective. Individual facts were not learnt for an immediate practical or professional end. The end seemed disinterested, because the real interest was the interior development of personality, the formation of character by means of the absorption and assimilation of the whole cultural past of modern European civilisation. Pupils did not learn Latin and Greek in order to speak them, to become waiters, interpreters or commercial letter-writers. They learnt them in order to know at first hand the civilisation of Greece and of Rome—a civilisation that was a necessary precondition of our modern civilisation: in other words, they learnt them in order to be themselves and know themselves consciously. Latin and Greek were learnt through their grammar, mechanically; but the accusation of formalism and aridity is very unjust and inappropriate. In education one is dealing with children in whom one has to inculcate certain habits of diligence, precision, poise (even physical poise), ability to concentrate on specific subjects, which cannot be acquired without the mechanical repetition of disciplined and methodical acts. Would a scholar at the age of forty be able to sit for sixteen hours on end at his work-table if he had not, as a child, compulsorily, through mechanical coercion, acquired the appropriate psycho-physical habits? If one wishes to produce great scholars, one still has to start at this point and apply pressure throughout the educational system in order to succeed in creating those thousands or hundreds or even only dozens of scholars of the highest quality which are necessary to every civilisation. (Of

course, one can improve a great deal in this field by the provision of adequate funds for research, without going back to the educational methods of the Jesuits.)

Latin is learnt (or rather studied) by analysing it down to its smallest parts—analysing it like a dead thing, it is true, but all analyses made by children can only be of dead things. Besides, one must not forget that the life of the Romans is a myth which to some extent has already interested the child and continues to interest him, so that in the dead object there is always present a greater living being. Thus, the language is dead, it is analysed as an inert object, as a corpse on the dissecting table, but it continually comes to life again in examples and in stories. Could one study Italian in the same way? Impossible. No living language could be studied like Latin: it would be and *would seem* absurd. No child knows Latin when he starts to study it by these analytical methods. But a living language can be known and it would be enough for a single child to know it, and the spell would be broken: everybody would be off to the Berlitz school at once. Latin (like Greek) appears to the imagination as a myth, even for the teacher. One does not study Latin in order to learn the language. For a long time, as a result of a cultural and scholarly tradition whose origin and development one might investigate, Latin has been studied as an element in an ideal curriculum, an element which combines and satisfies a whole series of pedagogic and psychological requirements. It has been studied in order to accustom children to studying in a specific manner, and to analysing an historical body which can be treated as a corpse which returns continually to life; in order to accustom them to reason, to think abstractly and schematically while remaining able to plunge back from abstraction into real and immediate life, to see in each fact or datum what is general and what is particular, to distinguish the concept from the specific instance.

For what after all is the educational significance of the constant comparison between Latin and the language one speaks? It involves the distinction and the identification of words and concepts; suggests the whole of formal logic, from the contradiction between opposites to the analysis of distincts;¹³ reveals the historical movement of the entire language, modified through time, developing and not static. In the eight years of *ginnasio* and *liceo*¹⁴ the entire history of the real language is studied, after it has first been photo-

¹³ For Croce's concept of the "analysis of distincts" see Introduction, p. xxiii.

¹⁴ See note 6 on p. 31.

graphed in one abstract moment in the form of grammar. It is studied from Ennius (or rather from the words of the fragments of the twelve tablets) right up to Phaedrus and the Christian writers in Latin: an historical process is analysed from its source until its death in time—or seeming death, since we know that Italian, with which Latin is continually contrasted in school, is modern Latin. Not only the grammar of a certain epoch (which is an abstraction) or its vocabulary are studied, but also, for comparison, the grammar and the vocabulary of each individual author and the meaning of each term in each particular stylistic "period". Thus the child discovers that the grammar and the vocabulary of Phaedrus are not those of Cicero, nor those of Plautus, nor of Lactantius or Tertullian, and that the same nexus of sounds does not have the same meaning in different periods and for different authors. Latin and Italian are continually compared; but each word is a concept, a symbol, which takes on different shades of meaning according to the period and the writer in each of the two languages under comparison. The child studies the literary history of the books written in that language, the political history, the achievements of the men who spoke that language. His education is determined by the whole of this organic complex, by the fact that he has followed that itinerary, if only in a purely literal sense, he has passed through those various stages, etc. He has plunged into history and acquired a historicising understanding of the world and of life, which becomes a second—nearly spontaneous—nature, since it is not inculcated pedantically with an openly educational intention. These studies educated without an explicitly declared aim of doing so, with a minimal "educative" intervention on the part of the teacher: they educated because they gave instruction. Logical, artistic, psychological experience was gained unawares, without a continual self-consciousness. Above all a profound "synthetic", philosophical experience was gained, of an actual historical development. This does not mean—it would be stupid to think so—that Latin and Greek, as such, have intrinsically thaumaturgical qualities in the educational field. It is the whole cultural tradition, which also and particularly lives outside the school, which in a given ambience produces such results. In any case one can see today, with the changes in the traditional idea of culture, the way in which the school is in crisis and with it the study of Latin and Greek.

It will be necessary to replace Latin and Greek as the fulcrum of the formative school, and they will be replaced. But it will not be easy to deploy the new subject or subjects in a didactic form

which gives equivalent results in terms of education and general personality-formation, from early childhood to the threshold of the adult choice of career. For in this period what is learnt, or the greater part of it, must be—or appear to the pupils to be—disinterested, i.e. not have immediate or too immediate practical purposes. It must be formative, while being “instructive”—in other words rich in concrete facts. In the present school, the profound crisis in the traditional culture and its conception of life and of man has resulted in a progressive degeneration. Schools of the vocational type, i.e. those designed to satisfy immediate, practical interests, are beginning to predominate over the formative school, which is not immediately “interested”. The most paradoxical aspect of it all is that this new type of school appears and is advocated as being democratic, while in fact it is destined not merely to perpetuate social differences but to crystallise them in Chinese complexities.

The traditional school was oligarchic because it was intended for the new generation of the ruling class, destined to rule in its turn: but it was not oligarchic in its mode of teaching. It is not the fact that the pupils learn how to rule there, nor the fact that it tends to produce gifted men, which gives a particular type of school its social character. This social character is determined by the fact that each social group has its own type of school, intended to perpetuate a specific traditional function, ruling or subordinate. If one wishes to break this pattern one needs, instead of multiplying and grading different types of vocational school, to create a single type of formative school (primary-secondary) which would take the child up to the threshold of his choice of job, forming him during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling—or controlling those who rule.

The multiplication of types of vocational school thus tends to perpetuate traditional social differences; but since, within these differences, it tends to encourage internal diversification, it gives the impression of being democratic in tendency. The labourer can become a skilled worker, for instance, the peasant a surveyor or petty agronomist. But democracy, by definition, cannot mean merely that an unskilled worker can become skilled. It must mean that every “citizen” can “govern” and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this. Political democracy tends towards a coincidence of the rulers and the ruled (in the sense of government with the consent of the governed), ensuring for each non-ruler a free training in the skills and general

technical preparation necessary to that end. But the type of school which is now developing as the school for the people does not tend even to keep up this illusion. For it is organised ever more fully in such a way as to restrict recruitment to the technically qualified governing stratum, in a social and political context which makes it increasingly difficult for “personal initiative” to acquire such skills and technical-political preparation. Thus we are really going back to a division into juridically fixed and crystallised estates rather than moving towards the transcendence of class divisions. The multiplication of vocational schools which specialise increasingly from the very beginning of the child’s educational career is one of the most notable manifestations of this tendency. It is noticeable that the new pedagogy has concentrated its fire on “dogmatism” in the field of instruction and the learning of concrete facts—i.e. precisely in the field in which a certain dogmatism is practically indispensable and can be reabsorbed and dissolved only in the whole cycle of the educational process (historical grammar could not be taught in *liceo* classes). On the other hand, it has been forced to accept the introduction of dogmatism *par excellence* in the field of religious thought, with the result that the whole history of philosophy is now implicitly seen as a succession of ravings and delusions.¹⁵ In the philosophy course, the new curriculum impoverishes the teaching and in practice lowers its level (at least for the overwhelming majority of pupils who do not receive intellectual help outside the school from their family or home environment, and who have to form themselves solely by means of the knowledge they receive in the class-room)—in spite of seeming very rational and fine, fine as any utopia. The traditional descriptive philosophy, backed by a course in the history of philosophy and by the reading of a certain number of philosophers, in practice seems the best thing. Descriptive, definitional philosophy may be a dogmatic abstraction, just as grammar and mathematics are, but it is an educational and didactic necessity. “One equals one” is an

¹⁵ The Gentile Reform provided for compulsory religious education in Italian schools, and Gentile’s justifications of this are criticised by Gramsci in Int., pp. 116–18: “. . . Gentile’s thinking . . . is nothing more than an extension of the idea that ‘religion is good for the people’ (people = child = primitive phase of thought to which religion corresponds, etc.), i.e. a (tendentious) abandonment of the aim of educating the people . . . Gentile’s historicism is of a very degenerate kind: it is the historicism of those jurists for whom the knot is not a knot when it is an ‘historical’ knot. Moreover, its ideas are extremely vague and confused. The fact that a ‘dogmatic’ exposition of scientific ideas and a certain ‘mythology’ are necessary in the primary school does not mean that the dogma and the mythology have to be precisely those of religion.” Etc. See note 14 on p. 132.

abstraction, but it leads nobody to think that one fly equals one elephant. The rules of formal logic are abstractions of the same kind, they are like the grammar of normal thought; but they still need to be studied, since they are not something innate, but have to be acquired through work and reflection. The new curriculum presupposes that formal logic is something you already possess when you think, but does not explain how it is to be acquired, so that in practice it is assumed to be innate. Formal logic is like grammar: it is assimilated in a "living" way even if the actual learning process has been necessarily schematic and abstract. For the learner is not a passive and mechanical recipient, a gramophone record—even if the liturgical conformity of examinations sometimes makes him appear so. The relation between these educational forms and the child's psychology is always active and creative, just as the relation of the worker to his tools is active and creative. A calibre is likewise a complex of abstractions, but without calibration it is not possible to produce real objects—real objects which are social relations, and which implicitly embody ideas.

