

MARXISM AND FUNCTIONALISM

This course is an introduction to functionalism as represented by the theories of Talcott Parsons and contemporary Marxism, or a particular reconstruction of Marxism associated with Althusser, Bolibar, Poulantzas, Gramsci and others. The purpose of the course will be to compare both sets of theories with a view to establishing types of questions and formulating problems to which a theory of social change must respond. The guiding question from which we will embark on our study of both theories is: given an ubiquitous competition among individuals, struggles between classes, political and economic crises, etc., how is it that societies, in particular capitalist societies, continue to survive (thrive?)? Contemporary Marxist theory has addressed this problem in different ways, but like much of "structural functionalism" it has frequently lost sight of the potentiality for and the sources of change. We will be concerned primarily with the particular formulations and assumptions embedded in the explanations of continuity and persistence, and the constraints these impose on the development of a theory of social change.

More specifically we will examine the notions of persistence/maintenance/tension management which define the functionalist problematic and the notions of production/reproduction which characterise Marxism. What do the two sets of notions have in common and what differentiates them? What are their respective notions of the social "totality" and how do they conceive of the relations among the parts? What is it that persists or is reproduced? What is a social system/mode of production/society? What are the components of a social structure/social formation? In each case how is the "totality" constructed?

What is the relationship between function and structure in the two theories? What is the relative status of conditions of reproduction and functional prerequisites in the two theories? Does Marxist theory have a notion of functional prerequisites? If so, what are they? Are they universal? Do they play a role different from the functional prerequisites of Parsons' AGIL scheme? How do the different theories understand the relationships among subsystems/structures? Do they distinguish between "determination" and "dominance"? What notions of causality do the different theories adopt ?

What is the status of "psychology" in the different theories? How should we look upon differences between value consensus on the one hand and ideology on the other? Are these "spontaneous" or "organized"? What meaning can we attach to the "structure" of a dominant value system or ideology? How is value consensus/dominant values/ideology maintained or reproduced? Where do they come from? How does politics/the state appear in the two theories?

How is history constituted in the different theories? Do they distinguish between dynamics and diachronics, that is change within a given system/structure/social formation and change from one system, etc. to another? What is the basis of dynamics in the two theories? How do they conceive of the periodization of history and the transition between periods?

What/who are the agents of change? What are the sources of change? What is a contradiction? Can a theory of persistence develop notions of contradiction? Do the theories postulate the existence of objective conflicts of interest? What are these and where do they come from? What is the relationship of a theory of persistence/reproduction to a theory of collapse? Can functionalist theories incorporate

notions of struggle as determining outcomes and development? Is struggle itself structured or determined?

We shall begin with Parsons, reading his working "internally" but also posing questions which emerge from the study of contemporary Marxism. Hopefully we will arrive at a reconstruction of Parsons' work, or rather point in the direction of such a reconstruction which will both reconcile some of the inconsistencies between his early and late work and raise questions to which his theory must respond if it is to develop a non-teleological theory of social change. With Marx our approach will be different. Though we will study his own writings, we will confine ourselves to the later works and to a particular interpretation of them. Our ultimate goal is ambitious, viz. to reconstruct a Marxist framework with which to study concrete social formations and conjunctures. We will proceed via a series of successive approximations.

Let me emphasize that the course is not designed to demonstrate that Talcott Parsons and Poulantzas do not have theories of social change. That would be a trivial, unfruitful and uninteresting exercise. Rather the point of the course is to examine why these theories fail to generate a theory of social change, or at least a satisfactory theory of social change. To the extent that there is a convergence between the problems both theories face, so it is likely that we are up against problems common to all theories of social change, problems of a logical nature. Although the emphasis will, therefore, be on the logical structure of the two theories, it is hoped that the course will be directly relevant to concrete problems which could provide the basis of written papers. The proof of each theoretical pudding is ultimately in the eating.

Key books are Parsons, The Social System; Parsons and Smelser, Economy and Society; Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks; Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes; Althusser and Balibar, Reading Capital. For background reading to the French Marxists, it may be useful to study Althusser's For Marx and Godelier, "Structure and Contradiction in Capital" in Robin Blackburn (ed.), Ideology in Social Science which also contains other important articles related to the structuralist debate.

The readings are generally difficult, and I recommend reading and rereading a smaller quantity rather than a superficial but extensive examination. The readings are also cumulative and we will be continually referring back to works previously assigned and studied. The schedule which follows is tentative and it is unlikely that we will cover the material in two quarters. We might, therefore, continue into Fall.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Motivating questions. Functionalism and Marxism. Logic of functionalist analysis. Causality. Concept and concrete. Basic differences between functionalism and Marxism. Common problems facing both theories. Introduction to concepts: dynamics, diachronics, reproduction, persistence, tension management, struggles, etc.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE THEORIES OF TALCOTT PARSONS

What is voluntaristic about social action? How does Parsons construct a social structure from below? How does he arrive at "value consensus" and how does this differ from "natural identity of interests"? How does a system of actors, a society, etc.

persist? Introduction to functional imperatives, internalization, institutionalization, systems of action and their interpretation, socialization and social control, AGIL scheme, symbolic media of interchange, hierarchy of control and conditioning, evolutionary universals.

Read:

Parsons, Structure of Social Action, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 12, 18, 19.

Parsons and Shils (eds.), Towards a General Theory of Action, Part I, Chapter 1.

III. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION: FIRST APPROXIMATION

How do social systems persist? What is equilibrium? What is the role of internalization in the theory? How are relations reproduced? Is value consensus given, spontaneous, organized or what? How is a social structure constructed? Is it an "expression" of dominant values? Is it prior to individuals? What is the relationship of function, structure and values to one another? Are there "dominant" institutions? In what sense are they dominant? What is the nature of the political?

What are the sources of change, disturbance, tension, deviance, etc.? What is being regulated in social control? Is regulation always effective? Do social systems ever collapse? (How? Why?)

Read:

Parsons, Social System, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7.

IV. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION: SECOND APPROXIMATION

What are the four functional prerequisites and what role do they play in the theory? In what sense are they functional? Where do they come from? What are the sub-systems and how do they relate to "institutions"? How are the sub-systems related? What are the hierarchies of control and conditioning? What are the media of interchange, particularly their theoretical status (abstract or concrete)? How is action linked to the functional subsystems?

Where does Parsons' discussion in The Social System fit into the new scheme? Has Parsons shifted his explanation for the persistence of social systems or merely elaborated? I.e., what role does value consensus play in the AGIL scheme? How is the social structure constructed? Are there dominant institutions/subsystems? What is the nature of dynamics? What are the sources of change? How is change propagated through the system?

Read:

Parsons and Smelser, Economy and Society, Chapters 1, 2 & 3.

Parsons, "An Outline of the Social System," pp. 30-79 in Parsons et al. (ed.) Theories of Society.

Parsons, "On the Concept of Political Power." Pp. 352-404 in Politics and Social Structure.

Parsons, "Theoretical Orientations on Modern Societies." Pp. 34-57 in Politics and Social Structure.

#### V. THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Does Parsons have a theory of social change? What is the nature of Parsons' distinction between dynamics and structural change? What are the courses/agents of social change? Are there laws of social change? What is the place of individuals, groups, etc. in Parsons' notion of social change? What is Parsons' notion of the future? How does he periodize history? What are the evolutionary universals? How does Parsons comprehend the transition from one society to another? Or from one value system to another? Is there any notion of contradiction?

#### Read:

Parsons and Smelser, Economy and Society, Chapter 5.

Parsons, "Introduction to Max Weber's 'The Sociology of Religion'," Chapter 2 in Sociological Theory and Modern Society.

Parsons, "Evolutionary Universals in Society." Pp. 490-520 in Sociological Theory and Modern Society.

Parsons, The Social System, Chapter 11.

Parsons, "Some Considerations on the Theory of Social Change." Rural Sociology, September 1961, pp. 219-239.

#### VI. RECONSTRUCTION AND REVIEW

Determination in the last instance by the cultural. Dynamics and structure of the cultural system. Dominant institutions. The basis of functional prerequisites. Constructing a social structure and constituting history.

#### VII. AN OVERVIEW OF MARX

Materialism as the point of departure. Mode of production. Forces of production. Relations of production. Social relations. Socio-economic formation. Determination in the last instance. Constructing the social "totality". Dominance. Production of use value and production of social relations. Production of ideology. The organization of politics and the state.

#### Read:

Marx and Engels, German Ideology, in Tucker (ed.), The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 110-164.

Marx, Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, in Tucker (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 3-6.



Marx, Letter to P. V. Annenkov (Brussels, December 28, 1846) in Marx and Engels, Selected Works, pp. 669-679.

Engels, Letter to Joseph Bloch (London, September 21-22, 1890) in Tucker (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 640-642.

Engels, Letter to Conrad Schmidt, (London, October 27, 1890) in Tucker (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 642-647.

Marx, Capital, Vol. III, Chapter 47, pp. 782-813.

Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific in Tucker (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 605-639.

#### VIII. MARXIST THEORY: FIRST APPROXIMATION

##### (a) Constructing a Social Structure

What are a mode of production, forces of production, relations of production? What are "structures"? How are relations between structures conceived? What does dominance mean? What are practices? What are interventions? What is determined in "determination in the last instance"? What is the nature of knowledge? How is it produced? What is the role of mystification? What is property? What are social relations? What is simple reproduction? What is its function in Marxist theory? Who are the "individuals" who appear in Marxist theory? What are we to understand by "individuality", "rationality"? What is the place of psychology?

##### Read:

Althusser and Balibar, Reading Capital, pp. 199-272.

Godelier, Rationality and Irrationality in Economics, I, pp. 1-104.

Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, Part I, Chapter 1, pp. 37-56.

##### (b) Constituting History

What is history? What is the distinction between history and pre-history? What is the distinction between dynamics and diachronics? How does dynamics appear in a theory of a mode of production? How does Balibar conceive of transitions between modes of production? Can a mode of production dissolve itself? Is Balibar's a teleological view of history? What does he mean by contradiction and tendency?

##### Read:

Althusser and Balibar, Reading Capital, pp. 273-308.

Godelier, "Structure and Contradiction in Capital" in Robin Blackburn (ed.) Ideology in Social Science, pp. 334-368.

#### IX. NON-CAPITALIST MODES OF PRODUCTION

Various forms of relations of production? How do the relations of production determine the forces of production? What does it mean to say that a mode of production is an

articulated combination of relations/forces of production? How does one discover the conditions of existence of a mode of production? How may these conditions of existence be dissolved? What is the status of dynamics in this formulation? What is the role of struggle? What is a social formation? What is the distinction between dominance and domination (c.f. slave mode of production and feudal mode of production)? How are transitions conceived? Is there a transitional mode of production?

Read:

Hindess and Hirst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production

Bettleheim, Economic Calculation and forms of Property

Bettleheim, Transition to Socialism

## X. THEORY OF CAPITALISM

### (a) Dynamics

The capitalist mode of production. How are capitalist relations of production reproduced? Circulation and reproduction schema. Simple and extended reproduction. Relations of production and relations of distribution. Values, prices and profit. Why do capitalists accumulate? Why do capitalists compete with one another? The dynamics of capitalism--the falling rate of profit. What is the role of the transformation problem in the Marxist theory of social change? At each step in his development of the dynamics of capitalism what assumptions does Marx make?

### (b) Consequences

What are the consequences of Marx's analysis of the dynamics of capitalism? In particular what are the implications of the falling rate of profit? What is the theoretical status of the "counter-tendencies" to the falling rate of profit? What does Marx understand by contradiction? In what sense (if any) is there an objective conflict of interests between workers and capitalists? Between labor and capital? What are objective interests?

Read:

Marx, Capital, Volume II, Chapter 20 and 21, pp. 392-523.

Marx, Capital, Volume III, Parts, I, II, III, pp. 23-240.

Marx, Wage, Labor and Capital, in Tucker (ed.), The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 167-190.

Yaffe, "The Marxian Theory of Crisis, Capital and the State," Economy and Society, 2, 1973, pp. 186-232.

Depending on available time and interest, we may extend the discussion to include more on Marxian economics and the labor process.

## XI. INTERVENTIONIST THEORIES OF THE STATE

What forms of organization of politics and ideology are compatible with the capitalist mode of production? What are the functions of the capitalist state? Have the functions remained invariant during the course of the development of capitalism? How are

the functions related to the concept of contradiction? What theories of the capitalist economy do the various theories of the state presuppose? What is the status of the labor theory of value in these theories? Why does the state perform the functions attributed to it? What is the meaning of function? How does class struggle appear in these theories? Are there notions of the collapse or transformation of capitalism?

Read:

O'Connor, Fiscal Crisis of the State

Habermas, Legitimation Crisis

Offe and Runge, "Theses on the Theory of the State," New German Critique, 1975, 6, pp. 137-148.

See also:

J. K. Galbraith, The New Industrial State

E. H. Carr, The New Society

A. Shonfield, Modern Capitalism

## XII. ALTERNATIVE RECONSTRUCTIONS OF THE MARXIST THEORY OF THE STATE

What are the alternative interpretations of Marx's phrase in The Manifesto: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"? What are the main assumptions and assertions of the instrumentalist and structuralist themes of the capitalist state? Is it important for the theory that positions of power are monopolized by members of economic elites? Are they always? Does the state ever act against the interests of capitalists? If so, how can it be explained? Under what circumstances does the state become independent of classes? What is the meaning of the "relative autonomy" of the state?

Read:

Miliband, "Marx and the State." Socialist Register, 1965.

Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society.

Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, Part III, pp. 187-252.

Poulantzas and Miliband, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," in Robin Blackburn (ed.) Ideology in Social Science, pp. 238-262.

## XIII. THE STATE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

Based on Marx's political writings 18th Brumaire and Class Struggles in France, we shall pose the question of whether Marx himself had a theory of the capitalist state, what it was and in particular examine the relationship of class and class struggles to the state. It will be necessary to distinguish very carefully among Marx's analyses of the different periods between 1848 and 1851 and the basis for his periodization.

### (a) Classes and Class Struggles

What are classes? How many are there? What are fractions of classes? What are "domi-

nant classes," "hegemonic classes," "ruling classes," "governing classes," "supporting classes"? How do the various classes relate to one another? What are coalitions, alliances and power blocs? What is class struggle? What are the various arenas for class struggle and class collaboration? What is the relationship of economic class struggle and political class struggle?

(b) The State and Class Struggle

How does the state "structure" class struggle? How are classes inserted into politics? What is the relationship between parties and classes; between executive and legislature? Are elections peaceful forms of class struggle? Does universal suffrage unchain class struggle?

What is the relationship of the state to the dominant classes? To the dominated classes? Is the capitalist state, a state of a dominant class(es) or a state of a society divided into classes? Does the state sacrifice the economic interests of the dominant classes? When? Why?

(c) The Relative Autonomy of the State

How does class struggle affect the organization of politics, the form of the state and the operation of the state, the way the state "structures" class struggle? Is relative autonomy an invariant characteristic of capitalist societies? Or does relative autonomy only occur in situations of class balance? What does Marx have to say about class balance? What is the significance of economic crises for the relative autonomy of the state? What are the forms of relative autonomy of the capitalist state? Can Marx's analysis be generalized to other periods?

Read:

Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

Marx, Class Struggles in France 1848-1850.

XIV. THE STATE AND IDEOLOGY

Orienting problem: How is it that in the class struggle over short term material interests, the cohesion of the social formation is maintained?

What is Gramsci's notion of the state? What are its "functions" and what are its institutions? What is ideology? What are the sources of ideology? What is hegemony and a hegemonic ideology? Can all ideologies be hegemonic? Does a hegemonic ideology possess a definite structure? What is the place of classes in a hegemonic ideology? What are the forms of political organization of different classes that appear in such an ideology? What are relations between parties and classes? Is a "hegemonic" ideology a single monolithic ideology? Does it preclude other ideologies? Is it a relationship among ideologies? What are the possible ideologies under capitalism? How are they produced? How might a "counter-hegemonic" ideology appear?

How is a hegemonic ideology maintained? What are the relations of concessions, force and consent in maintaining hegemony. What are the material conditions for hegemonic ideology? What are the limits of hegemony? What is the relationship of class struggle

and concessions? What is the relationship of hegemony and domination?

What assumptions does Gramsci make about the economy? How does this affect his analysis. How does he conceptualise "normal" and "crisis" times?

Read: Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks, pp. 1-318 but paying particular attention to the Modern Prince, and even more particularly to pp. 144-169; 175-185 and 210-218.

#### XV. THE POPULAR CLASS STATE

Why is the state the "factor of cohesion of the entire social formation"? Is it always? Under what conditions might it not play such a cohesive role? What are the fundamental characteristics of the popular class state? What is the role of parties? What does Poulantzas understand by political and economic interests? What is the meaning of domination and dominant classes? What does Poulantzas mean when he says that the political power of the dominant classes rests on an unstable equilibrium of compromise?

How does it happen that the state is relatively autonomous and yet reproduces the system in which the capitalist class is dominant? What does Poulantzas mean when he cites Engels' remark in a letter to Marx (13 April, 1866): "Bonapartism is after all the real religion of the modern bourgeoisie"? What does relative autonomy mean? Relative autonomy of what with respect to what? Relative autonomy of the state with respect to other structures or particular practices; classes or class struggles? What are the forms of relative autonomy of the capitalist state? What is the relationship of the unity of power of the state and its relative autonomy?

How does the state constitute the unity of the social formation and at the same time "isolate" its subjects? How does the state "fragment", "isolate," "disorganize" the dominated classes while at the same time constituting the unity of the dominant classes? What does it mean to say that the political domination of the dominant classes does not appear in the institutions of the state? What are the two senses of hegemony which Poulantzas adopts? What does Poulantzas mean by politics? What does he understand by ideology and its functions?

How does Poulantzas' analysis differ from Gramsci's?

Read:

Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes

Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays.

#### XVI. THE FORMATION OF CLASSES

Discussion of Przeworski, "The Process of Class Formation" and Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism



SOME WORKING PAPERS ON MARXISM AND FUNCTIONALISM\*

Michael Burawoy

\*These notes were prepared for a two quarter graduate course I taught at the University of California, Berkeley. Sections IX, XIII (part three), XIV and XV were never written up. The notes elaborate some, but by no means all of the arguments outlined in the proposal.

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## I INTRODUCTION TO MARXISM AND FUNCTIONALISM

In the first session we set about establishing the logical requirements to be satisfied by a theory of social change. Such a theory must explain both continuity and change over time with reference to some social object. A theory of social change must, therefore, specify what it is that is changing or not changing. We will refer to this object as a system in the following notes, but in so doing we will try not to make any assumptions about its "structure" or any other traits. Our theory must then examine the mechanisms which tend to "reproduce" or "maintain" the "system" (or a particular structure of that system) under examination and identifying those forces tending to promote change. We must then examine the conditions under which the "reproductive" or "equilibrating" mechanisms are effective. We ended up by formulating six sets of questions to which a theory of social change must respond.

I. What is it that persists or is reproduced? (In our Tobriand Islanders example it was fishing, in the case of Marxist theory it is the particular relations into which men and women enter as they transform nature - the mode of production. For Parsons it is not always clear but in The Social System it appears to be patterns of social interaction.

II (a) What are the mechanisms of that reproduction/persistence? (In the case of the Tobriand Islanders it was ritual dancing; in the case of Marxist theory it is frequently the state and in the case of Parsons it is a degree of value consensus.)

(b) Are these mechanisms distinguished from (external to) that which is being reproduced? There are three possibilities. 1. A process of self-regulation in which the mechanisms of reproduction are part of that being reproduced. (Marxist theory of crises which reestablishes the accumulation process. Parsons' social system in which deviance automatically brings forth counter-tendencies to restore conformity.) 2. A second possibility is that regulation takes place through the intervention of some external mechanism which for "structural" reasons engages in reproductive activities. We will find an example of this type in Poulantzas's theory of the state, viz. that it is in the structure of the state itself - rather than who controls it - that we must seek to understand the mechanisms of the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. 3. Finally there are forms of instrumental intervention in which agencies, groups, etc. actively and consciously intervene in the attempt to restore stability. Again certain fiscal policies of the state may be seen in this light - the rise of Keynesian economics.

III (a) What are the disturbances/reproduction requirements/social forces which make these mechanisms necessary? (Tobriand Islanders - the danger of fishing; Marx the falling rate of profit; Parsons - inconsistency of values, role conflict, lack of correspondence between functional requirements of personality system and social system, etc.)

(b) Is there a distinction between the maintenance of a state of a system in the face of a disturbance and its continuous reproduction irrespective of disturbance? (Theories that are only concerned with the former will be referred to as "persistence" theories whereas theories also concerned with the latter will be referred to as "reproduction" theories.

Marx's theory is clearly reproduction theory but we will have to discuss where Parsons belongs.)

(c) Are the disturbances generated internally, i.e. within the system or are they exogenous? Where the disturbances or forces tending towards change are formulated systematically and embedded in the "structure" of the system we will speak of dynamics. What is the relationship between a theory of dynamics and theories of reproduction/persistence?

IV. Under what conditions will the mechanisms of persistence/reproduction be actually engaged so as to maintain the system? Will they always be engaged? What determines whether they will or will not? (If deviance occurs will social control mechanisms be necessarily activated? Will the state always act so as to reproduce capitalist relations? These are questions of the activation and directionality of the mechanisms.)

V. Under what conditions will these mechanisms, once activated, be successful in reproducing/maintaining the system? What determines whether they will or will not be successful? (Will the social control mechanisms be effective in containing deviance? Has the state the capacity to reproduce capitalist relations? This is a question of capacity rather than directionality of the mechanisms?)

VI. What happens when these mechanisms either fail to attempt or fail to succeed in reproducing the system? How do we understand the collapse of the system? How do we understand the transformation of one system into another? (Revolution?) Or is that a wrong formulation in which case a better one might be, how do theories of social change conceive of the process of transition from one system to another? How do they understand the emergence of a new system? These are questions of diachronics. Is a theory of reproduction/persistence simultaneously a theory of transformation/transition/diachronics? What is the relationship between dynamics and diachronics?

While asking these questions of both Parsons' theories and contemporary Marxism, we will repeatedly return to the role of individuals/groups/classes in promoting or constraining change. How, if at all, do the theories allow human agents to make history? The major theoretical concern will be to link the possibility choice and indeterminacy (within limits) at the level of everyday experience (micro level) with the order and determinacy (within limits) at the level of global forces (macro level). People make history but under conditions beyond their control. Our task or rather aim will be to combine rather than separate the two components of this sentence.

How do people make history under conditions beyond their control?

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## II - AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEORIES OF TALCOTT PARSONS\*

"We must agree with the verdict. Spencer is dead. But who killed him and how? This is the problem." (SSA:3) "Thus at both the rationalistic and anti-intellectualistic poles of positivistic thought the same fundamental direction of a process of evolutionary change is given, that of better adaptation to environmental conditions. At one pole this adaptation is direct rational adaptation through application of scientific knowledge, at the other indirect by selection among variations. But in both the processes are linear, by a progressive accumulation of stages of approach to an asymptotic goal. The most essential point is that these are the only possibilities open on a strictly positivistic basis. Above all the one place for a positive role of ends is in the utilitarian form, and this provides no basis for a theory of change"(SSA: 124). Contrast or rather compare these statements made in 1937 with those made some thirty years later: "With these organic examples in mind, the conception of an evolutionary universal may be developed more fully. It should, I suggest, be formulated with reference to the concept of adaptation which has been so fundamental to the theory of evolution since Darwin. Clearly, adaptation should mean, not merely passive "adjustment" to environmental conditions, but rather the capacity of a living system to cope with its environment...An evolutionary universal, then, is a complex of structures and associated processes the development of which also increases the long-run adaptive capacity of living systems in a given class that only systems that develop the complex can attain certain higher levels of general adaptive capacity"(STMS: 493).

In presenting an overview we have to decide whether Parsons indeed reversed his position on the usefulness of a positivistic theory of social action and how his earlier rejection of "mechanical determinism" associated with "Social Darwinism" gave way to its resurrection. Indeed, to cite one comment, can Parsons be viewed as ever trying to develop a theory of social change or was he only making "empirical generalizations?" Whereas earlier formulations of the theory may have stressed the importance of social action as a series of "choices" made by individual actors, in the later formulations the individual has disappeared. What happened to it? What is "voluntaristic" about the voluntaristic theory of action? Did that theory always contain the seeds of "determinism" despite the manner in which it was formed - as a reaction to positivistic and idealistic theories of action? An answer to these questions must involve an examination of the development of Parsons' thought from his constitution of the unit act to his evolutionary theories of social change.

### I - Voluntaristic Theory of Social Action

The edifice which Parsons constructs in The Structure of Social Action rests on his definition of the unit act which has four components: (1) an agent or actor, (2) an end or future state of affairs to which action is oriented, (3) a situation which itself has two components (a) conditions over which the actor has no control and (b) means over which the actor has control and finally (4) a relation among these elements. Insofar as there is a choice of means to ends and of ends themselves, there is the possibility of normative orientation, that is the choice is neither random nor dependent exclusively on conditions. The voluntaristic theory of social action, which involves all four components and a normative orientation may be seen as being in tension between positivistic and idealistic theories of social action. The latter two theories are defined by a particular combination or structure defining the relationship among the various elements of the unit act.

A positivistic theory of social action can only entertain means and ends that are subject to empirically verifiable knowledge. The adjustment of means to ends is made on the basis of some notion of "efficiency" as viewed by an observer. Parsons examines utilitarianism as one such theory in which individuals pursue self interest in a rational manner. Taking the Hobbesian system as prototypical, he characterises utilitarianism by its atomism (by which he means that individuals are not subject to constraints in their interaction - no "emergent" properties), empiricism (all forms of social behavior can be understood by this theory), rationality and the postulate which he infers, namely that the ends which individuals pursue are random, that is independent of one another. Such a theory has two obvious shortcomings, he argues, namely the postulates of rationality and random ends.

Individuals clearly do not always act rationally and the only way utilitarianism can accommodate this within a positivistic framework is by viewing such discrepancies as the result of ignorance or error emerging from conditions, viz. the environment and hereditary. In relaxing the rationality postulate utilitarianism allows conditions to determine action, as in Malthus's population principle, Darwin's theory of natural selection, instinct theory and behaviouralism. The subjective orientation disappears and we are left with what Parsons refers to as "radical anti-intellectual positivism."

The postulate of random ends on the other hand is objectionable because it cannot account for social order. If we assume the randomness of ends that is the "war of all against all" then how are we to explain the relative stability and coherence of the social order? Parsons explicitly rejects the Hobbesian solution, which depends on the emergence of a social contract out of self preservation. For Parsons individuals, rationally pursuing their separate interests, cannot come together to create a social contract or organize a consensus. On the assumption of rationality individuals cannot establish a set of institutions regulating their activities; rather this consensus must exist prior to interacting/competing individuals. Competition presupposes the existence of consensus and takes within institutions defined and legitimated by that consensus. Ends must be somehow ordered prior to the appearance of individuals. Many of our later discussions of Parsons and then of Gramsci will revolve around this issue of consensus (given and primordial) and consent (organized). For the positivistic theory of action the only way in which ends can be coordinated with one another is through their being derived from the conditions of action. In this case action becomes rational adaptation of conditions. This is what Parsons refers to as "radical rationalist positivism". Here we find the theories of Locke and Rousseau which introduce the objectionable metaphysical postulate of the "natural identity of interests". (But in what way does Parsons's own assumptions of value consensus differ from Locke's postulate of the natural identity of interests? ?)

Parsons draws the following conclusions. The only form of positivistic action that retains a subjective orientation and avoids "mechanical determinism" is utilitarianism. But this makes untenable assumptions which when relaxed dissolve into some form of radical positivism in which means are assimilated to ends. At the other pole we find idealism which gives no effective place to conditions. The latter are treated as "emanations" of some cultural system, "spirit", etc. which have an autonomous movement of their own. Values are detached from the conditions of social action and so action as the adaptation of means to ends has no meaning in such a framework. Individuals become embodied in and expressions of a "spiritual" movement beyond their control. Voluntarism, by contrast, is an attempt to reconcile the two extreme positions by introducing normative components into a post-

vistic theory. Such an addition to the positivistic theories involves the possibility of regarding something as an end in itself which transcends empirically verifiable knowledge. Thus, apart from rational adaptation of means to ends there is, for example, ritual action in which means are chosen on the basis of symbolic appropriateness. Ends themselves derive neither from the environment nor are random but emerge from "ultimate values."

If action involves choices of both means and ends the question of the resolution of those choices becomes central. The answer Parsons provides to that question emerges as he turns from the unit act to a system of action.

## II. System of Action

So far we have only considered the components and various relations (structure) among the components of the unit act. In The Structure of Social Action Parsons is also concerned to deduce properties of a system of unit acts and he develops this particularly in his treatment of Pareto. (See Chapter VI, particularly, pp.233-41, 249, 265-6 and pp.767-8) The mode of orienting means to ends where a single act is concerned and where the end is given may be viewed as problem of technological efficiency. However, when we compound a number of unit acts to form an "individual" (conceived of as a knot of means and ends), then we may be faced with an economic problem, viz. the acquisition and allocation of scarce resources among alternative ends. At this juncture the formulation of a set of ultimate ends for which economic resources are to be ultimately adapted may become important. (Parsons talks about a means end chain in which the link between the most rudimentary means and the most final of ends is made through a series of intermediary ends. One works in order to earn money so as to survive and offer one's children educational opportunities so that they might be successful. Capitalists abstain and save in order that they might invest so that they might be successful business men/women so that they may convince themselves that they are going to heaven.)

But we must go further and include a number of individuals in our scheme. Under the assumption of scarce resources, we are faced with that war of all against all - essentially a distribution problem, that is a political problem. To preserve order and ensure a minimal amount of conflict it is necessary that the "individual" ends are integrated with one another (both for each individual and among different individuals). Parsons derives the necessity of a set of rules and norms to regulate and define patterns of struggle. Here we find such institutions as the market, legal norms, rights of participation, etc. - integrative problems. Finally it is necessary that these norms and institutions be legitimated in terms of a common value system which also defines the mode of integration of ends. It is therefore necessary to renew commitment to and control deviation from the common value system - a problem of pattern maintenance and tension management. Curiously we have here formulated in deductive fashion, starting with the unit act, Parsons' four function scheme (AGIL paradigm) which in fact emerged in the fifties' from Bales' study of small groups. Furthermore, the system we have just outlined rests on materialist premises, the struggle for material possessions. We will see later some broad (vague?) parallels between this derivation of the components of the social structure and that of Marx.

#### IV. Empirical Essays

Parsons begins to elaborate some of the empirical implications of his theoretical work after completing The Structure of Social Action. We shall not spend much time here. In his discussions of the professions he tries to demonstrate the shortcomings of the utilitarian notion of altruism. Lawyers, doctors, etc. are not "altruistic" but informed by a particular set of values. In other words interests are not somehow given but are always informed by a value system. There are parallels here with Godelier's criticism of utilitarianism. Similarly stratification patterns must be viewed in the first place as reflections of a common value system. Support for such a view is to be found in the considerable agreement among different sections of the population of the prestige ranking of different occupations. Parsons' discussion of the family and fascism took a new departure influenced by his reading of Freud. In these essays one notices the close parallels with the work of the Frankfurt School - the authoritarian family, the work of Marcuse (particularly Eros and Civilization). The organization of capitalism (competition, alienating work, limited opportunities for success, etc.) unavoidably generates anxiety and insecurity which appears in the form of free floating aggression. Whereas such aggression can achieve relatively harmonious outlets in a country like the United States, e.g. in romantic love and striving for success, in Germany these avenues are blocked because of the authoritarian nature of the family and status ascription. Rather than being dissipated and fragmented, aggression is channelled into militaristic traditions. At this stage in his career Parsons regards capitalism as full of dynamic conflict and aggression. "The fundamental problem then is how far factors such as these operate to produce deep-seated and chronic conflict between classes and how far they are counteracted by other factors in the social system...I believe that class conflict is endemic in our modern industrial type of society...The Marxian view of the importance of class structure has in a broad way been vindicated" (EST: 332-3-4). (Contrast with Parsons' essay in STMS, Chapter 4: e.g. "The basic conclusion seems almost obvious. Karl Marx was probably the greatest social theorist whose work fell entirely within the nineteenth century. His place in intellectual history is secure. As a theorist in the specifically scientific sense, however, he belongs to a phase of development which has been superseded. In sociology today, to be a Marxian, in the strict sense that denies any substantial theoretical progress since Marx, is not a tenable position" p.135.) The central role attributed to class conflict and the psycho-analytic dynamic as the basis for social change later disappears to be replaced by a more harmonious view of society in which individuals become passive recipients of dominant value systems. Notions of internalization are substituted for the development of free floating aggression and deviance for class conflict. It is interesting that Parsons' discussion of the family under capitalism in EST (Chapters, 9 and 14), anticipates many of the more recent feminist writings on the family, for example of Mitchell and Chodorow. For Parsons stresses the importance of the family as both absorbing anxiety and insecurity produced outside (particularly in the sphere of industrial work) and at the same time generating anxieties of its own. He dwells on the consequences of sexual asymmetries within the family, the importance of mothering, the attendant anxieties and difficulties experienced by both boys and girls (but differently) in the process of socialization.

## V. The General Theory of Action

How can we represent the major shift between the development of the general theory of action in TGTA and the earlier "voluntaristic" theory of social action? The major movement is away from the unit act as the elementary unit towards treating the individual (conceived of as a personality system rather than a "composite bundle of statuses and roles" SS, p.26) as the basic unit. Means and ends are replaced by modes of orientation - motivational orientation and value orientation. Ends have now entered the personality system of the actor and molded into "need dispositions" - a concept which simultaneously expresses the functional requirements of the personality system and a particular "orientation" dictated by the value system. That is ends have been internalized and action is viewed orientation towards objects (social and non social).

Motivational orientation is concerned with the actual or potential gratification of need dispositions and appears in three forms. They are cognitive discrimination based on such factors as location and characterization of objects; cathectic attachments - the tendency to react positively to attractive objects and negatively to noxious objects and evaluative orientation which is concerned with the remoter consequences of the objects in the situation. Coresponding to each motivational orientation there is an associated standard. Cognitive standards of discrimination, appreciative standards of cathectic attachment and moral standards of evaluation. Action is then conceived in terms of a process of selection among alternative modes of orientation.

In the second place, the frame of reference of the theory of action differs from common biologically oriented approaches in the categories used to analyze the interaction of organism and environment. The most obvious difference is the explicit concern of our theory with selection among alternative possibilities and hence with the evaluative process and ultimately with value standards. Thus, our primary concern in analyzing systems of action with respect to their aims is this: to what consequences has this actor been committed by his selections or choices? This contrasts with the primary concern of biological theorists, who, in a motivational analysis would ask a parallel but quite different question: what does this person have to do in order to survive? In the system of action the question the question is what does this actor strive for, not what does he have to strive for as an organism. Further we ask: on what bases does the actor make his selections? Implicit is the notion that survival is not the sole ground of these selections; on the contrary, we hold that internalized cultural values are the main grounds for such selective orientations...Action itself is the resolution of an undending series of problems of selection which confront actors. (TGA: 63-4)

Parsons et al. reduce these various orientations and standards to a set of pattern variables. Thus, under orientation to object (equivalent to motivational orientation) we find the following: affectivity vs. affective neutrality (gratification of an impulse vs. deferred gratification); specificity vs. diffuseness (response to single or many aspects of the object); self vs. collective orientation (priority of private or collective interests). Under evaluation of object (equivalent to value

orientation) we find two more sets of pattern variables: universalism vs. particularism (the adoption of general or particular norms) and ascription vs. achievement (the concern with quality or performance). These pattern variables, it is argued, are mutually exclusive and exhaustive of the universe of orientation and evaluation. They constitute the basic dilemmas that must be solved before action can take place. How are these problems of selection resolved?

## VI. The Social System

Essentially they are resolved theoretically by setting up the conditions for the stability of a social system, that is of a system of interacting actors. How is it that actors pursuing their interests can constitute a relatively stable and coherent order? This is a more general formulation of Section II, where assumptions of scarcity were introduced. But the basic condition of stability remains, viz. the integration of ends, or rather of role expectations. (A role is defined as the participation of an actor in a patterned interactive relationship. A role also carries a normative significance, namely it is organized in conformity to some value standards which specify a set of role expectations. Actors are oriented not only to a common value system but to the attitudes and activities of other actors - what are role expectations to ego are sanction for alter. The double contingency of ego responding to the anticipated behavior of alter can provide the basis of stable interaction. However, it is also necessary for actors not only to share the definition of role expectations but that those role expectations themselves must satisfy certain conditions of compatibility. Furthermore actors must be motivated to conform to the role expectations - a problem of internalization. Finally there are mechanisms of social control and socialization which are responsible for learning and the containing of "deviant" tendencies. A shared value system is institutionalized in the social system and internalized in the personality system in such a way that social order is possible. But, what precisely constitutes that special mode of institutionalization and internalization?