The child who sweats at *Barbara*, *Baralippton*¹⁶ is certainly performing a tiring task, and it is important that he does only what is absolutely necessary and no more. But it is also true that it will always be an effort to learn physical self-discipline and self-control; the pupil has, in effect, to undergo a psycho-physical training. Many people have to be persuaded that studying too is a job, and a very tiring one, with its own particular apprenticeship—involving muscles and nerves as well as intellect. It is a process of adaptation, a habit acquired with effort, tedium and even suffering. Wider participation in secondary education brings with it a tendency to ease off the discipline of studies, and to ask for "relaxations". Many even think that the difficulties of learning are artificial, since they are accustomed to think only of manual work as sweat and toil. The question is a complex one. Undoubtedly the child of a traditionally intellectual family acquires this psycho-physical adaptation more easily. Before he ever enters the class-room he has numerous advantages over his comrades, and is already in possession of attitudes learnt from his family environment: he concentrates more easily, since he is used to "sitting still", etc. Similarly, the son of a city worker suffers less when he goes to work in a factory than does a peasant's child or a young peasant already formed by country life. (Even diet has its importance, etc.) This is why many people think

¹⁶ *Barbara*, *Baralippton*, were mnemonic words used to memorise syllogisms in classical logic.

that the difficulty of study conceals some "trick" which handicaps them—that is, when they do not simply believe that they are stupid by nature. They see the "gentleman"¹⁷—and for many, especially in the country, "gentleman" means intellectual—complete, speedily and with apparent ease, work which costs their sons tears and blood, and they think there is a "trick". In the future, these questions may become extremely acute and it will be necessary to resist the tendency to render easy that which cannot become easy without being distorted. If our aim is to produce a new stratum of intellectuals, including those capable of the highest degree of specialisation, from a social group which has not traditionally developed the appropriate attitudes, then we have unprecedented difficulties to overcome.

¹⁷ *Signore*. On this term, not of course an exact equivalent of "gentleman", see below p. 272.

and of their relations with the homogeneous or subordinate social groups existing in the various historical sections (or sectors) of the national territory—can be reduced to the following basic factual

Thus it can be said that he has drawn attention energetically to the importance of cultural and intellectual facts in historical development; to the function of great intellectuals in the organic life of civil society and the State; to the moment of hegemony and consent as a necessary form of the concrete historical bloc. That this is not something 'futile' is proved by the fact that, contemporaneously with Croce, the greatest modern theoretician of the philosophy of praxis [Lenin], on the terrain of political struggle and organisation and with a political terminology, gave new weight—in opposition to the various 'economist' tendencies—to the front of cultural struggle, and constructed the doctrine of hegemony as a complement to the theory of the State-as-force, and as the present form of the Forty-Eightist doctrine of 'permanent revolution'. For the philosophy of praxis, the conception of ethical-political history, in as much as it is independent of any realistic conception, can be accepted as an 'empirical canon' of historical research, to be kept continually in mind while studying and analysing historical development, if it is desired to arrive at an integral history and not one that is partial and extrinsic (history of economic forces as such, etc.)." See too LC. pp. 482-83: "My study on intellectuals is a vast project. . . . Moreover, I extend the notion of intellectual considerably, and do not limit myself to the habitual meaning, which refers only to great intellectuals. 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 (Benedetto Croce, for example, is a kind of lay pope and an extremely efficient instrument of hegemony—even if at times he may find himself in disagreement with one government or another, etc.). This conception of the function of intellectuals, I believe, throws light on the reason, or one of the reasons, for the fall of the mediæval communes, i.e. of the rule of an economic class which did not prove able to create its own category of intellectuals and thus exercise a hegemony as well as a dictatorship. The Italian intellectuals did not have a national-popular character, but one that was cosmopolitan on the model of the Church; it was a matter of indifference to Leonardo whether he sold the designs for the fortifications of Florence to Duke Valentino. The Communes were thus a syndicalist state, which did not succeed in transcending this phase and becoming an integral State as Machiavelli vainly urged; the latter attempted, by reorganising the army, to organise the hegemony of the city over the countryside, and he can therefore be called the first Italian Jacobin (the second was Carlo Cattaneo, but he had too many strange fancies in his head). It thus follows that the Renaissance should be considered a reactionary and repressive movement, in contrast to the development of the Communes, etc." See too NM. p. 160: "Hegemony and Democracy. Of the many meanings of democracy, the most realistic and concrete one in my view can be worked out in relation to the concept of 'hegemony'. 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."

In an earlier draft of 1920-30, this long note on the Risorgimento was entitled

datum. The Moderates⁶ represented a relatively homogeneous social group, and hence their leadership underwent relatively limited oscillations (in any case, subject to an organically progressive line of development); whereas the so-called Action Party⁷ did not base itself specifically on any historical class, and the oscillations which its leading organs underwent were resolved, in the last analysis, according to the interests of the Moderates. In other words, the Action Party was led historically by the Moderates. The assertion attributed to Victor Emmanuel II that he "had the Action Party in his pocket", or something of the kind, was in practice accurate—not only because of the King's personal contacts with Garibaldi, but because the Action Party was in fact "indirectly" led by Cavour and the King.

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 the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when

"Class political leadership before and after attaining governmental power". Two of its key passages then read as follows: "... a class is dominant in two ways, i.e. 'leading' and 'dominant'. It leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies. Therefore, even before attaining power a class can (and must) 'lead'; when it is in power it becomes dominant, but continues to 'lead' as well . . . there can and must be a 'political hegemony' even before the attainment of governmental power, and one should not count solely on the power and material force which such a position gives in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony."

⁶ The Moderate Party, formally constituted in 1848, had grown out of the neo-Guelph movement (see note 9 on p. 58). Its first document was C. Balbo's *Le speranze d'Italia* (1844), and its ideas inspired the reforms of 1846-47. It stood initially for a confederation of the Italian States, and demanded reforms and written constitutions in each state. It was to some extent eclipsed in 1849, but its influence increased during the ten years from 1849-59, under the leadership of d'Azeglio and Cavour. It abandoned federalism, and was in fact the main instrument, at the level of political institutions, of national unification in 1859-61, and the main beneficiary of the Risorgimento. After Cavour's death in 1861, it became the Right in the Italian parliament, and held power until 1876.

⁷ The *Partito d'Azione* was founded by Mazzini in March 1853, after the defeat of the February rising in Milan and the dissolution of the *Associazione Nazionale Italiana*. It was republican, but its ambiguous aims were symbolised by its motto "*Dio e popolo*" (God and the people). After several years of tenuous existence, it was revitalised by Garibaldi's influence in 1859, and played an important role in the organisation of the Sicilian expedition of the Thousand. After the unification of the country, most of its members joined the parliamentary "Left", a minority the tiny Republican Party.

The policy of alliances and of permanent revolution had finished by posing new questions which at that time could not be resolved; it had unleashed elemental forces which only a military dictatorship was to succeed in containing.⁴⁹

In the Action Party there was nothing to be found which resembled this Jacobin approach, this inflexible will to become the "leading" [*dirigente*] party. Naturally one has to allow for the differences: in Italy the struggle manifested itself as a struggle

⁴⁹ Gramsci is here referring to what he elsewhere terms the "forty-eightist" slogan of "permanent revolution", since it was first put forward by Marx during the 1848 wave of bourgeois revolutions in the belief that these would lead directly to proletarian revolutions. See notably the 1850 "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League": "While the democratic petty bourgeoisie wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, . . . Their battle cry must be: 'The Revolution in Permanence'."