A social system is linked to a system of shared values which determines in part the relatively persistent social relations among actors, that is the social structure. Parsons characterises the particular value system by a combination of those pattern variables relevant to the evaluation of objects (rather than attitudes to objects), that is universalism-achievement; universalism-ascription; particularism-achievement; particularism-ascription. The value system is taken as given (just as for Marx the mode of production is taken as given). But as suggested in the previous paragraph a social structure is a particular mode of institutionalizing the value system, viz. one that is in accord with a set of functional requirements. In The Social System, these functional requirements initially emerge with reference to rudimentary notions about the relationship among the three systems of action (personality, social and cultural systems). Later in the book the functional imperatives are specified with respect to a particular social system (namely a society) as consisting of two types: universal institutions and conditions of compatibility of these institutions.



## VII. THE AGIL Paradigm

The rudimentary functional imperatives outlined in The Social System are later developed into a systematic formulation of four functional prerequisites or problems which all social systems must fulfil if they are to persist. They emerge out of Bales's study of interaction in small groups. Such groups when assigned a task would pass through four distinct phases each of which was defined by a particular type of interaction. The four functional problems in their most general formulation are (1) the problem of adaptation - A: that of providing disposable resources irrespective of the ends for which they are to be used. (2) the problem of goal attainment - G: the maintenance and pursuit of specific goal states with respect to the environment. (3) the problem of integration - I: the mutual adjustment and coordination of the units of the social system. (4) the problem of pattern maintenance and tension management -J: the maintenance of the stability of values, ensuring of motivational commitment and the controlling of deviance. (This latter problem was also referred to as the latency problem which in the context of phase movement among small groups corresponded to the initial and final states. In this phase there was little interaction but rather the maintenance of a given level of motivation and of a particular set of values.)

Corresponding to each of the functional requirements Parsons constitutes a "subsystem" of the social system which is responsible for carrying out the particular function. These subsystems are analytical in the sense that they do not bear a one to one relationship with concrete collectivities. Any one "real" collectivity will contribute to all four functions and any one function will be carried out by a multiplicity of collectivities. Thus, the family is involved in adaptive, goal attainment and integrative sectors but is primarily located in the latency subsystem, i.e. the family is primarily concerned with socialization and social control. Yet apart from the family we also find such organizations as schools, religion, etc. primarily located in the latency subsystem. Moreover each one of these concrete organizations has its own four function sub-systems.

Parsons et al. in Working Papers in the Theory of Action links this AGIL scheme to the earlier work by associating each of the analytical subsystems with particular types of action as defined by pattern variables. Based on the observation of activities in the phases through which small groups pass, the authors maintained that the adaptive subsystem is characterised by a combination of universalism and specificity; the goal attainment subsystem by a combination of achievement and affectivity; the integrative subsystem by a combination of particularism and diffuseness and the latency subsystem by a combination of ascription and affective neutrality. (WPTA, Chapter 3. In Chapter 5: 179-190.)

We note, therefore, how the scheme has moved from action defined in terms of adaptation of means to ends, to action defined in terms of selection of orientations to objects to the allocation of action to particular analytical subsystems of action. The stipulation of particular types of action in different spheres means that problems of selection have been resolved through the necessary fulfilment of certain functional requirements for the persistence of a social system. The persistence of a social system rests on appropriate patterns of socialization and social control which guarantee that actors will act in accordance with functional requirements.

### VIII. Systems of Interchange and Social Change

From the four function scheme Parsons derives his notions of change based on social differentiation. Development of societies is conceived of in terms of the differentiating out of the different subsystems. The first to pop out of the kinship based society in which all four functions are performed by the kinship system is the L sector (cultural legitimation). Then the I sector separates itself out and finally the G sector. The movement from one stage to the next is dependent on the emergence of certain key institutions which Parsons refers to as evolutionary universals. Furthermore each of the subsystems has its own inherent "dynamic" (A sector - adaptive upgrading; G sector - social differentiation; I sector - inclusion and L sector - value generalization.) It will be necessary to link all these notions of social change together and with the earlier position that pattern variables are the basis for distinguishing between societies.

In a differentiated social system the four subsystems become dependent on the exchange of resources for their individual development. Thus, in a "modern" society, the adaptive sector is dependent on capital or credit (from the goal attainment subsystem); on labor (from the pattern maintenance and tension management subsystem); on organization (from the integrative subsystem), while land is taken as given. In return the adaptive subsystem sends goods and services to the L sector; control over productivity (direction of investment) to the G sector; "new output combinations" to the I sector. A similar exchange system operates for all four subsystems giving rise to six sets of interchanges. Each interchange constitutes a market and in order to facilitate exchange four symbolic media of interchange are "produced" modelled on the role of money. The other media are power, influence and value commitments. In such a system the notion of dynamics appears as a result of imbalances on inputs and outputs (akin to Easton's analysis of the political system). One is, therefore, interested in how exogenous disturbances are propagated through the system as imbalances of inputs and outputs. Again the question must be raised as to when such imbalances lead to a change in the structure of a social system, that is whether Parsons distinguishes between dynamics and diachronics.

## IX. Conclusions

What has happened to Parsons' "voluntaristic" theory of social action? How do we explain the shift from the centrality of subjectivity to its apparent eclipse? What has become of the agents of change - the actors - in Parsons' final theory of social change? In what ways does Parsons' evolutionary theories differ from those of Spencer? Can individuals, groups, classes be rescued and returned to the stage of history? One tentative answer (and we will produce others in subsequent sessions) lies in the manner in which Parsons built up the social structure beginning not with the unit act but with the individual and conditions for stable interaction between individuals (conceived of as entities with personality systems). Once Parsons began from the Hobbesian state of nature problematic of struggling individuals, building an edifice which rested on those same individuals internalizing certain norms, so he could never then restore autonomy (relative autonomy) to the individual. Rather, individuals merely carried out those role expectations for which they had been programmed and without which the social fabric would collapse. The problematic was defined in terms of the relationship between the individual and society.

We will discover in Marx a different way of constructing the social totality, specifically out of the conditions for the reproduction of relations between empty places given by a particular mode of production. The question can then be formulated as to the relationship between these structures and concrete relations between concrete individuals. The relations among structures will be determined at one level of causality while the relationship between structures and practices or social relations will be determined at another level of causality. Thus, for example, structures will be responsible for the organization of individuals into classes, but these classes in their turn will - as social forces - modify the structures. We will also pose the problem of the relationship between the micro activities and macro consequences. How is that individuals can make real choices (within limits) (that is choices that are not mere hypothetical constructs as in the case of Parsons) and at the same time there is some notion of determinancy in the outcomes of those choices at the macro level. The analogy of the game will become central to our understanding of the relationship between these two levels.

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\*The following abbreviations will be used. SSA = The Structure of Social Action. EST = Essays in Sociological Theory. TOTA = Towards a General Theory of Action. SS = The Social System. WPTA = Working Papers in the Theory of Action. SES = Economy and Society. PSIP = Family, Socialization and Interaction Process. SSP = Social Structure and Personality. SPMS = Structure and Process in Modern Societies. STIS = Sociological Theory and Modern Society. PSS = Politics and Social Structure. SLS = The System of Modern Societies. SEV = Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives.

### III - STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION: FIRST APPROXIMATION

It will be argued during the course of this seminar that a satisfactory theory of social change must constitute both a social structure and a history. That is, we must develop a theory of social structure and history rather than receive or induce these from empirical observations. We must develop a set of concepts out of which we build a social structure, explain its persistence or reproduction and ultimately its collapse and transition to an alternative social structure. In other words we first "produce" social structures and history as theoretical objects. In these notes we will discuss Parsons' notion of social structure as it appears in The Social System, while in the next set we will discuss the notions of social structure as they appear in later works resting on the AGIL paradigm.

#### I. Three Notions of Social Structure

(a) Empiricist. Perhaps the most frequently encountered notion of social structure is the empiricist version which treats it as a set of perduring social relations. Such views are to be found, for example, in the work of Merton and Radcliffe Brown. More recently it has received added impetus from those engaged in various forms of network analysis (Mitchell, Laumann, Harrison White et al.). Social structures are induced from the empirical observations of the relations concrete men and women enter as they go about their lives. Thus, questionnaire data concerning respondents' best three friends can be used to establish a network of social relations which may be categorized by particular patterns such as "density", "span", etc. Essentially the social structure is empirically received rather than theoretically constructed. Social change is assessed by observing the patterns at two points in time but the connection between the two cannot be understood; it can only be described. The situation is akin to the observation of the sky at night. We can map the various constellations of stars and other heavenly bodies at two points in time but without an understanding of the relationship among them--an underlying dynamics (be it Ptolemaic or Copernican--we are not in a position to explain how the "map" changes from one point in time to another. What we seek therefore is a theory of social structure which will explain both continuity and change; a theory of the patterns of determination of our empirical observations. We are trying to establish "underlying structures" which will explain the social structure as it appears (or disappears). I wish to explore now two possible strategies of constructing a social structure theoretically.

(b) Historicist. The historicist notion of social structure is one which views the totality, the social structure, as an expression or emanation of a part. While it probably never appears in pure form, the closest approximations are probably to be found in those theories influenced by German idealism. There is convergence here between such writers as Lukacs and Weber. In the case of the former, the commodity relations which express the peculiarity of the capitalist mode of production, are expressed in all arenas of social life. Reification invades all spheres of life both inside and outside work. What happens at work imposes itself on or flows over into leisure. Thus, in a recent article, John Alt talks about the way Taylorism emerges in and emanates from the work place, finding its expression in consumerism and the fragmentation of relations outside work. (Telos 29) While there are indeed pockets of resistance (such as the family), so the argument goes, these occupy a diminishing social space. Thus, there is the view that the family erodes as capitalism develops. Gramsci takes a similar position when he speaks of hegemony in the United States being born in the factory and imposing itself on the entirety of society. However,

where there are pre-capitalist modes of production, as in Italy, there is resistance to the domination of capitalist relations, but a resistance which will presumably eventually decline in strength. The historicist position is also found in conventional sociology, particularly that influenced by Weber. Where Lukacs talks of reification and commodification, Weber talks of bureaucratization or "rationalization" as the single dominating principle which expresses the movement of modern society. It is a short logical step to the view that the persistence of forms of rationality other than legal rational are in some sense obstacles to economic development. Hence the concern in the "development" literature with primordial loyalties such as kinship and ethnicity as obstacles to the emergence of "modernity". The presence of "tribalism" and extended kin networks are viewed as cultural lags which must ultimately bow down before the ineluctable progress of economic development. Turning back to some Marxist theories, one finds parallel views, the inevitable elimination of pre-capitalist modes of production as a condition for the development of capitalism; the erosion of competitive capital as monopoly capital consolidates itself, etc.

What is common to all these formulations is the notion that there is single essence spirit or driving mechanism which pervades and dominates the entire social structure. Those spheres which continue to carry on alternative "spirit", "values", "relations" are forms of cultural lags, pockets of resistance etc. which will eventually be swept away. The various parts of the social structure lose their autonomy, they become expressions of an underlying movement. The view of social change is at once both linear and teleological--hence the name "historicist".

(c) Structuralist. The structuralist theory of social change can be seen as a response to the unsatisfactory nature of the historicist position. What development theorists refer to, implicitly or explicitly as cultural lags, and what some Marxists might refer to as "pockets of resistance" to "capitalist hegemony" are viewed as having an autonomy (albeit within limits) of their own. The family is by no means disintegrating but in certain classes it may be argued, e.g. working or upper classes, as exhibiting as much life as ever. In many parts of the world the condition of the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production is the reproduction of pre-capitalist modes of production, just as the expansion of monopoly capitalism is dependent on the presence of competitive capitalism. That such "primordial" allegiances as ethnicity and caste have provided the basis of modernity rather than its obstacle. In other words social change cannot be adequately conceived in terms of single unilinear teleological movements and that the parts of the social structure appear to have a relative autonomy of their own.

Out of these intuitions springs the structuralist view of social structure in which one part determines not the content of the whole but the relations among the constituent parts. That, for example, the economic determines the relations among the economic, the political and the ideological, but that simultaneously the parts exhibit a logic and autonomy of their own. More specifically the conditions for the reproduction of the feudal mode of production imply a particular sort of relations among the economic, political and ideological. Under capitalism, the mode of production determines a different set of relations among the political, economic and ideological. In both cases, each of the three "instances" have some measure of autonomy of their own. They contain within themselves their own logic which is not a direct emanation or expression of the economic. What is determined are the relations among the parts of the social structure. Frequently, what is determined is the dominant element of the social structure. In other words the structuralist notion of social

structure implies a radical distinction between determination and dominance. The economic determines which part is dominant, (ideological, political or economic), or the cultural determines which part is dominant (the adaptive, goal attainment, integrative, or latency sectors).

The questions we must now ask ourselves are first, in which of the three categories does Parsons fit? What implications does his position have for the possibilities of developing a theory of the continuity and change of social structures? We will confine ourselves to The Social System and Essays in Sociological Theory.

## II. Has Parsons a Theory of Social Structure?

It is possible to make a case for allocating Parsons to any one of the above three types. Perhaps the weakest argument is that his notion of social structure is empiricist, that it is built up from below out of patterns of roles, that is, a set of enduring social relations. We do find such passages as the following, "In this context what is meant by social structure is a system of patterned expectations of the behavior of individuals who occupy particular statuses in the social system. Such a system of patterned legitimate expectations is called by sociologists a system of roles." (Psychoanalysis and the Social Structure", EST: 337). "Since a social system is a system of processes of interaction between actors, it is the structure of the relations between the actors as involved in the interactive process which is essentially the structure of the social system" (SS: 25). "The problem of order, and thus of the nature of integration of stable systems of social interaction, that is, of social structure...." (SS: 36). "First it is a system of differentiated roles. The types of which it is composed, how they are distributed within the social system and how integrated with each other must be analyzed. This is what we mean by the social structure in the narrower sense of the term". (SS: 114).

The historicist position is more difficult to document. "The other pair of variables is universalism--particularism and ascription achievement. These variables have, by contrast with the other pair, reference to the social system as such. They are concerned, as we have seen, respectively with the type of value-norms which enter into the structure of the social system, and with the ways in which the characteristics of actors as objects of orientation are 'taken account of' in the selective processes through which social structures are built up". (SS: 106). But Parsons is quite clear that these value orientations that dominate the particular value system do not permeate the entire social structure but only those institutions he refers to as "relational institutions" as distinct from "regulative institutions" and "cultural institutions". Nonetheless Parsons does refer to the "trend to rationality" as an "inherent directionality of the action process, like entropy in classical mechanics" (SS: 362, 496-503) which may suggest the view that "rationality" invades all spheres of the social structure of modern societies. Despite occasional comments that may signify an alternative picture, Parsons' formulations appear overwhelmingly to fall into the structuralist camp. Let us follow through the logic of his deliberations.

Parsons notes (SS: 152-163), that concrete societies and specifically concrete institutions do not exhibit the complete range of pattern variable orientations. "The essential point is that in certain crucial areas of social structure we do not find that empirically observable structures cover anything like the whole range of theoretically possible variability: possible that is, according to purely logical permutations and combinations of structural components. Actual structures are, rather, con-

centrated in empirical 'clusterings'". (SS: 152) Parsons then considers four such clusterings (1) kinship, control of sex relations, and socialization, (2) the organization of instrumental achievement roles and stratification, (3) the relation between power, force and territoriality and (4) relation of value orientation to religion. There are passages in which Parsons appears to indicate that these clusterings are in some sense also "necessary" (a clearly untenable position since there are obvious deviant cases). The more prevalent position is that they are empirical generalizations suggesting the existence of some functional imperatives constraining or shaping the social structure.

### III. Functional Imperatives

What are these functional imperatives? Parsons develops the concept in two places. Initially (SS: 26-36), he writes of the necessary exchanges between personality, social and cultural systems. That is, the social system (be it family, school, society, etc.)--construed as a pattern of role expectations (determining the way actors relate to one another)--must be so structured as to be compatible with the requisites of the personality and cultural systems. On the one hand, the social system organizes the internalization of need dispositions of actors through socialization and social control and on the other hand, produces and maintains patterns of communication, and language through which the cultural system is expressed. At the same time the personality system must provide adequate motivation for the actors to conform with role expectations and the cultural system must embody a dominant value system which when institutionalized in the form of role expectations satisfies certain basic consistency criteria. (Particularly, that role expectations be complementary rather than antagonistic.)

More relevant to the construction of the social structure of a society, Parsons presents certain structural imperatives peculiar to the societal social system. There are two types. The first concerns the existence of certain basic institutions to be found in all societies, viz. (according to Parsons) kinship, community, ethnicity and class (SS: 191-197). These "universal institutions" constitute the minimum society. In addition there are certain "compatibility" requirements which in any given society (with a particular dominant value system) constrain within limits the relations among and possibly the content of the universal institutions, as well as determining certain interstitial institutions. But then how do we account for variations in social structure among societies?

### IV. Dominant Values

The critical variable distinguishing one society from another is the dominant value system. Parsons characterizes such dominant values in terms of two sets of pattern variables, namely those concerned with the evaluation of objects, universalism-particularism and achievement-ascription. This gives rise to four possible types of societies. For each Parsons proceeds to build up the social structure both from below and above, that is out of the universal institutions and their compatibility requirements on the one hand and from the dominant value system on the other.

It is, therefore, possible to approach the analysis of types of social structure from the side of patterns of value-orientation. By this procedure the first step will be to consider at what points in the system of foci of crystallization reviewed in the last chapter the primary foci of significance for the value system in question will be found, and what the functional conditions of realization of the value

patterns in question in that are. How will these necessitate modification of the fully ideal pattern? Then the question will have to be raised, given what we know about the functional imperatives of social systems and their empirical working out, what other structures must also exist in the same social system, and how can these other structures be integrated with the central value-focus structures? (SS: 169)

How is this combination of structural imperatives and dominant values achieved or understood? Parsons argues that the dominant values are embodied in "care," "central" or what he calls "relational" institutions, (see SS: 51, 52, 67, 168). Presumably the relational institutions are to be chosen from a set of Universal institutions to be found in all societies (in The Social System the restriction of universal institutions to kinship, ethnicity, class and community poses considerable problems.) In other words the institutional arrangement of society, i.e. the social structure will differ according to the different dominant values system as expressed in the particular "relational" or dominant institutions. Furthermore, through the formulation of imperatives of compatibility we may deduce the structural arrangement of the remainder of the universal institutions. How does the dominant value system "determine" the dominant institution? One argument would be that each of the universal institutions is characterized by particular types of "orientation", thus kinship is characterized by particularism and ascription, so that where this is the dominant value system of a society, then the kinship system is dominant. On the other hand when universalism-achievement is the dominant value system then the occupational structure will be dominant since this is its own basic orientation. Once it is established that the occupational structure is dominant then the compatibility imperatives lead to the determination within limits of the remainder of the social structure, that is the kinship, community, ethnic, religious and stratification patterns (SS: 182-190).

This process of deducing social structure from the dominant value system may be referred to as determination in the last instance by patterns of normative culture. What is determined is the pattern of relations among institutions. The latter are not mere expressions or emanations of the dominant value system. In modern societies there exist an array of "adaptive" institutions such as kinship, community and ethnicity which do not merely resist the encroachment of universalism and achievement patterns of orientation, but are necessary for the continued domination of universalism and achievement as the dominant value system. In this sense the adaptive institutions exhibit an autonomy of their own. The family far from eroding is necessary for the persistence of capitalism.

Can the four types of society enumerated above be regarded as "ideal types". The answer, I think, is "no". An ideal type is an abstraction from reality but it can in principle exist, that is there is nothing logically impossible about its existence. For Weber bureaucracy can conceivably exist as a pure type even though empirically it might not be found in pure form. Parsons appears to suggest that the four types of society cannot exist in pure form, that a society in which the value system is universalism and achievement in pure form is a logical impossibility.

Only in a limiting case, however, would the social structures which directly institutionalize the dominant value patterns, even with the above qualifications, meet most of the functional prerequisites of a going society. There will, then, in the same society, be other structures which are adaptive in a



still broader sense, in that they are organized primarily by the institutionalization of patterns other than the dominant value patterns: this would be the case, for instance, with kinship in American society. ...The problem of integration posed by the necessity of "tolerating" and indeed institutionalizing patterns deviant from the main values is one of the main integrative problems for social systems, the more so, the more complex and differentiated the social structure. (SS: 168-69)

It would appear that for modern society adaptive structures exist which embody "sub-dominant" value patterns as a necessity for the survival of such societies. In short the universalism achievement type cannot exist in pure form. It is conceivable on the other hand that the particularism ascription pattern of so called primitive societies could exist in pure form if there are no adaptive structures which embody subdominant values.

One interesting conclusion of following up this question is that the value system taken as a whole is a direct reflection of the social structure. Thus for the existence of an adaptive structure such as kinship in modern society there must be a corresponding subdominant element in the value system from which it derives its legitimation. We observe then, that in some ways the Parsonsian notion of social structure is historicist in the sense that the social structure corresponds directly to the value system. Moreover we can observe even at this stage the appearance of two forms of causality at work--a dominant and subordinate pattern. The dominant pattern, which we will later refer to as the hierarchy of control, deduces a dominant institution from the dominant values. The subordinate causality emerges from the functional imperatives which require the institutionalization of subordinate values, that is the functional imperatives modify the total value system by introducing subdominant values. This subordinate causality will be later referred to as the hierarchy of conditioning.

#### V. Some Problems

1. What are these universal institutions? Do we always build up the social structure in the first place out of these institutions? Do additional institutions appear to fulfill certain functional exigencies (such as markets) which act as a bridge between the original universals? We shall see how in later work, this problem is partially resolved by a scheme of universal functional prerequisites (AGIL) and corresponding subsystems of society.
2. The extent to which universal institutions are characterized by an invariant pattern of value orientations is not clear. (See, for example, SS: 173). Is the kinship system always defined by particularism and ascription, irrespective of the type of society? If this is true, then the dominant values determine the dominant institution in a relatively straightforward manner. If this is not true and kinship or economic activities can be characterized by different combinations of pattern variables in different societies then the notion of determination of the dominant institution by the normative culture is elusive and ad hoc.
3. It will be noted in Parsons' exposition that it is in fact not merely the relations among institutions that are determined by the presupposition of a particular dominant institution but also the form or content of those institutions. As we shall in the case of Marx too at the same time as relations among parts are determined so the form or content those parts assume is also shaped.

4. One problem which will be with us for some time to come is that of dominance. What does it mean to say that a particular value or set of values are dominant? Or that a particular institution is dominant? If we observe a particular concrete society such as U.S., how do we know which are the dominant values (without being told by Parsons)? On what grounds can we say that U.S. is characterised by dominant values of universalism and achievement (equality of opportunity) rather than particularism and ascription (sexism and racism)? A common solution particularly in the "development literature" (see, for example, the studies of political culture by Pye, Verba, Almond et. al.) is to interview participants on the assumption that they carry a congealed value system around in their heads. The outcome indicates that U.S. citizens are more achievement oriented than Indian citizens. But this comparative material says nothing about the dominance of achievement, etc. within the American value system. It also makes assumptions as to who carries the dominant value system. An alternative approach would be to argue that value systems are analytical concepts directly observed. Rather they can only be known by their effects, that is through their embodiment in the social structure, the relations of dominance that characterize the institutional arrangements. But the problem is merely shifted to another level, viz. how do we decide which is a dominant institution? We shall possibly come up with some answers when we deal with Poulantzas. For the moment we will just have to live with the problem.

#### VI. How do social structures endure over time?

What is problematical for Parsons in the persistence of a social structure?

Fundamentally the problem is, will the personalities developed within a social system, at whatever stage in the life cycle, "spontaneously" act in such ways as to fulfill the functional prerequisites of the social systems of which they are parts, or is it necessary to look for relatively specific mechanisms, that is, modes of organization of the motivational systems of personalities, which can be understood in direct relation to the socially constructed level or role behavior? The older "psychological" view that societies are resultants of the independently determined "traits" of individuals would take the first alternative. The modern sociological view tends to emphasize the second. (SS: 31)

The most fundamental problem for Parsons then is the motivation of actors to conform to role expectations. What is not problematical for Parsons?

It is certainly contrary to much of the common sense of the social sciences, but it will nevertheless be assumed that the maintenance of the complementarity of role-expectations, once established, is not problematical, in other words that the "tendency" to maintain the interaction process is the first law of social process. This is clearly an assumption, but there is, of course, no theoretical objection to such assumptions if they serve to organize and generalize our knowledge. Another way of stating this is to say that no special mechanisms are required for the explanation of the maintenance of complementary interaction-orientation. (SS: 205)

This is Parsons' "inertia principle" (see also WPTA: 99-103), which implies that social relations once established tend to persist of their own accord. It is important to note here that this is a complete reversal of our reading of Marx. For Marx the problem was one of the reproduction of relations. Relations do not automatically

persist but have to be reproduced by very specific mechanisms. In particular the reproduction of relationships between lord and serf, capitalist and worker, etc. are regarded as problematical. Indeed it is by posing the problem of the reproduction of relations that Marx built the entire social structure. On the other hand, the motivation of the various concrete individuals who fill the empty places which define the sets of relations is not problematical. Capitalists and workers act out the logic inherent in the positions they occupy or the relations they carry. At least that was how Marx formulated a theory of social structure. (How that structure then produced classes as social forces, is a separate question.) One might note in passing that in this respect Critical Theorists are closer to Parsons than to Marx (see, for example, Habermas, Legitimation Crisis.)

To return to Parsons: what are the conditions for the persistence of a social structure, or more generally for stable interaction? Parsons provides a detailed analysis which reduces to three or four essential features. First, actors must be oriented to a shared system of values. Second that shared system of values must be such that institutionalized actors behave in non-antagonistic ways. Third, individuals should be sensitive to one another. What are role expectations to one are sanctions to another and actors are oriented to the anticipated behavior of others. But the basic requirement is expressed in the following statement:

This integration of a set of common value patterns with the internalized need disposition structure of the constituent personalities is the core phenomenon of the dynamics of social systems. That the stability of any social system except the most evanescent interaction process is dependent on a degree of such integration may be said to be the most fundamental dynamic theorem of sociology. It is the major reference for all analysis which may claim to be a dynamic analysis of social process. (SS; 42)

But what dynamics does in fact emerge out of Parsons' treatment of the social system? As we shall see, Parsons tends to eliminate the potentiality for developing a dynamics by overdetermining the integration of need dispositions and role expectations through the concept of internalization.

It is in the process of socialization that need dispositions are shaped in accordance with the dominant value system. The most important agency of primary socialization is the family and Parsons delineates five aspects of the process: reinforcement-extinctions, inhibition, substitution, imitation and identification. The latter two become most significant in the shaping of the personality structure in accordance with patterns of normative culture. Parsons notes that in modern societies there is a contradiction between the characteristic type of interaction in the family (particularism, ascription, etc.) and the dominant value system. Whereas children may learn specific items of the culture through imitation the "internalization" of dominant values takes place through identification. Children are sensitive to the attitudes of their parents and thereby come to adopt the dominant values which guide the activities of the adult world. It is through the use of identification that Parsons makes automatons out of individuals. For Parsons the process of internalization is smooth and only occasionally upset by "strains". Internalization turns out to be a "black box"---a label which by verbal fiat dissolves the dynamics implicit in his "fundamental dynamic theorem". It is not unusual to discover sociologists using "internalization" in this way, that is as a handy tautology to explain why people do what they do. As an unexamined concept it, of course, explains little--it is a poor man's substitute for some rigorous psychology.

Of course, Parsons is more sophisticated than to embrace the notion of "internalization" without qualification and he has written much on the strains involved in socialization, as his studies of youth culture, and the family amply illustrate (see EST: Chapters 9, 14 and 16.) To be sure there are strains, but these are not systematically incorporated into an analysis of the dynamics and change of social structure, rather, they are eventually absorbed. Thus, for example, the position adopted by Parsons is very different from that of Nancy Chodorow who suggests (starting from similar premises of Parsons, viz. an emphasis on sexual asymmetries in the family and importance of mothering and heterosexuality) that while the family is reproduced, a series of strains are also reproduced which tend to undermine the family. As capitalism develops and the family is stripped of all but its socialization functions so the contradiction between heterosexuality and mothering gathers momentum. Or in another language the reproduction of the family involves the expanded reproduction of a contradiction within the family.

What is important here is not the specifics of Chodorow's argument but its structure, namely that the development of tensions, strains or contradictions occurs simultaneously with and is inseparable from processes of reproduction or persistence. For Parsons, on the other hand, strain occurs only to the extent that there is absence of harmony. Change and persistence are not conceived as occurring simultaneously. Our reading of Marx will illustrate how a theory of "reproduction" is simultaneously and inseparable from a theory of "dynamics"; how the reproduction of capitalist relations is simultaneously the reproduction of a contradiction; how a theory of accumulation cannot be anything but a theory of disaccumulation.

#### VII. How do social structures change?

Following the above line of argument, it is not surprising that Parsons conceives of social change in terms of deviance. "This paradigm provides the setting for the analysis of the genesis of motivation to deviance. Let us assume that, from whatever source, a disturbance is introduced into the system, of such a character that what alter does leads to a frustration, in some important respects, of ego's expectation-system vis-a-vis alter" (SS: 252). The question is then: will the exogenous disturbance stimulate deviance or will it be absorbed immediately? If it leads to deviance what form will it take (conformity/alienation/active/passive)? Will deviance escalate into a vicious circle or will the social system re-equilibrate? Alter may apply sanctions to bring ego back to conform with role expectations. Alter may join with ego in a partnership--the essence of the deviant subgroup. Finally ego's hostility may be aroused by the imposition of sanctions by alter and lead to cumulative deviance.

In each instance, social control mechanisms are only activated in response to deviance. They only operate, if they operate at all, when the inertia of the system is violated. While Parsons does recognize the importance of coercion (SS: 299) he prefers to examine the more subtle "underlying motivational aspects". He takes as prototypical the doctor-patient relationship with the assumption that the sick role may be regarded as a form of deviance and the doctor (therapist) is an agent of social control. He argues that social control goes through four phases, support, permissiveness, refusal to reciprocate expectations and the manipulation of the reward system. Since the examination of the genesis of deviance is separated from the examination of social control mechanisms there is no attempt to systematically relate the two so that we might approach the problem of understanding when social control mechanisms will indeed be activated or when they are likely to be successful. The generality of the analysis is such that these problems cannot be even formulated.

This cannot even constitute the basis of a theory of social change. At best it expresses general processes of re-equilibration of a social system in the face of a disturbance. It is in other words only a diachronics---a matter of survival or non-survival of the social system and interestingly the possibility of the collapse of a social system is not examined.

#### VIII. What are the sources of strain and change?

Sources of strain and change for Parsons are to be found in the failure to meet conditions of stable interaction. They can arise due to dislocations between two systems of action, that is between the personality system and the social system, between the social system and the cultural system, etc. While these systems are interdependent and do interpenetrate, they also exhibit a relative autonomy of their own and consequently may violate conditions of compatibility, as when need dispositions do not correspond to role expectations. More specifically, things may go awry in the process of socialization (e.g. regression--SS: 232; wrong role model--SS:231; the particular problems experienced by U.S. males--SS:269). The cultural system may not satisfy certain consistency requirements and so the interpretation and application of values may leave room for considerable ambiguity and therefore conflict (SS: 251 and 269). Finally the structure of the social system may itself make conformity with role expectations difficult as in role conflict and the allocation of time (SS: 251). Furthermore, there is always the potential emergence of "social movements" which embrace the dominant value system but seek to realize it in different ways. Insofar as the dominant value system can be institutionalized in only one way so these are "utopian movements," but when there are alternative ways of institutionalizing values (how does one decide except through practice?) then a "real" struggle could break out on the terrain of dominant values.

#### IX. How might a Parsonsian "Motivational" Theory Look?

It is a necessary inference from the above considerations that a general theory of the process of change of social systems is not possible in the present state of knowledge. The reason is very simply that such a theory would imply complete knowledge of the laws of process of the system and this knowledge we do not possess. (SS: 486)

The prosecution of this seminar rests on the premise that this is a misconceived statement. In other words, we are in a position to develop the rudiments of a theory of social change but that such a theory will not be a general theory of social change applicable to all social systems. The endeavour of generating a general theory of social systems, particularly of their change, is most probably futile. We can only develop theories of social change specific to particular social systems. Just as Marx did not have a general theory of modes of production but only particular theories of the capitalist mode of production, of the feudal mode of production and so on, so The Social System is admirable testimony to the necessity of developing theories of particular social systems, the family, capitalist society, etc. Parsons has indeed developed a set of concepts which may be utilised in the development of theories of social change but only when the distinction between the general concept and its particular expression are made central to his approach. In short we have general (analytical) categories out of which we must develop particular theories of social change.

Before we can formulate a theory of social change of any particular social system from below (that is on the basis of some motivational dynamics), we must rescue the "individual" from its automated status. This would involve dropping Parsons' notion of social structure as "institutionalized patterns of normative culture." This formu-

lation builds in its own persistence by presupposing the harmony of need dispositions and role expositions (implied in the concept of institutionalization). If we drop this aspect we are still left with social structure as a pattern of role expectations which derive from a combination of dominant values and functional imperatives. (Functional imperatives would have to be modified, perhaps, to ensure that they do not themselves necessarily imply the socialization of individuals to conform to role expectations) The purpose of such a formulation would be to leave open the question of the correspondence of role expectations and need dispositions.

Let us take "modern" society and examine possible ways in which the social structure systematically produces a discrepancy between role expectations and need dispositions. Let us assume that the dominant values of universalism and achievement are embodied in the occupational structure and that the dominant patterns of socialization in the family are those of ascription and particularism. As in Chodorow's and Parsons' work the organization of the family under capitalism may then systematically produce a discrepancy between need dispositions and role expectations. On the other hand, if we assume that need dispositions can eventually be molded into universalism and achievement (through identification of child with parents or secondary socialization, such as schooling), then it may be argued that the possibility of realizing those values in the real world are slim. The vast majority of occupations are not defined so as to allow the possibility of achieving "success". The role expectations which define an assembly line job at Ford do not permit upward mobility, etc. Now it is true that workers may then adapt to the situation by redefining success or transferring it to other objects (children, leisure, "the American Dream") or "taking pride in their work." (See, for example, Ely Chinoy's The Automobile Worker and the American Dream.) Nonetheless an argument could be made that the discrepancy between the personality structure and social system remains, giving rise to strain and, to use Parsons' earlier expression, "free floating aggression." (It is, of course, also possible to re-Freudianize Parsons by allowing instincts to play a larger role in fostering the autonomy of the personality system.) Two problems then present themselves. First: how is such aggression channeled by the social structure? Is it fragmented or can it provide the basis for collective action? Against what objects might such aggression may be aimed? The second problem concerns the possible directions of change of the social structure. A more rigorous formulation of the functional imperatives might help us in developing a theory of the limits to the change of the social structure given a particular dominant value system. These problems apart, we would then have a theory of social change which would show how a particular social structure systematically produced "aggression", channeled it in particular directions and thereby modifying the social structure itself which in turn would affect the further production of aggression, and so on.

We will, therefore, go to Parsons' later work with three questions. Does he show more sensitivity to the development of particular theories out of his general concepts? Does he develop a theory of social structure which defines the functional imperatives more rigorously? Does he begin to set up the problem of the propagation of strain through the system?

#### IV -STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION: SECOND APPROXIMATION

When we were discussing The Structure of Social Action, we noted how Parsons drew out of Pareto a sequence of conditions which must be met if a social order is to be preserved. Beginning with economic activities, Parsons confronts the problem posed to the social order by the struggle for scarce resources (whether that struggle develops along class lines or concerns "individuals" is not immediately a problem for Parsons). He is led to deduce the existence of a set of rules or norms that regulate the distribution of those scarce resources. The specific form those norms take is immaterial, all that matters for Parsons is that they exist. However, such norms can only effectively carry "moral coercion" if they are sanctioned (legitimated) by a shared system of values. In other words, Parsons deduces the necessity of a common value system from the nature of the economic system. As we shall see, the logic of the argument is akin to that of Marx, viz., if a particular economic system (mode of production) is to continue to exist then certain conditions have to be met. But Marx goes further in that he not only deduces certain properties of the "totality" or "social structure" but also the actual form, and relations among the elements of that social structure. Where Parsons, at this point, only deduces the necessity of a political order, a legal order and a common value system, Marx tries to establish the specific form of politics, of law, of ideology (shared values), etc. and the relations among them as conditions for the survival of a specific economic system (mode of production). In other words, following the same deductive or "functionalist" logic (if X then Y), Marx generates different social structures corresponding to the conditions of survival of different modes of production. Parsons, by contrast, only uses the deductive logic to establish the necessity of a common value system and then promptly neglects the arguments by which he derived that necessity. Accordingly he proceeds to examine the various common value systems of different societies (e.g. in The Social System) independently of the specific conditions which make them necessary. (He later modifies this position by the introduction of a hierarchy of conditioning which allow material factors to affect values, though the latter through the hierarchy of control is dominant.)

The different value systems that Parsons generates derive from the possible modes of evaluating social and non-social objects as defined by the pattern variables. Having classified the possible value systems he then proceeds to construct the social structure from top down by combining the dominant values and the functional prerequisites. Initially the functional prerequisites took the form of universal institutions and conditions of compatibility. Later they take the form of four universal functional requirements which all social systems must satisfy if they are to survive (AGIL paradigm). Parsons does not deduce these functional imperatives from materialist assumptions as he did in The Structure of Social Action but brings them in as a generalization of Bales' analysis of interaction in small groups. Where for Marx the "functional prerequisites" (reproduction requirements) are derived in a manner which makes them historically specific to a particular mode of production for Parsons they are invariant and given. The question then becomes: how does Parsons construct different social structures out of the dominant value system and these new functional imperatives? Ultimately we must also link the new directions of development to the formulations in The Social System if only to discover any solutions to the problems we have highlighted in previous discussions.

##### I -The Meaning and Derivation of the AGIL Scheme

Bales' work on small groups indicated that when confronted with some task such groups would pass through four distinctive phases. In the first--the adaptive phase--

the participants ask or give opinions or orientation. In the second, goal attainment phase the participants give or ask for suggestions. In the third, integrative phase participants show solidarity or antagonism towards one another and in the fourth, latency phase participants release tension (through jokes for example) and agree or disagree. There was no invariant order to the movement of the group through these phases. (The above description is an oversimplification of the relevant parts of parts of Chapters 3 and 5 in WPTA.) It was also noted that each of these phases could also be characterised by a particular combination of pattern variables, viz. the adaptive phase--universalism and specificity; goal attainment phase--performance and affectivity; integrative phase--particularism and diffuseness; latency phase--quality and neutrality. This was an empirical observation.

In addition a tendency was found for some actors to specialize in the activities associated with the different phases. One could in a sense divide the small group into subgroups which specialized in the four types of task or problem. That is, there were jokers, initiators, guiders, best liked, sociometric stars etc. The scheme was generalised by Parsons et al, so that the four phases corresponded to four functional problems that all social systems (and later all action systems) had to fulfill if they were to survive. The adaptive function was the provision of scarce facilities. This involved the transformation of the environment into resources independent of their relevance for any particular goal. In other words the resources could act as means to a number of different ends. The goal attainment function concerned the directional change tending to reduce the discrepancy between the needs of the system and the conditions that bear upon the fulfillment of needs. For example one of the goals of American society is to maintain its hegemony in the world system, that is maintain the society in a particular state vis-a-vis the enviroing societies. The function of intergration involves coordinating the various parts, units or subsystems so that they contribute to the effective functioning of the whole. Here we find such institutions as legal norms, allocation of rights and obligations, distribution of rewards and so forth. Finally, there is the latency function which concerns tension management and pattern maintenance. Here we are concerned not with the relations among units or between the system and the environment but with the functional problems of the units themselves. That is, the latency problem is concerned with ensuring the adequate motivation of actors and their commitment to shared values. It also concerns the maintenance of that shared value system itself. The latency function is in this sense a precondition of the other three functions. Latency refers to the phase when the members of the "small groups" were not actively engaged in problem solving but rather restoring their motivation to engage in future activities.

On the basis of this generalization from small groups to all social systems, Parsons developed the scheme further by introducing analytical subsystems which were defined as those subsystems of any social system whose task it was to carry out the corresponding functional problem. Thus each social system could be subdivided into four sub social systems--the adaptive, integrative, goal attainment and latency subsystems. This was the way Parsons suggests one moves from the macro social system to the micro social system. For example, beginning with a society one can subdivide this into four subsystems--the economy (A), the polity (G), the societal community (I) and the latency sector (L). But each one of these may be further subdivided into subsystems. Thus Parsons and Smelser (ES: Chapter 2) subdivide and then subdivide again the adaptive sector or economy of a modern society. Thus what is at one level of analysis a unit of a social system at another level of analysis is treated as a social system itself. There would seem to be no limit to the number of subdivisions one can



make so long as one is still left with more than two actors. (And, of course, even then the personality system has its own four functions.)

But it should at no point be forgotten that these subsystems are analytical, that is, they are theoretical constructs which help us interpret the "real" or "concrete" world. But as in any theory the relationship between the analytical and the concrete has still to be spelled out. Unfortunately this is perhaps the weakest aspect of the AGIL scheme. The mapping between analytical categories and concrete institutions is based on notions of primacy. Any concrete institution or collectivity will contribute to all four functional problems of the wider society but will contribute primarily to one problem. Thus the family is primarily concerned with problems of latency, in particular socialization and social control of participants in the wider society. Although the business enterprise makes both political and integrative contributions to working of the whole, it is primarily located in the adaptive sector. As a result a number of institutions will "map" onto any given subsystem. The problem comes in actually carrying out the mapping in practice. How do we discover what the functions of any given institution is and then how do we determine what is its primary function?

In this scheme what differentiates one society from another? Parsons and Smelser argue that it is the arrangement of the concrete institutions or collectivities that distinguishes one society from another. In particular, they suggest that the level of social differentiation is what distinguishes, for example, kinship society from modern society. In a kinship based society the kinship system performs all four functions itself. As societies develop, so they spawn institutions which specialize in the performance of particular functional problems. So the emergence of religion as separate from kinship appears early on and later the legal system separates, and so on.

## II. Interchange Systems

But, as differentiation advances, how do the parts hold together to form a cohesive society? Parsons dwells on the analogy of the movement from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, arguing that different collectivities in an advanced society are linked through a series of interchanges. Organic solidarity is produced through interdependence and the interdependence is expressed in the form of inputs and outputs between the four analytical subsystems. Each subsystem receives inputs from and produces outputs for each of the other subsystems. Thus the economy (adaptive subsystem) receives capital from the polity, organization from the integrative subsystem and labor from the latency subsystem. Land the fourth factor of production is taken as given. In return the economy produces certain types of goods which enter the household (output to latency subsystem), and as new goods have an effect on distribution of wealth and rewards (output to integrative subsystem). What is produced is also subject to some control by the polity through taxation policies and subsidies (output to G subsystem). Similar sets of exchanges can be constructed from the other subsystems which in fact gives rise to six sets of "interchanges". Since they take place between analytical subsystems, so the interchanges themselves must be analytical. (See, for example, ES: 27, 54, 62, 79, 81-3). Thus, for example, the concrete exchanges between family and economy include not only the exchange of labor for income (A-L interchange) but also provision of capital (through savings) for interest (A-G interchange) and the incentive to innovate in exchange for profit or new goods (A-I interchange).

While it is clear that the interchanges are analytical it is less obvious that they are universal and apply to all societies let alone all social systems.

In interpreting this conclusion, we do not identify the boundaries of the economy with any particular "organizational" features of any particular society. In very highly differentiated cases, some of the boundaries may coincide approximately with specific concrete markets such as the market for consumers' goods and the labour market in our society. In peasant society, on the other hand, the boundary between production and consumption lies to a large extent within the same household, regarded as a collectivity... (ES: 27)

We hold that our generalized theoretical scheme, for the analysis of a society and of the economy as one of its subsystems, is not bound to any particular structural type of society or economy. The analytical elements we have distinguished, and other we have been unable to discuss for reasons of space, are distinguishable as elements in any society, indeed in any social system. These analytical elements are not, however, equally closely related to the concrete structure of collectivities and roles in all societies. In general our functional sub-system categories correspond more closely to organizationally differentiated sectors of the social structure as the society approaches greater structural differentiation.... Thus the operationalization of economic theory in highly differentiated societies is more successful because of the visibility of the transactions which comprise the data subject to statistical analysis. In less differentiated societies, the lack of demarcation between collectivities conceals more and more intra-collectivity transactions which are nonetheless analytically significant. (ES: 83-4)

What does it mean to say that an analytical scheme is "significant" but its operationalization not "successful"? It appears that Parsons and Smelser would like to argue that the interchanges are not only analytical but also universal, even though the concepts they use together with the illustrations they adopt are singularly relevant to a modern differentiated society.

In passing, it is interesting to note how Parsons and Smelser foreclose the possibility of posing what, for Marxist theory, will be a central and embarrassing problem--the problem of reproducing the conditions or reproduction. For Marxist theory, it may be argued that the state is actively involved in producing or maintaining the conditions of accumulation and the conditions for reproducing capitalist relations of production. But, this raises the problem of the reproduction of the state itself. In the scheme laid out by Parsons and Smelser everything reproduces everything else through a theoretical construction. The conditions of reproduction of any one subsystem or collectivity are found directly within society. The problem of securing the reproduction of the conditions or reproduction does not enter, and the theoretical system is in this sense logically closed. By posing this as a problem Marxists opened up one avenue for developing a theory of social change and the movement of society through a series of "unstable equilibria" or from one crisis to the next. At the same time, it is interesting to note that the imposition of closure by Parsons and Smelser finds its analogue in the famous reproduction schema of Marx (Volume II, Capital). Here too Marx imposed a self consistency and assumed self-reproducing mechanisms for the circulation of commodities between the different sectors of society--an assumption which has been seriously questioned by many Marxists--under the label of the "realization problem".

### III. Double Interchange Systems and Markets

While the single interchange systems outlined above may be universal and analytical, the same clearly cannot be said for the system of double interchanges, which are the (analytical or concrete?) forms these interchanges normally assume in a modern society. The interchange of inputs and outputs between subsystems in advanced society cannot take place without the mediation of certain symbolic media of interchange, money, power, influence and value commitments. For example, a worker may enter the factory and produce hubcaps or even bread but in return for labor he/she cannot survive on the commodities produced in that factory. One cannot live by hubcaps or bread alone. So money as a symbolic medium of exchange and a measure of value (utility) is exchanged for labor in the form of a wage and this in its turn is exchanged in the market for consumer items. We have a double interchange system in which labor is exchanged for a wage and the wage is exchanged for commodities. The relationship between any two analytical subsystems in a modern society must be seen as a double interchange system comprised of two "markets".

Here Parsons develops certain aspects of Durkheim's notion of solidarity and at the same time extends ideas developed in the social system. A single market, for example the exchange of labor for a wage, must be regarded as itself a social system linking two other social systems rather than two individuals. The two elements being exchanged (for example, wage and labor) are the analogue of performances and sanctions in the interaction between two individuals. The institution which binds two subsystems or collectivities is the contract--"The crucial fact in a contract is that it links two systems of action; it is the social relation by means of which boundary interchanges take place" (ES: 107). Like any other social system, the market must satisfy the four functional problems A, G, I and L. For Parsons and Smelser, the A and G components represent "contractual" elements while the I and L represent the non-contractual elements of contract. In other words, Parsons stresses the importance of the non-contractual elements of contract (that is an underlying value consensus) as a condition for the emergence of exchange systems and "organic" solidarity.

Let us take the labor market as an example and examine it as a social system from the point of view of representatives of the two systems it links, that is from the point of view of the laborer and the employer. For the worker the G component represents the interest in wages, and for the employer the G component is the interest in purchasing labor power. But a worker must make certain adaptations to the family, to the demands made by the firm on the amount of time to be spent at work, rules concerning absenteeism, the nature of the work and so forth. The employer must also adapt to the exigencies of the laborers, their capacity, certain safety requirements and to certain minimal efficiency requirements made necessary by competition with other firms and so forth. The integrative problem of the market system refers to certain symbolic elements which produce a sense of solidarity between employer and worker. For the worker this may involve a certain loyalty to the firm, a commitment to a certain style of life which may further attach the worker to the job. For the employer this aspect of the exchange may involve the reputation as a "good employer", the provision of certain "extraneous" conditions such as lockers, sports facilities, Xmas hams, certain levels of employment security and so forth. Finally the latency aspects reflect a set of common values which employer and worker share, such as general confidence in the future of the economy and in particular of the firm.

Both sides of industry may view efficiency and hard work as values. They may share the view that the worker should also be a good provider and so forth.

Parsons and Smelser point out that trade unions have only been involved in the definition of the A and G elements of the market; unions do not challenge the I and L components. Indeed, the very stress on the A and G components presupposes a consensus over the non-contractual elements of contract. But for Parsons and Smelser that consensus is prior to the contract; the terms of the contract are negotiated on the basis of a pre-existing harmony of interests. Here again we find Parsons' solution of the Hobbesian problem and the ruling out of Hobbes' own solution that it is in the very process of negotiation that the consent is organized. As we shall see, when we come to Gramsci, the very participation in negotiation can itself generate and manufacture the consent; that the non-contractual elements of contract emerge out of rather than exist prior to the contractual relationship.

#### IV. The Political Support System

The treatment outlined above of the relationship between the L subsystem and A subsystem can be extended by analogy to the other interchange systems. We will briefly mention the interchange between the polity (G) and the public (I). The polity is concerned with a system's attainment of goals and to achieve this end makes decisions binding on the public. In exchange for this output to the integrative sector the polity receives generalized support from the population. The vote, for example, is a particular manifestation of such support. However, just as the link between labor and commodities was complicated by wages and purchasing power, so the political support system contains further elements, responsible leadership and demands. Thus binding decisions appear in response to demands from the public, whereas responsible leadership is a means of bargaining for generalised support (e.g. in elections).

Just as money is a measure of utility (the value standard by which the economy is assessed) so power is a measure of effectiveness of the polity in achieving the goals of the system. The more power the more effective. This leads to Parsons' definition of power as "the generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective organization when the obligations are legitimized with reference to their bearing on collective goals and where in case of recalcitrance there is a presumption of enforcement by negative situational sanctions--whatever the actual agency of enforcement" (PSS: 361). For Parsons, therefore, power is a symbolic medium like money which has no intrinsic value. It inheres in certain positions of the social structure. Binding decisions are made by incumbents and those over whom they are exercised most normally obey without the imposition of negative sanctions. Workers do what their bosses tell them without the continuous exercise of disciplinary sanctions, though these are always available and their potential deployment is necessary to elicit cooperation. "As will be made clear later, this in no way implies that fear of negative-sanctions is the principal motive for honoring collective commitments. But it does imply that contingent negative-sanctions are inherent components of the political system, because without them it would be senseless to insist on the bindingness of commitments" (PSS: 321). If force is an "inherent" element in Parsons' notion of power so is legitimacy. For Parsons power is always legitimate and therefore non-compliance reflects an incomplete institutionalization of power (PSS: 371). (Parsons does not talk about the genesis of a power system only its maintenance, and therefore avoids the possibility that force may be a predominant element in establishing "legitimate" domination.) According to this concept-

ualization, authority is the right to use power, it is "the institutional code within which the use of power as medium is organized and legitimized" (PSS:371). Property is the analogous institution for the monetary system, regulating rights of ownership and possession.

Just as barter, as an economic exchange, does not involve money, so the compliance of one individual with the wishes of another outside an institutional context, cannot be referred to as power (PSS: 362). How then does Parsons deal with the intuition that power has a hierarchical element and is unequally distributed? The power of A over B reflects a hierarchical ordering of binding obligations based on the relative importance of the contributions of A and B to the functioning of the collectivity. The power of A over B then is the right, legitimized by the pursuit of collective goals, of A to make decisions which take precedence over those of B. Hierarchies of this nature are necessary for the effectiveness of the collectivity.

Of course where conditions are sufficiently simple, or where there is sufficient anxiety about the hierarchical implications of power, the egalitarian element may penetrate far into the political decision-making system itself, with, e.g. insistence that policy-decisions, both external and internal in reference, be made by majority vote of all members, or even under a unanimity rule. The respects in which such a system--which of course realistically often involves a sharply hierarchical stratification of influence--is incompatible with effectiveness in many spheres, can be said to be relatively clear, especially for large collectivities. (PSS: 378)

The assumptions that hierarchy is necessary for effectiveness and that the decisions of say a foreman are more important than those of a worker are to be found at the basis of organization theory and pervade the work of Durkheim and Weber. Needless to say none of these writers are particularly convincing in justifying these assumptions. Parsons does add a rider (again derived from Weber) that the hierarchies may be modified in the "egalitarian" direction by interchanges over the boundaries of the collectivity, viz. through equality of opportunity to contribute services (involving the A-G interchange) and through equality of franchise (involving the G-I interchange).

One final issue concerns the possibility of expanding the amount of power in a system in the manner that banks through the operation of a credit system increase the amount of money in the economy. The analogue of depositors putting their savings in a bank, is the voter who supports a party every three years in the election. The vote is a deposit of power and the elected party, like the banker, utilizes the trust in any number of ways by making binding decisions for the public. But it must do so in the light of the forthcoming election and if it over-extends its power during its term or uses it in unacceptable ways then it may be thrown out of office in the following election. Similarly a bank that consistently makes bad investments may lose customers. If on the other hand the political decisions are "judicious" and the returns to "power credit" are sufficiently great then the party may be successful in being elected again. At any rate, Parsons argues that the zero-sum notion of power, that A gains power only to the extent that B loses it, misses the importance of creating power in electoral systems. Presumably the idea could be extended to all power systems which rest on generalized support accorded to a small group of decision makers.

#### V. Social Control and Symbolic Media of Interchange

In The Social System, Parsons stresses the central role of shared cultural system in maintaining stable interaction between actors. The distinctive feature of human

society is language which is a central element of the cultural system. Language facilitates "adaptation" of human beings to their environment and provides the medium for the expression of shared values. With the development of a modern differentiated society so other symbolic media (specialized languages) develop in order to enhance adaptation and coordinate different collectivities. Interdependence of the parts rests on such media of exchange as money, power, influence and value commitments. Thus money introduces four degrees of freedom in economic exchange not present in barter, freedom to spend money on any desired item available, freedom to shop around among alternative sources of supply, freedom to choose one's own time of purchase and freedom to consider and bargain over terms of exchange. Similarly the introduction of power and its investment in certain positions, according to Parsons, facilitates the effectiveness of goal attainment, without the continuous intervention of force. Similar arguments might be made for influence and value commitments.

These symbolic media of interchange also provide Parsons with more extensive and differentiated notions of social control. The notions of social control outlined in very general terms of role-expectations and sanctions in The Social System is now specified along two dimensions. The first refers to whether control is exercised over the "situation" or the "intentions" of actors. The second refers to whether positive or negative sanctions are mobilised. Control over the situation through the use of positive sanctions is defined as "inducements" with money as the symbolic medium. Control over the situation through negative sanctions is defined as deterrence with power as the symbolic medium. Control over intentions through the use of positive sanctions is defined as persuasion with influence as the symbolic medium. Finally, control over intentions through negative sanctions is defined as the activation of value commitments with generalized commitments as the symbolic medium, (for example, activation of guilt) (See PSS: Part IV). Clearly social control has become ubiquitous with the differentiation of society. Why is there the need for all this social control? In The Social System social control was only activated in response to deviance. If this is still true, why the increase in deviance as societies develop? Or is social control necessary for purposes of coordination as societies become more complex? Is coordination a sufficient explanation or do we have to posit the existence of structured patterns of conflict? What implications does the widespread use of mechanisms of social control have for the validity of the "inertia principle"--that social relations once established maintain themselves of their own accord without any special mechanisms?

## VI. The Construction of Social Structure

How is a social structure constructed out of the AGIL paradigm? In our examination of The Social System, we argued that a social structure was constituted from dominant values and functional imperatives. Can the translation of analytical subsystems into a concrete arrangement of institutions, that is a social structure, be derived in the same way? We have developed a more general and well defined set of functional imperatives, but the problem comes in linking these to values. In particular what are the relations of the pattern variables to the functional subsystems? Given the dominant value system can we determine which subsystem will carry those values and may thereby be defined in some sense as dominant?

The answer to these questions is by no means clear. The origin of AGIL scheme in Bales' small group experiment directly linked pattern variables to specific functional problems, e.g. universalism and specificity to the adaptive problem. In their only statement, Parsons and Smelser trace the development of the relationship

between the four function scheme and the earlier pattern variables but are decidedly ambiguous as to whether the correspondence can be generalized to all social systems, or is specific to small groups. "The main methodological procedure of the present work is based on these developments. We feel that it is fruitful to treat the system-function (pattern variable) scheme as the main frame of reference for analysing the structural differentiation of a large scale society" (ES: 37). This passage suggests that the relationship of the pattern variables to AGIL scheme may be general, and certainly the derivation (Chapters 3 and 5 in WPTA) is presented as general. Therefore, it would appear that either the linkage is an empirical generalization or it is definitional. With one exception the linkage is never again drawn, and the four functions are always defined independently of any characteristic type of action (see for example, pp. 38-42 in "Outline of Social System" in TS). Therefore, the relationship would hardly seem definitional. We are only left with an "empirical generalization", that adaptation involves certain empirically invariant types of action as does "goal attainment", "integration" and tension management".

But if this is true what does it mean? What are we to make of the supposition that the adaptive subsystem is characterized by universalism and specificity. For we know that this adaptive subsystem itself can be divided up into subsystems, which would mean that different sub-subsystems are composed of the different types of action. To say that univ-spec. defines action in the adaptive subsystem can only mean that the adaptive subsystem of the economy is dominant, in some sense. In other words the allocation of pattern variables to functional subsystems is not the allocation of typical kinds of action, but the determination of a particular arrangement of dominance within the subsystem. (One can see, therefore, why Parsons only once more attempts to link action to subsystems and then to obscure rather than clarify the above problems, see, "Pattern Variables Revisited: response to Robert Dubin" in STMS: 192-219) So what? Given a particular dominant value system, if we accept the allocation of pattern variables to subsystems, then we can derive a dominant subsystem or corresponding institution. So if universalism and achievement are the dominant values then this suggests that a cross between the adaptive and goal attainment sectors is dominant, that is, possibly, the occupational structure. Unfortunately we are frequently told in the later writings of Parsons that it is no longer the occupational structure which is the "core" institution but the "societal community" (Integrative subsystem). "Within this framework, the core of a society as a social system is its integrative subsystem" (PSS: 40).

Even this attempt at reconstructing a theory of social structure seems to flounder. Certainly Parsons nowhere lays out how dominant values combine with functional prerequisites to produce a social structure, namely the institutionalized patterns of normative culture. At best he offers a set of components in terms of which a social structure may be described, viz. values, norms, collectivities and roles. The key notion which distinguishes one social structure from another is the level of social differentiation, but this is taken as given rather than derived deductively. There appears to be no satisfactory way of moving from values and functional subsystems to concrete social structures, as defined in terms of levels of social differentiation. As we shall see without a theory of social structure, Parsons cannot conceivably develop a theory of the dynamics of a social structure--its change and transformation.

## VII. The Description of Social Change

The basis of the persistence of the social structure as outlined in The Social System lay in the correspondence of need dispositions and role expectations. There was no reference to the interchange between a social system and environing social

systems. The development of such interchanges in Economy and Society leads to a different conception of persistence and stability, viz. the balancing of inputs and outputs. Just as a discrepancy between need dispositions and role expectations led to deviance, so an imbalance between the inputs entering and outputs leaving a particular social system leads to instability, the engagement of re-equilibrating mechanisms and possibly to some social change of a structural nature. Furthermore just as Parsons does not develop any way of independently assessing whether need dispositions do deviate from role expectations, so there is no attempt to derive independent measures of inputs and outputs and therefore of their balance or imbalance. Indeed, without some mode of comparing inputs and outputs we have only obtained a definition of social change, at best a useful tautology or heuristic device directing our attention to particular types of processes. Parsons offers examples of two types of social change: the first involves no change in the structure of a social system while the second does involve such a structural change but without any change in the dominant values.

(a) The dynamics of inflation and deflation.

Imbalance of inputs and outputs is treated as an analogue of inflation and deflation in a monetary system. When the extension of monetary credit is greater than the increases in production of commodities it brings about then there is inflation. When the amount of credit or money declines relative to values produced then we have deflation. The interchange between the polity and the public can be examined in the same terms. When a political leadership over-extends the power embodied in its position without bringing about corresponding returns, or when positions in an organization lose their power or if incumbents make too many binding decisions over and above the power to enforce them, then we find ourselves in a position of inflation. Thus the over-extension of U.S. political involvement in the affairs of other nations might constitute an example of power inflation. Or the Watergate break-in might be another example of the over-extension of power. By contrast the contraction of U.S. commitments overseas, the narrower definition of power associated with official positions and the insistence of increased political loyalty, all of which according to Parsons characterised the McCarthy era, would represent a period of power deflation. Equally the post Watergate period can also be seen as a period of power deflation in which diminishing trust does not allow the development of previous levels of power credit.

(b) Structural Differentiation

Parsons and Smelser (ES: 252-270) try to show the usefulness of their scheme in examining a particular instance of structural differentiation, viz. the separation of ownership and control. On "general theoretical considerations" (which are?) "a simultaneous deficit at the G-boundary and increment at the A-boundary is a particularly significant combination for the initiation of positive structural changes in the (economic) system" (ES: 257). This corresponds to a deficit of labor input and a surplus of capital input into the economy. Under what conditions is this likely? The "protestant ethic" represents the complex of values leading to these conditions. First, "The 'Puritan' attitude toward work, however, does not predispose people to perform given routine tasks faithfully, but to live to increase productivity by improving methods and organization. In fact, the characteristic businessmen (in this tradition) tends, if anything, to neglect the requirements of stable routine production; he restlessly changes and improves. Relative to the "expectations" of a steady state, therefore, he tends to withdraw labor services from the routine productive process in order to reintroduce them with great intensity only if his conditions of a changed organization of production are met" (ES: 261). Second, the protestant



ethic leads people to save and to believe in the development of productivity for its own sake and hence the release of funds for capital investment. Thus, the impetus to change is explained but how is it propagated? According to Parsons and Smelser the disequilibrium of inputs and outputs leads to inflationary outbursts (e.g. attacking big business) and hence to re-equilibration through support and permissiveness of innovation--an input from the I sector into the economy. This gives rise to structural change. The particular form it assumes (separation of ownership and control) is determined by the dissatisfaction of high level employees who have considerable responsibility but little control or autonomy (exacerbated by the increasing size of enterprises). This formulation into stages (and there are others) follows Smelser's later conceptualization of collective behaviour (structural conduciveness, structural strain, spread of generalized beliefs, etc.)

This can hardly provide the basis for a theory of social change. At best it is a description, using categories that do not seem to be appropriate. What light does the description shed on the process of structural differentiation? What are we to make of "labor deficit" element? While Parsons and Smelser are forced to bring in agents of change, it is nowhere clear who those agents are, workers, capitalists, state officials? There is no sense in which consequences may be deduced from certain conditions? There is no theory or determination (within however broad limits) of the direction in which a "disturbance" may be propagated? Notice also there is no mention of how the changing inputs are combined within the economy to produce the structural change. Again we have discovered that Parsons' attempt to generate some understanding of social change is lacking something, but what? Is there something in the way he sets up the problem and the assumptions he makes? How does the failure of the AGIL scheme in this respect relate to the failure in The Social System?

#### VIII: Black Boxes and the Inertia Principle

One of the fundamental postulates of The Social System was the inertia principle, that once established no special mechanisms are necessary to reproduce social relations. Actors conform to role expectations without "outside interventions". But in The Social System, Parsons does not concern himself with the interchanges of one social system with another. He does not talk about social systems as dependent on inputs from other social systems, as is clearly the case once the AGIL scheme is developed. But if one allows the necessity of processing of inputs into outputs then what becomes of the inertia principle? Social relations are only reproduced, then, on condition the social system consistently receives a specific set of inputs.

Further, the very existence of the four function scheme would seem to imply that the inertia principle itself cannot account for the persistence of social relations. For, the inertia principle emerges out of the fundamental dynamic theorem, as expounded in The Social System (p. 42) that stable interaction depends on the correspondence of need dispositions and role expectations, or, in other words, the appropriate motivation of individuals to conform to expectations. And is this postulate none other than the "latency" or "tension management and pattern maintenance" problem, that is just one of the four functional problems that a social system must solve if it is to "survive"? If by survival we mean the persistence of a particular set of social relations, then the validity of the AGIL scheme hinges on the rejection of the inertia principle. That is, that the reproduction of social relations depends on the performance of certain adaptive, goal attainment and integrative tasks as well as the correspondence of need dispositions and role expectations.

Part of the problem we are stumbling upon is the way the functional subsystems and their inner workings are understood or rather not understood. As a social system, the economy could be understood in terms of patterns of role expectations. But at the same time it is also regarded as combining and translating certain inputs into outputs (factors of production into shares of income). How are these two perspectives--that of role-expectations in an interactional context and transformation of inputs into outputs joined? How do Parsons and Smelser deal with the internal working of the economy, for example? The answer, of course, is that they split the economy up into subsystems (AGIL) and examine again the interchanges in terms of inputs and outputs. Indeed, the universal and general applicability of the AGIL scheme to all social systems allows them to avoid telling us anything about how inputs are transformed into outputs. Each subsystem is then a black box, concealing two perspectives that of interaction and that of activities.

An attempt at reconciling these two perspectives would in fact involve juxtaposing the notion of action as adaptation of means to ends as defined in The Structure of Social Action and action as involving orientation to objects--complementarity of role expectation as laid out in The Social System. What happens however is that the interactional notion of action replaces rather than becomes part of the means-end notion. For Parsons and his voluntaristic theory of action, "means" imply values and norms and it is the latter which come to dominate the development of the theory of action. By contrast for Marx, "means" imply social relations but neither can be reduced to the other. For Marx the notion of social structure refers to social relations between "individuals" as they engage in particular activities. The two elements are inseparable but distinct.

Parsons and Smelser tell us that dynamics are to be understood as the relationship between inputs and outputs. Yet, because we can uncover no processes of transformation, that is no "activities", we are left with no way of understanding the development of an imbalance between input and outputs. A crucial dimension of social structure appears to have been omitted. We are unnecessarily thrown back to seeking the source of change exogenously.

In many ways, therefore, the obstacles to developing a theory of social change out of the AGIL paradigm are similar to those we encountered in The Social System. The latter deals with interaction among actors through role-expectations and sanctions and posits the necessity of shared values while the former theoretical system is concerned with interaction between social systems as defined by the contract through inputs and outputs based on non-contractual elements of contract (as shared values). The notion of internalization was presented as a black box determining the correspondence of role expectations and need dispositions and thereby foreclosing the possibility of a motivational theory of change. In the same way the translation of inputs into outputs is another black box, in general, determining an equilibrium and foreclosing a theory of social change based on systematic bias in exchange between systems, as for example, in the possibility that input of labor is of greater "value" than the wages received. Indeed, so long as there is no change, the input of labor necessarily balances the wage output. Moreover, even supposing we develop a theory of the production and maintenance of a systematic discrepancy between inputs and outputs, we can only develop a theory of social change on the basis of a theory of social structure which would allow us to determine the direction of propagation of imbalances and institutional changes they may effect. And then how do those structural changes in turn modify the production of unequal exchange? As with deviance, Parsons' notion of inflation and deflation are regarded as apart from and a pathology of the normal balance between inputs and outputs. The implication, as ever, is that a theory of social change is distinct from a theory of persistence.

## V AND VI: SOCIAL CHANGE AND RECONSTRUCTION

So far we have considered two types of social change, namely those originating in a discrepancy between need dispositions and role expectations (motivational theories of change) and those originating in an imbalance of inputs and outputs between subsystems of social systems. Both sets of theories have been concerned with processes and dynamics, that is change within a given social structure or type of society, rather than the transition between different social structures or types of societies. (Though we did also deal with the emergence of structural differentiation through specific types of imbalances within a social system.) I propose now to turn to diachronic change, that is change between different societies and how Parsons conceives of such change.

### I. Evolutionary Universals

Parsons' most significant theoretical formulation of the problem is to be found in his article on "evolutionary universals", which are defined as follows:

An evolutionary universal, then is a complex of structures and associated processes the development of which so increases the long run adaptive capacity of living systems in a given class that only systems that develop the complex can attain certain higher levels of general adaptive capacity. (STMS:493)

Of course, the definition hinges on the notion of adaptive capacity, the nearest we get is, "Clearly, adaptive capacity should mean not merely passive 'adjustment' to environmental conditions, but rather the capacity of a living system to cope with its environment. This capacity includes an active concern with mastery, or the ability to change the environment to meet the needs of the system, as well as the ability to survive in the face of unalterable features" (STMS: 493). Adaptive capacity involves both the ability to cope with a broad range of environmental features and their uncertainty. (Later, Parsons does specify the meaning of increased adaptive capacity for each of the four subsystems: adaptive upgrading (A sector), social differentiation (G sector), inclusion, such as incorporation of greater numbers as citizens (I sector) and value generalization, so as to provide the basis for the changes in the other sectors (L sector).

What then are these evolutionary universals, which allow societies to increase their "adaptive capacity" and move from one stage of development to the next? They are in order of appearance, stratification, cultural legitimation, bureaucratic organization, money and markets, generalized universalistic norms and democratic association. Parsons provides a rationale suggesting why each enhances the adaptive capacity of a society. Thus, stratification by concentrating responsibilities allows a leadership to appear which is prepared to "stick their necks out in taking the responsibility for important changes" (STMS: 499). It also helps to loosen the rigidity of an kinship based society. But stratification leads to all sorts of tensions between leaders and led unless that differentiation and centralization of power is somehow legitimated. The emergence of cultural legitimation, for example in the form of religious institutions such as caste, allows the effective functioning of a hierarchy of power and control. For those societies which have moved well beyond the "primitive" stage, bureaucratic organization and money and markets appear as evolutionary universals which further enhance the adaptive capacity of a society. Bureaucratic organization is known for its efficiency, and money and markets allow the freer distribution of goods and services. And so on.

## II. Contradiction

I now propose to read into Parsons' scheme elements that are only potentially or implicitly there. Suppose first that we can periodize history in terms of the evolutionary universals. In the first period we only have kinship and language. In the second period we have the addition of stratification. In the third period, cultural legitimation appears and then bureaucratic organization in the fourth and so forth. Assume an evolutionary universal appears somehow, for example, stratification appearing in a "primitive" society. Initially, the consequences of its introduction are the "development" of that society. But later its presence poses as an obstacle to further development because, for example, of the tensions and rigidities it introduces. Then a society will either "stagnate" (rather than die), that is its adaptive capacity will no longer increase but asymptotically approach a particular level. Only if a second evolutionary universal is introduced will the society shift to another level (quantum leap?) and its adaptive capacity further increase. "Social stratification in its initial development may thus be regarded as one primary condition of releasing the process of social evolution from the obstacles posed by ascription. The strong emphasis on kinship in much of the sociological literature tends to obscure the fact that the new mobility made possible by stratification is due primarily to such breaks in kinship ascription as that across class lines... [But] in the transition to full modernity, stratification often becomes a predominantly conservative force in contrast to the opportunities it provides for innovation in the earlier stages" (STMS: 500).

We have here a notion of "contradiction" that is a process which sows the seeds of its own destruction. We can do a straight translation from Marx:

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society (read adaptive capacity) come in conflict with the existing relations of production (read e.g. patterns of stratification)... From forms of development of the productive forces (read adaptive capacity) these relations (patterns of stratification) turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. (Tucker, pp. 4-5).

Where for Marx the movement from one society to the next involves the destruction of pre-existing patterns of social relations, for Parsons the evolutionary universals of previous periods maintain their presence in subsequent periods. They are not burst asunder! Nonetheless there are parallels between evolutionary universals and adaptive capacity on the one side and property relations and forces of production on the other.

There are also some parallels in the discussions of the conditions of transition.

No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces (read adaptive capacity) for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production (read evolutionary universals) never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. 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 not its solution already exist or at least in the process of formation. (Tucker, p. 5)

Which is to say that in Parsonese, that new evolutionary universals are introduced when a society is no longer able to increase its adaptive capacity without moving to another evolutionary universal. But where Marx has some theory of the agents of change--the motor

of history responsible for bringing about transition--revolution--namely class struggle, Parsons has no such agents change. (Though class struggle is the motor of history for Marx, he nonetheless dealt with the genesis of capitalist relations and forces of production as "prehistory", that is as a series of events, historical accidents which are described, for example, in the chapter on primitive accumulation in Capital Volume I. (For Marx the genesis of a new mode of production as distinct from its dynamics or history is not an object of theory.) Parsons does not tell us how evolutionary universals appear except that they are "likely to be hit upon by various systems operating under different conditions" (STMS: 491).