See too NM, pp. 102-3: "The development of Jacobinism (of content), and of the formula of Permanent Revolution put into practice in the active phase of the French Revolution, found its juridical-constitutional 'completion' in the parliamentary régime. The latter, in the period in which 'private' energies in society were most plentiful, realised the permanent hegemony of the urban class over the entire population in the Hegelian form of government with permanently organised consent. (However, this organisation of consent was left to private initiative, and was thus of a moral or ethical character, because it was consent 'voluntarily' given in one way or another.) The 'limit' which the Jacobins had come up against in the Le Chapelier law and in the law of the *maximum* was transcended and pushed progressively back in the course of a whole process, in which propagandistic and practical (economic, political-juridical) activity alternated. The economic base was continually enlarged and reinforced through industrial and commercial development. Those social elements which were most highly endowed with energy and spirit of enterprise rose from the lower classes to the ruling classes. The entire society was in a continuous process of formation and dissolution, followed by more complex formations with richer potentialities. This, broadly speaking, lasted until the epoch of imperialism and culminated in the world war. In this process, attempts at insurrection alternated with pitiless repression, enlargements of political suffrage with restrictions, freedom of association with restriction or annulment of that freedom. . . . The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary régime is characterised by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other 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. Between consent and force stands corruption/fraud (which is characteristic of certain situations when it is hard to exercise the hegemonic function, and when the use of force is too risky). This consists in procuring the demoralisation and paralysis of the antagonist (or antagonists) by buying its leaders—either covertly, or, in cases of imminent danger, openly—in order to sow disarray and confusion in his ranks. In the period following the World War, cracks opened up everywhere in the hegemonic apparatus, and the exercise of hegemony became permanently difficult and aleatory."

against old treaties and the existing international order, and against a foreign power—Austria—which represented these and upheld them in Italy, occupying a part of the peninsula and controlling the rest. This problem arose in France too, in a certain sense at least, since at a certain point the internal struggle became a national struggle fought at the frontiers. But this only happened after the whole territory had been won for the revolution, and the Jacobins were able to utilise the external threat as a spur to greater energy internally: they well understood that in order to defeat the external foe they had to crush his allies internally, and they did not hesitate to carry out the September massacres.⁵⁰ In Italy, although a similar connection, both explicit and implicit, did exist between Austria and at least a segment of the intellectuals, the nobles and the landowners, it was not denounced by the Action Party; or at least it was not denounced with the proper energy and in the most practically effective manner, and it did not become a real political issue. It became transformed "curiously" into a question of greater or lesser patriotic dignity, and subsequently gave rise to a trail of acrimonious and sterile polemics which continued even after 1898.*

⁵⁰ Between 2 and 5 September 1792, at the insistence notably of Marat, some 1200 royalist prisoners were massacred. They were accused of having by their treachery brought about the defeats suffered by the revolutionary armies prior to the battle of Valmy.

* See the articles of Rerum Scriptor in *Critica Sociale* after the resumption of publication, and the book by Romualdo Bonfadini, *Mezzo secolo di patriottismo* ["Half a century of patriotism"], Milan 1886. The question of the "testimony" of Federico Confalonieri should be recalled in this respect: Bonfadini, in the above-mentioned book, asserts in a note that he has seen the collection of the "testimony" in the State Archives of Milan, and he refers to some 80 dossiers. Others have always denied that this collection of testimony exists in Italy, thus explaining its non-publication. In an article (published in 1925) by Senator Salata, charged with carrying out research in the Viennese archives on documents concerning Italy, it was claimed that the testimony had been traced and would be published. Recall the fact that at a certain time *Civiltà Cattolica* challenged the liberals to publish it, asserting that if it was known it would blow sky high, no less, the unity of the State. In the Confalonieri question, the most remarkable fact is that unlike other patriots pardoned by Austria, Confalonieri, who had been a remarkable politician, withdrew from active life and after his liberation maintained a very reserved bearing. The whole Confalonieri question should be critically re-examined, together with the attitude assumed by him and his companions, and an analysis in depth made of the memoirs written by the individuals involved (when they wrote any). For the polemics which they provoked, the memoirs of the Frenchman Alexandre Andryane are interesting; he treats Confalonieri with great respect and admiration, whereas he attacks Giorgio Pallavicino for his weakness.

⁵¹ "Costituti" are more precisely statements made under pre-trial interrogation; the word has no exact English equivalent.

Federico Confalonieri (1785-1846) was a conspirator, inventor and journalist. He was a member of the "Italiani" in opposition to Napoleon in 1814, and subse-

THE MODERN PRINCE

INTRODUCTION

The concept of "Jacobinism" is perhaps that which establishes most clearly and most succinctly the unifying thread which links all of Gramsci's prison writing on history and on politics. Machiavelli was a "precocious Jacobin"; Mazzini and his followers failed to be the "Jacobins" of the Risorgimento; the "Modern Prince"—i.e. the communist party—must organise and express a national-popular collective will, in other words, must be a "Jacobin" force, binding the peasants beneath the hegemony of the proletariat, and rejecting all forms of economism, syndicalism, spontaneism. What has characterised Italian history hitherto is the fact that "an effective *Jacobin* force was always missing". Now the question is posed of whether the urban proletariat has "attained an adequate development in the field of industrial production and a certain level of historico-political culture". Its historical task can only be accomplished if "the great mass of peasant farmers bursts *simultaneously* into political life". The writings on the communist party grouped in this section aim to define what type of party could play the role of the "Modern Prince".

In an earlier version of the passage here entitled "The Political Party", Gramsci gave what he wrote the heading "Marx and Machiavelli", and began: "This theme can be developed in a two-fold study: a study of the real relations between the two as theorists of militant politics, of action; and a book which would derive from Marxist doctrines an articulated system of contemporary politics of the '*Prince*' type. The theme would be the political party, in its relations with the classes and the State; not the party as a sociological category, but the party which seeks to found the State." Why did Gramsci attach such importance to Machiavelli? Because "Machiavelli was the representative in Italy of the recognition that the Renaissance could not be a real one without the foundation of a national State"; "Machiavelli's political thought was a reaction to the Renaissance [in the narrow sense]; it was an invocation of the political and national necessity of drawing closer to the people as the absolute monarchies of France and Spain had done . . ." Machiavelli did not merely abstractly desire the national unification of Italy; he had a programme, and it was one which revealed his "precocious Jacobinism". He intended through the

institution of a citizen militia to bring the great mass of peasant farmers into political life. For Gramsci, he was not simply a precursor of the "historical" Jacobins, but a precursor of the "modern" Jacobins—i.e. the communists—in their task of forging the worker-peasant alliance. In his identification of the communists with Jacobinism, Gramsci was developing and expanding a theme already touched on by Lenin—who wrote in July 1917 that "Jacobinism" in Europe or on the boundary line between Europe and Asia in the twentieth century would be the rule of the revolutionary class, of the proletariat, which, supported by the peasant poor and taking advantage of the existing material basis for advancing to socialism, could not only provide all the great, ineradicable, unforgettable things provided by the Jacobins in the eighteenth century, but bring about a lasting world-wide victory for the working people".

The notes grouped in this section approach the problem of the "The Modern Prince" from many angles; they analyse the nature of a political party as such; the relations between party, class and State; the ideological dangers of economism and spontaneism, against which it must struggle; the type of non-bureaucratic internal régime which is necessary if it is to be effective. But if there is one passage which perhaps more than any other encapsulates Gramsci's conception of the revolutionary party, it is the opening sentences of the section entitled "Prediction and Perspective" in which he evokes Machiavelli's Centaur as a symbol of the "dual perspective" which must characterise the revolutionary party (and State). The party must hold together in a dialectical unity the two levels "of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy". Perhaps one can see here an attempt to theorise the struggle Gramsci had conducted in the PCI against Bordiga on the one hand and Tasca on the other. Bordiga in this schema would represent an undialectical isolation of the moment of force, domination, etc., Tasca a parallel isolation of the moment of consent, hegemony; the short-term and the long-term perspective respectively, mechanically and incorrectly divorced from the other. Gramsci sought to theorise the unity of the two perspectives.

THE MODERN PRINCE

BRIEF NOTES ON MACHIAVELLI'S POLITICS

The basic thing about *The Prince* is that it is not a systematic treatment, but a "live" work, in which political ideology and political science are fused in the dramatic form of a "myth". Before Machiavelli, political science had taken the form either of the Utopia or of the scholarly treatise. Machiavelli, combining the two, gave imaginative and artistic form to his conception by embodying the doctrinal, rational element in the person of a *condottiere*,¹ who represents plastically and "anthropomorphically" the symbol of the "collective will". In order to represent the process whereby a given collective will, directed towards a given political objective, is formed, Machiavelli did not have recourse to long-winded arguments, or pedantic classifications of principles and criteria for a method of action. Instead he represented this process in terms of the qualities, characteristics, duties and requirements of a concrete individual. Such a procedure stimulates the artistic imagination of those who have to be convinced, and gives political passions a more concrete form.*

Machiavelli's *Prince* could be studied as an historical exemplifica-

¹ See note 21 on p. 64.