One additional point. It is possible that evolutionary universals may not actually appear in the order given, for example money and markets may appear before cultural legitimation, democratic association may appear before bureaucratic organization. In his discussion of the Greek polis Parsons appears to want to deny this. In practice, the "premature" appearance of an evolutionary universal can be incorporated by arguing that their particular effectiveness in promoting adaptive capacity is dependent on the presence of prior evolutionary universals. (There are parallels here with Smelser's value added logic which is not a chronological statement about the appearance of stages themselves but of their effective contribution to the development of collective behavior). For Marx, there is similar argument. Roman law, and primitive accumulation all appeared before the advent of feudalism, but, it might be maintained, could not bring about capitalism before the rise and decline of feudalism.

### III. The Periodization of History

If we treat the evolutionary universals as a way of periodizing history, how do we reconcile them with Parsons' other ways of distinguishing between societies, namely through values and levels of social differentiation? One possibility would be to allocate each criterion to a particular subsystem, as is done to some extent in his book on the evolution of societies. But in that scheme the notion of evolutionary universals appear to drop out and emphasis is laid on value generalization rather than different types of value system. Let us stay with our three criteria and see how they may be logically, if not empirically, reconciled.

We must first ask what meaning we may attribute to the evolutionary universal in this attempt at periodizing history. Based on our earlier discussions, one possibility is that they correspond to the dominant institutions at any particular stage of development. Thus at one stage, stratification determines the direction of development. At the next stage it is cultural legitimation and so forth. Second, the dominant institution or evolutionary universal would also carry or embody the dominant values. Third the dominance of a particular institution would impose certain constraints on the form of social structure with which it would be compatible. Thus a particular value system would imply a particular dominant institution (evolutionary universal) which in turn would define a range of possible social structures. The movement of a society between these social structures would be in some sense determined by the evolutionary universal itself and take place through a process of social differentiation. For example, the separation of ownership and control or more generally the family from the firm represents the development of a society within a single dominant value system in which possibly generalized universalistic norms happen to be the evolutionary universal. (Since we are reconstructing and combining disparate strands of Parsons' work, we should not be surprised to discover some empirical inconsistencies).

How, under such a scheme, would Parsons understand the transition between different types of society? Would a new evolutionary universal appear through immaculate conception, the development of "productive forces", the inevitable process of social differentiation or through a change in values? If it is a combination of all these elements,

as Parsons might want to argue, then which is the dominant force which asserts itself above all others?

IV. Hierarchy of Control and Hierarchy of Conditioning

If there is one constant theme through Parsons' writing it is the tension he highlights between materialism and idealism and the priority within this dualism he accords values. This position reaches a final expression in his two hierarchies: control (reflecting the idealistic pole in his thought) and conditioning (reflecting his materialist pole) in which the former is somehow dominant. These hierarchies are seen in cybernetic terms in which those systems high in information are higher than those systems high in energy. In practice this is an argument for the dominance of the cultural system (in the systems of action), of the latency subsystem (in the functional subsystems), and of values (in the social structural categories).

Action system	Functional Subsystem	Structural Categories	Hierarchies	
			Control	Conditioning
Cultural System	L	values		
Social System	I	norms		
Personality System	G	collectivities		
Behavioral Organism	A	roles		

Those systems, functions, etc. high in the cybernetic hierarchy determine the lower levels quite broadly, that is there is a wide range of roles which are compatible with a given value system. On the other hand the lower levels "determine" the higher levels narrowly. Given a role then the possible range of values with which it is compatible is relatively narrow. Thus changes lower in the hierarchy are less likely to effect changes higher in the hierarchy whereas changes at the higher levels will necessarily give rise to changes lower down. Thus the behavioural organism, adaptive sector and roles some how condition or set limits upon the control of, for example, the cultural system, latency sector and values. (Two brief descriptions of these cybernetic hierarchies are to be found in Bellah's Beyond Belief, pp. 9-11 and SEV: 113-5.)

V. Cultural Theories of Social Change

What this does suggest, is that in seeking the source of transformation of societies we should look to the transformation of the value system or the system of which it is a part, namely the cultural system. (In outlining a Parsonsian theory of social revolution, Tiryakian in S.2 Klausrerled)-The Study of Total Societies, argues that the crucial source of radical change is L sector of the L subsystem--non-institutional religion.) Thus we could look upon the emergence of new evolutionary universals as an expression of changes in the cultural system, rather than the other way round. But has Parsons a notion of cultural change or of cultural dynamics? Certainly in the "evolutionary universals" article he does not refer to changes in the cultural system as the guiding mechanism. Indeed his earlier characterization of the value systems in terms of pattern variables has dropped out of sight. In The Structure of Social Action, Parsons writes, "ideas may be said to be constant data for the theory of action in the same methodological sense as are physical data. They are not, as such, variables of the action system" (p. 758). Furthermore Parsons seems to preclude the possibility of ex-

amining the dynamics and transformation of the cultural system in the following passage, "The cultural systems are distinguished from both the others in that they are both non-spatial and atemporal. They consist, as Professor Whitehead says, of eternal objects, in the strict sense of the term eternal, of objects not of indefinite duration but to which the category of time is not applicable. They are not involved in 'process'". (SSA: 763). So then how do we understand their change?

One possibility to which Parsons refers in The Social System is to consider the interaction amongst the elements of the cultural system, namely the value system, expressive symbol systems (e.g. art) and belief systems (e.g. science). Autonomous developments in each one of these elements lead to changes in the other. Thus, the rise or advancement of science as an autonomous movement leads to changes in art and dominant values concerning the good society, etc. But then the movement of science or any of the other elements has itself to be explained. While Parsons in SSA castigates the radical rationalist positivism for their cumulative view of change, there are definite suggestions that his own views of changes in the cultural system can be seen in the same terms of accumulation and gradual growth. (Even SSA itself seems to point in that direction--autonomous developments in sociology as expressed in the convergence of Durkheim, Weber, Pareto and Marshall.) Thus Parsons does talk about the imminent movement of value system towards rationalization (e.g. SSA: 567, SS: 495 -503) or toward systemization and logical closure. He also talks about the importance of value generalization (see, for example, SMS: 14-15 and in his essay on voting Parsons shows how the process of value generalization operates to cement emergent cleavages which develop within a modern society, PSS: 221-9). Values become more general and diffuse as societies differentiate and they also become detached from the bearers of those values (SEV: 115). In his introduction to Weber's Sociology of Religion, Parsons argues against Weber's views of the radical transformation of a cultural system through the prophetic break through (the appearance of a charismatic leader). "Such prophetic breaks as he describes have probably occurred, but he seems to have a theoretical bias [the 'trait atomism' of Weber's ideal types] toward highlighting them, to the neglect of the possibility of more gradual and cumulative processes of change" (STMS: 76). Parsons tends to stress more gradual and evolutionary changes.

But by talking about graduals it changes, Parsons blurs the possibility of distinguishing between changes within a given society (defined by a particular value system) and changes from one society to another (from one value system to another). That is he refuses to distinguish between a dynamics of value systems and their diachronics. To periodize history we require elements which enable us to define qualitatively different value systems. At the same time we must understand how and to what extent there are changes within a given value system.

However, it is my belief that one cannot have a dynamics of a value system without a theory of the reproduction of a value system (or cultural system). To understand how values change, we must also understand how they are maintained and seek in the conditions for their maintenance also the seeds of their change. This Parsons does not do. While he states that the conditions for stable interaction lie in the existence of a shared value system he does not speak either to the origin of that value system or how it is maintained. (He only talks at any length about the way it is institutionalized and internalized in the social systems and personality system respectively, but not the way these latter two systems are also the conditions for its maintenance.

A theory of social change would then postulate as its initial premise the necessary existence of a shared value system. Throughout the following the relationship between value and cultural system is left open.) A set of elements should be defined out of which a set of possible value systems could be constructed, such as the pattern variables.

Then we must ask what are the conditions for the reproduction of a given value system (cultural system). This might involve the delineation of particular sets of activities and interaction. For different value systems we would arrive at different sets of activities and interaction and therefore different social structures. We would also have to develop some dynamics of the value system, such as the directional tendency towards rationalization, closure etc. and perhaps indicate how this comes into conflict with the conditions for its reproduction. Then we would have to examine the transition from one value system and social structure to another. Weber's notion of charismatic breakthrough may be of some use. Finally we must reintroduce individuals as bearers of culture and collectivities as agents of change in that culture. We have to see individuals as symbol manipulators rather than agents of production. (Note Habermas wants both.)

## VI. Summary Set of Questions

### A. Types of Value System Based on a Dominant Value System.

What is a value system? What are its elements? What is the structure of the combination of these elements? What are its dynamics? What are the conditions of its reproduction? Or does it just hang out there and persist, (like the Californian fog)?

### B. Reproduction/Persistence of Particular types of Society.

1. Functional Prerequisites--AGIL. What are they? Are they in fact conditions for the reproduction of sets of social relations? How do they relate to the inertia principle?

2. Hierarchy of Control and Conditioning. In the derivation of the necessity for a common value system, in SSA, we met AGIL in an embryonic form. The derivation was basically from bottom up starting from materialist premises and arriving at the hierarchy of conditioning. How does this square with the hierarchy of control and that values are dominant? Should functional prerequisites be derived from the conditions of reproduction of a particular value system? Or from the needs for reproducing a particular economy? The ambiguity in the derivation and subsequent development is left unresolved by insisting on both a hierarchy of conditioning and control. What is the precise relationship between the two?

3. Internalization and institutionalization ensure that actors are motivated to conform with the activities defined by the functional prerequisites. But what is the psychology associated with internalization? Is it any more than saying that since societies persist people must do what they are "expected" to do? The personality system remains a black box. Is there a reason for this?

### C. Determination in the last instance by values.

1. This notion constitutes a dominant institution which both carries dominant values (in its associated activities) and is an evolutionary universal defining the direction of development of a society. Is this an acceptable, conceivable, logically consistent interpretation of the hierarchy of control?

2. In this way a social structure is constructed (and therefore a theory developed) out of dominant values and functional prerequisites. For any given dominant value system there are a number of possible social structures. Can we look upon social dif-



ferentiation as being the key distinguishing feature among these social structures?

#### D. Dynamics

1. Why does Parsons not develop a theory concerning the ways in which a systematic discrepancy emerges between the personality system and social system? Why does he not develop theoretically what is implicit in many of his empirical essays?
2. Similarly why does Parsons not develop a theory of the systematic production of imbalances between inputs and outputs in the AGIL scheme? How are inputs transformed into outputs? Under what conditions do disequilibria occur? How are they produced? How is equilibrium restored? Under what conditions is it restored? What happens if it is not restored? How do we know whether there is an imbalance in the first place?
3. How does Parsons in AGIL scheme understand the transition between social structures? How does he understand the movement from quantitative to qualitative change? Is there a place for that distinction in any of his theories?
4. Is there a place for contradiction in his theory? Where might it appear? In what sense is there a notion of a process sowing the seeds of its own destruction?
5. What is the relationship between a theory of change and theory of persistence in Parsons scheme? Are they separate and distinct? Is change to be seen as the absence of consensus or do both take place at the same time. Why does he adopt either position?

#### E. Diachronics

1. Has Parsons any notion of collapse of a social system? What happens when one of the AGIL functions is not fulfilled? What happens when there is value dissensus? Does he ever consider such societies? Do societies ever collapse for Parsons? Or crash? Without such examples are his theories any more than tautologies, but perhaps useful ones?
2. How are we to tie up the different arguments Parsons makes in connection with the transition from one type of society to another, in particular, the pattern variables, the popping out of different AGIL subsystems as a process of differentiation, the argument about evolutionary universals and the notions that each subsystem of a society has its own dynamics (A-adaptive upgrading, G-social differentiation, I-inclusion and L-value generalization)?

#### F. Agents of Change

What are these? How do we actually get from one state to the next? How is history made? By the movement of values? By the participation of individuals? What notions of human intervention does Parsons have? Any notion of collectivities effecting change? What are we to make of his notion of voluntarism? Does it merely refer to the relative importance of values over material conditions and the implication of a cybernetic imagery of individuals actively adapting to the environment through information processing, as some of his interpreters have suggested (Bellah and Alexander)? What is the place for real thinking, sensuous, sexual, etc. men and women?

#### G. Note on General Theory and Historicism

I have frequently maintained that a general theory of social change is not possible, or necessarily inadequate and that the attempt to construct such a theory is misguided.

What about a general theory of persistence? For reasons which I shall briefly allude to in a second, I think that is equally erroneous. But what are we to make of The Social System? If it is not a general theory what is it? I would suggest that it represents empirical generalizations concerning the conditions for stable interaction at the most general level; that we would only have a theory of social persistence if the principles are applied to particular and concrete social systems. That we can only have theories about "real" social systems and not of social systems in general. Why? This is difficult, but the argument would rest on the relationship between a general theory and a teleological view of history, (history has a purpose unto itself, an inevitable unfolding of some value or essence). A general theory would tend to see the present as the culmination of the past and have little notion of the future. This tends to be true of Parsons' systems which imposes categories developed for modern societies (AGIL) and sees past societies in such terms as evolving the differentiated subsystems. And we have little notion of what comes next when the subsystems have differentiated out. Moreover, a theory that is equally applicable to all societies from the most "primitive" to the most "modern" would be so general as to be of little explanatory power by itself in any particular instance or society. All we can possibly develop are empirical generalizations and some general concepts to help us study and understand a particular society or social system. More of this later.

## VII - AN OVERVIEW OF MARX

No matter who they may be, everyone has their own Marx. Whether they have read him or not, all have their own notion of what Marx wrote and an interpretation which corresponds to their station in life. There is no longer a pristine Marx. We cannot ignore the century of debate that has surrounded his work. We cannot return to an original Marx and begin afresh. We are definitely going to adopt a particular interpretation of Marx. We are not going to engage in a reconstruction of his entire works, as we did with Parsons. On the contrary we will be examining one particular perspective, which has come to be known as "French structuralism". This interpretation regards Capital as the most important of Marx's texts. In it we find the closest approximation to Marx's method, philosophy, science and politics. Althusser proposes to establish an "epistemological" break between Marx's early writing and his later writings; between Marx's treatment of capitalism and that of the classical economists such as Smith, Ricardo and Proudhon. The break argues Althusser constitutes the movement from ideology to science. Although certain Hegelian elements are carried over into the three volumes of Capital and although Marx continues to use certain terms of the bourgeois political economists, this should not be taken as a sign of continuity between Marx and those to whom he was responding. Rather that continuity reflects the necessity of adopting some terrain in which to carry out the discourse and polemic and to establish the differences which separate him from his predecessors. It is only later, when the focus of attention is directed to Marx's work itself, that we can sort out the "scientific elements" from the "pre-scientific" elements and remove some of the misleading statements and vocabulary which obscure the specificity of Marx's method. Althusser goes even further in Reading Capital, suggesting that Marx himself was not entirely conscious of his own "immense theoretical revolution." Marx provided answers to questions he did not even pose and it is necessary now to try and ferret out the nature of these questions which define the problematic of Marx's work.

This is all by way of background and can be found elaborated in Althusser's For Marx and in the first part of Reading Capital. These issues will not directly concern us in our attempt to constitute a Marxist theory of social change, a theory which will ultimately provide some guidelines to an understanding of what is possible in any given conjuncture. One does not have to be an empiricist to acknowledge that Marx did in fact make certain prognoses about the development of capitalism. As Lukacs wrote:

Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx's individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious "orthodox" Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx's theses in toto --without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the "belief" in this or that thesis, not the exegesis of a "sacred" book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method. (History and Class Consciousness, p. 1)

Nonetheless it is still important to use and develop Marxist method to respond to definite "empirical" issues pertaining to the movement of capitalism. I propose to list eight. First, is the ability of capitalism to absorb or repel revolutionary movements and change. It becomes important to examine what happens to socialist and communist parties when they get into power, e.g. Chile, Sweden, Soviet Union. Why was Marx wrong when he said that "universal suffrage would unchain class struggle"? We should

try and understand the progressive incorporation of trade union movements as defenders of capitalism, Etc. Second, we have to understand the increases in the standard of living of the working classes of many capitalist countries. Are we to understand this in terms of class struggle or in terms of concessions or both? Third, we have to understand the dynamics of the development of the social division of labor, the rise of middle classes, service classes, state workers and so forth. In the terms of bourgeois sociology we need to develop a theory of changes in the occupational structure. Fourth, we must try to understand how the dominant classes manage to obtain the active consent of large sections of the dominated classes, and the relationship between force and consent in capitalist society. Fifth, we must understand the persistence of divisions based on such categories as race and sex. Sixth, how is it that capitalists continue to fight and compete with one another and yet capitalist hegemony is preserved? Seventh, whereas the experience of the working class has become increasingly homogeneous both at work and in leisure and work itself has become increasingly "degraded", class consciousness does not appear to have developed commensurately in most countries of advanced capitalism. Why? Eighth, nationalism continues to be a force over which Marxism has stalled. How are we to explain its continuing hold despite the internationalization of capital? (There are also a whole series of questions related to imperialism apart from the national question.)

In our discussion of Marx we will draw upon the same distinctions and categories we applied to Parsons' work, viz. between analytical and concrete; general and particular; theory of social structure; historicist and structuralist positions; deductive and inductive approaches; different notions of causality; determination in the last instance and determination within limits; dynamics and diachronics; problems of transition and periodization of history. We will first discuss the "preface" and the "introduction" to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (Grundrisse) and then the German Ideology.

### I: The Preface

Marx refers to the preface to The Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, as the "general result which I arrived at and which once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies" (Tucker, p. 4). It is the only place where Marx summarises his method and we shall dwell upon it at some length, posing six questions, namely, the nature of the concepts used, where the concepts come from and their relation to "reality", the nature of society, the place of individuals in the scheme, how Marx constitutes history and finally the epistemological status of the "preface". (a) The Nature of the Concepts/Marx introduces a number of concepts into the preface, namely, forces of production, relations of production, mode of production, etc. He introduces them as general concepts, that is they never exist as such but can be applied to all societies. In their particular or concrete manifestation they allow us to talk about particular societies, such as capitalism, feudalism, etc. They are the basic ingredients in any theory of any particular society. In other words they are general concepts but applied to particular societies. For example, a mode of production is the definite way of transforming nature, and so we have the capitalist mode of production, the feudal mode of production, etc. (These two levels find their parallel in Parsons who has the AGIL functional problems, role expectations, social system etc. all of which are to be used to understand particular social systems, such as the family, "modern society" or whatever. Whereas Marx actually uses his general concepts to develop a theory of a particular society, viz. capitalism, it is more doubtful whether Parsons has in fact developed any such particular theories.)

Thus when we speak of production, we always have in mind production at a definite stage of social development, production by individuals in a society.... All periods of production, however, have certain features in common: they have certain common categories. Production in general is an abstraction, but a sensible abstraction in so far as it actually emphasizes and defines the common aspects and thus avoids repetition. Yet this general concept, or the common aspect which has been brought to light by comparison, is itself a multifarious compound comprising divergent categories. Some elements are found in all epochs, others are common to a few epochs. The most modern periods and most ancient period will have certain categories in common. Production without them is inconceivable. But although the most highly developed languages have laws and categories in common with the most primitive languages, it is precisely their divergence from these general and common features which constitutes their development. It is necessary to distinguish those definitions which apply to production in general, in order not to overlook the essential differences existing despite the unity that follows from the very fact that the subject, mankind, and the object, nature, are the same. For instance, on failure to perceive this fact depends the entire wisdom of modern economists who prove the eternity and harmony of existing social relations... ("Introductions" pp. 189-90, to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, International Publishers)

To recapitulate: there are categories which are common to all stages of production and are established by reasoning as general categories; the so-called general conditions of all and any production, however are nothing but abstract conceptions which do not define any of the actual historical stages of production. (Introduction, p. 193)

Can one argue that the eternal and harmonious nature of the social relations of existing modern society, as described by Parsons, is in part due to his failure to distinguish between general concepts and the particular way they relate to one another in different societies?

(b) The Production of Concepts Where do Marx's concepts come from? How does he "discover" the forces of production, mode of production, etc? Where does Parsons discover his AGIL scheme, the pattern variables, etc? In the passages just cited, Marx make two references to the "production" of concepts, namely, "this general concept, or the common aspect which has been brought to light by comparison..." (p. 190) and general categories are "established by reasoning". In other words, both comparison and reasoning are involved in the derivation of general concepts--a process we might call "induction."

If one were to take population as the point of departure, it would be a very vague notion of a complex whole and through closer definition one would arrive analytically at increasingly simple concepts; from imaginary concrete terms one would move to more and more tenuous abstractions until one reached the most simple definitions. From there it would be necessary to make the journey again in the opposite direction until one arrived once more at the concept of population, which is this time not a vague notion of a whole, but a totality comprising many determinations and relations.

The first course is the historical one taken by political economy at its inception. The seventeenth-century economists, for example, always took as their starting point the living organism, the population, the nation, the State, several States, etc., but analysis led them always in the end to the discovery of a few decisive abstract, general relations, such as division of labor, money and value. When these separate factors were more or less clearly deduced and established, economic systems were evolved which from simple concepts, such as labour, division of labour, demand, exchange value, advanced to categories like State, international exchange and world market. The latter is obviously the correct scientific method...The first procedure attenuates meaningful images to abstract definitions, the second leads from abstract definitions by way of reasoning to the reproduction of the concrete situation. (Introduction, p. 206)

Thus, two processes are involved, namely an inductive process in which "society" or "societies" as they are directly experienced are reduced to "simple analytical categories"; these are then recombined through "deductive" reasoning until we have reconstructed our specific and concrete societies from whence we began. However, by reconstructing "social formations" in this way, we will have developed a theory of their dynamics, and of their reproduction, that is we will have learnt a great deal more about that society--its present, past and future than we knew before. Note, Marx refers to the deductive process as the correct scientific method.

So far we have argued that the Marx's "method" involves a movement from the concrete to the abstract and thence to the reconstruction of the concrete out of the abstract. But this "method" is as true of bourgeois political economists as it is true of Marx. What then differentiates Marx's "science" from the "ideology" of "classical" political economy? We can tackle this question by first examining Marx's view of the difference between the "vulgar" economists and the "classical" economists.

Vulgar economy actually does no more than interpret, systematise and defend in doctrinaire fashion the conceptions of agents of bourgeois production who are entrapped in bourgeois production relations. It should not astonish us, then, that vulgar economy feels particularly at home in the estranged outward appearances of economic relations in which these prima facie absurd and perfect contradictions appear and that these relations seem the more self-evident the more their internal relationships are concealed from it, although they are understandable to the popular mind. But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided. Thus vulgar economy has not the slightest suspicion that the trinity which it takes as its point of departure, namely land-rent, capital-interest, labor-wage or the price of labour, are prima facie three impossible combinations. (Capital, Vol. 3, p. 817)

The philistine's and vulgar economist's way of looking at things stems... from the fact that it is only the direct form of manifestation of relations that is reflected in their brains and not their inner connection. (Marx to Engels, 27 June, 1867)

Once and for all I may here state, that by classical Political Economy, I understand that economy, which, since the time of W. Petty, has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society, in contradistinction to vulgar economy, which deals with appearances only, ruminates without ceasing on the materials long since provided by scientific economy, and there seeks plausible explanations of the most obtrusive phenomena,

for bourgeois daily use, but for the rest, confines itself to systematising in a pedantic way, and proclaiming for everlasting truths, the trite ideas held by the self-complacent bourgeoisie with regard to their own world, to them the best of all possible worlds. (Capital, Vol. I, p. 81)

What is clear from these excerpts is that one component of the distinction between science and ideology is the distinction between appearance and reality. Vulgar economy rests on the use of "natural" categories, that is those categories or concepts which are embodied in the immediate, everyday experience of capitalists. (What about laborers-- is their day-to-day experience the same as that of capitalists? Are profit, interest, rent, etc. as immediate and obvious to the exploited as they are to the exploiter? Under what conditions might the "lived experience" of one class diverge/converge with that of another class?)

Therefore, a necessary condition for a "theory" to be science is that it explains appearances. That Einsteinian relativity theory is a science relative to Newtonian theory because it explains Newtonian theory, just as Copernican theory of the universe is a science relative to Ptolomeic system because the former explains why we experience the sun moving around the earth etc., i.e. explains appearances as well as delineating the "real" movement of heavenly bodies.

It is not our intention to consider, here, the way in which the laws, imminent in capitalist production, manifest themselves in the movements of individual masses of capital, where they assert themselves as coercive laws of competition, and are brought home to the mind and consciousness of the individual capitalist as the directing motives of his operations. But this much is clear; a scientific analysis of competition is not possible, before we have a conception of the inner nature of capital, just as the apparent motion of the heavenly bodies are not intelligible to any but him, who, is acquainted with their real motions, motions which are not directly perceptible by the senses... (Capital, Vol. I, p. 316)

Or as Geras puts it, in Capital Marx "...analyses the mechanisms by which capitalist society necessarily appears to its agents as something other than it really is" (Geras in Blackburn (ed.) Ideology in Social Science, p. 286).

But Science does more than explain ideology, it also transforms ideology. Ideology provides the raw material, the template out of or upon which "science" is constituted. The transformation of ideology into science is what Althusser calls "theoretical practice." In the terms of our earlier discussion "theoretical practice" involves moving from one set of abstractions (ideology) to another set of abstractions (science). Thus, for example, relative to Marx's theory classical political economy is ideology, since by "working upon" such concepts as profit, interest, rent, labour Marx "discovered" or produced the concepts of "labour power" and "surplus value".

Marx describes this process of theoretical practice in contrast to the Hegelian "practice" as follows:

To consciousness, therefore, the evolution of categories appears as the actual process of production--which unfortunately is given an impulse from outside--whose result is the world; and this (which is however again a tautological expression) is true in so far as the concrete totality regarded as a conceptual totality, as a mental fact, is indeed a product of thinking, of

comprehension; but it is by no means a product of the idea which evolves spontaneously and whose thinking proceeds outside and above perception and imagination, but is the result of the assimilation and transformation of perceptions and images into concepts. The totality as a conceptual entity seen by the intellect is a product of the thinking intellect which assimilates the world in the only way open to it, a way which differs from the artistic, religious and practically intelligent assimilation of this world. (Introduction, p. 207)

In other words theoretical practice, or Marx's scientific method takes "ideological" perceptions and images as raw material and transforms them into concepts of a "scientific" nature. But, this theoretical practice does not in some sense determine the concrete but on the contrary takes place under definite conditions which set limits on that practice. "The concrete subject remains outside the intellect and independent of it-- that is so long as the intellect adopts a purely speculative, purely theoretical attitude. The subject, society, must always be envisaged therefore as the pre-condition of comprehension even when the theoretical method is employed" (Introduction, p. 207).

What this means is that the concepts of "science" do not evolve "spontaneously" but are conditioned by the very society in which theoretical practice occurs. Even such a concept as labour is a historical concept in the sense that it first appears under capitalism.

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

Or more generally:

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

In other words just as Parsons' AGIL scheme is an expression of the conditions of modern society, so notions such as exploitation, surplus value, labor power and so on are expressions of the conditions of capitalism. In both cases, the theorists argue that the general categories of their systems are nevertheless applicable to all periods of history. But there is a difference. For Marx the relationship among the concepts varies according to the period whereas for Parsons this variation is either absent or at best implicit. Under capitalism capital is the central category whereas under feudalism landed property is the decisive factor.

It would be inexpedient and wrong therefore to present the economic categories successively in the order in which they have played the dominant role in history. On the contrary, their order of succession is determined by their mutual relation in modern bourgeois society and this is quite the reverse of what appears to be natural to them or in accordance with the sequence of his-



torical development. The point at issue is not the role that various economic relations have played in the succession of various social formations appearing in the course of history; even less is it their sequence "as concepts" but their position within bourgeois society. (Introduction, p. 213)

In other words for each "mode of production" we have to specify both the form and the relationship among the various "instances" (political, ideological and economic). The various general concepts have to be specified anew for each mode of production. What is important here is not the change from landed property to capital but rather to understand the significance and place of the landed property or capital among the other instances of the corresponding modes of production.

Thus Marx criticises Proudhon for taking a historicist position, that is, looking at a society at any particular moment as a stage of some general or universal development. According to such a view the various parts of a society will be viewed in terms of past stages or future stages, the latter assuming increasing importance at the expense of the former. In like manner Braverman regards the assembly line as representative of prototypical capitalist relations whereas craft work is a remnant of an earlier stage to be superceded. Arenas which capitalist relations have not yet invaded are seen to be pockets of resistance which will necessarily succumb to commodification, e.g. the family. Such arenas are viewed as "cultural lags" rather than as functional or necessary for the reproduction of the dominant mode of production.

The production relations of every society form a whole. M. Proudhon considers economic relations as so many social phases, engendering one another, resulting one from the other like the antithesis from the thesis, and realizing in their logical sequence the impersonal reason of humanity.

The only drawback to this method is that when he comes to examine a single one of these phases, M. Proudhon cannot explain it without having recourse to all other relations of society; which relations, however, he has not yet made his dialectic movement engender. When, after that, M. Proudhon, by means of pure reason, proceeds to give birth to these other phases, he treats them as if they were new-born babes. He forgets that they are of the same age as the first...

In constructing the edifice of an ideological system by means of the categories of political economy, the limbs of the social system are dislocated. The different limbs of society are converted into so many separate societies, following one upon the other. How, indeed, could the single logical formula of movement, of sequence, of time, explain the structure of society, in which all relations coexist simultaneously and support one another? (Poverty of Philosophy, pp. 110-11)

We have here, then, a notion of a structuralist totality in which the different sectors or parts are seen in terms of their mutual relationship rather than in terms of emergent and decaying societies.

In this digression we have so far suggested that Marx's concepts are an expression of the social relations of capitalism but that they nonetheless have validity for all modes of production. At the same time the manner of their combination and their form are determined by the specific mode of production in which they appear.

We return now to the question of what distinguished science from ideology. In the case of the experimental science, physics, chemistry, astronomy etc., the criterion which defines theoretical practice rest on observations and prediction. However, what is it in the case of the social sciences, or Marx or historical materialism?

We have learnt that Marx not only explained capitalism but also why classical political economists developed the theories they did. But how do we compare Marx's theory with some alternative theory that also explains classical political economy but not Marx's theory? What happens if classical political economy can in turn explain Marx's theory, e.g. as evolving out of the equally partial view of the proletariat? Is it not strange that the differences between classical political economy or indeed contemporary neo-classical theory differs from Marx in that what the one regards to be ideology the other regards as science!

Two answers are definitely unsatisfactory. The first, is that of empirical validation. This rests on certain criteria of predictability measured against some notion of objective facts. This makes the untenable assumptions that facts themselves are somehow given, and that different classes can come to an agreement on the relative accuracy of prediction of different theories. In practice facts are not given but produced, and their production is itself a subject of struggle.

Under capitalism the ruling facts are preeminently the facts of the ruling class. Agreement on facts therefore is an expression of the dominance of the ruling class and not the predictability of different theories. Second it is tempting to argue that the two theories, classical and Marxist political economy, are expressions of the interests or experience of different classes. Because it is the rising class (assumption) the theories corresponding to the proletariat constitute science. While certain interpretations have indeed taken this position it does not find much support in Marx's own work. For, to Marx, concepts such as exploitation, surplus value and so forth were hidden to all agents of production. The appearances and consciousness produced by the capitalist mode of production applied to all classes. (See, for example, the section on fetishism, in Capital, Vol. 1, pp. 71-83); the source of profit, Vol. 3, Chapter 9 and the trinity formula, Vol. 3, Chapter 48.) Here, I cannot answer the question of the sufficient conditions of the specificity of Marx's political economy as science and the criteria which define the validity of Marx's theoretical practice. Perhaps when we've read more of Marx we may come up with something.

The final issue in this section concerns an equally elusive issue, namely the relationship of the concepts we have constructed, or Marx discovered, such as labor power and surplus value, and the concrete real. Marx writes,

...whereas the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is simply the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete mental category...The totality as a conceptual entity seen by the intellect is a product of the thinking intellect which assimilates the world in the only way open to it, a way which differs from the artistic, religious and practically intelligent assimilation of this world...(Introduction, pp. 206-7).

What does Marx mean by "assimilate"? At this point all I can say is that the concepts Marx develops and their combinations are used to help us understand the concrete real and leave open the questions of how we know whether we have gained any understanding. (Such notions that "the historical process"(?) or political practice provide the "proof" of theories need considerable refinement and specification.)

(c) What is a society?

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces...(Tucker, p. 4)

What are these relations that are "indispensible" and "independent of one's will"? What do these terms mean?

That the relations into which people enter are "indispensible" suggests that they cannot choose this or that society to live by, but rather in order to survive they have to take what is available. Under capitalism, for example, if capitalists are to survive as capitalists they must exploit, accumulate and compete. Equally for their survival workers have no alternative but to sell their labor power to some capitalist or other. Where for Parsons it is not clear why men and women must enter into social relations, for Marx this is necessary precondition of the production of life.

What is society whatever its form may be? The product of men's reciprocal action. Are men free to choose this or that form of society? By no means. Assume a particular state of development in the productive faculties of man and you will get a particular form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce and consumption, and you will have a corresponding constitution, a corresponding organization of the family, of orders or of classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society. Assume a particular civil society and you will get particular political conditions which are only the official expression of civil society...It is superfluous to add that men are not free to choose their productive forces--which are the basis of all history--for every productive force is an acquired force, the product of former activity. The productive forces are therefore the result of practical human energy; but this energy is itself conditioned by the circumstances in which men find themselves, by the productive already acquired, by the social form which exists before they do, which they do not create, which is the product of the preceding generation...(Marx to Annenkov, December 28, 1846)

Not only can people not choose the relations into which they enter with one another, but they cannot mold these relations to suit their own interests. As individuals they cannot change those relations and in this sense the latter are "independent of their will". Capitalists as individuals cannot alter the relations of competition into which they must enter, just as workers cannot individually modify the relations they enter into with one another or with capitalists. Attempts to change those relations by an individual and possibly even a group of individuals has consequences beyond the control of those individuals.

In the second place, however, history is made in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each again has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus, there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant--the historical event. This may again itself be viewed as the product of a power which works as a whole, unconsciously and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed. Thus past history proceeds in the manner of a natural process and is essentially subject to the same laws of motion. But from the fact that individual wills--of which each desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and external, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general)--do not attain what they want,

but are merged into a collective mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that their value is equal to zero. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this degree involved in it.

(Engels to Bloch, September 21-22, 1890)

We note here how the resultant of individual actions is specified as the movement of a particular society and not as some notion of social order as it is in the case of Parsons. The action of individual capitalists competing with one another and struggling with individual or collectively organized labor gives rise to a very definite movement, in Marx's case the falling rate of profit and all that goes along with it as further consequences. Though Parsons does in fact sometimes talk of a "moving equilibrium", he never specifies the form that movement may take; rather he is concerned with a broader and diffuse state of "cohesion". The coexistence of change and stability is never spelled out by Parsons as it is by Marx.

Because these relations are "indispensable and independent of their will" we can talk about them without reference to the concrete individuals who carry them. More specifically, at least under capitalism and feudalism (it is a moot point whether one could say the same for communism), we can examine the question of the reproduction of these sets of social relations as sets of relations independently of the concrete capitalists, laborers, lords, serfs, etc., who "support" them. Though, as we shall see, this only provides an initial basis for our study of social change.

(d) Who are the individuals who enter these social relations?

For Marx these individuals are real, concrete individuals--breathing, talking, thinking, sensuous, sexual, etc. individuals. They are not abstract "man"; some imaginary human essence or some spiritual concept.

...The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life process of definite individuals, but of individuals not as they appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e., as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will...This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists. (German Ideology, Tucker, p. 118-9)

Thus it is real, corporeal men and women who make history and not some abstraction "man". However these real men and women do not "make history just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (18th. Brumaire, Tucker, p. 437)

One might note in passing that this is far from a technologically deterministic view of history. It is men and women who make history not forces of production or relations of production. To be sure "the handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist", (Poverty of Philosophy, p. 109),

but here the different forces of production are conceived of as social relations; the particular relations into which men and women enter as they transform nature with this or that mill.

(e) What is history?

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the Preface does Marx refer specifically to class struggle. The nearest he gets is: "With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic--- in short ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" (Tucker p. 5). Class struggle has as its object the transformation of the economic conditions of production. Furthermore, the form such struggle assumes is conditioned by the particular ideological, legal and political relations. Once we have specified the specific form of the relations into which men and women enter, those relations which are "indispensable and independent of their will", and further the conditions for their reproduction, we will turn our attention to their transformation through the struggles they engender.

But how do we understand history? What does it mean to talk of "transformations"? Marx periodizes history into a succession of "ways of transforming nature", ways or modes of production. "In broad outline Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society" (Tucker, p. 5).

(f) The Status of the Preface in Marx's Work

What are we to make of the passage which states:

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or---what is but a legal expression for the same thing---with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. (Tucker, p. 4)

Is this a hypothesis, a prior teleology, a general theory (meta theory?), a methodological postulate or an empirical generalization? In our discussion, we dismissed Lenin's view that it is a hypothesis. There was not a great deal of support for the view that it was a prior teleology, viz. the mission of history was to ensure the supercession of capitalism in this manner. There was some support for the view that it was a methodological postulate, that it furnished a framework and concepts with which to examine history. That in seeking to explain the transformation of societies one should examine the relationship between the forces and relations of production.

The most interesting discussion revolved around whether or not it was a general theory of history or not. I made two arguments here, first, that this was not what Marx thought it was and second, that a general theory of history is not possible. Apart from the "preface" Marx always refers to the relations between his general concepts as they are found in definite, concrete societies. He always applies his general concepts to particular periods, or rather particular modes of production to develop particular

theories. In practice, therefore, Marx only has particular theories, indeed only one theory--a theory of capitalism.

But why might one argue against the possibility of general theories? First, to understand the development of the Asiatic, ancient modes of production, the passage from feudalism to capitalism and then to treat the development of the capitalist mode of production itself and its supersession with a single general theory would imply that it was so general as to be useless or tautological. It would explain little. Second, such a general theory would be ahistorical in the sense that it would apply equally to all periods, past, present and future. It would in that sense be supra-historical. Marx critiqued Hegel for developing such a "transcendental" theory. Third, a general theory would necessarily use general concepts as applicable to all history. But as we suggested at the beginning of this discussion of the "preface" general concepts do not exist as such, but only in particular concrete forms. Thus, for example, property is a general concept but its manifestation takes on radically different forms in different periods.

Finally, the last category in M. Proudhon's system is constituted by property. In the real world, on the other hand, the division of labour and all M. Proudhon's other categories are social relations forming in their entirety what is today known as property; outside these relations bourgeois property is nothing but a metaphysical or juristic illusion. The property of a different epoch, feudal property, develops in a series of entirely different social relations. M. Proudhon, by establishing property as an independent relation, commits more than a mistake in method: he clearly shows that he has not grasped the bond which holds together all forms of bourgeois production, that he has not understood the historical and transitory character of the forms of production in a particular epoch...Thus, M. Proudhon, mainly because he lacks the historical knowledge, has not perceived that as men develop their productive faculties, that is, as they live, they develop certain relations with one another and that the nature of these relations must necessarily change with the change and growth of the productive faculties. He has not perceived that economic categories are only abstract expressions of these actual relations and only remain true while these relations exist. He therefore falls into the error of the bourgeois economists, who regard these economic categories as eternal and not as historical laws which are only laws for a particular historical development, for a definite development of the productive forces. Instead, therefore, of regarding the political-economic categories as abstract expressions of the real, transitory, historic social relations, Monsieur Proudhon, thanks to a mystic inversion, sees in the real relations only embodiments of these abstractions. (Marx to Annenkov, December 28, 1846)

So that while the general concepts are applied to each particular epoch, they combine with one another to produce historically specific and not general theories. In failing to do this, Marx suggests, one eternalises the categories and with them the laws of history; one tends to regard the present (bourgeois) society as the end of history and to regard it as the natural culmination of the past.

Our final possibility is that the "preface" represents an "empirical generalization" an induction from historical and comparative studies Marx made. Marx examined the available information on the transformation of societies (transitions) and was led to a generalization concerning the way the forces of production tended to develop until they burst asunder the relations of production. It is then on the basis of this empirical generalization, that Marx felt justified in adopting the categories of forces of production, rela-

tions of production, etc. to understand history. That the generalization which Marx makes in the preface is the result of inductive reasoning finds confirmation in the following letter:

Thus events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historic surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by the universal passport of a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical (Marx to the Editor of *Otyecestvenniye Zapisky*, End of 1877).

Here we leave the discussion of some of the epistemological issues of Marxist theory as found in the Preface and Introduction to The Contribution of the Critique of Political Economy. Many of the questions remain unresolved and only a more thorough examination of Marx's other writings might lead to some further clues as to the basis of the Marxist "method" or "methods". I turn now to a discussion of the premises: the working, substantive and philosophical assumptions behind Marx's view of history.

## II. The Premises of All History

...the first premise of all human existence and therefore of all history [is] that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. (German Ideology, Tucker, pp. 119-120)

History is made by real men and women. Therefore the first premise of all history is that men and women must exist, that is they must produce the means of their survival. Note, that this contrasts vividly with Parsons' first premise of history that men and women are transmitters of culture, symbol carriers. For Parsons, the first and most fundamental evolutionary universal is language. Marx has this to say:

Man can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life. (Tucker, p. 114)

The second premise is more controversial.

The second point is that the satisfaction of the first need leads to new needs; and this production of new needs is the first historical act. (German Ideology, Tucker, p. 120)

Has Marx smuggled a "psychology" into his theories by arguing that one need begets another need? A universal characteristic of human nature? The problem arises when we ask why do the forces of production develop? Why do men and women ever seek more than their individual survival? Or more specifically, why do capitalists accumulate and compete with one another? Why do men and women stage revolutions? Are we to explain such pheno-

mena by reference to some psychology, that capitalists are "disposed" to accumulate like misers or are we, as Marx does in Capital, to attribute the action of individuals to the requirements of survival, to the submission to "external coercive laws" (Capital, Vol. I, pp. 591-8)?

Do we explain the development of the forces of production by reference to some psychology of the human beings who act as agents of productions? Or can we speak of mechanisms inscribed, inherent in the structure of any given mode of production which propels, as a means of survival, people to act in certain ways? Moreover, does our answer depend on the particular mode of production? That is, while it may be true that needs are socially derived and the activities of capitalists are propelled by the logic of capitalism, is this true of feudal mode of production of kinship societies and more important of communism? What is the status of needs under communism? Is it possible, as one person suggested, that this second premise only refers to the dawn of history. It would seem not, in the light of a subsequent passage, "These three aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as three different stages, but just as three aspects or, to make it clear to the Germans, three "moments," which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today? (Tucker, p. 121).

The third premise is that people must beget people, that there must not only be the production of material life but also the production of men and women.

The third circumstance which, from the very outset, enters into the historical development, is that men, who daily remake their own life, begin to make other men, to propagate their kind; the relation between man and woman, parents and children, the family. (Tucker, p. 120)

The fourth premise is that people do not transform nature by themselves but enter into definite social relations with one another.

The production of life, both of one's own labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of cooperation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a productive force. (Tucker, p. 121)

Isolated producers not entering into definite social relations with other producers is a figment of the classical economist's imagination.

Individuals producing in a society, and hence the socially determined production of individuals, is of course the point of departure. The solitary and isolated hunter or fisherman, who serves Adam Smith and Ricardo as a starting point is one of the unimaginative fantasies of eighteenth century romances a la Robinson Crusoe...(Introduction, p. 188)

With social relationships men and women also constitute "consciousness". Language is the most rudimentary form of consciousness and arises from need of intercourse of individuals with one another. Language or more broadly a historically defined consciousness, a culture or set of values if you will, appears as the result of the first



act of history the production of material life. Consciousness is produced as men and women enter into social relations with one another to transform nature. "Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all" (Tucker, p. 122). (Again note the contrast with Parsons. Values appear as a consequence rather than a determinant of material life. For Marx the "non contractual elements of contract" appear as a result of men and women entering into intercourse with one another, e.g. through exchange, distribution, or production; they are not prior to such relations.)

### III: Modes of Production

In taking materialism as the point of departure, Marx is able to periodize history into a succession of different ways of producing material life, the particular sets of social relations into which men and women enter as they transform nature, that is the particular modes of production. There are two distinct sets of social relations which concern Marx here. The first focuses on the direct relationship of men and women to nature, while the second set focuses on the relationship of men and women to one another. The first set of relations among individuals is variously referred to as the technical division of labor, relations of material or real appropriation of nature, the labor process or most commonly the forces of production. Note, in our treatment the forces of production are themselves a social relationship--a form of social cooperation--relations in production. The forces of production do not constitute "technology", "machines", etc. but the specific social relationship men and women enter as they use those instruments of production to transform nature. Thus, capital is a force of production only insofar as it presupposes and implies a definite social relationship. Idle capital is not a force of production. Only when concrete individuals working in concert set it into motion does it become a force of production. To say that the forces of production develop means that people's capacity to transform nature increases, through, for example changes in raw materials, ideas, mode of cooperation, machinery.

The second set of social relations are variously referred to as the social division of labor, property relations, relations of surplus appropriation, or simply relations of production. With the development of the forces of production, there arises the possibility that individuals can produce more than their own subsistence, that is the possibility of surplus.

With the division of labor...is given simultaneously the distribution, and indeed the unequal distribution, both quantitative and qualitative, of labour and its products, hence property: the nucleus, the first form, of which lies in the family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first property, but even at this early stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labour-power of others. Division of labour and private property are, moreover, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of activity. (Tucker, p. 124)

The appropriation of surplus labor, property relations or relations of exploitation begin with the division of labor and vice versa. But it should be noted that property relations are not legal relations of property but refer to the particular relations of acquiring and disposing of surplus, or the particular relations between laborer and non-laborer; the direct agent of production and the expropriator; worker and capitalist; serf and lord, etc. The relationship between property relations and their legal expression varies from society to society.

Therefore, a mode of production may be defined as a particular combination of forces and relations of production; a double connection of nature, direct producers and agents of surplus appropriation. Each connexion may be characterized as a "separation" or a "union". "Separation" of the relations of production indicates that those who produce surplus are separated from those who control surplus, for example, the capitalist is separated from the laborer. By contrast under primitive communism or kinship based societies it might be argued that those who produce surplus also distribute that surplus. To say that the forces of production are characterized by "separation" means that laborers are subordinated to the means of production; they cannot put the means of production into motion by themselves. That is, they are separated from nature. Under capitalism workers exist only as a collective worker and depend on the capitalist before they can engage in production, whereas under feudalism the serf can autonomously set in motion the means of production, plant the seeds and plough the land. Similarly in kinship based societies individuals are able to transform nature by themselves.

We have therefore constructed a general concept of the mode of production as an articulated combination of relations and forces of production. And by introducing notions of union and separation we have been able to specify four particular types of mode of production. A more sophisticated way of specifying modes of production out of the original general concept is to be found in Hindess and Hirst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Productions. Our next task is to construct a social structure corresponding to a given mode of production. How do we construct a particular social structure conceived of as a relationship among economic, political, ideological and legal realms?

#### IV: Constituting a Social Structure

How do we understand the various superstructural elements? From whence do they come? What is their significance? How do they change? In the Preface Marx writes, "The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness" (Tucker, p. 4). How are we to interpret "the real foundation, on which rises..."? It is the response to this question which defines the specificity of the particular interpretation of Marx with which we shall be concerned. We understand the nature of politics, ideology, etc. as the conditions of existence of a particular mode of production.

The formulation is of the same order as Parsons: what are the conditions of existence of the most general social order? In a sense politics and ideology become functional prerequisites but they assume different forms and relate to one another and to the mode of production in different ways according to the specific mode of production. Where Parsons is not always very clear as to what it is that constitutes social order, that is what it is that is being reproduced, Marx is always very clear that it is the particular set of social relations which define a particular mode of production.

To repeat, for each mode of production we pose the question what are the conditions for its existence and its continuity through time; that is for the reproduction of its corresponding forces and relations of production. We understand the answer to that question in terms of a particular form of politics, ideology, law, etc. and a particular way they relate to one another. This is how we construct the structuralist totality. I propose now to offer two examples of this method.

(a) Feudal Mode of Production

Let us take corvée labour as our example. Serfs spend four days working for themselves, say, and two days for the lord. In the four days the serf produces enough for the subsistence of the family, that is the serf produces and is in direct possession after four days work of his/her family's means of subsistence. In the remaining two days the serf works on the lord's land and produces a surplus which is appropriated by the lord. Thus the surplus labor is transparent, visible and divorced from subsistence or necessary labor, in both time and space. Under such circumstances, how is it that the serf actually works for the lord at all, if she/he already possesses subsistence? In other words because surplus is not produced in the same production cycle as subsistence, its realization becomes problematical. Indeed the only way the lord can obtain that surplus is through an "extra economic" intervention of a political or ideological nature.

This necessity for an "extra-economic" element provides the key to the nature of politics and ideology under feudalism. First, agents of production (lord and serf) appear as such in politics and ideology. The empty places in the form of politics and ideology are those of agents of production. The political reproduces the distinction and the relations between classes, while the ideological (religion) legitimates that distinction. Second, since the reproduction of the feudal mode of production is dependent on the political and/or ideological for its reproduction, the latter appears as dominant. Under feudalism, religion or politics (rather than economics) is dominant, because either or both are necessary for the reproduction of the economic. That is the economic determines the realm which is dominant. Third, politics and economics do not appear as separate elements under feudalism, since they are so intertwined in the appropriation of surplus. One can only think their difference from the standpoint of capitalism.

(b) Capitalist Mode of Production

Under capitalism independent means of subsistence are eliminated (with a few exceptions that are not important here). So that those who don't own the means of capitalist production have to sell their labor power for a wage. They come to work for a capitalist for eight hours every day and they produce, say, hubcaps. But, while they may be in possession of the things they produce, they are never in possession, during their activities in the production cycle, of their means of subsistence. One cannot live by hubcaps alone. They work for eight hours and they are paid a wage, which appears as remuneration for the entire eight hours work. In fact the wage equivalent is something less than eight hours, say, six hours. Two hours go to the capitalist as unpaid surplus labor.

Therefore, surplus or unpaid labor is masked/mystified/obscured in at least two ways. First, laborers are paid for the entire eight hours work rather than the six hours to which their wage corresponds. Second, unpaid surplus labor and necessary labor (wage equivalent) are separated neither in time nor in space. The spatial and temporal separation of working for oneself and working for the lord which makes surplus transparent under feudalism is confounded under capitalism. What is more, there is no alternative but to sell one's labor power and to work for the entire eight hours, since it is only after eight hours that one receives a wage with which to purchase the means of subsistence. There isn't a great deal of sense of walking out of a plant after six hours with ten hubcaps, (though of course it sometimes happens!). The point is, however, that there is no need for the continual intervention of an extra-economic element. Furthermore a worker has to return to work because there is no alternative source of subsistence.

A worker has to come to work each day to produce a commodity, deliver surplus value to the capitalist and take away subsistence. That is the very act of producing a commodity also produces and reproduces the relations between capitalist and worker. The act of production is at the same time an act of reproduction of relations of production. So again there is no need for extra economic intervention.

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

What does this tell us about the nature of politics and ideology under capitalism? Not much. At this level all we can say is that agents of production do not have to appear as such in the form of politics and ideology. It does suggest that there are possible legal and political preconditions necessitated by the free exchange of commodities and labor power. There are possibly certain minimal levels of "universalism" and "freedom". (Even in South Africa, black workers enter into "wage contract" and sell their labor power rather than themselves. The various pass laws, influx control, etc. represent serious limitation on "freedom" to sell one's labor power but they do not eliminate that "freedom" and are applied more or less universalistically within the black population.) Because the capitalist mode of production is able to reproduce relations of production of itself, so the form of politics and ideology assume a certain (relative) autonomy and can take on widely disparate forms. Thus the CMP is compatible with a wide range of different types of state, politics, ideology.

Note: In our brief exposition, we have been concerned with the continuous reproduction of social relations and not with the correspondence of need dispositions and role expectations, i.e. socialization and social control. For Marx, relations have to be continuously reproduced, they do not merely persist over time once they are established. And their reproduction has nothing to do with the correspondence of the personality system and social system. Rather the latter may be said to be a consequence rather than a condition of "persistence."

#### V: Determination in the Last Instance

The way in which we have begun to construct a social structure above, rests on the notion that the economic determines the form of the whole --the region which is dominant and the forms of and the relations among the political, ideological, etc. instances. This is what we call determination in the last instance by the economic, and can be illustrated by a number of passages from Marx. In responding to a critique of his work about role of the economic in history, Marx writes:

In the estimation of that [critique], my view that each special mode of production and the social relations corresponding to it, in short, that the economic structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in which material interests preponderate, but not for the middle ages, in which Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, where politics, reigned supreme. In the first place it strikes one as an odd thing for anyone to suppose that these well-worn phrases about the middle ages and the ancient world are unknown to anyone else. This much, however, is clear,

that the middle ages could not live on Catholicism, nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the mode in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics, and there Catholicism, played the chief part. For the rest, it requires but a slight acquaintance with the history of the Roman republic, for example, to be aware that its secret history is the history of its landed property. On the other hand, Don Quixote long ago paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economic forms of society. (Capital, Vol. I, p. 82)

Here we have the notion that it is the economic that determines the dominant region of the social structure. An example of the same form of determination is to be found in the Introduction to the Contribution to the Critique...

A distinct mode of production thus determines the specific mode of consumption, distribution and the specific relations of these different phases to one another. Production in the narrow sense, however, is, in its turn, also determined by the other aspects. For example, if the market, or the sphere of exchange, expands, then the volume of production grows and tends to become more differentiated. Production also changes in consequence of changes in distribution, e.g., concentration of capital, different distribution of the population in town and countryside, and the like. Production is, finally, determined by the demands of consumption. There is an interaction between the various aspects. Such interaction takes place in any organic entity. (Introduction, p. 205)

In this extract we find two types of causality, the original structuralist causality in which the part determines the structure of the whole, i.e., the relations among the various parts which make up the whole and a second interactive causality in which changes in any one part promote changes in other parts.

Perhaps the most famous passage is to be found in Marx's treatment of feudal labor rent.

The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows up out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers--a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby its social productivity--which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of state. (Capital, Vol. III, pp. 791-2)

We see here an explicit formulation of the relationship between a social structure and the relations of production. The conditions of existence of the latter are reflected in the form of the state. The political and ideological realms provide the conditions for the reproduction of the relations between expropriators and expropriated. The latter determine certain necessary features of the political and ideological structures, that is the relations of production determine a set of limits on the variation of the form of the entire social structure. Moreover, the form of the state (or the political and ideolo-

gical structures) also determines the development of the economic, that is there is an interactive causality between the various elements of the social structures, but again the changes that may occur are restricted so long as we are dealing with the same mode of production. One also notes that in the same passage Marx suggested that the forces of production determine the corresponding set of possible relations of production.

Finally, what does Marx mean when he refers to the relations of production as the "innermost secret" or "hidden basis" of the entire social structure? He means precisely that the economic determines that structure or realm which is dominant, and it appears as though it is the latter which is the "determining element." In other words, that the economic is determinant in the last instance is masked by displacing the "determination" onto another element of the social structure. Thus under feudalism the religious may appear determinant while in Athens it was politics, etc. (Under capitalism, the economic itself is both determinant and dominant and the associated mystifications are produced within the economic itself, for example, fetishism, exploitation, source of profit etc.)

In summary, we have considered at least three forms of causality. First, there is the structural causality in which the part determines the whole, through the establishment of conditions of existence. Second, a linear causality in which different parts interact, react upon and effect changes in one another. Third, there is the idea of determination within limits. The economic determines within limits the form of the state, the forces of production determine within limits (a set of possible alternatives) the relations of production.

#### VI: The Production of Consciousness

At the same time as men and women enter into relations with one another to transform nature, they not only produce use values, they not only produce social relations but they also produce a knowledge about those relations of production. "The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with their material productivity, produce also principles, ideas and categories, in conformity with their social relations" (Poverty of Philosophy, p. 109)

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.--real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else but conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process. (Tucker, p. 118)

The consciousness that Marx is referring to here, is produced spontaneously in everyday life. It is a pre-scientific, uncritical and immediate lived experience that grows directly out of the way we produce material life. The categories--true and false--have no relevance here. As regards content it incorporates a way of interpreting society and one's position in that society. It provides the basis through which people relate to one another as social beings as serfs or lord, as worker or capitalist. Ideology in this view, then becomes an elaboration of that lived experience carried out in what may be referred to as "ideological state apparatuses", schools, mass media, etc.

Let us return to some examples of spontaneous consciousness, the knowledge a particular set of social relations produces of itself. Under feudalism surplus is transparent and thus exploitation is part of the consciousness of both serf and lord. Politics is responsible for ensuring it and ideology for legitimating it. Under capitalism by contrast exploitation is mystified so that the distinction between worker and capitalist becomes less obvious. "We are all workers." Capitalists regard the source of profit as lying in constant capital (since when you introduce new machines your profits increase) or as emerging from the play of the market (since fluctuation around an average price is the result of supply and demand). That capital itself must be regarded as embodied labor time and cannot be set in motion without workers and that the average price bears a definite relationship to socially necessary labor time are aspects of an underlying reality which is not part of the lived experience of the capitalist, or for that matter of the worker. Marx argues in the section on the "Trinity Formula" (Vol. 3, Capital, pp. 817-21) that three factors of production and their corresponding incomes (land-rent, labor-wage, capital-profit) represent political economy's elaboration of the capitalist's lived experience; they are the natural categories which constitute the day to day experience of the individual capitalist. But Marx argues wage is not payment for labor but for labor power (that is, not as a reward for effort but as the costs of reproducing labor power). That the difference between time spent working for the capitalist and the wage equivalent constitutes unpaid surplus labor, which may be divided up into rent and profit. In other words it is not land that creates rent, and capital that creates profit but rather rent and profit are concrete forms of surplus value.

Moreover, Marx goes on to argue that individual capitalists are entrapped in these "bourgeois" categories. As individuals they cannot reach beyond their immediate experience to penetrate the underlying determinants of those appearances. (Even if they did it is clear from Marx's exposition of the falling rate of profit, they would still act in the same way. Though Lukacs goes further and suggests that capitalists must be protected from the recognition of the collective fate, if they are to uphold their political and ideological dominance.)

...it is just as natural for the actual agents of production to feel completely at home in these estranged and irrational forms of capital-interest, land-rent, labour-wages, since these are precisely the forms of illusion in which they move about and find their daily occupation. It is therefore just as natural that vulgar economy, which is no more than a didactic, more or less dogmatic, translation of everyday conceptions of the actual agents of production, and which arranges them in a certain rational order, would see precisely in this trinity, which is devoid of all inner connection, the natural and indubitable lofty basis for its shallow pompousness. This formula simultaneously corresponds to the interests of the ruling classes by proclaiming the physical necessity and eternal justification of their sources of revenue and elevating them to a dogma. (Capital, Vol. 3, p. 830)

There is another aspect of consciousness which is "determined in the last instance" by the particular mode of production, namely the forms of individuality and rationality.

This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production. (Tucker, p. 114)

Or as it is put somewhat more pithily in the Theses on Feuerbach, "But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations". (Tucker, p. 109). There are no "abstract" individuals but individuality is an "effect" of the particular structures into which people are inscribed.

This may be illustrated in the different forms of rationality associated with different forms of feudalism Marx examines. So long as serfs pay a rent in kind, they have no choice as to how they should transform nature, cultivate the land. They produce subsistence for themselves and surplus for the lord. However, when they pay a rent in money and enter the cash nexus, it becomes crucial to make certain choices about what to grow, how much and for how long. It may be necessary to choose between setting up some cottage industry or growing some new crop for the market. The serf then becomes an "entrepreneur" maximising returns and choosing among alternatives. We have here a very different rationality or individuality from the serf whose link between means and ends is heavily determined by custom. The idea that different structures give rise to different economic rationalities has been at the basis of much of the recent Marxist anthropology (see, for example, Godelier, Rationality and Irrationality in Economics).



## VIII - MARXIST THEORY: FIRST APPROXIMATION

In the social sciences we develop concepts in different ways. First, there is the possibility of "inducing" concepts and categories from the real/concrete world. This is the empiricist method. You recall how Neil Smelser understood the development of the concept of political participation, he tried to formulate it in ways that would have applicability to a diversity of nations. But having derived a concept of political participation which can be "measured" and used as a basis of comparison between nations, what does one do next? Does one develop other concepts of a similar stature? What for?

### I: The Production of Concepts

Balibar has a very different notion of producing concepts. For him the development of concepts takes place in the realm of theoretical work. He proceeds not on an inductive basis (deriving his concepts from some notion of the concrete real) but on a deductive basis, by laying out certain assumptions, and by asking or posing certain questions. In answering those questions Balibar derives "new" concepts. To be sure the questions he asks, the logic he pursues and the assumptions upon which his theoretical edifice is shaped by his real concrete world--capitalism--but the method he adopts is not empiricist. In the same way, though starting from different assumptions, and posing different questions, etc., Parsons also engages in the theoretical development of concepts. In many ways the endeavours of Parsons and Balibar are defined by a similar method, even if the content, questions and assumptions, from which they proceed, are very different. It is part of the task of this course to point to convergences in method and divergences in content of the two theoretical schemes.

As we have seen in the case of Marx, "inductive" and "deductive" methods are by no means mutually exclusive. Rather they represent different steps in the process of understanding the real world. You recall how Marx spoke of deriving categories from the real world--moving from the concrete to the abstract. As a result of empirical generalizations (based on political, economic and other conditions and positions) Marx adopts concepts, such as class struggle and the mode of production. But the true scientific method, Marx claimed, is moving from the abstract back to the concrete. This is the method he follows in the three volumes of Capital, where beginning with certain abstract concepts such as labor, value, mode of production, he deduces other concepts such as labor power, simple reproduction, expanded reproduction, etc. and eventually arrives back at the determination of certain concrete/real phenomena such as prices, profit and rent.

To return to Balibar. His ultimate objective is to "produce" concepts of social structure and of history. That is, rather than receiving social structure as a given, obvious, observed, etc. set of (perduring) social relations, Balibar aims to constitute a social structure through the development and formulation of concepts of the elements out of which it is composed. Similarly with history. History is not to be regarded as a string of empirically given events but rather the object of history has to be constructed (namely the social structure or as Althusser prefers the social formation). Once the object of history has been delineated, history itself has to be understood theoretically as the combination of the dynamics of the various parts. And, of course, these dynamics themselves have to be thought theoretically and constructed rather than taken as empirically given. Needless to say Balibar does not complete his program but at best defines and develops some concepts necessary for carrying it through. (In the process, he also raises important questions.)

But he, nonetheless, does illuminate what such a theoretical approach might entail. Because his formulations and contributions are incomplete (though that shouldn't detract from the achievement), Balibar never erects the bridge back to the concrete/real from the abstract. We read virtually nothing about the concrete real in the entire essay.

## II. The Abstract and the Concrete

Since this exposition is also not going to touch the concrete/real, it might be as well, at this point, to mention at least two ways of conceiving the relationship between concepts and reality. The first view is that we develop these concepts in order to better explain or understand the world in which we live.

The analysis must be conducted on two levels: a theoretical level which allows the establishing, producing, and developing of concepts with which to operate, and a level of concrete analysis which brings to light how and why such theoretical concepts can (or cannot) serve the understanding of real historical relations and, in case of need, show how to act on these relations by guiding a determined political action--which, in the final analysis, is the goal of theoretical analysis in the domain of historical materialism. (Bettelheim, p. 46 in Sweezy and Bettelheim, On the Transition to Socialism.)

But what does "understand" or "political action" (which?) mean? In talking about the relations between concepts and reality, Balibar refers to the tendency for most linkages to rest on "intuition", "judgment", etc.

However, it seems that we still need to know something else, i.e., when and where the concept is 'applicable', what societies, at what moments in their histories, have a capitalist mode of production...it is also necessary to build an actual history with them, quite simply, real history, our history, which presents these different modes of production here or there, one after the other...it seems that we need rules to determine which objects in experience fall within the concept of the capitalist mode of production. It is this apparent [italics added] necessity which gives rise to the empiricist interpretation of theoretical practice as a practice which constitutes 'models': in this view, the entire theory of Capital is a study of the properties of a model, properties which are valid for every production that is an 'example' or 'case' of the structure. The identification of the cases, the actual subsumption, is, in this ideology of models, in every respect a pragmatic process, a gesture, however complicated the forms in which it is achieved...As such it is a non-theoretical process which depends, not on concepts, but on properties of the identifier, properties which may well be called psychological even where a scientific consciousness is concerned. Kant already said that good judgement is a gift which cannot be learnt, and that the basis of the judgement is a profound mystery (for theory). (Balibar, p. 255.)

If the "understanding" of the relationship between the concept and the concrete is a non-theoretical process how does one go about demonstrating the superiority of one set of concepts over another? Apparently this is a matter of persuasion and one uses any instruments at one's disposal. Today, if one wants to convince sociolo-

gists (in certain universities) of the superiority of Marxist categories over bourgeois categories then one might show how the former explain "more of the variance" in some path analytic model predicting income distribution. However, would one use the same techniques of persuasion with workers on the shop floor? Ultimately, one might argue that the proof of one's concepts lies in some ideological or political struggle.

But there is a theoretical way of posing the relationship between theoretically derived concepts and the concrete lived experience and that is to use those concepts not only to constitute the social relations which make up a social structure but to talk about the way a specific set of social relation generate a particular knowledge or "consciousness" of those relations. That is we can move from the level of social structure, as one level of reality, to another level of reality--the phenomenal world which we experience. This is what Marx tried to do in the three volumes of Capital, viz. to move from his theoretical categories such as value, labor power, surplus, etc. back to the natural categories, to the obviousities(?) of life under capitalism where price, profit, labor, etc. reign as the only "conceivable" or the "spontaneous" categories which constitute the basis of everyday life. We shall have much more to say about his theoretical construction of the relationship between concept and experience next week.

### III: Mode of Production

So, where does Balibar begin? He begins where Marx begins, with production. The first step in the constitution of a social structure and of history is to define the particular relations men and women enter into as they transform nature, that is the particular mode of production. The mode of production as a general concept has three elements, three invariant functions, connected in two different ways. The three elements are laborer, means of production and non-laborer; the two connexions are the property connexion (relations of production, social division of labor, relations of surplus appropriation, relations of exploitation, etc.) and the real or material appropriation connexion (technical division of labor, forces of production, labor process, etc.). While the functions themselves are invariant, variations in the form, their connexions and in particular the relationship between the connexions define a particular mode of production. We have already observed how this works itself out in practice, for the feudal and capitalist modes of production. (At this level, one might note in passing, the distinction between manager and capitalist in the CMP reflects the functions of non-laborer in the real or material appropriation connexion and the property connexion respectively.)

Defining the mode of production in this way allows one, in principle, to generate a variety of possible modes of production and indeed, further, to argue, as Hindess and Hirst do, that certain modes of production, such as the Asiatic mode of production, are impossible. Whereas Balibar characterises the two connexions in terms of union or separation alone, Hindess and Hirst try to evolve more varied forms of the two connexions. With the definition of the mode of production, Balibar has provided the foundation upon which he can then begin to construct the different levels of the social structure and a rudimentary notion of temporal continuity.

### IV: Simple Reproduction

Having established the basic concept out of which we shall construct social structure and history, how do we now set the mode of production "in motion"; how do we understand its continuity (and later transformation) and the emergence (theoretical) of the other elements of the social structure? It is at this point we introduce the central concept of reproduction. The analysis of reproduction serves three

functions for Balibar. It links different capitals by focusing on the interdependence of different sectors of the economy. It links different levels of social structure by showing how each is necessary for the persistence of the others. Lastly, it ensures the successive continuity of production itself.

But what is this reproduction--reproduction of what and how? Here Balibar dwells on the significance of "simple reproduction" in volumes 1 and 2 of Capital. He provides a number of alternative but partial meanings (e.g. a quantitative meaning equivalent to zero accumulation, a particular case of expanded reproduction and therefore a "simplification, etc.). What is important for Balibar, however, is the "qualitative" meaning of "simple reproduction." That is, simple reproduction represents the reproduction of social relations of production. It is the concept of (re)production of social relations that becomes the distinguishing feature of Balibar's scheme. We have talked a great deal about this already in connection with the feudal mode of production and the capitalist mode of production. We showed how the concept can be used to develop a social structure or at least certain necessary features of a social structure corresponding to a given mode of production. Political, ideological, etc. structures serve to provide the conditions for the reproduction of the relations of production.

Two qualifying remarks are in order. First Balibar, like Marx, only writes about the reproduction of property relations. It is not clear how the relations of material or real appropriation (forces of production) are reproduced; although there does seem to be a presupposition that if property relations are reproduced then relations of real or material appropriation are necessarily also reproduced. A doubtful statement. Second, while they may say something about the inter-relations among and the form politics and ideology must assume if the mode of production is to be reproduced, Balibar and Marx have little to say about the conditions of the reproduction of the political and ideological relations themselves.

Parsons, you will recall, solved this problem in the AGIL scheme by asserting that each subsystem was dependent for its persistence on inputs from the other three subsystems. In that way, by theoretical fiat or act of faith Parsons closed his "reproduction schema", so that in combination each subsystem contributed to the conditions of reproduction of all the others. Marx himself engages in a similar argument in his own reproduction schema in Volume II of Capital. There Marx argues that for stability or equilibrium inputs must equal outputs, what is required in one department must be supplied in the correct quantities by another department. However, Marx and many of those who have followed in his footsteps have noted the potentiality for crises implicit in these reproduction schema. Perhaps the most famous of these crises are those based on "disproportionalities" in the production of commodities in some sectors vis-a-vis their demand in other sectors of the economy and those based on theories of underconsumption. But these are essentially the form crises may assume and, as Yaffe emphasizes, are not to be confused with the causes of such crises. The source of "disequilibria" or "crises" in the circulation process are to be found in the organization of capitalist production, for Yaffe in the falling rate of profit and the overproduction of capital this stimulates. Presumably Engels is referring to the same phenomenon when he talks about "the mode of production rising in rebellion against the form of exchange" (Tucker, p. 639). The comparison with Parsons is instructive. When we discussed Economy and Society, we noted how Parsons and Smelser do entertain the possibility of imbalances of inputs and outputs and that these imbalances can lead to social change. But we could never discover when an imbalance had occurred since inputs and outputs appeared as incommensurable. Also, and perhaps more significantly, we never learnt where the imbalances originated--

what caused them. We see now how Marx in his analysis of the economy responds persuasively to both these questions.

### V: Dynamics

Having developed the concepts that form the basis of a social structure and understood how they are to be related to one another, etc., we now want to know not merely how the corresponding relations are continually produced but also how to understand quantitative change, that is change that leaves the defining relations unchanged.

There are two problems. The first is to "produce" a dynamics for each of the relatively autonomous "structures" ("instances")--the economic, the political, the ideological, etc. in the case of capitalism. The second problem is to examine the interaction or rather the interventions of the practices (activities) associated with one structure in another structure. For example, we must understand the impact of political struggles on the economic structure, as Marx tries to for the Factory Acts. (In Volume I of Capital Marx shows how political struggles lead to the limitation of the working day and how this led capitalists to increasing "relative surplus value"--intensifying labor, reducing necessary labor time, etc.--rather than increasing "absolute surplus value"--extending the length of the working day.)

We shall deal first with the dynamics, in particular the dynamics of one relatively autonomous instance, namely the capitalist mode of production. What Balibar wants to say (and Godelier too) is that the characteristic dynamics of the CMP are the mutual effect of the forces of production and relations of production upon one another. The specific dynamics with which Balibar is concerned is the falling rate of profit. Neither Godelier nor Balibar actually show that the falling rate of profit is inscribed in the form of the mode of production.

Balibar then goes on to discuss the meaning of "tendency" and "contradiction". The two terms would appear to be closely linked. Contradiction refers to the contradictory consequences of a single effect, itself the outgrowth of the relationship between the forces of production and relations of production. A movement in one direction, say to reduce the rate of profit, in and of itself brings about a counter-movement. This counter-movement or counter-tendency is not the result of an external intervention but inscribed in the very structure of the mode of production. "Tendency" then refers to the specific rhythm that is set up as a result of these contradictory movements. Though it is by no means clear, Balibar does seem to suggest that there is also an overall directionality, or "orientation" in the movement of the rate of profit and that it is downward. (Given the wide ranging disputes as to whether the rate of profit tends to increase or decrease and given that neither side has yet been able to come up with a particularly convincing statement, Balibar's hedging has some foundation.)

We can illustrate the contradictory movement by reference to the formula for the rate of profit

$$p = \frac{s}{c + v} = \frac{s/v}{1 + c/v} = \frac{e}{1 + q}$$

where  $s$  is the surplus value,  $c$  is constant capital (in value terms) and  $v$  is variable capital (wages measured in value terms),  $e$  is the rate of exploitation and  $q$  the organic composition of capital. Competition leads capitalists to replace labor with capital, that is variable capital with constant capital. This supposedly increases

the organic composition of capital ( $q$ ). However, it also has the effect of increasing  $e$  by reducing the labor time involved in reproducing labor power ( $v$ ), by pushing workers out of the labor force and into the "reserve army of unemployed" and thereby dragging wages down even further. In other words a tendency to reduce  $p$  -- an increase in  $q$ --sets up its own counter-tendency--an increase in  $e$ . The ultimate direction of the movement of the rate of profit depends on the relative strengths of changes in  $e$  and  $q$ .