* One will have to look through the political writers who preceded Machiavelli, to see whether there had been other examples of such personification before *The Prince*. The "mythical" character of the book to which I have referred is due also to its conclusion; having described the ideal *condottiere*, Machiavelli here, in a passage of great artistic effect, invokes the real *condottiere* who is to incarnate him historically.² This passionate invocation reflects back on the entire book, and is precisely what gives it its dramatic character. L. Russo, in his *Prolegomeni*,³ calls Machiavelli the artist of politics, and once even uses the word "myth", but not exactly in the sense just indicated.

² I.e. Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom "The Prince" is addressed, and who is invited in the famous last chapter of the work to "make Petrarch's words come true: 'Virtù contro a furore prenderà l'arme; e sia el combatter corto, ché l'antico valore nell'Italici cor non è ancor morto.' [Virtue will take up arms against fury; and may the fight be brief, since the ancient valour is not yet dead in Italian hearts]".

³ Luigi Russo: *Prolegomeni a Machiavelli*, included in *Ritratti e disegni storici*, Bari 1937. We have not been able to trace the original place and date of publication. In another note (NM, p. 141) Gramsci writes: "Russo, in his *Prolegomeni*, makes *The Prince* into Machiavelli's treatise on dictatorship (moment of authority and of the individual), and *The Discourses* into his treatise on hegemony (moment of the universal and of liberty). Russo's observation is correct, although there are allusions to the moment of hegemony or consent in *The Prince* too, beside those to authority or force. Similarly, the observation is correct that there is no opposition in principle between *Principato* [see note 51 on p. 249] and republic; what is involved is rather the hypostasis of the two moments of authority and of universality." See "Prediction and Perspective" on pp. 169-173.

tion of the Sorelian myth⁴—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. The utopian character of *The Prince* lies in the fact that the Prince had no real historical existence; he did not present himself immediately and objectively to the Italian people, but was a pure theoretical abstraction—a symbol of the leader and ideal *condottiere*. However, in a dramatic movement of great effect, the elements of passion and of myth which occur throughout the book are drawn together and brought to life in the conclusion, in the invocation of a prince who “really exists”. Throughout the book, Machiavelli discusses what the Prince must be like if he is to lead a people to found a new State; the argument is developed with rigorous logic, and with scientific detachment. In the conclusion, Machiavelli merges with the people, becomes the people; not, however, some “generic” people, but the people whom he, Machiavelli, has convinced by the preceding argument—the people whose consciousness and whose expression he becomes and feels himself to be, with whom he feels identified. The entire “logical” argument now appears as nothing other than auto-reflection on the part of the people—an inner

⁴ Georges Sorel (1847-1922) was the principal theorist of revolutionary syndicalism, and the author notably of *Reflections on Violence* (1906). Influenced above all by Bergson and Marx, he in his turn had an immense influence in France and Italy—e.g. on Mussolini. His work was an amalgam of extremely disparate elements, reflecting the metamorphoses through which he passed—anti-Jacobin moralist, socialist, revolutionary syndicalist, far-right (indeed near-monarchist) preacher of an anti-bourgeois authoritarian moral regeneration, sympathiser with the Bolshevik revolution. In *Reflections on Violence*, Sorel develops the idea of the General Strike as a myth—indeed “the myth in which Socialism is wholly comprised, i.e. a body of images capable of evoking instinctively all the sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the war undertaken by Socialism against modern society”. Myths “enclose within them all the strongest inclinations of a people, of a party, or of a class”. He contrasts myth in this sense with utopias “which present a deceptive mirage of the future to the people”. (Another example of myth was Mazzini’s “mad chimera”, which “did more for Italian unity than Cavour and all the politicians of his school”). The idea of the General Strike “destroys all the theoretical consequences of every possible social policy; its partisans look upon even the most popular reforms as having a middle-class character; so far as they are concerned, nothing can weaken the fundamental opposition of the class war.” The General Strike thus focuses the “cleavage” between the antagonistic classes, by making every individual outburst of violence into an act in the class war. “Cleavage”, for Sorel, is the equivalent of class consciousness, of the class-for-itself; e.g. “When the governing classes, no longer daring to govern, are ashamed of their privileged situation, are eager to make advances to their enemies, and proclaim their horror of all cleavage in society, it becomes much more difficult to maintain in the minds of the proletariat this idea of cleavage without which Socialism cannot fulfil its historical role.” *Reflections on Violence*, Collier Books, 1950, pp. 124-26, 133-35, 186.

reasoning worked out in the popular consciousness, whose conclusion is a cry of passionate urgency. The passion, from discussion of itself, becomes once again “emotion”, fever, fanatical desire for action. This is why the epilogue of *The Prince* is not something extrinsic, tacked on, rhetorical, but has to be understood as a necessary element of the work—indeed as the element which gives the entire work its true colour, and makes it a kind of “political manifesto”.

A study might be made of how it came about that Sorel never advanced from his conception of ideology-as-myth to an understanding of the political party, but stopped short at the idea of the trade union. It is true that for Sorel the “myth” found its fullest expression not in the trade union as organisation of a collective will, but in its practical action—sign of a collective will already operative. The highest achievement of this practical action was to have been the general strike—i.e. a “passive activity”, so to speak, of a negative and preliminary kind (it could only be given a positive character by the realisation of a common accord between the various wills involved), an activity which does not envisage an “active and constructive” phase of its own. Hence in Sorel there was a conflict of two necessities: that of the myth, and that of the critique of the myth—in that “every pre-established plan is utopian and reactionary”. The outcome was left to the intervention of the irrational, to chance (in the Bergsonian sense of “*élan vital*”)⁵ or to “spontaneity”.*

⁵ For Henri Bergson’s key concept of “*élan vital*” or “vital impulse”, see notably the final section of chapter I of his *Creative Evolution*. In contrast to “mechanistic” theories, which “show us the gradual building-up of the machine under the influence of external circumstances”, and to “finalist” theories, which say that “the parts have been brought together on a preconceived plan with a view to a certain end”, Bergson suggests that there is “an original impetus of life”, life being defined as “a tendency to act on inert matter”. The implications of this theory were an extreme voluntarism: “Before the evolution of life . . . the portals of the future remain wide open. It is a creation that goes on for ever in virtue of an initial movement.” Also an emphasis on chance: “The direction of this action [i.e. action on inert matter] is not predetermined; hence the unforeseeable variety of forms which life, in evolving, sows along its path.” *Creative Evolution*, London 1954.

* At this point an implicit contradiction should be noted between on the one hand the manner in which Croce poses his problem of history and anti-history,⁶ and on the other hand certain of Croce’s other modes of thought: his aversion to “political parties” and the way in which he poses the question of the “predictability” of social facts (see *Conversazioni critiche*, First series, pp. 150-52, review of Ludovico Limentani’s book *La previsione dei fatti sociali*, Turin, Bocca, 1907). If social facts cannot be predicted, and the very concept of prediction is meaningless, then the irrational cannot but be dominant, and any organisation of men must be anti-historical—a “prejudice”. The only thing left to do is to resolve each

Can a myth, however, be "non-constructive"? How could an instrument conceivably be effective if, as in Sorel's vision of things, it leaves the collective will in the primitive and elementary phase of its mere formation, by differentiation ("cleavage")—even when this differentiation is violent, that is to say destroys existing moral and juridical relations? Will not that collective will, with so rudimentary a formation, at once cease to exist, scattering into an infinity of individual wills which in the positive phase then follow

individual, practical problem posed by the movement of history as it comes up, and with extemporaneous criteria; opportunism is the only possible political line. (See Croce's article *Il partito come giudizio e come pregiudizio*, in *Cultura e vita morale*).

* For Croce's concept of history and "anti-history", see General Introduction; "Problems of Philosophy and History" below; and note 19 on p. 137. For his "aversion to political parties", see "Politics as an autonomous science", pp. 126-143 below. Gramsci's view was, in fact, that Croce precisely himself fulfilled the function of a "political party" (see especially *Alcuni temi*; and note 39 on p. 150), organising the "leadership" or hegemony of the bourgeoisie at the same time as fascism provided a transitional form of its "domination". Croce in fact supported fascism initially, and continued to do so in the Senate even after Matteotti's murder in 1924—in fact until the banning of the Aventine opposition in 1925. Thereafter he maintained a critical position *vis-à-vis* fascism, but not of a kind to prevent his continuing to live and publish in Italy. At the level of political theory, his essential activity was directed against "the philosophy of praxis", and he contributed in Gramsci's view—whatever his subjective intentions—to the reinforcement of fascism; see for this "The History of Europe seen as 'Passive Revolution'" on pp. 118-120 above. Also *Lettere dal Carcere* pp. 691-93: "I think you exaggerate Croce's present position, and see him as more isolated than he really is . . . Croce has published a considerable proportion of his present views in the review *Politica*, edited by Coppola and Rocco, the Minister [of Justice]; and in my view not just Coppola but many others too are convinced of the usefulness of the position taken up by Croce, which creates a situation in which it becomes possible to give the new ruling groups which have emerged since the war a real education for public life. If you study all Italian history since 1815, you will see that a small ruling group has succeeded in methodically absorbing into its own ambit the entire political personnel thrown up by the various, originally subversive, mass movements. From 1860 to 1876 the Mazzinian and Garibaldine Action Party was absorbed by the Monarchy, leaving only an insignificant residue which lived on as the Republican Party, but whose significance was more folkloristic than historico-political. The phenomenon was called 'transformism', but it was not an isolated phenomenon; it was an organic process which, in the formation of the ruling class, replaced what in France had happened in the Revolution and under Napoleon, and in England under Cromwell. Indeed, even after 1876 the process continued, molecularly. It assumed massive proportions after the War, when the traditional ruling group appeared no longer capable of assimilating and digesting the new forces thrown up by events. But this ruling group is more 'malin' and capable than one could have imagined: the absorption is difficult and laborious, but takes place nonetheless, by a host of different ways and means. Croce's activity is one of these ways and means; indeed, his teaching produces perhaps the greatest quantity of 'gastric juices' to assist the process of digestion. Set in its historical context, the context of Italian history, Croce's work appears to be the most powerful mechanism for 'conforming' the new forces to its vital interests (not simply its immediate interests, but its future ones as well) that the dominant group today possesses, and I think that the latter has a proper appreciation of his utility, superficial appearances notwithstanding".