Two points are worth noting. At the same time as commodities are being produced, social relations are being reproduced, so contradictions too are being reproduced. The production of social relations is simultaneously the production and reproduction of contradictions. This is in stark contrast to Parsons (and indeed other Marxists) who regards reproduction of a system and the production of contradictions (e.g. conformity and deviance), as opposed rather than coincident features. For Parsons deviance is the negation of conformity whereas for Balibar reproduction of social relations is inseparable from the reproduction of a contradiction. Thus for Parsons there is only a "diachronics"--survival or non-survival of a system. He has no way of formulating in a systematic manner a notion of dynamics because he does not allow the systematic generation of conflict (discrepancy between need dispositions and role expectations, inputs and outputs, etc.) alongside the persistence of his system. That is why Nancy Chodorow's article is so significant a departure from Parsons, while influenced by many of Parsons' ideas she is able to show not only how relations are reproduced but how, at the same time, "contradictions" between mothering and heterosexuality are reproduced.

The second point concerns the meaning of "relative autonomy". We have talked about the rhythm of the development of the capitalist mode of production as if the latter existed in isolation. Tendency and counter-tendency are produced by the very structure of the mode of production, the particular manner in which the forces and relations of production are combined. How, then, do we understand the presence of other structures e.g. political or ideological structures and their impact on the development of the mode of production? Balibar argues that to say that a structure is relatively autonomous means that the consequences of the intervention of a second structure are determined by the first structure. That the intervention of politics into the mode of production has definite consequences but that those consequences are determined by the mode of production itself. Moreover, the consequences may affect the amplitude and periodisation of the rhythm in quantitative terms but not the form of the rhythm. Or put another way while  $q$  (the organic composition of capital) and  $e$  (the rate of exploitation) may be affected by political struggles, the relationship between the two remains the same and it is the relationship which determines the form of the rhythm of the rate of profit. Political struggles may for example, through the introduction of the Factory Acts, have significantly altered,  $q$ , but the rhythm of the rate of profit would be determined by the way  $q$  then affected  $e$  and this relationship is inscribed in the structure of the mode of production. Similarly for exogenous influences on the level of  $e$ .

Balibar has only talked about the dynamics of one of the relatively autonomous instances--the economic. To begin to construct a history of a social structure it is also necessary to try and establish the dynamics characteristic of politics and ideology conceived of as relatively autonomous structures. About this Balibar has nothing to say. Possibly, it might be argued, Poulantzas is attempting to begin thinking about the type of dynamics that may be characteristic of the capitalist state. And the only writer who even remotely approaches a dynamics of the ideological is Gramsci.

VI: Relations Among the Instances (Structures) of a Social Structure

A second aspect of the construction of a history of a social structure involves the developing inter-relations and interactions among the separate instances. Balibar discusses two such inter-relations, between the legal structure and the property connexion (relations of production) and second, the intervention of science in the forces of production.

(i) Property and its Legal Expression. In everyday language we tend to confuse property as a relation of production, viz. the capacity to acquire and dispose of surplus, with property conceived of as a legal concept. Balibar argues that the two should be radically dissociated and that the law must be seen as in some way dislocated from the relations of production which it both conceals and expresses. (Poulantzas makes a similar point about the relative autonomy of the law by which he means that it possesses a coherence of its own. It cannot be changed in an arbitrary way but only in a specified manner. At the same time it does reflect and preserve capitalist relations of production.)

The political significance of this dislocation between property and its legal expression should be clear. Merely to abolish private ownership of the means of production by abolishing private property as a legal concept says little about the form of property as a relation of production. Nationalization or state ownership of the means of production, by no means portends the end of the private appropriation of surplus. (A point which Engels makes very strongly in Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, see footnote p. 633 in Tucker.) In a similar vein Bettelheim argues that to examine the progression to socialism of such countries as the Soviet Union it is no good looking at such phenomenal forms, or surface expressions as the relative preponderance of markets or plans, but one must dig deeper and examine the relations of production they simultaneously express and conceal. In so doing Bettelheim comes to the conclusion that the underlying property relations are indeed those of state capitalism.

Under capitalism the legal system, Balibar argues, on the one hand, expresses and codifies the relations of production and on the other, masks those relations of production. How is this possible? The legal system reflects the universality of commodity exchange under capitalism and as such is itself universal and abstract. There is probably no better exposition of this aspect of the law than Weber, who sees in its universality an expression of the formal rationality of capitalism. But Weber underplays the way in which the legal systems conceals elements of the relations of production.

Whereas the property connexion concerns the relations between the owners of the means of production and the owners of labor power, the law distinguishes two sets of relations, contract, which governs the relations between persons and persons, and property, which governs the relations between persons and things. We see immediately that the law establishes two distinct relations where the mode of production presents only one such relationship. At the same time, the law denies the difference between different types of things (property), that is between elements of individual consumption (shirts) and elements of productive consumption (machines), between "consumer" goods and capital. Similarly, the law denies the distinction between different types of people, between those who own the means of production and those who only own their labor power. The law constitutes individuals as "formally equal" before the law. There is not a separate law for capitalists and a separate law for workers. In these three ways, by creating new distinctions

and denying actual distinctions, the legal system masks the underlying property relations.

Furthermore, It appears that it is the legal system that produces and reproduces social relations between workers and capitalists whereas, in fact, they are inscribed in the very structure of the CMP. It is not the law (contract) that binds worker to capitalist but the CMP binds the worker to the capitalist--a fact which the law masks. Social relations of production are prior to the legal system. Worker and capitalist are bound to one another by economic necessity--those individual threads which Marx talks about and uncovers in Volume I of Capital.

While Balibar illuminates the way the law functions in relation to the property relations of the CMP, we have no sense of whether the law has to assume this form if the relations of production are to be reproduced. Are other forms or structures of the legal system compatible with the CMP?

### (ii) Science and the Development of the Forces of Production

In the previous discussion Balibar gives us no sense of the way in which the law intervenes in the operation of the economy (CMP) and affects its development. In his second example, however, Balibar directs attention to just that problem. He suggests that the very structure of the CMP allows science to intervene and cause the development of the forces of production. Following Marx, he makes a crucial distinction between manufacture in which workers are only "formally" subsumed under capital and modern industry where the worker is "really" subsumed under capital. In the first case the property connexion (relations of production) correspond to CMP. The forces of production, on the other hand, correspond to the FMP or more specifically to "handicrafts" that is to a labor process in which workers control and set the instruments of production into motion by themselves. By contrast, under modern industry labor is subordinated to capital not merely in terms of the appropriation of surplus but also in relation to the instruments of production. Workers become appendages of machines and the capitalist seeking to innovate no longer has to fight against the independence of the worker. The capitalist has no longer to contend with opposition from laborers since that discipline is enforced by machinery. Under such circumstances the application of science to the development of new and more wonderful instruments of production advances unhindered.

We have here an example of how the consequences of the intervention of one practice (science) in another (transformation of nature) are determined by the form of the latter. It is not so much the development of science that causes the forces of production to be revolutionized but rather the forces of production established in the modern factory create the conditions necessary for science to intervene in the productive process.

### VII: History

These two examples are merely illustrations of the way one might understand the relations between different relatively autonomous instances within a social structure. To begin to develop a history of a social structure there are therefore at least four steps--each one presenting immense theoretical and practical problems. First one has to construct the various elements of the social structure, by examining the conditions of existence that is the conditions of reproduction of the given mode of production. This gives us the form and inter-relations of the various relatively autonomous structures/instances of the social structure. Second, one must develop a characteristic dynamics of each of these structures/instances. This dynamics



should supposedly emerge out of our conception of the structure's form and content. Third, we must understand how the different instances/structures intervene in one another and how each may affect the movement of others, within limits defined by those others. (In practice, one has to incorporate class and other struggles at this point.) Fourth and this is something Balibar does not really think about, one has to combine the different dynamics and interventions to form a history of the social structure.

One can appreciate already the importance of arguing that the different structures operate in different "times", that, as will become apparent in the case of Marx's treatment of France 1848-1851, the "time" of politics may be unrelated to the time of economics. Part of Althusser's continual stressing of the importance of "conjunctures" reflects the way different structures moving according to some "relatively" autonomous dynamics can give rise to all sorts of crises in an unpredictable manner. Again, one may draw upon a metaphor from astronomy. The different orbits of the different planets allow certain conjunctures to occur from time to time. Eclipses, for example, occur when planets moving in their own orbits (dynamics), enter particular positions with respect to one another. Such conjunctures can of course be predicted with a certain amount of accuracy in the case of eclipses, but analogous conjunctures in the social world, such as crises, cannot be predicted. Nonetheless the analogy does help us distinguish the "structuralist" from the "historicist" perspective on the emergence of crises. From the perspective of "historicism" time is unique--a single social structure or society moves according to a single rhythm dictated to it by its "spirit" its "essence" or some central core which imposes a particular "time" rhythm on the entire society. The movement towards crisis is therefore linear and "tendential" in the everyday sense of the word. From a structuralist perspective the movement towards crises depends on the appearance of particular "conjunctures" of the different instances (political, ideological, economic, etc.) moving according to their individual "times" or rhythms. Societies don't tendentially move towards crises but crises may appear at different moments according to the relations among and states of the different parts. This does not mean that (revolutionary) crises can appear at any moment but does nonetheless allow a greater indeterminacy in their emergence than a historicist position. It allows us to talk about France in 1848-1851, France in 1968, Russia in 1917, Chile under Allende, etc. in meaningful ways. It allows us to talk about revolutionary and non-revolutionary crises; to see these in their own terms rather than as another event on the path to some culminating, global and inevitable revolutionary crisis in the unspecified future.

#### VIII: Transitions

For Balibar the recognition that history is composed of the combination of different "structures" moving in different times is crucial to the understanding of the transition from one mode of production to another. So far we have only talked about constructing a social structure and a history corresponding to a single mode of production. We must now fill in another theoretical gap--history as a succession of modes of production. How shall we conceive of transitions? Put in other words, we can say that so far we have talked about the dynamics of a mode of production and corresponding politics, ideology etc., assuming the existence of that mode of production. But how do we in fact explain its genesis? How do we think about the origins of the capitalist mode of production?

Balibar thinks about the genesis and the dynamics of a mode of production in totally different ways. Indeed Balibar argues that one can have a theory of a mode

of production--its dynamics, its structure, etc.--but not a theory of its genesis. Moreover the genesis of one mode of production, say CMP, is to be thought of separately from the dynamics or dissolution of a previous mode of production, say FMP. In analysing the genesis of a mode of production, one seeks to explain, on the basis of hindsight, how the two "connexions" (forces of production and relations of production) eventually came together. That is, how, for example, free labor and capital appeared at the time FMP was digging its own grave. The two factors (capital and free labor) could have emerged together in any number of ways. That it, in fact, took the form of "primitive accumulation" as described by Marx, was in part a reflection of the types of resources available at a time when the FMP was dominant.

This is very different from the more usual understanding of transitions, that capitalism is formed in the womb of feudalism. Transitions are frequently understood in terms of "caterpillars" transforming themselves into "butterflies". Here we radically dissociate the genesis of one mode of production from the dissolution of another; the two "processes" take place in different times. The question has to be posed: under what conditions does the emergence of one mode of production coincide with the disappearance of another, ~~that~~ is how do we ensure that at a critical point the "times" coincide?

An important implication of this formulation of the succession of modes of production is the denial of any inevitability of which mode of production follows any given mode of production. For Marx, it seems clear that there was a natural progression from feudalism to capitalism and from capitalism to socialism. The direction of the progression was somehow dictated by the development of the forces of production. For Balibar what comes after feudalism depends on what is around at the time. There was no necessity about the appearance of capitalism and a reversion to the slave mode of production or the ancient mode of production could not be ruled out as impossible. Similarly, there is no inevitability about what comes after capitalism. Indeed there is a radical indeterminacy. We could be back in feudalism.

This formulation has been forged out of certain interpretation of political and economic events in the twentieth century. Marx, it will be recalled, argued that as the forces of production developed they would become increasingly socialized and that this development constitutes a preparation for socialism. Furthermore the development and socialization of the productive process would increasingly come into antagonism with the private appropriation of surplus. The proletarian revolution would then replace the private ownership of the means of production with a collective ownership. According to recent assessments, however, capitalist property relations, far from acting as a fetter on the development of socialized forces of production, actually subordinate and continue to facilitate their development. The appearance of socialism within the womb of capitalist relations appears to be a pipe dream. Moreover, the Soviet experience teaches us, according to these same commentators, that the adoption of capitalist productive forces, no matter how developed, acts as a barrier to the development of socialism. Clearly (!) the experiences of the twentieth century lead one to doubt the plausibility of socialism developing within the womb of capitalism, and further, that same experience perhaps leads one to doubt the inevitability of what comes after capitalism. Rosa Luxemburg offered us two alternatives, "Barbarism or Socialism", Balibar seems to be offering us an even wider range, but in both cases the implication is clear, viz. that the nature of class struggle at the point of revolutionary conjuncture and the preparation for that conjuncture are critical determinants of what comes afterwards. Capitalism may carry the seeds of its own destruction but it does not carry the seeds of the next mode of production.

How does Balibar conceptualize the transition itself? He argues that they have

to be conceived in terms of what he calls transitional modes of production. Production of material life can never just stop while one mode of production succeeds another. Rather the transition itself must be understood as a mode of production. Accordingly Balibar views manufacture as a transitional mode of production between FMP and CMP. What distinguishes a transitional mode of production from a normal one is its instability. Manufacture which combines capitalist relations of production with feudal forces of production can move in either direction (back to feudalism or on to capitalism), but move it must. The significance for the transition to socialism is clear; namely that it is a two way street. Even supposing you have set up a transitional mode of production between capitalism and socialism it is nevertheless possible for a society to return to capitalism. Thus, while the Soviet Union may have been initially propelled in the direction of socialism, it was still possible for it to "regress" into capitalism and that indeed is the analysis offered by some. Again we see Balibar knocking at any remnants of teleology or inevitability about the transition to socialism even after the supercession of capitalism.

This analysis should not be confused with Bettelheim's which conceives of transitions as an unstable combination of modes of production. (See also Balibar, p. 307) The implications, however, are similar, viz., that the transition to socialism is a two way street. For Bettelheim, it becomes a matter of empirical investigation to discover, at any moment in time, whether CMP or Socialist mode of production is "dominant." In fact he argues that the Soviet Union has reverted to a form of state capitalism as the dominant mode of production.

But, by postulating a transitional mode of production, Balibar does not escape the problem of understanding transitions, in particular the transition to and from that transitional mode of production, for example the transition from FMP to manufacture and from manufacture to CMP. Here we come up against an ambiguity in his analysis. On the one hand, Balibar disavows any connection between genesis and dissolution, that is disavows the caterpillar to butterfly transformation when he theorises about transitions generally and between FMP and CMP in particular. On the other hand, Balibar talks about the way handicrafts transforms itself into manufacture and thence in to modern industry.

Thus the movement from one form to the other can be completely analysed: not as the mere dissolution of a structure (the separation of the labourer from the means of labour), but as the transformation of one structure into another. Nor as the constitution ex nihilo of a structure although it is original....or as the accidental formation of that structure by the convergence of those two abstractions...The new system of the productive forces...is neither an absolute end nor an absolute origin, but a reorganization of the entire system, of the relation of the real appropriation of nature, of the 'productive forces'. (Balibar, pp.242-3)

Therefore, Balibar conceptualises transitions in radically different ways at different points in the discussion. The inconsistency poses another question, viz. should we theoretically conceive of all transitions in the same way? Should we look upon the transition from FMP to CMP in the same way as the transition from CMP to the socialist mode of production? Can we conceive of the dissolution of FMP as distinct from the genealogy of the CMP and at the same time view the dissolution of CMP as equivalent to the emergence of the socialist mode of production, as the more optimistic analysis of Marx indicates?

#### IX: Forms of Individuality

And, where, pray, do real concrete individuals fit into this scheme of things? Nowhere. Balibar only talks about individuals as theoretical objects--the effects of structures. Individuals only exist in this scheme insofar as they carry, or act

as agents of social relations. The analysis is of social relations and not of the individuals who act as their supports. Therefore, it is not only that each mode of production has its characteristic "individuality" or "rationality" but that each relatively autonomous structure or instance has its own individuality. Thus capitalists carry an individuality/rationality of accumulation and profit maximization as they act in the economic structure but exhibit a very different individuality when it comes to politics. Individuality, in this sense, is not carried as some lag, consciousness, need disposition or other artifact of socialization, from one structure to the next. There is an individuality of the shop floor and one of the family-- they are independent of one another, except insofar as the social relations of factory and family are interdependent. Individuality is, therefore, an effect of a particular structure of social relations in which people are inscribed and not the combined effect of all structures. Or, to put it differently, individuals are the supports of particular structures rather than general supports upon which structures are erected. Parsons and most sociologists adopt the latter rather than the former perspective. The notion of socialization implies that individuals carry a consciousness from one structure to another and, moreover, activate that consciousness there. By interviewing people one can get at the dominant value system (e.g. political culture) and thence derive a society's social structure. Individuals carry in their heads a concentrated form of the social structure. Hence, for example, some sociologists discover "confused" Indian intellectuals caught in an ambivalent state of mind, caught, that is, between tradition and modernity. From Balibar's perspective, Indian intellectuals, far from being confused, operate according to different norms in different situations. They have no pressing concern to reconcile their individualities, which emerge from different sets of social relations.

#### X: Conclusion

Balibar has provided a foundation for developing Marxist theory. His work represents a set of very basic concepts--a first approximation. The remainder of this course is launched from this platform. We will try and fill some of the lacunae left by Balibar and perhaps modify parts of the foundation itself. One weakness in Balibar's scheme is his crude formulation of variations in the forces and relations of production, namely the dichotomous attribute--separation/union. A more sophisticated and detailed attempt is to be found in Hindess and Hirst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production, which takes off from Balibar's notion of a mode of production as an articulated combination of forces and relations of production. Balibar's conceptualization of CMP is unsatisfactory if only because it does not allow one to distinguish among different forms of the labor process and even relations of production that are to be found under capitalism. Part but only part of this problem can be taken care of by talking about capitalist social formations as combinations of modes of production. Balibar's conception of transitions is sometimes contradictory but it does raise interesting problems which Bettelheim explores further in his two books.

Time does not allow us to explore these issues and in the next meeting we turn to aspects of the theory of the development of capitalism. The object here is to set Balibar's concepts in motion, to give them some concrete existence... We will try and show how capitalists, inscribed in competitive, market relations, act according to their immediate experience and at the same time cause history to move behind their backs. Individual capitalists in seeking to survive make history but in ways both against their will and beyond their control. This leads to section XI where we examine the ways in which history may be "reoriented" by the intervention of the state.

In section XII we talk about class struggle for the first time. Balibar mentions class struggle (pp. 293, 222, 203) only in connection with transitions and says nothing about its organization and forms. We will discuss two rival theories which implicitly place class struggle at the forefront of their analysis of the state. In both cases the state is both the organizer and object of class struggle. Having focuses on these issues we return to Marx in Section XIII for a detailed analysis of The 18th Brumaire and Class Struggles in France.

It should be clear by this time that we cannot get much further without developing concepts of ideology and politics. We will turn to Gramsci for the former, in particular the notion of hegemonic ideology, and to Poulantzas for some notion of politics. The ultimate goal should be to provide a systematic critique of Poulantzas since he incorporates many of the features already discussed, develops others and compounds the inadequacies of yet others. From Poulantzas we should ascend to a second platform from which we could move in any number of directions.

## X - THE DYNAMICS OF CAPITALISM

So far we have developed a set of basic concepts which, by themselves, should be helpful in making sense of the "real" world. One way of proceeding, therefore, would be to take our concepts and see how "they fit" real empirical situations. We can start by seeing any given society as emergent out of the conditions of reproduction of a specific combination of modes of production. Thus, for example, one can look at South Africa as a society emergent out of the conditions of reproduction of a precapitalist mode of production (system of "production" in the black reserves) alongside a capitalist mode of production. The apartheid state, or rather the peculiar characteristics of that state (particularly the differential incorporation of races), spring from interventions which prevent or reverse the destruction of a precapitalist by a capitalist mode of production (a tendency inherent in the nature of CMF and its conditions of reproduction), through the regulation of the distribution of surplus and the flow of labor between the two modes of production. The reproduction of a system of migrant labor, therefore, involves enforcing the apartheid laws, influx control, job reservation, pass laws, residence qualifications, denial of political rights to migrant laborers, etc. Race and racism is then a specific expression of the coexistence of two "contradictory" labor systems. The reproduction of relations between black and white in South Africa, to use Balibar's terms, both conceal and express the reproduction of relations between a precapitalist and capitalist mode of production. This does not mean that every time the state intervenes in the reproduction of a precapitalist mode of production alongside a capitalist mode of production, then we get racism. The particular "cultural" or better "ideological" form of reproduction is to be grounded in the specific history of a concrete society. Thus, in South Africa one looks to the specific forms of settler colonialism which have appeared there in the last two centuries. Furthermore racism is not a mere reflection of the economic. Nor can it be reduced to the economic. Rather as Balibar says of the legal system under capitalism, it possesses a relative autonomy and is dislocated from the relations of production it codifies and masks. In the same way the dynamics and "relative autonomy", as in some sense dislocated from movements in the economic realm. Finally, it is on the terrain of ideology, in this case apartheid, that the various struggles are conducted. Ideology does become the material force which shapes the way people compete, cooperate and struggle with one another. However, the consequence of those struggles have to be understood, at least in part, in terms of the underlying economic structure, that is the material basis of the ideology of apartheid.

This clearly is one way of going about "using our theoretical concepts." It lies somewhere between induction and deduction, between empiricism and pure theory. In developing our concepts we moved from the concrete to the abstract and then used the abstract to illuminate the concrete. We took the racist ideology as given rather than deriving it from our abstract categories. We did not, as Marx insisted we should and as he himself tried to do in Volume 3 of Capital, take the abstract concepts and reconstruct the concrete.

The various forms of capital, as evolved in this book, thus approach step by step the form which they assume on the surface of society, in the action of different capitals upon one another, in competition, and in ordinary consciousness of the agents of production themselves. (Capital, Vol. III, p. 25)

This view of the world, as consisting of two levels, is at the basis of "French structuralism". We must distinguish, that is, between a phenomenal world, the lived experience, the world of appearances, the "as if" world, etc. and an underlying "structure" or "underlying reality" which expresses, conceals and also explains the movement and reproduction of the former.

Thus, for Marx, as for Claude Levi-Strauss, 'structures' should not be confused with visible 'social relations' but constitute a level of reality invisible but present behind the visible social relations. The logic of the latter, and the laws of social practice more generally, depend on the functioning of these hidden structures and the discovery of these last should allow us to 'account for all the facts observed'. A very crude summary of Marx's thesis might go as follows: In the practice of the capitalist system everything occurs as if the wage were paid for the worker's labour, and as if the capital had of itself the property of automatic growth and of rendering a profit to its owner. In day to day practice there is no direct process that capitalist profit is unpaid workers' labour, no immediate experience of the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist. (Godelier, "Structure and Contradiction in Capital," p. 336.)

When we were discussing Parsons, we were continually trying to move from his AGIL scheme, or his underlying pattern variables to the real concrete world of actual institutions, but we never discovered a satisfactory relationship between the two. Indeed for Parsons his analytical schemes do not represent any "underlying reality" which "generates" the phenomenal world, rather they are theoretical constructs in terms of which we may hope to understand the concrete world better. There was no attempt on his part, as there is with Levi Strauss for example, and Marx, to discover some organizational principle or dynamics of the AGIL scheme and to then generate and determine the movement of the phenomenal world. On the contrary we continually found Parsons slipping between the analytical and concrete in a way which suggested that the distinction was not so central to his theoretical system as it is, for example, for Marx.

Balibar, however, only helps us in developing concepts of this underlying structure. He does not systematically move us in the direction of appearances. One notable exception is his discussion of the legal system, though even here it is not clear whether he is talking at the level of structures or lived experiences. He seems to argue that the legal structure is so organized as to give rise to certain appearances about the nature of social relations, relations between things and relations between things and people--appearances which both conceal and express the relations of production.

Because he is mainly concerned to develop notion of an underlying structure Balibar only talks of individuals as theoretical objects which carry sets of social relations. The notion of real individuals occurs at different levels of analysis, most particularly at the level of lived experience. It is at the level of ideology, the elaboration of lived experience, that men and women merge into classes. Thus Balibar doesn't talk about struggles either because he does not talk of the "ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" (Preface, Tucker, p. 4). It is on the terrain of ideology or lived experience that

people engage in struggle, as we have suggested in the case of South Africa.

What we are going to do now, is to establish a notion of the underlying structure of the capitalist mode of production and, at the same time, try to understand how that underlying structure generates the world of appearances of lived experience. Further we shall try and explore how, by acting in accordance with the dictates of the phenomenal or experiential level of reality, individuals push capitalism in a particular direction--indeed a direction which is not necessarily in their interests. In Rationality and Irrationality in Economics, Goddell makes the important distinction between rules and laws. Rules are what individuals or groups of individuals obey, in Parsons' terms they correspond to norms. Laws are what "systems" obey and, of course Parsons has little to say on that matter. Indeed it may be argued that Parsons refuses to make the distinction. History has no laws, it is described as the unfolding of values and norms. It is one thing to recognize and delineate both rules and laws, it is another to see and understand how they are related; how the former give rise to the latter. That is our task here; to connect rules and laws, the micro indeterminacy of everyday activities (which does permit some measure of choice within limits) and a macro "determinacy within limits" a directionality of societal change. As an example of the type of theory we are looking for, I have taken Marx's outline of the development of capitalism as laid out in the three volumes of Capital. Its validity and details of the formulation are not important for the present discussion (though we will inevitably have something to say on that score in subsequent discussions). What is important is the form of the argument and manner in which Marx attempts to link Goddell's two levels of reality, the world of appearance and the underlying structure: micro and macro.

### I: The Labor Process

We start with the process of production. On the one side we have the capitalist the legal proprietor of the means of production. He or she has the power to dispose and acquire surplus value, pumped out of the direct producer--the laborer--who sells labor power, that is the generalized capacity to work. The capitalist offers laborers a wage prior to the latter actually producing anything. The problem for the capitalist is then to ensure that workers not only produce enough to meet the wage but in addition produce a surplus. While the capitalist is very concerned about the organization of production, it appears that the critical factor determining the "realization" of profit is beyond control, namely the market. Under assumptions of competitive capital (perfect competition) individual capitalists have no control over prices products fetch on the market. At the same time capitalists have to survive, that is they must continue to produce surplus, invest and accumulate capital. As we shall show, the capitalist who does not invest in the latest techniques goes out of business as a result of competition.

Workers must also survive and under capitalism that usually means they have to sell their labor power to some capitalist. They have to go to work, expend labor and, moreover, they have to return to work the next day if they are to assure themselves the means of their existence. In this sense workers have a vested interest in capitalists remaining in business, for under capitalism the capitalist is the source of a worker's livelihood. Measured in value terms (socially necessary average labor time), the total product can be divided into three parts: C is the constant capital; V is variable capital and S is surplus.



## II: Simple Reproduction

Earlier we talked about simple reproduction in connection with the reproduction of relations of production. This was Balibar's interpretation. Let us see what it means in terms of a two product economy. Suppose a society produces corn for subsistence and also iron which is necessary for producing corn (machinery etc.) In department I iron is produced of value  $w_1$  and department II corn is produced of value  $w_2$ .

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I: Iron} \quad c_1 \quad + \quad v_1 \quad + \quad s_1 \quad = \quad w_1 \\ \text{II: Corn} \quad c_2 \quad + \quad v_2 \quad + \quad s_2 \quad = \quad w_2 \end{array}$$

In producing iron ( $w_1$ ) a certain amount of iron (machines, etc.) is necessary ( $c_1$ ), a certain amount of labor power ( $v_1$ ) and a surplus ( $s_1$ ) is generated. In producing corn ( $w_2$ ) a certain amount of iron (ploughs, etc.) is necessary ( $c_2$ ), a certain amount of labor power ( $v_2$ ) is necessary and a surplus ( $s_2$ ) is generated. Suppose capitalists consume all their surplus in the form of corn and the same for workers. There is, therefore, no accumulation. Then we have:

$$v_1 \quad + \quad v_2 \quad + \quad s_1 \quad + \quad s_2 \quad = \quad w_2$$

In addition, in order to produce  $w_2$  corn you need  $c_2$  of iron and to produce  $w_1$  of iron you need  $c_1$  of iron, that is:

$$c_1 \quad + \quad c_2 \quad = \quad w_1$$

As soon as we know the scale of the economy, or rather how much corn or how much iron is to be produced, then we know the values of all the variables.

The above equations simultaneously express the relations of production and the relations of distribution. Relations of production are also relations of distribution. This means, further, that relations of production also determine the supply and demand. Accordingly neo-classical economics which argues that prices are determined by supply and demand, tends to obscure the origin of supply and demand, namely the relations of production. In other words, relations of production do shape the movement of prices but in complicated and "non obvious" ways. To the capitalist, therefore, it appears that the market is the source of profit, since it is in the market that commodities fetch their particular price. In fact, as Marx tries to show, the market is only a conveyor belt for the determination of prices by relations of production, that is by value measured in socially necessary labor time. That is the market is the institutional mechanism for the translation of values (which are the quantitative expression of the relations of production) into prices which people actually "experience", in terms of which people make their real calculations and which determine the fate of individual capitalists. Our problem now is to understand the relationship between values and prices and how the pursuit of profit in terms of the latter leads to specific movements of profit in terms of the former.

## III: Transformation of Values Into Prices

For Marx, as for Balibar, the movement of capitalism is expressed in the movement of the rate of profit:  $p = e/1+q$ . In certain places Marx, and Balibar too, but particularly Yaffe (and in fact many others of the Mattick school), claim that there is an inherent tendency for the rate of profit to fall, that is that the rate of change of  $q$  is positive and greater than the rate of change of  $e$ . However, no matter how many times they differentiate their equations, etc., they can only show an

inherent and necessary movement of the rate of profit by incorporating all sorts of assumptions. The major stumbling block is that the rate of change of  $q$  is retarded by capital saving innovations which reduces rather than increases the organic composition of capital ( $q=c/v$ ). I don't believe that one can demonstrate the tendency of the rate of profit to fall without talking about how capitalists act, how they respond to situations in which they find themselves. And capitalists above all respond to prices and not to values. It is in terms of values that we understand the movement of capitalism as a whole and in terms of prices that we understand the responses of individual capitalists. The problem is to relate the two--the transformation problem. More generally, we have to link the indeterminacy of individual actors making choices and the macro consequences in terms of the movement of a system of capitalism. The analogy of a game is appropriate here, namely that actors obey the rules of a game (the rationality of capitalists) but the consequences while not necessarily determinate are nonetheless limited. So what is the capitalist game?

Consider two capitalists Smith and Brown, both producing shirts and employing a single worker for ten hours each day. Constant Capital ( $c$ ) Smith bought an expensive machine of value 2000 hours of socially necessary labor at a time when one shirt contains one hour of socially necessary labor. Brown on the other hand bought a cheap machine containing 500 hours of socially necessary labor when one shirt contains one hour of socially necessary labor. Both machines last for 100 days. Rate of Exploitation ( $s/v$ ). It is assumed that the rate of exploitation is one for both capitalists and that each capitalist reckons on paying a wage to his worker equivalent to the time it takes to produce 5 shirts. Each capitalist also reckons therefore on receiving the equivalent of five shirts profit.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{S: } \frac{c}{1/100(2000 \text{ hrs.})} + \frac{v}{5 \text{ shirts}} + \frac{s}{5 \text{ shirts}} = \frac{w}{30 \text{ shirts}} \\
 \text{B: } \frac{c}{1/100(500 \text{ hrs.})} + \frac{v}{5 \text{ shirts}} + \frac{s}{5 \text{ shirts}} = \frac{w}{15 \text{ shirts}}
 \end{array}$$

Thus the organic composition of capital ( $c/v$ ) is 4 for Smith and 1 for Brown. If the economy was entirely composed of Smith making shirts then average rate of profit would be  $5/25$  or  $1/5$ . On the other hand, if the economy was entirely composed of Brown making shirts, then the average rate of profit would be  $5/10$  or  $1/2$ .

Smith produces 30 shirts in a ten hour day while Brown produces only 15 shirts. The two equations represents the "prices" of production of the capitalist, that is Smith expects to realise the value of his shirts in terms of the labor time it has cost him and Brown expects to realise the value of his shirts in terms of the labor time it has cost him. (Marx defines prices of production differently, namely as  $(c+v)(1+p)$  where  $p$  is the average rate of profit, that is it refers to cost price in terms of labor time plus some notion of interest on the amount of capital (constant + variable) advanced, where the rate of interest is regarded as the average rate of profit. For the purposes of this example I am assuming that we can look upon the expectations of the capitalist in terms of realising a value for his shirts based on constant rate of exploitation.) Thus Smith expects to exchange one shirt for whatever it takes 20 minutes to produce (10hrs/30) and Brown expects to exchange one of his shirts for whatever it takes 40 minutes to produce (10hrs/15). For example if it takes 20 minutes of socially necessary labor to produce a pair of shoes, Smith expects to receive one pair of shoes for one shirt while Brown would expect to receive 2 pairs of shoes for a single shirt.

But these "prices" of production are the capitalist's prices. Society is not necessarily prepared to pay the capitalist prices, indeed society operates on a single price for shirts, an average price. That is, society is prepared to pay a "socially necessary" price which is in fact the weighted mean of the individual capitalist prices. Smith produces 30 shirts at 20 minutes a shirt while Brown produces 15 shirts at 40 minutes a shirt in each working day. Therefore the socially necessary labor in a single shirt is  $(30 \times 20 + 15 \times 40) / 45 = 26 \frac{2}{3}$  mins. This is what society is prepared to pay--it also represents an equilibrium price. (The  $26 \frac{2}{3}$  minutes is in fact a "value" but commodities of equal value, it will be assumed, will exchange as equivalents. Marx certainly asserts this in Volume I but it is not clear whether it still holds in Vol. III.) This market value is an equilibrium value because if for some reason shirts exchange for commodities that embody socially necessary labor more or less than  $26 \frac{2}{3}$  minutes, then this will imply the movement of capital into or out of shirt making until equilibrium is reestablished. If one can exchange a shirt for a pair of shoes which it only takes 20 minutes to produce, then everyone will move into production of shoes until a new equilibrium is reached. (Why should a new equilibrium be reached?)

What does all this mean for the individual capitalists, Smith and Brown? For Smith it means that he can exchange what it takes to produce in 20 minutes for something which it takes  $26 \frac{2}{3}$  minutes to produce. So to replenish capital used up in one day's labor, he does not have to spend the time of producing 20 shirts but  $20 / 26 \frac{2}{3}$  that is 75% of 20 shirts which is 15 shirts. Because he produces shirts more efficiently he does not have to spend as much time replenishing machines as he originally anticipated. Similarly with labor power. To pay labor the socially necessary labor equivalent of five shirts he in fact needs to spend less time than originally anticipated, namely 75% of 5, that is  $3 \frac{3}{4}$  shirts. The remainder is surplus.

For Brown the situation is not too good. In 40 minutes he produces shirts worth  $26 \frac{2}{3}$  minutes on the market. His hours are worth less than he anticipated and therefore he has to work longer to replenish capital and wages. Indeed the distribution of times in the working day are changed by a factor of  $40 / 26 \frac{2}{3} = 150\%$ . This means he spends of his total production of 15 shirts 7.5 on replenishing capital and 7.5 on replenishing labor power. This leaves no surplus at all. The equation transformed into socially necessary times, i.e. when allowance is made for the differing efficiencies of the two capitalists, are as follows:

	c		v		s		w
S:	15	+	$3 \frac{3}{4}$	+	$11 \frac{1}{4}$	=	30
B:	$7 \frac{1}{2}$	+	$7 \frac{1}{2}$	+	0	=	15

The new rate of profit for Smith is  $\frac{3}{5}$  and for Brown it is zero.

It appears, then, that the market has really upset Brown with his less efficient machine while it has awarded Smith a bonanza. Smith's efficiency has allowed him to "cheapen" the cost in terms of labor time of both constant capital and labor power and so he has increased his surplus. Brown, because of his relative inefficiency, finds himself without any profit at all.

To the individual capitalist, therefore, it appears that the major determinant of profit is the market, and it appears as a market beyond the control of the individual. The capitalist appears largely at the mercy of the market. On the other hand

It also appears that temporary advantages may be gained by introducing new machinery and so it appears that profit is the product of constant capital (dead labor power) and has little to do with labor itself. But this is only at the level of appearances. This is the surface reality. As we have seen, prices are not produced immaculately in the market but rather result from the aggregation of values. Our analysis has been based on the combination of socially necessary labor time expended by different capitalists on labor power and on machinery. In other words rates of profit are determined by the aggregation of the activities of individual capitalists and for this reason appear to be beyond the control of any one capitalist. The market appears to have mystical powers. But in their joint activities (decision making) history is being made behind the backs of capitalists. But precisely how and with what result?

IV: Capitalist's Dilemma

At the end of 100 days each capitalist is faced with a decision to either invest in a big machine (Smith's) or in a small machine (Brown's) or not to invest at all. I will exclude the latter, since I am assuming they both want to remain capitalists. At the end of 100 days Smith has accumulated the equivalent of  $26.25 \times 100$  shirts = 2625 shirts, whereas Brown has only accumulated  $7.5 \times 100$  shirts = 750 shirts. (I am also neglecting here the amount of shirt equivalent that is consumed by the capitalist personally, that is unproductively.) I am going to make a further assumption that in terms of shirts the costs of the two machines has not changed. In other words the big machine costs 2000 shirts and the small machine 500 shirts. Moreover, I shall assume that Brown can borrow enough money to finance the purchase of a big machine if he wants. So what does each do? Let us examine the consequences of each possible combination of decisions in terms of the rate of profit.

Smith

		Smith	
		Invest in Small Machine	Invest in Big Machine
<u>Brown</u>	Invest in Small Machine	$p=1/2$ $p=1/2$	$p=3/5$ $p=0$
	Invest in Big Machine	$p=0$ $p=3/5$	$p=1/5$ $p=1/5$

On the assumption that each capitalist makes his decision on the basis of complete knowledge (perfect information), then they would argue as follows. Smith says that if I invest in a big machine the best I can do is a profit rate of  $3/5$  and the worst I can do is a rate of profit of  $1/5$ . If I invest in a small machine then the

best I can do is  $1/2$  and the worst I can do is 0. Obviously Smith must invest in a big machine. Similarly Brown "must" invest in a big machine. As a result of both of them investing in big machines, however, the rate of profit falls to  $1/5$ . If they had both invested in small machines then the rate of profit would have been much higher, namely a half. In other words, by pursuing an individual rationality Smith and Brown undermine their collective interests. Their common class interests in maintaining a high rate of profit is undermined and in contradiction with their desire for self protection. For if Smith, for example, decides to invest in a small machine, then he has no guarantee that Brown will do the same. Indeed if Brown does not do the same, that is if Brown does invest in a big machine then his rate of profit will be  $3/5$  (greater than  $1/2$ ) and Smith will be doomed to zero rate of profit. Therefore, there does not seem to be any reason for either Smith or Brown to act in their common interest, unless they collude. Above all there must be a mechanism of enforcing collusion of transcending the market and enforcing their common interests. Monopolies and cartels, are one concrete form through which collusion may take place. As Schumpeter once said, monopolies are necessary for the development of capitalism, they are the brakes that enable the automobile to go faster. As long as they don't collude, even if they are aware of the problem and of the underlying forces, capitalists cannot but submit to processes of collective self destruction. In other words the self defeating nature of their activities is not the result of ignorance. As Levi Strauss argues about his underlying structures, knowledge of them does not in any way help to change society.

In the pursuit of private interest capitalists would appear, if this example were an accurate reflection of the working of capitalism, to ineluctably determine the movement of capitalism in a particular direction. In this sense the tendency of capitalism is inscribed in its structure. But as we have seen it does make certain assumptions about the responses of capitalists, assumptions which have turned out to be historically inaccurate. The perfect competition of the market has been transcended. There have been monopolies and there has been state intervention to protect the common class interest of capitalists. The precise forms of such interventions and the nature of monopoly or organized capitalism will be discussed in the next set of notes.

One conclusion should be noted. If the above argument bears some resemblance to Marx's arguments in vol. III of Capital, that the falling rate of profit rests on certain assumptions about perfect competition and absence of collusion, then it would seem that the survival of capitalism rests on the emergence of monopolies, cartels, trusts, etc. which necessarily undermines the analysis of vol. III. That is, the very existence of capitalism and its continuing strength would invalidate many of the assumptions and therefore the analysis of Vol. III. It may be truly said that Marx's economics sows the seeds of its own destruction. It is distinctly obscure what happens to the rate of profit under such conditions!

#### V: The Meaning of Contradiction

What shall we mean by contradiction? The concept is used in different ways by different people. Many refer to the major contradiction of capitalism as between capital and labor but in what precisely does this contradiction consist? What is "contradictory" about the relationship? Does contradiction mean anything more than antagonism? Others refer to the contrast between the socialization of the means of production and private appropriation of surplus value as the fundamental contradiction. But again what is this contradiction? Is it any more of a contradiction than

that between hot and cold? Why are the forces of production and relations of production opposed to one another, is there any basis for the emergence of such an opposition? It might, indeed, be argued that the forces of production and relations of production constitute a mutually reinforcing pair.

In fact Marx tends to use the notion of contradiction with reference to the falling rate of profit, as a process which sows the seeds of its own destruction; a process which undermines the conditions of its own reproduction; a process which threatens to destroy capitalism through its own organization and through its irrevocable working. (See Vol. III, Capital, p. 242, 246, 259, etc.) What this means is that the major contradiction concerns the relations among capitalists, namely that they are caught in a gigantic "Prisoner's Dilemma."

By implication, therefore, the major contradiction of capitalism is not between capital and labor. It has been assumed quite generally in the Marxist literature that there exists an underlying objective conflict of interests between worker and capitalist. The interests imputed to capital and labor are antagonistic. But what is the basis of this imputation? Can interests be somehow given a priori or are they organized? Are they primordial and given or are they derivative? The underlying objective interest is based on a state of nature argument; a metaphysical argument similar to that of spontaneous consensus or underlying harmony which lies at the bottom of bourgeois sociology (pluralism, organization theory and above all Parsons). To assert an underlying objective contradiction within capitalism is, therefore, to fall into the same traps that Parsons falls into. This is not to say that labor and capital are not in opposition to one another, but rather to say that we have to examine interests as somehow emergent out of political and economic activities but in particular out of the ideological realm. We cannot take interests as given or impute interests to different classes (as in fact political sociologists tend to do) but we have to develop a theory of interests.

So then how do we understand relations between capital and labor? To be sure there is conflict between the two, but is a conflict that takes place, most frequently (in normal times) at the margin, over the distribution of surplus. However this conflict is not necessarily of a zero sum nature. On the contrary what is so peculiar to capitalism is its capacity to turn what might appear to be a zero sum conflict into a non-zero sum conflict. Capitalism has managed to concretely coordinate the interests of labor and capital through the dispensation of concessions based on growth. In many industries workers have come to accept that wage increases are dependent on increases in profits. In the monopoly sector what workers forego today in the form of wages, allows capitalists to accumulate more and thereby creates conditions for future wage increases. The material basis of capitalist hegemonic ideology--the "development and expansion of the particular group [dominant economic class] are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the "national" energies (Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 182)--lies in the dependence of workers on capitalists, of concessions and wages on the existence of surplus.

To say that the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital is only to say that the more rapidly the worker increases the wealth of others, the richer will be the crumbs that fall to him, the greater is the number of workers that can be employed and called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent on capital be increased...To say that the most favourable conditions for wage labor is the most rapid

growth of productive capital is only to say that the more rapidly the working class increases and enlarges the power that is hostile to it, the wealth that does not belong to it and that rules over it, the more favourable will be the conditions under which it is allowed to labor anew at increasing bourgeois wealth, at enlarging the power of capital, content with forging for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train. (Wage Labour and Capital, Tucker, p. 184)

Under what conditions then, is the capitalist class no longer able to present itself as the guardian of not only the present but also of the future interests of labor? Under what conditions is the non-zero sum pattern of relations replaced by a zero sum pattern? Clearly when accumulation ceases. For Marx, of course, this occurred as a result of competition between capitalists and the falling rate of profit.

We have portrayed above, in a hasty sketch, the Industrial war of capitalists among themselves; this war has the peculiarity that its battles are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of labor. The generals, the capitalists, compete with one another as to who can discharge most soldiers of industry. (Ibid., p. 188)

However, so long as the rate of profit does not fall, it may still be possible for capitalists to present their own interests as the interests of all.

## XI: INTERVENTIONIST THEORIES OF THE STATE

Last time we tried to set Balibar in motion by constituting two levels of reality--a surface or phenomenal level of rules or norms and an underlying level which generates this lived experience and contains within it the "laws" of the system as a whole. This is already a fundamental departure from Parsons, for at least three reasons. First, Parsons does not self consciously or systematically develop a relationship between his two "levels"--the analytic and the concrete. They are not two distinct levels of reality. Second, while Parsons is quite clearly concerned with the consequences of people acting according to their individual interests in the light of a lived experience, his only preoccupation is with consensual outcomes--the so-called Hobbesian problem of order. Parsons, therefore, only talks about people adhering to norms based on common values. He does not further explore the consequences of normative behavior for the propulsion of a social system as a whole. That is, he ignores the distinction between rules and laws. (Laws, by the way, should not be understood in any deterministic sense but rather refer as Marx did to some tendencies inherent in a system. They indicate that change is not arbitrary but somehow constrained. They indicate the delimitation of possible outcomes, of following certain norms or rules.) Third, Marx is simultaneously concerned with change and persistence; with the reproduction of relations of production and the reproduction of contradictions. The production of commodities and accumulation explain both continuity and change in the capitalist mode of production. Parsons bifurcates change and persistence, conflict and consensus, etc. to the extent that one exists the other does not. For Parsons "reproduction" and "contradiction" do not reinforce or generate one another. They are opposed to one another.

These then are basic differences between the approaches to social change that we have been exploring and those of Parsons. But as will become increasingly clear in this section, there are also some convergences. While reproduction and contradiction may develop simultaneously, the tendencies towards crises, it is argued, can only be averted by interventions from outside the mode of production. The political and ideological perform crucial functions in restoring the vitality of capitalism in the face of inherent tendencies towards collapse, just as Parsons' subsystems are dependent on inputs from one another. We will return to a discussion of the parallels at the end of this session.

### I: Tendencies of the Capitalist Mode of Production

Last time we showed how Marx's analysis in Vol. III seemed to lead to its falsification by predicting the emergence of conditions which would invalidate the assumptions upon which it rested. In particular we suggested that the falling rate of profit could be averted through collusion among capitalists, that is the transcendence of perfect competition and the development of monopolies, cartels, etc. But the tendency for the rate of profit to fall is not the only consequence that Marx talks about in connection with accumulation. Along with centralization and concentration of capital, Marx argued that workers would be pushed out of production and a relative surplus population would be created. He also talked about tendencies towards immiseration. Following certain passages in Capital, other Marxists argue that the most severe crisis tendency of capitalism is under-consumption--the inability of capitalism to generate the conditions for the absorption and consumption of the surplus it produces. Still other commentators have



emphasized the importance of the socialization of the labor process and the emergent contradiction between the collective worker and the private appropriation of surplus value.

Having located a particular crisis tendency, argued for its centrality (as a principal contradiction), commentators then erect a theory of the state aimed to introduce a counter-tendency to the particular crisis tendency. Thus Baran and Sweezy talk about the state as consuming excess surplus through the permanent arms economy. Yaffe links a theory of the state to the falling rate of profit. Gramsci and Poulantzas talk about the state in terms of the disorganization of the working class and concretely coordinating the interests of all classes in society. All these theories of the state, and we shall explore some more below, seem to have a common characteristic--namely they are functional theories of the state. If capitalism is to survive then certain conditions must be fulfilled and the state is created (theoretically) to provide for those conditions.

The questions to be posed to all these theories are the same as the ones we posed more generally to Parsons. Why does the state intervene in the way that allows capitalism to survive? Why does the state do what it has to? Under what conditions might the state not intervene to offset crisis tendencies? Has the state the capacity to reverse the contradiction? Might not the cure be worse than the illness?

The theories of Offe, O'Connor and Habermas, carry the assumption that it is necessary to make a radical distinction between competitive (liberal) capitalism and organized (monopoly) capitalism. There is almost the suggestion that organized capitalism has to be regarded as some new mode of production, in which the political rather than the economic is dominant. Common to them all is the view that relations of production no longer reproduce themselves of themselves. In this sense they would seem to invalidate Balibar's treatment of the capitalism mode of production. In fact this is far from being true. All these interventionist theories of the state refer to contradictions among capitalists or among workers but not between workers and capitalists, (though, of course, they may regard the latter as the primary contradiction and the former as secondary manifestation of this primary contradiction.) The point is that the interventions with which these theories are concerned relate to the relations among capitalists (infrastructure, research and development, government subsidies, etc.) or relations between the state and the surplus population (welfare, unemployment, retirement schemes, education, etc.). That is, the state's activities intervene in the reproduction of labor power and capital as inputs into a capitalist enterprise but the relations of production continue to reproduce themselves of themselves. The state provides the necessary conditions for the production cycle but the relations of production, the production of the capitalist on the one side and the worker on the other is the result of the act of production. No extra-economic element intervenes into the production process to ensure the reproduction of relations of production as is the case with the feudal mode of production.

In other words, the theories of the state which we will discuss in this section primarily concern what Marx wrote in Vol. II (process of circulation) and Vol. III (Capitalist Production as a whole), and only peripherally affect what he wrote in Vol. I (labor process). It is no coincidence that there have been no great advances in Marxist theory of the labor process. It is no coincidence that Braverman's analysis rings so true to life but at the theoretical level is largely a very clear summary of Vol. I. Both Marx and Braverman are dealing with the same

capitalist labor process. In its fundamental features it has remained the same over the last one hundred and fifty years. The form of the capitalist state, however, has changed over this period, but again by no means as much as some would like to argue. The interventions of the state, as we shall see, concern the processes of circulation, distribution and consumption but not specifically the reproduction of the relations of production. The interventionist theories supplement rather than contradict the analysis of Balibar.

## II: The Economic and Political - Administrative Recommodification

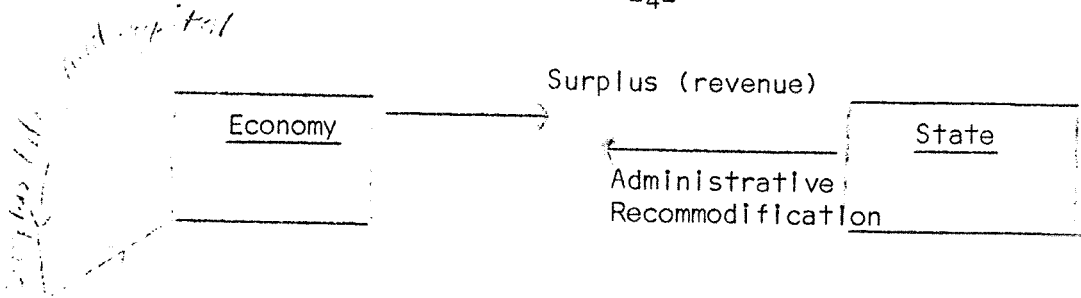
The simplest of the theories of the state which we will consider is the set of theses proposed by Offe and Ronge. Their short article is particularly useful in that it is a clear expression of the form of argument that also characterizes the work of O'Connor and Habermas.

The theses go as follows. Evidence suggests that the capitalist economy is not (no longer) self regulating. A central expression of this is the tendency for both labor and capital to be continually thrown out of the commodity form. Thus, capitalism is continually producing surplus capital and surplus population. Capital becomes obsolete or idle (due to over-production) and in both processes labor is also pushed out of production. But, argue Offe and Ronge, to the extent that all values appear in commodity form that is, for example, that all potential workers can exchange their labor power for a wage, so:

...there is no need for the state to intervene in economic decision making; there is no lack of material resources needed by the state; there is no problem in maintaining a steady process of accumulation...; and there is no problem in maintaining political support for a political party which manages to create the universe of commodities...The commodity form is the general point of equilibrium of the capitalist state.  
(pp. 140-1)

Therefore, the state intervenes to protect or guard the commodity form - an intervention which Offe and Ronge refer to as "administrative recommodification." This involves such activities as will increase the saleability of labor power (for example, training, education, and the political adjustment of wages); increasing the saleability of capital (for example, integration of capital and product markets, control over competition, infrastructural investment) and finally the renovation of backward sectors of the economy (for example, through subsidies and research and development).

These interventions, however, may lead to their own "contradictions." Thus recommodification involves depriving capital of profit and labor power and in particular the freedom to deploy either in profitable ways. Recommodification also involves the expansion of organizations which themselves cease to be subject to the commodity form in their own mode of operation. Thus, for example, teachers don't produce commodities but the skills to facilitate the sale of labor power.



A series of questions have to be confronted. What are the forces tending to throw labor and capital out of the commodity form? What are the assumptions about the capitalist mode of production which lead to such consequences? Second, why does the state intervene? To be sure the state depends on revenue, but then why is the state around in the first place? Is administrative recommodification the only function of the state? Under what conditions might the state not intervene to re-commodify values? Third, has the state the capacity to reverse the process of de-commodification? Above all, on what basis do they assert that if all values are commodified then the capitalist mode of production will pose no problems in terms of survival? Isn't this precisely the situation which Marx delineated as leading to the collapse of capitalism? Fourth, where do agents of production fit into this scheme? Where do classes fit in? To be sure Offe and Ronge do mention struggle from time to time (in connection with the state interventions) but how are classes and class struggles organized? How do they affect the form of intervention? Classes and struggles are thrown in arbitrarily and in no way systematically incorporated into their theory of the state, which is a functionalist theory based on the preservation of the technical conditions of accumulation.

### III: The Economic, Political and Public Realms--Fiscal Crisis of the State

James O'Connor takes some of Offe and Ronge's arguments in new directions. (To be fair, Offe himself has written a great deal which goes much further than the article referred to here. Indeed the works of Offe and O'Connor are closely linked and have been mutually influential.) O'Connor begins from the premise "

...that the capitalist state must try to fulfill two basic and often mutually contradictory functions--accumulation and legitimization." (p.6, also p. 70). In fact he only refers to the material bases of the legitimization processes, and has virtually nothing to say how consent to capitalist social relations is engineered through the realm of ideology.

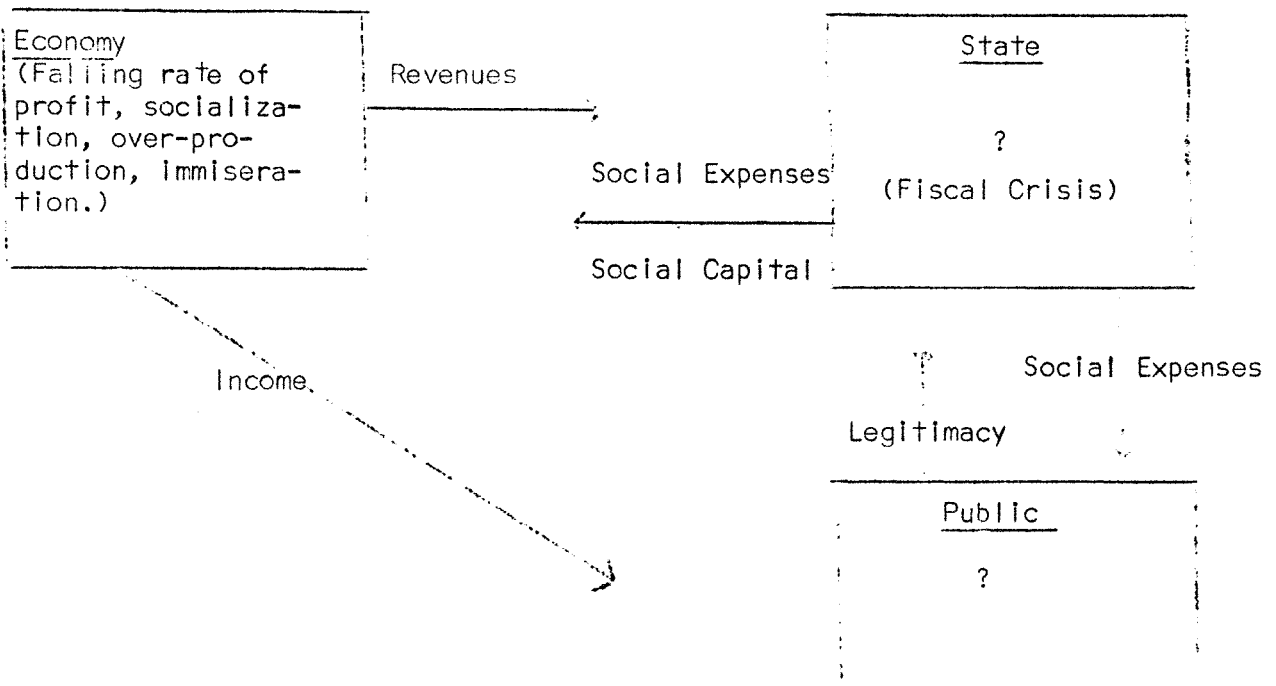
In broad outline he argues that with the development of capitalism, "the socialization of the costs of social investment and social consumption increases...and increasingly is needed for profitable accumulation by monopoly capital" (p. 8).

The general reason is that the increase in the social character of production (specialization, division of labor, interdependency, the growth of new social forms of capital such as education, etc.) either prohibits or renders unprofitable the private accumulation of constant and variable capital. The growth of the monopoly sector is irrational in the sense that it is accompanied by the unemployment, poverty, economic stagnation, and so on. To insure mass loyalty and maintain its legitimacy the state must meet various demands of those who suffer the "costs" of economic growth (p.8. See also p. 24)

The state, therefore, (must) intervenes to provide social capital for the monopoly sector. "Social capital is expenditures required for profitable private accumulation; it is indirectly productive. There are two kinds...: Social investment and social consumption...Social investment consists of projects and services that increase the productivity of a given amount of labor power and, other factors being equal, increase the rate of profit...Social consumption consists of projects and services that lower the reproduction costs of labor and, other factors being equal, increase the rate of profit..." (pp.6-7).

But, in so assisting monopoly capital to increase its profitability the state simultaneously sets in motion problems of legitimation. In the process of accumulation monopoly capital produces a relatively surplus population, that is throws workers (and uncompetitive capitalists) out of production. This excess work force is in part absorbed by the expansion of the competitive and service sectors. But to maintain harmony in these sectors and among the unemployed it is necessary for the state to distribute certain concessions which O'Connor refers to as social expenses (e.g. welfare system). At the same time, accumulation in the monopoly sector also generates surplus capacity, that is a tendency to produce more commodities than can be absorbed by the economy. The state, therefore, engages in the absorption of this "excess" surplus and thereby increases social expenses (particularly in the form of the warfare state or the permanent arms economy).

In other words, the warfare-welfare aspects of the state represent social expenses which are necessary if social crises (class struggles, etc.) and system crises (underconsumptionist tendencies) are to be avoided--crises which are themselves the result of the state's attempt to preserve the conditions of accumulation. That is, in off-setting the tendency for the rate of profit in the monopoly sector to fall, the state engenders a new set of costs which it has to absorb to protect social and economic stability. The state is involved in averting the very crises it generates through preserving the conditions of accumulation. The fiscal crisis of the state, then, refers to a "structural gap between state expenditures and state revenues" (p.9), reflecting the juxtaposition of the private appropriation of profit and the socialization or "externalization" of costs in the form of social capital and social expenses.



IV: Parsons and O'Connor

As must be clear by now, the arguments of O'Connor and Parsons take on similar forms. Both concern themselves with exchanges between different "systems" (economy, state, public realm in the one case and economy, polity and societal community in the other case). Both look upon change in terms of imbalances of inputs and outputs, leading in O'Connor's case to crises. Both theories suffer from the problem common to most orthodox functionalist analysis--the problem of explaining why parts or systems do what they are supposed to do; that is fulfill certain functional requirements or needs. And both are unclear about the role of individuals and groups of individuals as agents of change. These factors the two theories have in common, but they also diverge from one another in significant ways.

(a) How do they analyse exchanges between sectors/systems of society?

Let us consider the exchange between economy and polity (state). Parsons and Smelser (ES:72-8) examine the exchange of "productivity" (equivalent to O'Connor's revenue) and capital (O'Connor's social capital) as the basic form of A-G interchange, though it is also elaborated into a double interchange that need not concern us here. O'Connor's understanding of the relationship between economy and state is far more detailed and precise than that of Parsons and Smelser. Indeed the former is based on very much more specific sets of needs that the state must fulfill, stemming from such phenomena as the tendency for the rate of profit to fall and over-production, whereas Parsons and Smelser seem to rest their analysis of the economy on inputs of three factors of production (labor, capital and organization--land is taken as given).

Between the polity and the integrative subsystem (state and public realm) Parsons' analysis is in many ways more satisfactory than O'Connor's. (See, PSS: Parts III and IV). Whereas for O'Connor the legitimacy of the capitalist order is seen largely in terms of the extension of material concessions to those sectors of society particularly hard hit in the development of capitalism, Parsons offers a more detailed analysis in which the public offers generalized support and makes demands on the state while the latter offers "responsible leadership" and makes binding decisions for the public. O'Connor's material concessions are but one aspect of Parsons' "binding decisions." Parsons also attempts to determine the conditions under which a "legitimation" crisis may occur, viz., when the state over-extends its political credit beyond that which is implied in generalized support. However, inadequate his treatment may be, it nevertheless does go beyond O'Connor in trying to understand the basis of legitimacy of the political realm as expressed in the public realm.

(b) The dynamics of different systems' sectors of society

One of the major criticisms we had of Parsons' AGIL scheme was its failure to examine the translations of inputs into outputs--the various subsystems were in effect "black boxes." In this respect O'Connor is a definite advance on Parsons. He does have some notion of the working of the capitalist economy though it is not a sustained or systematic treatment. He tends to take for granted the various Marxist analyses of the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production, particularly the underconsumptionist theories and falling rate of profit theories and, of course, assumes that contemporary capitalism is incapable of self-regulation. At the same time, he also splits up the capitalist economy (in some broad sense analogous to Parsons and Smelser) into three sectors: competitive, monopoly and service sectors. While his economic analysis does bring a "structure" to the advanced capitalist mode of production, his political analysis suffers from the failings of Parsons,

Easton and other systems theorists--that is a tendency to treat it as a black box without a structure of its own. (Offe does make some advances in this area by talking about the operation of certain "selective mechanisms" embedded in the state.) It is true that O'Connor does talk about the formation of policies, particularly fiscal policies within certain of the legislative and executive branches of the state, but never in a systematic manner that would help us understand the relationship of the state to the economy and the public realm at a more general level. He has virtually nothing to say about the structure of the public realm and the way consent is organized among subordinate classes.

Thus, O'Connor stresses the importance of the displacement of an economic crisis into the state--the fiscal crisis of the state. On the one hand, in so doing he points to the contradictory demands placed on the state by two different exchanges--one with the public and the other with the economy. This is something Parsons never considers since he always confines himself to the examination of one interchange system at a time. On the other hand, the crisis is understood in terms of imbalances between an array of inputs and outputs and there is little notion of how the state responds, or if you will, attempts to manage those imbalances. Moreover, the fiscal crisis itself is not shown as endemic, "organic" or a necessary feature of advanced capitalism. One reason for his inability to accomplish this must lie in his failure to distinguish values from prices. That is, his analysis of the dynamics of capitalism is in terms of value while his analysis of the fiscal crisis is in terms of price. Therefore, any necessary link between the economy and the state can only be made if he sticks to prices or values throughout or recognises the "transformation problem." Furthermore, even after establishing a fiscal crisis, he still has to examine the conditions under which this becomes experienced as a social crisis. He tends to conflate system crises and social crises.

(c) How is it that the state does what it is supposed to?

With Parsons we faced the problem of how it was that those specific concrete structures associated with the polity actually did what was expected of them--that is fulfilled the functional prerequisites associated with the polity, considered as an analytical subsystem. In the same way O'Connor continually writes about the needs the state must fulfill (or is compelled to fulfill (see, for example, pp. 51, 64, 69, 150, 188, 203, 211)). But unlike Parsons, O'Connor does hint at certain answers to this problem. Thus he frequently talks about the state as though it were an instrument of monopoly capital (e.g., pp. 23-5). At other times he talks about the state as though it were a vessel for the negotiation and arbitration among conflicting pressure groups--a classical pluralist view of politics. (See, for example, pp. 150, 106, 157, 162, 246). What is missing again is some theory of the state, how it is structured and how it comes to do what it does, that is how it comes to simultaneously provide the conditions of accumulation and of legitimation.

(d) Where and how do historical actors--agents of change--appear?

Parsons seemed to have no place for agents of change--for individuals or groups of individuals--in his theoretical scheme. Everything is expressed in terms of imbalances. O'Connor most definitely incorporates historical actors--specifically classes or better interest groups. The state is seen as the object of certain struggles between different interest groups, but it is not clear where these struggles come from, how the groups which struggle are constituted and finally

why they struggle over some issues and not others. What is missing is the manner in which classes, struggles and interests are organized by the state. There is no attempt to understand the dynamics through which the political and ideological realms of the state and civil society as well as the economic shape and are shaped by the form of struggles. Rather struggles tend to be thrown into the argument at opportune moments but in a theoretically arbitrary manner. Nowhere is this more apparent in his fascinating discussion of the emergence of struggles in the service sector where, for example, welfare workers recognise a common interest with their clients. (see, Chapter 9). But when and how, under what conditions, etc.?

#### V: The Completion of the Parsonian Scheme--Legitimation Crisis

Habermas completes the Parsonian schema, by introducing a fourth realm--the socio-cultural system. As with O'Connor and Offe, the distinctive feature of advanced capitalism is the role of the state, reacting to and attempting to contain economic crises. In this way crises are displaced from the economic realm into other arenas of society. In establishing the organizational principles of advanced capitalism, Habermas defines four types of government intervention into the economic, viz., securing general conditions of accumulation (protecting property, and exchange relations, etc.); market complementing adaptations (regulating competition introducing minimal welfare conditions, education, etc.); market replacing activities (basically O'Connor's social investment); compensation for dysfunctional consequences of accumulation (O'Connor's social expenses and social consumption). Whereas under competitive capitalism the state only engaged in the first two sets of activities under advanced capitalism the state expands its activities to include all four types.

Along with the changes in the forms of intervention, Habermas also delineates three characteristics which distinguish relations of production under competitive capitalism from those under advanced capitalism. First, there is the altered form of production of surplus value, specifically the form of indirectly productive labor which characterises the production of social capital. Second, wages are no longer governed by market factors but through political class compromises and so you have now what Habermas refers to as a quasi-political wage. (Though he does not talk of wages in terms of the costs of reproduction of labor power, presumably this idea also goes by the board.) Third, the breakdown of the market and the intervention of the state to fill the "functional gaps" (his words) leads to growing needs for legitimation. Distribution is no longer governed by the market but increasingly by political decisions which therefore require new forms of legitimation. One implication of these changes, in particular the market replacing activities of the state, means for Habermas that the labor theory of value (and therefore Marx's economic theory) is no longer of any use. But why the labor theory of value (what this is, is made transparently unclear) has to go is never explained. In making such a radical distinction between competitive and advanced capitalism, Habermas unfortunately appears to throw the baby out with the bathwater, leaving us with a vague and confused AGIL paradigm--Economy, State, Public Realm and Socio-Cultural System (ESPC).

Where Parsons emphasizes, or assumes, a tendency for interchanges between sub-systems of a society to tend towards equilibrium, Habermas makes the opposite assumption, namely a tendency for interchanges to give rise to crises. But they both share the common failing, viz. an inability to justify their particular assumptions or to demonstrate that their views correspond to some intuitive or concrete understanding of the world. But first, let us give a brief description of the various crisis dispositions of Habermas's system.

The source of the economic crisis is largely expressed in terms internal to advanced capitalism. Habermas is not altogether clear what the crisis is, however, since he refers to the falling rate of profit (p.45), to "the fundamental contradiction" (p.69) and to the contradiction between socialized production for private ends (pp.39,40). There is possibly a suggestion that the repoliticization of the relations of production has not developed along with political control of the economy. To the contrary, the control economy continues to lie in the hands of private capitalists. But, as in the case of O'Connor, and Offe a systematic discussion of the crises tendencies of the capitalist economy is absent.

A second crisis--rationality crisis--is located and defines the operations of the state. This is the product of two sets of interchanges between the state and the economy (revenues from E to S and administrative decisions concerning social capital from S to E) on the one hand and the state and the public on the other (concessions from S to P and legitimacy or mass loyalty from P to S). There is a tendency, argues Habermas, for either one set of interchanges to be itself out of balance or for it to lead to an imbalance in the other set. Thus, for example, the concessions necessary to ensure mass loyalty may not be available given the revenues the state receives from the economy and the outlay of social capital it has to provide to avert an economic crisis. Here we find the fiscal crisis of the state.

In the public realm we discover the legitimacy crisis, which arises when there are inadequate "inputs" from the cultural system and the state. A legitimization crisis is associated with unfulfilled expectations arising out of a motivational or rationality crisis. Since the stability of the public realm depends on its depoliticization, that is the absence of demands for genuine political participation in the affairs of the state, it is dependent on a particular cultural input which Habermas refers to as "civil privatism" (directly analogous to civic culture--a little but not too much, that is "responsible," participation). The demand for participation is also held in check so long as the distribution of concessions provides the basis of continued loyalty to the government and approval for the administrative decisions it makes.

The final crisis--the motivational crisis lodges in the cultural system. There is a tendency under advanced capitalism, argues Habermas, towards the erosion of those values necessary for sustaining the motivation to participate in the economic and political realms. The factors leading to this erosion are complex, and I provide only the barest outline. First, Habermas asserts that the capitalism has never been able to reproduce the values upon which it rests. Rather, capitalism has always depended on pre-bourgeois traditions and ideology, namely passivity in political participation (civil privatism) and possessive individualism and achievement orientation (familial privatism). Both civil privatism (an input from C to P) and familial privatism (an input from C to E) are part of pre-capitalist ideology which competitive capitalism adopted for the maintenance of relations of production and corresponding political participation. In practice, advanced capitalism is not only incapable of reproducing but is also hostile to these ideological forms. Thus interventions by the state in the economy stirs up traditional ideologies and undermines both forms of privatism. The scope for participation in the capitalist economy (through occupational and educational structures) prove unable to support possessive individualism and achievement orientation. Moreover, the new forms of culture--post-auratic art, scientism and universal morality--are in no way able to act as functional equivalents for the pre-bourgeois forms they replace. To the contrary they tend to undermine the cultural basis of advanced capitalism and hence lead to a motivational crisis.



What is not clear in Habermas's formulation is the origin of the new culture. While political and economic structures can dissolve an old culture--"tradition"--they do not seem to be endowed with the ability of creating the new and it is therefore not apparent where "scientism", "post auratic art" and "universal morality" come from. We had the same problem with Parsons. But whereas Parsons began with a given cultural system and largely derived the form of the social structure from it, Habermas starts from both the cultural and the economic ends without explaining the relationship between the two.

By way of conclusion a few other comparisons between Habermas and Parsons can be made. Habermas does try and put some content into his various "realms" or "sub-systems"--he definitely offers more in the way of explaining the translation of inputs into outputs than does Parsons and recognises the possibility of crises arising from the inability of a given "subsystem" to resolve contradictory demands made upon it. By emphasizing the contradictory demands rather than balanced interchanges, Habermas is led to emphasize crisis tendencies where Parsons stresses equilibria. Neither make much advance in defining what a crisis really is (notwithstanding Habermas's distinction between system and social crises), how it appears, where it appears, the consequences of its appearance, etc. No empirical examples of crises are offered; all we have is a potentiality of crises in all arenas of society. Like Parsons, Habermas stresses the propagation of crises from one subsystem to another, but again like his predecessor he does not offer any directionality in that propagation. In both schemes agents of historical change are absent--there is no attempt to incorporate notions of struggles which would shape and in turn be shaped by participation in the various realms.

In general, then, we find that Habermas, O'Connor and Offe share many of the defects of conventional functionalist theories, viz. they have no theory of collapse. They fail to specify the conditions under which specific structures act to preserve rather than undermine other structures. They fail to incorporate struggles as a decisive element in the determination of the "functionality" of specific structures. Ultimately theories of capitalism cannot arbitrarily pick on "crisis tendencies" in the economy and then erect a corresponding theory of the state destined to fill the "functional gaps". Such procedures cannot provide a theory of change which will allow us to understand what is possible now or in the future. They either present what exists as necessary and inevitable and above all enduring. Or they talk about crises, but these turn out to be as arbitrary as the way they fill functional gaps.