separate and conflicting paths? Quite apart from the fact that destruction and negation cannot exist without an implicit construction and affirmation—this not in a "metaphysical" sense but in practice, i.e. politically, as party programme. In Sorel's case it is clear that behind the spontaneity there lies a purely mechanistic assumption, behind the liberty (will—life-force) a maximum of determinism, behind the idealism an absolute materialism.

The modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual. It can only be an organism, a complex element of society in which a collective will, which has already been recognised and has to some extent asserted itself in action, begins to take concrete form. History has already provided this organism, and it is the political party—the first cell in which there come together germs of a collective will tending to become universal and total. In the modern world, only those historico-political actions which are immediate and imminent, characterised by the necessity for lightning speed, can be incarnated mythically by a concrete individual. Such speed can only be made necessary by a great and imminent danger, a great danger which precisely fans passion and fanaticism suddenly to a white heat, and annihilates the critical sense and the corrosive irony which are able to destroy the "charismatic" character of the *condottiere* (as happened in the Boulanger adventure).⁷ But an improvised action of such a kind, by its very nature, cannot have a long-term and organic character. It will in almost all cases be appropriate to restoration and reorganisation, but not to the founding of new States or new national and social structures (as was at issue in Machiavelli's *Prince*, in which the theme of restoration was merely a rhetorical element, linked to the literary concept of an Italy descended from Rome and destined to restore the order and the power of Rome).⁸ It will be defensive

⁷ General Boulanger (1837-91) was French Minister of War in 1896. He symbolised the idea of *revanche* (against Germany after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71) in the popular consciousness. The government became afraid of his popularity, and of his tractions with monarchist forces. They dismissed him, and posted him to Clermont-Ferrand. He founded a Boulangist party, which called for a new Constituent Assembly, a military regeneration of the nation, and reform of "the abuses of parliamentarism". Elected with a huge majority to the National Assembly, he appeared likely to attempt a *coup*—which could well have succeeded—but in fact hesitated, and subsequently fled the country fearing imminent arrest (1899).

⁸ It is true that Machiavelli was inspired to his political conception of the necessity for a unitary Italian State not only by the example and model of the great absolute monarchies of France and Spain, but also by the remembrance of Rome's past. However, it should be emphasised that this is no reason for confusing Machiavelli with the literary-rhetorical tradition. For this element is neither

rather than capable of original creation. Its underlying assumption will be that a collective will, already in existence, has become nerveless and dispersed, has suffered a collapse which is dangerous and threatening but not definitive and catastrophic, and that it is necessary to reconcentrate and reinforce it—rather than that a new collective will must be created from scratch, to be directed towards goals which are concrete and rational, but whose concreteness and rationality have not yet been put to the critical test by a real and universally known historical experience.

The abstract character of the Sorelian conception of the myth is manifest in its aversion (which takes the emotional form of an ethical repugnance) for the Jacobins, who were certainly a "categorical embodiment" of Machiavelli's Prince.⁸ *The Modern Prince* must have a part devoted to Jacobinism (in the integral sense which this notion has had historically, and must have conceptually), as an exemplification of the concrete formation and operation of a collective will which at least in some aspects was an original, *ex novo* creation. And a definition must be given of collective will, and of political will in general, in the modern sense: will as operative awareness of historical necessity, as protagonist of a real and effective historical drama.

One of the first sections must precisely be devoted to the "collective will", posing the question in the following terms: "When can the conditions for awakening and developing a national-popular collective will be said to exist?"⁹ Hence an historical (economic) analysis of the social structure of the given country and a "dramatic" representation of the attempts made in the course of the centuries to awaken this will, together with the reasons for the successive failures. Why was there no absolute monarchy in Italy in Machiavelli's time? One has to go back to the Roman Empire (the language question, problem of the intellectuals, etc.), and understand the

exclusive nor even predominant, nor is the necessity for a great national State argued from it; moreover, this very allusion to Rome is less abstract than it may seem, when it is set in its correct context of the intellectual climate of Humanism and Renaissance. In Book VII of the *Art of War* one finds: "This province (Italy) seems born to bring dead things back to life, as we have seen occur with poetry, with painting and with sculpture"—why then should it not rediscover military skill too? etc. One would have to collect together all the other references of this kind in order to establish their exact character.

⁸ For Gramsci's conception of the relation between Machiavelli, Jacobinism and the Communist Party, see introductions to "Notes on Italian History" and to this section (pp. 44-47 and 123-4). See too "Material for a critical essay on Croce's two Histories", on pp. 114-118 above. On Ris. p. 155 Gramsci defines "historical Jacobinism" as "union of city and countryside".

⁹ For the concept of national-popular, see note 65 on p. 421.

function of the mediaeval Communes, the significance of Catholicism etc.¹⁰ In short, one has to make an outline of the whole history of Italy—in synthesis, but accurate.

The reason for the failures of the successive attempts to create a national-popular collective will is to be sought in the existence of certain specific social groups which were formed at the dissolution of the Communal bourgeoisie; in the particular character of other groups which reflect the international function of Italy as seat of the Church and depositary of the Holy Roman Empire; and so on. This function and the position which results from it have brought about an internal situation which may be called "economic-corporate"¹¹—politically, the worst of all forms of feudal society, the least progressive and the most stagnant. An effective *Jacobin* force was always missing, and could not be constituted; and it was precisely such a Jacobin force which in other nations awakened and organised the national-popular collective will, and founded the modern States. Do the necessary conditions for this will finally exist, or rather what is the present relation between these conditions and the forces opposed to them? Traditionally the forces of opposition have been the landed aristocracy and, more generally, landed property as a whole. Italy's particular characteristic is a special "*rural bourgeoisie*",¹² a legacy of parasitism bequeathed to modern times by the disintegration as a class of the Communal bourgeoisie (the hundred cities, the cities of silence).¹³ The positive conditions

¹⁰ For Gramsci's discussion of the "language question", see Int. pp. 21-25, etc. In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church fought against the use of the vernacular and for the preservation of Latin as the "universal" language, since this was a key element in its own intellectual hegemony. Dante, for example, felt compelled to defend his use of (Florentine) Italian in the *Divine Comedy*. Gramsci describes the emergence of Florentine dialect as a "noble vernacular". "The flowering of the Communes developed the vernaculars, and the intellectual hegemony of Florence produced a united vernacular, a noble vernacular. . . . The fall of the Communes and the advent of the Princely régime, the creation of a governing caste detached from the people, crystallised this vernacular in the same way as literary Latin had become crystallised. Italian was once again a written and not a spoken language, a language of scholars rather than a language of the nation." The language question was simplified at one level in the nineteenth century, when literary Italian finally defeated Latin as the language of learning, and when it was adopted as the language of the new Italian national state. But it persists in the existence of dialects as the "mother-tongue" in many Italian regions even today, despite the development of the mass media and universal education in this century.

For the Communes, see note 4 on p. 53.

¹¹ For the concept of economic-corporate, see note 4 on p. 53, and also Notes on Gramsci's Terminology, p. xiii.

¹² On the "*rural bourgeoisie*", see note 61 on p. 91, and "Subversive", pp. 272-5 below.

¹³ See notes 61 and 62 on p. 91.

are to be sought in the existence of urban social groups which have attained an adequate development in the field of industrial production and a certain level of historico-political culture. Any formation of a national-popular collective will is impossible, unless the great mass of peasant farmers bursts *simultaneously* into political life. That was Machiavelli's intention through the reform of the militia, and it was achieved by the Jacobins in the French Revolution. That Machiavelli understood it reveals a precocious Jacobinism that is the (more or less fertile) germ of his conception of national revolution. All history from 1815 onwards shows the efforts of the traditional classes to prevent the formation of a collective will of this kind, and to maintain "economic-corporate" power in an international system of passive equilibrium.

An important part of *The Modern Prince* will have to be devoted to the question of intellectual and moral reform, that is to the question of religion or world-view. In this field too we find in the existing tradition an absence of Jacobinism and fear of Jacobinism (the latest philosophical expression of such fear is B. Croce's Malthusian attitude towards religion).¹⁴ The modern Prince must

¹⁴ Gramsci alludes to Malthus here, as he usually does, simply to indicate fear of, or contempt for, the masses. On MS, pp. 224-29 he discusses Croce's attitude to religion, and the character of the "reformation" which he represents. Gramsci criticises Croce for not understanding that "the philosophy of praxis, with its vast mass movement, has represented and does represent an historical process similar to the Reformation, in contrast with liberalism, which reproduces a Renaissance which is narrowly limited to restricted intellectual groups. . . . Croce is essentially anti-confessional (we cannot call him anti-religious given his definition of religious reality) and for numerous Italian and European intellectuals his philosophy . . . has been a genuine intellectual and moral reform similar to the Renaissance . . . But Croce did not 'go to the people', did not wish to become a 'national' element (just as the men of the Renaissance—unlike the Lutherans and Calvinists—were not 'national' elements), did not wish to create a band of disciples who . . . could have popularised his philosophy and tried to make it into an educative element, starting in the primary school (and hence educative for the simple worker or peasant, i.e. for the simple man of the people). Perhaps this was impossible, but it was worth trying and the fact that it was not tried is certainly significant." Gramsci goes on to criticise Croce's view that religion is appropriate for the masses, while only an élite of superior intellects are capable of a rational conception of the world. Croce was minister of education in Giolitti's 1920-21 government, and introduced a draft bill to reorganise the national educational system; this bill provided for the reintroduction of religious instruction in the primary schools—something which had not existed since the 1859 Casati Act laid the basis for the educational system of post-Risorgimento Italy. In fact, Giolitti withdrew the bill, but the main lines of it were taken up by Gentile when, as minister of education in the first Fascist government of 1922, he drew up the Gentile Act, which was passed in 1923. (See note 15 on p. 41.)

For the concept of "intellectual and moral reform" (taken from Renan), see "Philosophy of Praxis and Modern Culture" on pp. 380-99. It should be noted that the Italian word "*riforma*" translates both "reform" and "reformation" in English.

be and cannot but be the proclaimer and organiser of an intellectual and moral reform, which also means creating the terrain for a subsequent development of the national-popular collective will towards the realisation of a superior, total form of modern civilisation.

These two basic points—the formation of a national-popular collective will, of which the modern Prince is at one and the same time the organiser and the active, operative expression; and intellectual and moral reform—should structure the entire work. The concrete, programmatic points must be incorporated in the first part, that is they should result from the line of discussion "dramatically", and not be a cold and pedantic exposition of arguments.

Can there be cultural reform, and can the position of the depressed strata of society be improved culturally, without a previous economic reform and a change in their position in the social and economic fields? Intellectual and moral reform has to be linked with a programme of economic reform—indeed the programme of economic reform is precisely the concrete form in which every intellectual and moral reform presents itself. The modern Prince, as it develops, revolutionises the whole system of intellectual and moral relations, in that its development means precisely that any given act is seen as useful or harmful, as virtuous or as wicked, only in so far as it has as its point of reference the modern Prince itself, and helps to strengthen or to oppose it. In men's consciences, the Prince takes the place of the divinity or the categorical imperative, and becomes the basis for a modern laicism and for a complete laicisation of all aspects of life and of all customary relationships. [1933-34: 1st version 1931-32.]

MACHIAVELLI AND MARX¹⁵

The basic innovation introduced by the philosophy of praxis into the science of politics and of history is the demonstration that there is no abstract "human nature", fixed and immutable (a concept which certainly derives from religious and transcendentalist thought), but that human nature is the totality of historically determined social relations, hence an historical fact which can, within certain limits, be ascertained with the methods of philology and criticism. Consequently political science, as far as both its concrete content and its logical formulation are concerned, must

¹⁵ This note was given no title in its final version translated here, so we have given it the title used by Gramsci for the first version.

on a distinction between political society and civil society,⁵⁵ which is made into and presented as an organic one, whereas in fact it is merely methodological. Thus it is asserted that economic activity belongs to civil society, and that the State must not intervene to regulate it. But since in actual reality civil society and State are one and the same, it must be made clear that *laissez-faire* too is a form of State "regulation", introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means. It is a deliberate policy, conscious of its own ends, and not the spontaneous, automatic expression of economic facts. Consequently, *laissez-faire* liberalism is a political programme, designed to change—in so far as it is victorious—a State's leading personnel, and to change the economic programme of the State itself—in other words the distribution of the national income.

The case of theoretical syndicalism is different. Here we are dealing with a subaltern group, which is prevented by this theory from ever becoming dominant, or from developing beyond the economic-corporate stage and rising to the phase of ethical-political hegemony in civil society, and of domination in the State. In the case of *laissez-faire* liberalism, one is dealing with a fraction of the ruling class which wishes to modify not the structure of the State, but merely government policy; which wishes to reform the laws controlling commerce, but only indirectly those controlling industry (since it is undeniable that protection, especially in countries with a poor and restricted market, limits freedom of industrial enterprise and favours unhealthily the creation of monopolies). What is at stake is a rotation in governmental office of the ruling-class parties, not the foundation and organisation of a new political society, and even less of a new type of civil society. In the case of the theoretical syndicalist movement the problem is more complex. It is undeniable that in it, the independence and autonomy of the subaltern group which it claims to represent are in fact sacrificed to the intellectual hegemony of the ruling class, since precisely theoretical syndicalism is merely an aspect of *laissez-faire* liberalism—justified with a few mutilated (and therefore banalised) theses from the philosophy of praxis. Why and how does this "sacrifice" come about? The transformation of the subordinate group into a dominant one is excluded, either because the problem is not even considered (Fabianism, De Man,⁵⁶ an important part

⁵⁵ See introduction to "State and Civil Society" on pp. 206-9.

⁵⁶ Henri de Man (1885-1953) was a Belgian social-democrat, author notably of the work of revisionism "*Au delà du marxisme*" (1929). In 1934 he wrote a programme of peaceful transition to socialism, known as the "De Man Plan",

of the Labour Party), or because it is posed in an inappropriate and ineffective form (social-democratic tendencies in general), or because of a belief in the possibility of leaping from class society directly into a society of perfect equality with a syndical economy.

The attitude of economism towards expressions of political and intellectual will, action or initiative is to say the least strange—as if these did not emanate organically from economic necessity, and indeed were not the only effective expression of the economy. Thus it is incongruous that the concrete posing of the problem of hegemony should be interpreted as a fact subordinating the group seeking hegemony. 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.

Economism appears in many other guises besides *laissez-faire* liberalism and theoretical syndicalism. All forms of electoral abstentionism belong to it (a typical example is the abstentionism of the Italian Clericals after 1870, which became ever more attenuated after 1900 until 1919 and the formation of the Popular Party;⁵⁷ the organic distinction which the Clericals made between the real Italy and the legal Italy was a reproduction of the distinction between economic world and politico-legal world); and there are many such forms, in the sense that there can be semi-abstentionism, 25 per cent abstentionism, etc. Linked with abstentionism is the formula "the worse it gets, the better that will be", and also the formula of the so-called parliamentary "intransigence" of certain groups of deputies.⁵⁸ Economism is not always opposed to political action and to the political party, but the latter is seen merely as an educational organism similar in kind to a trade union.

and was a minister from 1935 to 1938. In 1946 he was sentenced to prison for collaboration with the Germans during the occupation of Belgium.

⁵⁷ See notes 14 on p. 62, 73 on p. 96 and 89 on p. 102.

⁵⁸ For the "intransigents" see note 72 on p. 95 and General Introduction. Some of the old intransigent wing of the PSI helped to form the Communist Party in 1921, others remained in the "maximalist" majority faction of the PSI. This passage, however, seems clearly directed more specifically against Bordiga, his abstentionism, etc.

science abstracts the element "will", and does not take account of the end to which a particular will is applied. The attribute "utopian" does not apply to political will in general, but to specific wills which are incapable of relating means to end, and hence are not even wills, but idle whims, dreams, longings, etc.

Guicciardini's scepticism (not pessimism of the intelligence, which can be combined with an optimism of the will in active and realistic politicians)⁷⁶ has other sources: 1. diplomatic habit: i.e. the habit of a subordinate, subaltern activity (executive-bureaucratic) which has to accept a will (the political will of the diplomat's government or sovereign) which is extraneous to the diplomat's individual convictions. (He may, it is true, feel it as his own, in so far as it is in line with his own convictions: but he may also not do so. The fact that diplomacy has of necessity become a specialised profession has led to this consequence, of allowing the diplomat to become independent of the policies of changing governments, etc.). The result is scepticism and, in scientific discussion, extra-scientific prejudices; 2. the actual convictions of Guicciardini, who, in the general context of Italian politics, was a conservative, and hence theorises his own opinions, his own political position, etc.

Guicciardini's writings are more of a period piece than they are political science, and that is De Sanctis' judgement. Just as Paolo Treves' work too is more of a period piece than it is history of political science. [1930-32]

ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS. RELATIONS OF FORCE

The study of how "situations" should be analysed, in other words how to establish the various levels of the relations of force, offers an opportunity for an elementary exposition of the science and art of politics—understood as a body of practical rules for research and of detailed observations useful for awakening an interest in effective reality and for stimulating more rigorous and more vigorous

⁷⁶ See PP. p. 6: "On daydreams and fantasies. They show lack of character and passivity. One imagines that something has happened to upset the mechanism of necessity. One's own initiative has become free. Everything is easy. One can do whatever one wants, and one wants a whole series of things which at present one lacks. It is basically the present turned on its head which is projected into the future. Everything repressed is unleashed. On the contrary, it is necessary to direct one's attention violently towards the present as it is, if one wishes to transform it. Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will." [1932] Romain Rolland's maxim "Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will" was made by Gramsci into something of a programmatic slogan as early as 1919, in the pages of *Ordine Nuovo*.

political insights. This should be accompanied by the explanation of what is meant in politics by strategy and tactics, by strategic "plan", by propaganda and agitation, by command structure⁷⁶ or science of political organisation and administration.

The elements of empirical observation which are habitually included higgledy-piggledy in works of political science (G. Mosca's *Elementi di scienza politica* may be taken as typical) ought, in so far as they are not abstract and illusory, to be inserted into the context of the relations of force, on one level or another. These levels range from the relations between international forces (one would insert here the notes written on what a great power is, on the combinations of States in hegemonic systems, and hence on the concept of independence and sovereignty as far as small and medium powers are concerned)⁷⁷ to the objective relations within society—in other words, the degree of development of productive forces; to relations of political force and those between parties (hegemonic systems within the State); and to immediate (or potentially military) political relations.

Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? There can be no doubt that they follow. Any organic innovation in the social structure, through its technical-military expressions, modifies organically absolute and relative relations in the international field too. Even the geographical position of a national State does not precede but follows (logically) structural changes, although it also reacts back upon them to a certain extent (to the extent precisely to which superstructures react upon the structure, politics on economics, etc.). However, international relations react both passively and actively on political relations (of hegemony among the parties). The more the immediate economic life of a nation is subordinated to international relations, the more a particular party will come to represent this situation and to exploit it, with the aim of preventing rival parties gaining the upper hand (recall Nitti's famous speech on the *technical* impossibility of revolution in Italy). From this series of facts one may conclude that often the so-called "foreigner's party"⁷⁸ is not really

⁷⁶ *Organica* has no exact equivalent in English—it means the organisation of armed forces, their division into different arms and corps, their system of ranks, etc.

⁷⁷ See NM, pp. 141 and 167 ff.

⁷⁸ Term used especially of communist parties by the nationalist Right, and, in an earlier period, of parties influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution. The latter—Mazzini's Action Party is a good example—did in fact often have links with liberals in other countries.

the one which is commonly so termed, but precisely the most nationalistic party—which, in reality, represents not so much the vital forces of its own country, as that country's subordination and economic enslavement to the hegemonic nations or to certain of their number.* [1933–34: 1st version 1931–32.]

It is the problem of the relations between structure and superstructure which must be accurately posed and resolved if the forces which are active in the history of a particular period are to be correctly analysed, and the relation between them determined. 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.** From a reflection on these two principles, one can move on to develop a whole series of further principles of historical methodology. Meanwhile, in studying a structure, it is necessary to distinguish organic movements (relatively permanent) from movements which may be termed "conjunctural" (and which appear as occasional, immediate, almost accidental).⁷⁹ Conjunctural phenomena too depend on organic movements to be sure, but they do not have any very far-reaching historical significance; they give rise to political criticism of a minor, day-to-day character, which has as its subject top political leaders and personalities with direct governmental responsibilities. Organic phenomena

* An allusion to this international element which "represses" domestic energies can be found in G. Volpe's articles published in *Corriere della Sera*, on 22 and 23 March 1932.

** "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions for their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation." Marx, Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*.

⁷⁹ On PP, pp. 148–49 Gramsci wrote: "The conjuncture can be defined as the set of circumstances which determine the market in a given phase, provided that these are conceived of as being in movement, i.e. as constituting a process of ever-changing combinations, a process which is the economic cycle . . . In Italian the meaning of 'favourable or unfavourable economic situation (*occasione*)' remains attached to the word 'conjuncture'. Difference between 'situation' and 'conjuncture': the conjuncture is the set of immediate and ephemeral characteristics of the economic situation . . . Study of the conjuncture is thus more closely linked to immediate politics, to 'tactics' and agitation, while the 'situation' relates to 'strategy' and propaganda, etc."

on the other hand give rise to socio-historical criticism, whose subject is wider social groupings—beyond the public figures and beyond the top leaders. When an historical period comes to be studied, the great importance of this distinction becomes clear. A crisis occurs, sometimes lasting for decades. This exceptional duration means that incurable structural contradictions have revealed themselves (reached maturity), and that, despite this, the political forces which are struggling to conserve and defend the existing structure itself are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts (since no social formation will ever admit that it has been superseded) form the terrain of the "conjunctural", and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise. These forces seek to demonstrate that the necessary and sufficient conditions already exist to make possible, and hence imperative, the accomplishment of certain historical tasks (imperative, because any falling short before an historical duty increases the necessary disorder, and prepares more serious catastrophes). (The demonstration in the last analysis only succeeds and is "true" if it becomes a new reality, if the forces of opposition triumph; in the immediate, it is developed in a series of ideological, religious, philosophical, political, and juridical polemics, whose concreteness can be estimated by the extent to which they are convincing, and shift the previously existing disposition of social forces.)

A common error in historico-political analysis consists in an inability to find the correct relation between what is organic and what is conjunctural. This leads to presenting causes as immediately operative which in fact only operate indirectly, or to asserting that the immediate causes are the only effective ones. In the first case there is an excess of "economism", or doctrinaire pedantry; in the second, an excess of "ideologism". In the first case there is an overestimation of mechanical causes, in the second an exaggeration of the voluntarist and individual element. The distinction between organic "movements" and facts and "conjunctural" or occasional ones must be applied to all types of situation; not only to those in which a regressive development or an acute crisis takes place, but also to those in which there is a progressive development or one towards prosperity, or in which the productive forces are stagnant. The dialectical nexus between the two categories of movement, and therefore of research, is hard to establish precisely. Moreover, if error is serious in historiography, it becomes still more serious in the art of politics, when it is not the reconstruction of past history

but the construction of present and future history which is at stake.* One's own baser and more immediate desires and passions are the cause of error, in that they take the place of an objective and impartial analysis—and this happens not as a conscious "means" to stimulate to action, but as self-deception. In this case too the snake bites the snake-charmer—in other words the demagogue is the first victim of his own demagoguery.

These methodological criteria will acquire visibly and didactically their full significance if they are applied to the examination of concrete historical facts. This might usefully be done for the events which took place in France from 1789 to 1870. It seems to me that for greater clarity of exposition it is precisely necessary to take in the whole of this period. 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 definitively 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-à-vis both the old and the very new.

Furthermore, it was in 1870-71 that the body of principles of political strategy and tactics engendered in practice in 1789, and developed ideologically around '48, lost their efficacy. (I am referring to those which can be resumed in the formula of "Permanent Revolution"; it would be interesting to study how much of this formula passed into Mazzini's strategy—for example, in the Milan insurrection of 1853—and whether this happened consciously or not.) One piece of evidence for the correctness of this point of view is the fact that historians are by no means of one mind (and it is impossible that they should be) in fixing the limits of the group

* Failure to consider the immediate moment of "relations of force" is linked to residues of the vulgar liberal conception—of which syndicalism is a manifestation which thought itself more advanced when in reality it was taking a step backward. In fact the vulgar liberal conception, stressing relations between political forces organised in the various forms of party (newspaper readerships, parliamentary and local elections, the mass organisations of parties and trade unions in the strict sense), was more advanced than syndicalism, which gave primordial importance to the fundamental socio-economic relation and only to that. The vulgar liberal conception took implicit account of this socio-economic relation too (as many signs clearly indicate), but it insisted besides on the relation of political forces—which was an expression of the former and in reality contained it. These residues of the vulgar liberal conception can be traced in a whole series of works purporting to be connected with the philosophy of praxis, and have given rise to infantile forms of optimism and folly.

of events which constitutes the French Revolution. For some (Salvemini, for instance) the Revolution was complete at Valmy: France had created its new State and had shown itself capable of organising the politico-military force necessary to assert and to defend its territorial sovereignty. For others the Revolution continues until Thermidor—indeed they speak of various revolutions (10 August⁸⁰ is a separate revolution, etc.).* The interpretation of Thermidor and of the work of Napoleon provokes the sharpest disagreements. Was it revolution or counter-revolution? For others the history of the Revolution continues until 1830, 1848, 1870 and even until the World War of 1914. All these views are partially true. In reality the internal contradictions which develop after 1789 in the structure of French society are resolved to a relative degree only with the Third Republic; and France has now enjoyed sixty years of stable political life only after eighty years of convulsions at ever longer intervals: 1789, 1794, 1799, 1804, 1815, 1830, 1848, 1870. It is precisely the study of these "intervals" of varying frequency which enables one to reconstruct the relations on the one hand between structure and superstructure, and on the other between the development of organic movement and conjunctural movement in the structure. One might say in the meantime that the dialectical mediation between the two methodological principles formulated at the beginning of this note is to be found in the historico-political formula of Permanent Revolution.

The question of so-called relations of force is an aspect of the same problem. One often reads in historical narratives the generic expression: "relation of forces favourable, or unfavourable, to this or that tendency". Thus, abstractly, this formulation explains nothing, or almost nothing—since it merely repeats twice over the fact which needs to be explained, once as a fact and once as an abstract law and an explanation. The theoretical error consists therefore in making what is a principle of research and interpretation into an "historical cause".

Meanwhile, in the "relation of forces" various moments or levels must be distinguished, and they are fundamentally the following:

1. A relation of social forces which is closely linked to the structure, objective, independent of human will, and which can be measured with the systems of the exact or physical sciences. The level of development of the material forces of production provides a basis for the emergence of the various social classes, each one of which

⁸⁰ On 10 August 1792 the Tuilleries Palace was stormed and the Monarchy fell.
* See *La Révolution française* by A. Mathiez, in the A. Colln series.

represents a function and has a specific position within production itself. This relation is what it is, a refractory reality: nobody can alter the number of firms or their employees, the number of cities or the given urban population, etc. By studying these fundamental data it is possible to discover whether in a particular society there exist the necessary and sufficient conditions for its transformation—in other words, to check the degree of realism and practicability of the various ideologies which have been born on its own terrain, on the terrain of the contradictions which it has engendered during the course of its development.

2. A subsequent moment is the relation of political forces; in other words, an evaluation of the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organisation attained by the various social classes. This moment can in its turn be analysed and differentiated into various levels, corresponding to the various moments of collective political consciousness, as they have manifested themselves in history up till now. The first and most elementary of these is the economic-corporate level: a tradesman feels *obliged* to stand by another tradesman, a manufacturer by another manufacturer, etc., but the tradesman does not yet feel solidarity with the manufacturer; in other words, 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. A second moment is that in which consciousness is reached of the solidarity of interests among all the 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-judicial 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. A third moment is that 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. This is the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures; it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become "party", 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—bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle

rages not on a corporate but on a "universal" plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups. 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. In other words, the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the 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 the 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.

In real history these moments imply each other reciprocally—horizontally and vertically, so to speak—i.e. according to socio-economic activity (horizontally) and to country (vertically), combining and diverging in various ways. Each of these combinations may be represented by its own organised economic and political expression. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with these internal relations of nation-states, creating new, unique and historically concrete combinations. A particular ideology, for instance, born in a highly developed country, is disseminated in less developed countries, impinging on the local interplay of combinations.* This relation between international forces and national forces is further complicated by the existence within every State of several structurally diverse territorial sectors, with diverse relations of force at all levels (thus the Vendée⁸¹ was allied with the forces of international reaction, and represented them in the heart of French territorial unity; similarly Lyons in the French Revolution represented a particular knot of relations, etc.).

* Religion, for example, has always been a source of such national and international ideological-political combinations, and so too have the other international organisations—Freemasonry, Rotarianism, the Jews, career diplomacy. These propose political solutions of diverse historical origin, and assist their victory in particular countries—functioning as international political parties which operate within each nation with the full concentration of the international forces. A religion, freemasonry, Rotary, Jews, etc., can be subsumed into the social category of "intellectuals", whose function, on an international scale, is that of mediating the extremes, of "socialising" the technical discoveries which provide the impetus for all activities of leadership, of devising compromises between, and ways out of, extreme solutions.

⁸¹ See note 47 on p. 79.

3. The third moment is that of the relation of military forces, which from time to time is directly decisive. (Historical development oscillates continually between the first and the third moment, with the mediation of the second.) But this too is not undifferentiated, nor is it susceptible to immediate schematic definition. Here too, two levels can be distinguished: the military level in the strict or technical military sense, and the level which may be termed politico-military. In the course of history these two levels have appeared in a great variety of combinations. A typical example, which can serve as a limiting case, is the relation involved in a State's military oppression of a nation seeking to attain its national independence. The relation is not purely military, but politico-military; indeed this type of oppression would be inexplicable if it were not for the state of social disintegration of the oppressed people, and the passivity of the majority among them; consequently independence cannot be won with purely military forces, it requires both military and politico-military. If the oppressed nation, in fact, before embarking on its struggle for independence, had to wait until the hegemonic State allowed it to organise its own army in the strict and technical sense of the word, it would have to wait quite a while. (It may happen that the claim to have its own army is conceded by the hegemonic nation, but this only means that a great part of the struggle has already been fought and won on the politico-military terrain.) The oppressed nation will therefore initially oppose the dominant military force with a force which is only "politico-military", that is to say a form of political action which has the virtue of provoking repercussions of a military character in the sense: 1. that it has the capacity to destroy the war potential of the dominant nation from within; 2. that it compels the dominant military force to thin out and disperse itself over a large territory, thus nullifying a great part of its war potential. In the Italian Risorgimento the disastrous absence of politico-military leadership may be noted, especially in the Action Party (through congenital incapacity), but also in the Piedmontese Moderate Party, both before and after 1848, not to be sure through incapacity but through "politico-economic Malthusianism"—in other words, because they were unwilling even to hint at the possibility of an agrarian reform, and because they had no desire to see a national constituent assembly convoked, but merely waited for the Piedmont monarchy, free from any conditions or limitations of popular origin, to extend its rule to the whole of Italy—sanctioned only by regional plebiscites.

A further question connected with the foregoing is whether the fundamental historical crises are directly determined by economic crises. The answer is contained implicitly in the foregoing paragraphs, where problems have been considered which are only another way of presenting the one now under consideration. Nevertheless it is still necessary, for didactic reasons, given the particular public which is being aimed at, to examine each of the ways in which a single question may present itself as if it were a new and independent problem. It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events; they can simply create 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. Moreover, all assertions concerning periods of crisis or of prosperity may give rise to unilateral judgements. In his historical outline of the French Revolution, Mathiez, in opposition to the vulgar traditional history which aprioristically "discovers" a crisis coinciding with every major rupture of social equilibrium, asserts that towards 1789 the economic situation was in an immediate sense rather good, so that it cannot be said that the downfall of the absolute State was due to a crisis of impoverishment. It should be observed that the State was in the throes of a mortal financial crisis and considering which of the privileged social orders would have to bear the sacrifices and burdens necessary for the State and Royal finances to be put back in order. Furthermore, if the economic position of the bourgeoisie was flourishing, the situation of the popular classes was certainly not good either in the towns or, especially, on the land—where they suffered from endemic poverty. In any case, the rupture of the 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. Changes can come about either because a situation of well-being is threatened by the narrow self-interest of a rival class, or because hardship has become intolerable and no force is visible in the old society capable of mitigating it and of re-establishing normality by

legal means. Hence it may be said that all these elements are the concrete manifestation of the conjunctural fluctuations of the totality of social relations of force, on whose terrain the passage takes place from the latter to political relations of force, and finally to the military relation which is decisive.

If this process of development from one moment to the next is missing—and it is essentially a process which has as its actors men and their will and capability—the situation is not taken advantage of, and contradictory outcomes are possible: either the old society resists and ensures itself a breathing-space, by physically exterminating the élite of the rival class and terrorising its mass reserves; or a reciprocal destruction of the conflicting forces occurs, and a peace of the graveyard is established, perhaps even under the surveillance of a foreign guard. [1933-34: 1st version 1930-32.]

But the most important observation to be made about any concrete analysis of the relations of force is the following: that such analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves (unless the intention is merely to write a chapter of past history); but acquire significance only if they serve to justify a particular practical activity, or initiative of will. They reveal the points of least resistance, at which the force of will can be most fruitfully applied; they suggest immediate tactical operations; they indicate how a campaign of political agitation may best be launched, what language will best be understood by the masses, etc. 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 ever more homogeneous, compact, and self-aware. This is clear from military history, and from the care with which in every period armies have been prepared in advance to be able to make war at any moment. The great Powers have been great precisely because they were at all times prepared to intervene effectively in favourable international conjunctures—which were precisely favourable because there was the concrete possibility of effectively intervening in them. [1933-34: 1st version 1931-32.]

ON BUREAUCRACY

1. As political and economic forms develop historically, a new type of functionary is increasingly being produced—what could be