## XII: ALTERNATIVE RECONSTRUCTIONS OF THE MARXIST THEORY OF THE STATE

The rise and consolidation of advanced capitalism--the emergence of monopoly capital alongside and its ascendancy over competitive capital--signals the demise of the market and the "need" for social capital and social expenses. Hence the interventionist theories of the state. How the interventionist state is established and what mechanisms ensure the necessary interventions remain obscure. It must remain obscure as long as such theories do not systematically incorporate class struggle into their theories--class struggle which is organized by the state and whose object is the state. If Offe, O'Connor and Habermas pay respect to the importance of class struggle by casually and arbitrarily inserting the notion into their descriptions Balibar, in a more rigorous formulation, systematically omits class struggle from his framework. For Balibar it is in fact another level of analysis--nevertheless a level which can and must be incorporated in the elaboration of his theoretical framework. We, therefore, turn now to "class struggle" theories of the state--the more conventional Marxist treatments of the capitalist state of Marx, Engels and Lenin which have been recently reexamined by a large number of commentators. We shall pay particular attention to two divergent approaches to the theory of the state as the focus and locus of class struggle, namely those of Poulantzas and Miliband.

### I: Instrumentalist Perspective

The fountain of the different reconstructions of the Marxist theory of the state is to be found in the Communist Manifesto, where Marx and Engels wrote:

The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. (Tucker, p. 337)

According to Miliband this is the "classical Marxist view on the subject of the state" to be conflated or equated with the notion of political power as "the organized power of one class for oppressing another" also to be found in the Manifesto (See Miliband, 1965: 283). In his book, The State in Capitalist Society, Miliband goes even further when referring to the above citation from the Manifesto.

In one form or another the concept this embodies reappears again and again in the work of both Marx and Engels; and despite the refinements and qualifications they occasionally introduced in their discussion of the state--notably to account for a certain degree of independence which they believed the state could enjoy in 'exceptional circumstances' (My italics - MB)--they never departed from the view that the state was above all the coercive instrument of a ruling class, itself defined in terms of ownership and control of the means of production. (Miliband, 1969: 5)

Miliband adds in a footnote:

See, e.g. Marx twenty-two years after the Communist Manifesto: 'At the same pace at which progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labour, the state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism (K. Marx, 'The Civil War in France'...) and Engels, 'The Modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital...an organization of the particular class which was pro-tempore the exploiting class, an organization for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the conditions of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour)' F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific...

This so-called classical view of the modern state as the coercive instrument of the bourgeoisie finds its most perfect expression in Lenin:

According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of "order", which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes. (Lenin, 'The State and Revolution' in Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 291)

But Miliband does note that there is also "another view of the state in his (Marx's) work, which it is inaccurate to hold up as of similar status with the first, but which is nonetheless of great interest..." (Miliband, 1965: 283).

This secondary view is that of the state as independent from and superior to all social classes, as being the dominant force in society rather than the instrument of a dominant class. (Miliband, 1965: 283)

The realization of the autonomy of the state occurs under exceptional consideration, when there is a situation of "class balance". Engels presents this position most clearly in The Origin of the Family, Property and the State:

As the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but as it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the

modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labor by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both. Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held balance between the nobility and the class of burghers; such was Bonapartism of the First, and still more of the Second French Empire, which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The latest performance of this kind, in which the ruler and rules appear equally ridiculous, is the new German Empire of the Bismark nation: the capitalists and workers are balanced against each other and equally cheated for the benefit of the impoverished Prussian cabbage Junkers. (Tucker, pp. 653-4)

## II: The Relative Autonomy Perspective

By contrast the alternative reconstruction of the Marxist theory of the state regards the autonomy or rather relative autonomy of the state as a normal rather than an exceptional characteristic of capitalism. Bonapartism is to be regarded not only as a historically particular form of state--namely the Second Empire in France--but as possessing features generic to all forms of capitalist states. Poulantzas denies that Bonapartism is to be only associated with some notion of class balance but rather, citing a letter from Engels to Marx (1966): "Bonapartism is after all the real religion of the modern bourgeoisie." We shall later explore precisely what aspects of Bonapartism are indeed to be regarded as generic to capitalist states and whether in fact Miliband's interpretation of Bonapartism as a product of class balance provides an adequate understanding of the Second Empire as a historically specific and relatively unusual form of state.

How, then, does this interpretation of the capitalist state differ in its understanding of the classic passage from the Manifesto: "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie?" The answer lies in the meaning of "common affairs" of the "whole bourgeoisie"--what are these common affairs or common interests? What interests do all members of the bourgeoisie share? They can only be their interests in the preservation of the capitalist system as a whole. These include the preservation of the technical or economic conditions of accumulation about which we have talked in the context of "interventionist theories of the state". They also include the preservation of the political conditions of accumulation--the containment and organization of class struggle so as to preserve the cohesion of the entire social formation. But what must be true if the state is to protect these common interests of the bourgeoisie? Well, it is argued by commentators from the "relative autonomy" school that the state must not side with this capitalist or that capitalist, this fraction of the capitalist class or that fraction. The state must present itself as above the struggles between individual capitalists or fractions of capital since to side with one or the other would jeopardise its ability to protect the common interest. That is, in order to protect the common

interests of the whole bourgeoisie, the state must be "relatively autonomous" from the economically dominant class.

There is a sense in which the state is concerned with the preservation of the capitalist system as a whole and only as part of this function with the oppression of one class by another. In order to maintain the cohesion of the entire system it could not be a mere coercive instrument of the ruling class.

Past societies shaken by class conflicts had need of the state, an organization of the exploiting class in each period for preserving the external conditions of production, and particularly for holding down by force the exploited class in the condition of oppression (slavery, serfdom or unfree tenure, wage labor) required by the existing mode of production. The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its embodiment in a visible corporation. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which in its time represented society as a whole: in antiquity the state of the slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobles; in our time, of the bourgeoisie. (Engels in Anti-Duhring)

Empirically, Marx's analysis of the factory acts gives expression to the view that the state must be in some measure independent of the immediate or short term economic interests of the economically dominant classes. For, to preserve the capitalist system as a whole, that is to protect the political (long term? common?) interests of the bourgeoisie the state must act against its short term economic interests and indeed force capitalists to make economic sacrifices. The capitalist state is not then a mere instrument of the capitalist class but is the state in a class society and expresses the interests of all classes albeit in a manner which preserves the fundamental characteristics of the entire social formation.

It follows from this that all struggles within the state... are merely the illusory forms in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another (p. 124)... Since the State is the form in which individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society of an epoch is epitomised, it follows that the State mediates in the formation of all common institutions.... (German Ideology, Tucker, p. 151)

The pages of the Wall Street Journal are a living testimony to the relative autonomy of the state, to the state acting against the economic interests of individual capitalists or fractions of capital while preserving their common interests --see corporate taxes, pollution control, enforcement of labor arbitration and other labor laws, anti-trust legislation, etc. etc. etc.

### III: The State in Capitalist Society vs. The Capitalist State

One fundamental difference between Miliband and Poulantzas' interpretation of the capitalist state revolves around their frame of reference. Whereas Miliband directs attention to the empirical discrepancies between the way the state is supposed to operate (according to the prevailing bourgeois ideology) and the way it actually operates, Poulantzas attempts to delineate the fundamental characteristics of the capitalist state as opposed to other forms of state, most particularly the feudal state. Not surprisingly, therefore, they tend to focus on different aspects of capitalism.

Miliband takes up Mills' axe and grinds away at the prevailing ideology that presents capitalism as composed of interest groups competing with one another on a more or less equal footing and that presents the state as arbitrating and reconciling conflicts among these groups. This is the view that Mills aptly described as "romantic pluralism." Unlike Mills, whose work is perhaps peculiarly American, Miliband places these ideas in a more orthodox Marxist framework. Rather than talking of a power elite Miliband sets about establishing the existence of a ruling class. The dominant economic groups are more appropriately regarded as a dominant and cohesive class than an assemblage of disparate elites. Moreover this dominant economic class exercises a directing influence over the activities of the state. The operation of the different branches of the state are heavily "biased" towards the interests of the dominant class. Thus, he talks about different forms of imperfect competition, as for example in electoral politics, where the dominant economic class can bring to bear many greater resources than the subordinate classes. He talks about the social origins, background, education, life style, etc. which members of the state elites share with the dominant economic class and which, he therefore presumes will predispose the former to act in the interests of the latter. He talks about direct interventions by the dominant economic class into the operation of the state, when for example, business men sit directly on committees in the executive branch. He also talks about the mechanisms of socialization through mass media, education, etc. that contain a heavy input from the dominant class and provide the basis of legitimation of the capitalist order. At each level Miliband is able to suggest that the state operates if not as a willing and self conscious tool of the dominant class then certainly in a way that is markedly biased towards the preservation of the immediate interests of the dominant class. In his formulation, there is no systematic way of understanding the operation of the state in opposition to the interests of the dominant economic class, for the dominant economic class is also the ruling class.

Furthermore, his inferences concerning the existence of a cohesive ruling class rest on certain assumptions which may not be tenable. Like Mills, Miliband's conclusions are largely derived from the assertion that members of the dominant economic class and state elites share a common background. But it is not clear why people with a common background must necessarily act in concert or protect the same interests. It is not clear why attending the same school, or frequenting the same club, etc. would override serious antagonisms produced by virtue of their location in different parts of the social structure, for example as top civil servant, cabinet minister, supreme court justice, President of General Motors, etc.

The "structural" position of different members of the economically dominant class and the state elites continuously place them in opposition to one another. Competition, albeit in various forms, still dominates relations among individual capitalists; the supreme court can still rule against the executive branch; the executive branch can still insist on pollution controls in automobile engines and so forth.

In other words, by emphasizing their common background, Miliband perhaps presents a false sense of cohesion among the members of the dominant classes. A more compelling testimony of such cohesion would be systematic analyses of events and activities of the different sections of the dominant classes. Both Mills and Miliband fail to examine specific events in which different sections of the dominant class have interests. Cohesion or class consciousness can ultimately only take on any meaning if it is realized through some concrete intervention. For example, a careful analysis of such a crisis as Watergate, the alignments and pressures applied by different fractions of the dominant classes would be instructive. Miliband underplays the way competition and conflict are systematically organized among individuals and "groups" with different relations to capital and to the state; the different imperatives to which structural positions give rise; the definite limits on the intervention of the members of the economically dominant class into the state, for example, into the legal system, if the latter is to preserve its legitimacy, etc. Miliband ignores the quite fundamental opposition between the immediate economic interests of individual capitalists and the collective interest of the capitalist class. The latter can only be protected at the expense of the former, by the state intervening in opposition to the interests that emerge from the day-to-day life of the individual capitalist or fraction of the capitalist class. In short, Miliband underplays the ambiguity of relations among different sections of the dominant classes--both cohesive and antagonistic--to form a contradictory unity.

#### IV: Two Types of Bias

That the outcomes of state interventions are biased in favor of the economically dominant class is beyond dispute. Furthermore, these biases are by no means random but systematic. This would be true of the operation of any state in any society divided into classes. However, what varies between societies are the particular mechanisms through which the state manages to achieve asymmetrical outcomes. What are the mechanisms of bias in a capitalist social formation? Miliband compounds two very different types of mechanisms, viz. bias that originates in the very structure of the state, in the rules of the game and bias that is produced by the different resources different classes have at their disposal to affect policy outcomes. Miliband does not appear to be sensitive to the distinction between the two types of bias since he is essentially concerned to document bias irrespective of its source.

But the question is important if we are interested in the specificity of the capitalist state and the way it operates to manage the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. Are the outcomes skewed in favor of the dominant class because the judiciary, government, military are staffed by members with particular social backgrounds and can be influenced directly by the economically dominant class?

Alternatively is it the case (approximately) that the legal order, the civil service, etc. operate according to formally neutral rules (neutral with respect to agents of production) but that members of the economically dominant classes are better able to manipulate those rules for their own ends? Put in another way, do the rules themselves recognise and treat classes differently, as is the case under feudalism, or are the rules themselves blind to the class positions and origins of the players? Miliband, since he is describing the state in capitalist society, regards both as important or at least makes no attempt to stress one more than the other. For him judges, civil servants, ministers, etc. are inherently and systematically biased and inclined to favor outcomes that protect the interests of the dominant economic class, that is the state is biased in its very functioning and organization. Outcomes also favor the dominant economic classes by virtue of the resources they can bring to bear in the formulation of policies.

Again, it is true that both types of bias exist under capitalism. But that is a trivial statement if we are interested in the conditions for the maintenance of the capitalist mode of production. In seeking the sources of the breakdown of capitalism and in formulating political positions one is interested in what is necessary for the reproduction of capitalism. One cannot be so crude a functionalist as to presume that what exists is also necessary. So when Poulantzas writes about the distinctive features of the capitalist state, he is writing about those features which are necessary for the preservation of the capitalist social formation. He is not denying the existence of other features, but rather is trying to understand what is central or as Gramsci would say "organic" to politics under capitalism. With this in mind, we can now evaluate Poulantzas' view that the distinctive feature of the capitalist state is the absence of a bias in the structure and organization of the state itself. Thus, he looks upon the legal system as treating and constituting agents of production as "free and equal" citizens; their status with respect to the means of production is systematically absent from the legal apparatus. Classes do not appear as such in the capitalist state--to the extent that they do, Poulantzas might argue, this will tend to threaten the cohesion and unity of the entire social formation. In electoral competition everyone has a formally equal vote--the electoral system as a system of rules is neutral vis-a-vis classes. A franchise based on property qualification or education which systematically builds into its rules discrimination on the basis of class is, if we take Poulantzas seriously, a threat to the stability of capitalism as reflected in the state's ability to contain and organize class struggle within definite limits. This is what Poulantzas means by the relative autonomy of the state, viz. the absence of systematic bias in its rules and the fact that these rules cannot be arbitrarily changed to favour one class or another.

The political implications of this argument are only too clear. To eliminate bias in the mode of operation of the state itself is to perfect rather than undermine the machinery which guarantees the preservation of capitalism. It means that we must take bourgeois ideology about the citizen, the fairness of the electoral system, etc. very much more seriously than Miliband. It is the realization, however imperfect, of bourgeois ideology in this area that offers the most significant support to capitalism and not discrepancies from that ideology which Miliband constantly brings to the attention of the reader. Miliband seems to imply that the bias in the rules



of the game assists the survival of capitalism (since it allows the state to be manipulated in the interests of the dominant economic class), whereas Poulantzas argues that it is the elimination of such bias that constitutes the basis of the survival of capitalism.

But Poulantzas gets carried away with his own argument. In talking about the "prior" or "formal" neutrality or in his words, "relative autonomy" of the state and of the rules by which it operates, Poulantzas neglects the second type of bias which stems from the nature of the players. Because it is largely classes who play these "games," it becomes important to understand what this may mean for the outcome of the activities and interventions of the state. Here Miliband is much more to the point than Poulantzas.

A few examples might illuminate their differences. Laws of the type, "sleeping on the streets of Berkeley is prohibited" or "stealing is a punishable offence," although they are formally neutral in that they apply equally to all citizens, nevertheless are clearly biased against the poor in their outcomes. There is, however, a quite fundamental difference between such laws and those which stipulate "hippies are not allowed to sleep on the streets of Berkeley" since such a law is both biased in its rules and in its outcomes. Yet it is laws of the latter type that characterize capitalism.

Fitzgerald and Wellman ("Satisfying the appearance of justice: choosing a jury for the trial of Wendy Yoshimura") document how a formally neutral procedure of jury selection results in a systematic bias in the composition of juries towards the white middle class. Prospective jurors have to convince a judge that they believe in certain fictions about the operation of the law. The system of interrogation, known as voir dire, places members of the white middle class in a favored position over those groups in society which have to face law enforcement agencies on a more regular basis. Although these selection procedures do not recognize class, indeed they aim to obtain representatives from all walks of life, outcomes are skewed because voir dire takes place in a class society. To eliminate biases in the rules of the game themselves would in no way significantly affect the distribution of outcomes.

Boudon in his book, Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality makes a similar argument. He suggests that one can explain inequality of educational outcomes without reference to inequality of opportunity. Suppose there is perfect equality of opportunity--the educational system recognizes only merit, children from all classes attend the same schools, there is cultural background effect, etc. He then shows how such a system, when placed in a class society, must lead to a distribution of educational levels heavily biased in favour of higher income groups. The cost-benefit balance of continuing education at any given point in the educational ladder is systematically different for children from different classes. The probability of a member from lower income groups continuing their education past any particular point is much lower than for higher income groups since, to simplify, the higher income families can afford to keep their children off the labor market longer. At any rate the different probabilities may be unrelated to the educational system but reflect the class context in which the system is placed. In

the real world the educational system does recognise class distinctions in the way it is organized (e.g. private and public schools) but the elimination of that bias would in no way significantly affect the bias in the distribution of outcomes.

Gramsci makes the same argument in connection with electoral politics. To be sure, universal suffrage is formally neutral vis-a-vis classes in that it no longer recognises classes in its "rules". However, outcomes are skewed in favor of dominant classes because of the class distribution of the capacity to persuade.

One of the most banal commonplaces which get repeated against the elective system of forming State organs is the following: that in it numbers decide everything, and that the opinions of any idiot who knows how to write (or in some countries even of an illiterate) have exactly the same weight in determining the political course of the State as the opinions of somebody who devotes his best energies to the State and the nation, etc. But the fact is that it is not true, in any sense, that numbers decide everything, nor that the opinions of all electors are of "exactly" equal weight. Numbers, in this case too, are simply an instrumental value, giving a measure and a relation and nothing more. And what then is measured? What is measured is precisely the effectiveness, and the expansive and persuasive capacity, of the opinions of a few individuals, the active minorities, the elites, the avant-gardes, etc.--i.e. their rationality, historicity or concrete functionality. Which means it is untrue that all individual opinions have "exactly" equal weight. Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously "born" in each individual brain: they have had a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion--a group of men, or a single individual even, which has developed them and presented them in the political form of current reality. The counting of "votes" is the final ceremony of a long process, in which it is precisely those who devote their best energies to the State and the nation (when such they are) who carry the greatest weight. (Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 193)

The effectiveness of the capitalist state, therefore, lies in its capacity to present itself as "formally neutral" in its operation while at the same time ensuring a distribution of outcomes that favors the dominant classes. In other words, the relative autonomy of the state also refers to the appearance of autonomy--the appearance of neutrality. (The appearance, of course, breaks down at times of crisis.)

In discussing Balibar we drew attention to the importance of the distinction between a "combination" and a "combinatory," between the rearrangement of relations among parts where the parts remained the same and a rearrangement where the parts (though not their function) assume different forms. The distinction between combination and combinatory is at the core of Poulantzas' endeavour to show that it is not merely the relationship between politics and economics that changes but the

very form of politics also changes as we move from feudalism to capitalism and presumably from capitalism to socialism. It is not, therefore, simply a matter of conquering the capitalist state but of dismantling the state and replacing it with something entirely different. It is not merely a matter of who controls the state but of the very form or structure of the state.

The implications of Miliband's position are ambiguous. To the extent that he focuses on who are in charge of the state--people with the same social background as the dominant economic class, and on who control or wield the state--the dominant economic class, so the transition to socialism involves the working class laying claim to the apparatuses of the state--gaining state power. From this perspective the state itself is neutral, in the sense that it can be "used" by any class to enforce its domination, Miliband does not analyse what is specific to the structure of the capitalist state and how it may differ from other states, such as the socialist state. His book is about the state in capitalist society and not the capitalist state. While perhaps not a reflection of Miliband's actual political position, nevertheless the implications of this work resonate with current trends in certain European communist parties--that the working class can carry out the transition to socialism by a relatively peaceful subjugation of the political apparatus to its class interests. To Poulantzas, Balibar, Althusser, et al., such "reformist" positions are political heresy. As Marx wrote in a number of places, including the 1872 preface to the Communist Manifesto and The Civil War in France:

But the working class cannot simply lay hold on the ready-made state-machinery and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation. (Second Draft of Civil War in France, p. 196)

This was the lesson Marx drew from the Paris Commune.

#### V: Epistemological Differences

In their commentaries on Miliband, Feuerbach and the young Marx, Poulantzas and Althusser both point to the dangers of engaging in debate with one's political and ideological adversary on the adversary's epistemological terrain. Important as such debate is in unmasking ideology, nonetheless by itself it leads to the absorption and acceptance of the major tenets of the problematic one is attacking. Marx's early confrontation with Hegel, and to a lesser extent his later works too, were expressed in the idiom, terminology indeed epistemology of Hegel. Only later, argues Althusser, did Marx approach a clean break with Hegel and discover a new problematic. As Marx himself suggests in The German Ideology standing Hegel on his head imprisoned Feuerbach in the same Hegelian framework from which he was trying to escape. Standing Parsons on his head by stressing conflict rather than consensus as fundamental to contemporary U.S. society traps so called conflict theorists or "radical sociology" in the same epistemological terrain as Parsons himself and they therefore suffer from the same epistemological problems, e.g., inability to understand social change. Nowhere is this clearer in Mills' rebuttal of pluralist or consensus sociology and Parsons' justified claim that what separates himself from

Mills are minor empirical differences and a certain moral evaluation. This is not to say that the attack on bourgeois sociology in terms comprehensible to itself should be avoided, but rather that the attack should not be mistaken for an alternative perspective.

A man on his head is the same man when he is finally walking on his feet. And a philosophy inverted in this way cannot be regarded as anything more than the philosophy reversed except in theoretical metaphor: in fact, its structure, its problems and the meaning of these problems are still haunted by the same problematic. (Althusser, For Marx, p. 73)

In the same way, Miliband is in danger of incorporating the problematic of his adversaries by confining himself to their concerns, their concepts and their epistemological premises. Important as his endeavour is in revealing the biases of the dominant ideology and its social science, it has to be supplemented by the movement to another problematic.

I simply mean that a precondition of any scientific approach to the 'concrete' is to make explicit the epistemological principles of its own treatment of it... In effect, one has the impression that this absence often leads Miliband to attack bourgeois ideologies of the State whilst placing himself on their own terrain. Instead of displacing the epistemological terrain and submitting these ideologies to the critique of Marxist science by demonstrating their inadequacy to the real (as Marx does, notably in the Theories of Surplus Value), Miliband appears to omit this first step. Yet the analyses of modern epistemology show that it is never possible simply to oppose 'concrete facts' to concepts, but that these must be attacked by other parallel concepts situated in a different problematic. For it is only by means of these new concepts that the old notions can be confronted with 'concrete reality'... Miliband sometimes allows himself to be unduly influenced by methodological principles of the adversary... I would say that it is visible in the difficulties that Miliband has in comprehending social classes and the State as objective structures, and their relations as an objective system of regular connections, a structure and a system whose agents, 'men', are in the words of Marx, 'bearers' of it--trager. Miliband constantly gives the impression that for him social classes or 'groups' are in some way reducible to inter-personal relations of the members of the 'diverse' groups that constitute the State apparatus, and finally that the relations between social classes and the State itself is reducible to interpersonal relations of 'individuals' composing social groups and 'individuals' composing the state apparatus... (Poulantzas, in Ideology and Social Science, pp. 240-3)

In short, Poulantzas is objecting to the "empiricist" tendencies of Miliband's work --the view that there is only one level of reality; the level we directly experience. Miliband goes out and "measures" social relations as interconnections among individuals. He receives the empirical world as it presents itself in its obviousness. He makes little attempt to establish a second level of reality behind the visible inter-subjective relations among individuals, that is a set of "structures" which have the visible inter-relations among individuals as their effect.

Poulantzas, however, tries to establish for the political what Marx constructed for the economic in the three volumes of Capital. That is Poulantzas tries to constitute theoretically rather than receive empirically, the form of the capitalist state and politics. He tries to constitute the "empty places" or structures that bear an epistemological analogy to the sets of relations which constitute the mode of production (forces of production/relations of production). The relationship of the inter-subjective and concrete relations among individuals to the underlying structure which they obscure and out of which they emerge, are analogous to the relationship between value and price, to the relationship between the articulation of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production in South Africa and apartheid, etc. In other words, Miliband never gets beyond or behind the problematic of the individual, social origins, motivations and inter-subjective connections (social networks). For Miliband it is important to examine which individuals hold positions in the state structures, for Marx and Poulantzas individuals are seen as "carriers of relations" supports, agents. They occupy a set of "empty places" and what becomes central to the analysis is the structure of the empty places--a structure which is independent of the social origins, education, motivations, etc. of the occupants of the empty places. According to Poulantzas, if directors and managers of corporations changed places with workers, this would in no way upset his notions of capitalism, since the latter is defined independently of the particular individuals who carry out its functions. (Though, of course, such mobility might threaten capitalism at another level, that of class struggle.) In dwelling on the problematic of the subject or social actor, he of course finds himself in the same prison as Parsons. He has difficulty in conceiving social change, except at the purely descriptive level. He is neither able to formulate a dynamics of the particular structures which give rise to the phenomenal world nor is he able to incorporate notions of class struggle since struggle and structure are collapsed onto a single empirical plain of social networks and motivated subjects.

To be sure Miliband is driven to talk about "objective constraints" and thereby hints at the existence of a set of structures which shape relations independently of the individual actor. Thus he talks of the consistent failure of governments dominated by socialist parties to effect any significant transformation in the operation of capitalism. However, even then he vacillates between attributing blame to the socialist leaders who exhibit human frailty by losing their ideological commitment, on the one hand, and certain not clearly specified structures that make the implementation of socialist policies difficult to accomplish in the framework of capitalism on the other. Poulantzas, by contrast, recognises that the constraints or the objective structures--the rules of the game as you might say--are the crucial determinant of the prospects for change when a socialist government assumes power, in a bourgeois democracy.

Miliband's formulation of the theory of the state is inextricably interwoven with the notion of class. The state is an instrument of the economically dominant class for the domination of society (Miliband 1969, p. 23). As already suggested this presupposes the existence of a cohesive, organized dominant class as a central feature of capitalist society. This is indeed a very stringent requirement to be built into the very definition of the state. It gives little autonomy to the constitution of the dominant class in different capitalist societies and little notion of how such cohesion is achieved in opposition to the equally fundamental divisive tendencies that separate fractions of capital and individual capitalists from one another. By dislocating the concept of class from the definition of the state and by distinguishing structures and struggles, Poulantzas is able to understand the different relations among and within the dominant economic classes, and the different relations between dominant and dominated classes as effects of different relations among structures. He is also able to understand how these structures are changed as a result of the struggle they themselves fashion. In other words, while at one level Poulantzas aims to delineate the fundamental characteristics of the capitalist state, he is also able to explain the variety of class alliances, power blocs, etc. that the various forms of capitalist state are able to produce as their effect. Precisely how such an analysis might proceed is hinted at in Marx's political texts --The Eighteenth Brumaire and Class Struggles in France.

## VI: Conclusion

Whatever fundamental epistemological and ideological differences separate Poulantzas and Miliband, they both have things to say about the concrete relationships between the state and various classes in a capitalist social formation. At an empirical level their most clear divergence revolves around the relative autonomy of the state, where relative autonomy is held to mean some measure of independence of the state from all classes. Thus, they both agree that Bonapartism represents some such autonomy. However, while Miliband attributes the phenomenon to an exceptional situation of "class balance," Poulantzas sees in Bonapartism the fundamental features of the capitalist state. Therefore, in the next session we will turn to Marx's political texts and see what they have to say about the capitalist state and Bonapartism. Was Bonapartism, considered as a concrete historical phenomenon, the product of an unusual class balance? Did Marx himself have a theory or theories of the capitalist state? If so where do they fit in relation to the debate we have outlined above?

XIII - THE STATE AND CLASS STRUGGLE: PART I

Marx was a political primitive. He could not develop a political science or a political theory, because he had no recognition of politics as an autonomous field of activity and no concept of a political order which transcends that of social class. (From Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 336)

If the "economic function" of the capitalist state is to preserve certain technical conditions of accumulation, that is provide social capital, its political and ideological functions are to organize class struggles so that they do not pose a threat to the cohesion of the social formation as a whole. Under monopoly capitalism the economic functions of the state dominate the political and ideological functions, in that the former are more "central" and "extensive" in the reproduction of the conditions of production. Under competitive capitalism, however, the economic function is subordinate to the political function because of the state's relatively minor role in preserving the technical conditions of accumulation and its correspondingly major role in organizing and containing class struggles. To understand the strictly political function of the state it is reasonable, therefore, to examine it in its purest form, that is as it occurred under competitive capitalism. It is appropriate, then, to turn to Marx's analyses of France between 1848 and 1851. The Eighteenth Brumaire and Class Struggles in France whose object was to specify the political role of the state and to constitute the political as a "relatively autonomous" set of activities. A careful examination of these texts will lay the ground for understanding the role of the state under monopoly capitalism. To be sure the application or extension of Marx's political analyses cannot be conducted in any simpleminded manner. Rather what we extract from these texts is a method, an approach, a set of questions which might guide a study of the political role of any capitalist state.

Although the economic and ideological functions of the state do not figure prominently in Marx's political analysis of France, he is by no means silent as to their place. By drawing attention to these subsidiary realms, it will be possible to understand how to incorporate them more systematically into a theory of the state under monopoly capitalism. Indeed, in the next session I will argue that Gramsci's political writings may be interpreted in precisely these terms. By applying Marx' method, he is able to move beyond Marx's historically confined understanding of politics and elaborate the outlines of a theory of a state under advanced capitalism. Gramsci's distinctive contribution is to demonstrate the increasing salience of ideology and its combination with the political as part of the state's global function of preserving the cohesion and unity of the entire social formation.

I: Six Guiding Problems for the Study of Marx's Political Texts

Rather than engage in a long and elaborate attempt to extract Marx's method from his political texts, I will reverse the order of exposition and begin with a

set of questions (distilled from the texts) which Marx answers but does not pose, at least explicitly. I will then proceed to illustrate the way Marx responds to these problems, showing general patterns in his political analysis. The formulated questions should also be viewed as an attempt to both respond to and transcend the debate between instrumentalist and relative autonomy perspectives. The way we pose the questions as we thread through the texts will be designed to illuminate the issues discussed in the last session.

#### A. The Periodization of Politics

The fundamental concept for the periodization of the history of a social formation is the mode of production. The dominance of a particular mode of production in a social formation sets limits on the form of politics in ways we discussed when we dealt with Balibar and Marx. These limits on the form of politics are so broad in the case of capitalism that we can also talk about the periodization of politics within a capitalist social formation. Furthermore we can examine the succession of different forms of politics, different forms of state independently of changes in the mode of production because the one does not necessarily affect the other. They move in different times of temporalities. In other words, because the realms of politics and economics are relatively autonomous--at least under competitive capitalism--we can simply focus on successive forms of the state. This is precisely what Marx does in the 18th Brumaire and Class Struggles in France.

So what is the basis of Marx's periodization? We are confronted with five distinct periods, viz., the July Monarchy (prior to February 24, 1848); the Social Republic (February 24 to May 4, 1848); Constituting the Republic (May 4, 1848 to May 28, 1849); The Constitutional Republic (May 28, 1849 to December 2, 1851); Bonapartism (after December 2, 1851). What are these periods? They are, I would suggest, forms of state defined by such factors as the extent of suffrage, and the party system. But Marx has a further periodization of these five distinct periods (EB: 116-7), so that the period of constituting the republic is itself divided into three, as is the period of the constitutional republic. The concept I propose to use to designate these sub-periods are government or regime and these, I suggest tentatively, may be indexed by the relationship between the executive and legislative within a given form of state. The exact meaning to be attached to the concepts "form of state" and "regime" awaits more careful analysis. What is important, at this juncture, is that Marx was clearly concerned with the problem of periodization of the political and we should not confuse what he says about one period with what he says about a different period. Too frequently commentators lift what Marx says with respect of a specific political context, and treat it as though it were a statement applicable to all capitalist social formations. It will be necessary to examine very carefully what Marx asserts about each period and from an accumulation of his contextually specific conclusions begin to formulate a more systematic theory of the capitalist state.

#### B. Relations of Classes to the State

From a structuralist perspective it is important to show how classes are formed out of struggles and the way these in turn may affect the form of state or regime. We shall return to this below. The alternative approach, which speaks to



the instrumentalist perspective, involves a different type of relationship of classes to the state. We are interested in who "controls" the state--the legislative, the executive and the various repressive and ideological apparatuses. But there are two notions of control that must be distinguished, based on the difference between those who execute policy, that is those who man/woman the apparatuses and those who influence, shape, determine, etc. those policies. (There is no place for the shaping of policies by objective constraints, by the logic of the structure of the state, etc.) Is there a class or fraction of a class which dominates by its presence and/or influences through its power the various organs of the state--the judiciary, the media, the government, the legislature, etc.? Do different classes or fractions dominate different organs of the state? How does one understand the class nature of those who run the state apparatuses independent of their class origins? What are these class origins and do they have any impact on state interventions?

We can talk about classes which are represented in the state, either directly by their physical presence or indirectly through the exercise of influence, but this is something different from the classes whose interests are protected by the state. The protection of class interests is indexed by the reproduction of a corresponding set of relations of production. So, which sets of relations of production are protected and reproduced by the state? Is it possible that the working class, for example, controls the state (even in both senses) and at the same time the state protects and reproduces capitalist relations of production? We have dealt with two categories of relations between classes and the state--representation and protection of interests. There is a third, viz., the classes which support the state, for example, the classes who vote in elections, submit to the state's interventions, recognise its legitimacy, etc. Is it possible that the state rests on the support of classes whose "interests" it continuously undermines and who achieve little or no representation in its apparatuses?

### C. The Organization of Classes

But what are classes? There are two very different notions of class in the Marxist literature. There is the "sociological" notion or "class in itself" which links class to some common position of its members to the means of production. This is a notion of class defined at the level of empty places, classes as performing a definite function, for example, capitalists, managers, petty bourgeoisie and workers. There is a second notion which views class as an historical force, that is a force that makes history. In this view classes appear as such when they enter the historical scene, when they have historically significant "effects." This is the "class for itself." There is a well worn tradition in Marxism, and its source may be found in Marx's writings, to collapse or combine these two notions of class in a mechanical manner; a tradition which either argues for the inevitability of the sociological class becoming an historical class (class in itself becomes class for itself) or poses the relationship between the two as a problem of consciousness. In this tradition there is a strong supposition that there is and should be some link between class in itself and class for itself--that such a link is natural. The tradition is also firmly established in bourgeois sociology, emanating from Weber's imputing of interests to a class and reflected in a wide range of formulations such as Dahrendorf's distinctions between "quasi groups" and "interest groups."

In our discussion of Marx's political texts we will continually come across an assumed association of economic classes treated as political actors and a definite set of "imputed" interests. The precise status of these imputed interests is not clear; they could be the long term interests, ultimate interests, natural interests, theoretical interests, etc. Whatever they are, they serve a specific function as a point of reference for the actual, lived interests of the same classes. Marx is at his most polemical and eloquent when trying to explain the discrepancy between actual and imputed interests. He seems to assume that such discrepancies are ephemeral rather than permanent (conjunctural rather than organic as Gramsci might say). Here I will try and distance myself from any presumptions about the relationship of class in itself to a class for itself by eliminating the notion of class in itself and treating class as an historical force with definite effects, or as Poulantzas would say "pertinent effects." Given that Marx's texts are based on the premise that economic classes are the relevant political actors, or at least the building blocks for such actors, it will be impossible and perhaps undesirable to completely reorient the discussion around class defined as a historical force.

One sufficient but not necessary condition for a class to be an historical force is that it be politically organized. We must then ask, which agents of production are politically organized? It is assumed, at least for present purposes that those who are politically organized into a class do in fact share some common position in relation to the means of production, though this can get one into tricky waters. Can women, then, constitute a class? Yes, insofar as they share a common position vis-a-vis the means of production? What about parties, such as the democratic party in the U.S., which represents the organization of a very disparate set of agents of production? Gramsci, for whom the party is the most natural expression of class as a political force, is sensitive to the problem.

Although every party is the expression of a social group, and of one social group only, nevertheless in certain given conditions certain parties represent a single social group precisely in so far as they exercise a balancing and arbitrating function between the interests of their group and those of other groups, and succeed in securing the development of the group which they represent with the consent and assistance of the allied groups--if not out and out with that of groups which are definitely hostile... (Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 148.

As we shall see, Marx himself tends to treat parties as the political organization of single classes. Whether Marx was correct in making such simple associations and, if he was correct, how we are to explain fundamental changes in the relations of parties to classes is a matter for further investigation. It also becomes important to examine the political scene or arena in which these parties, or other modes of political organization, become active and have their "effects." We must also inquire into the relationships between classes organized in the political arena, e.g., the party of the bourgeoisie in the legislature, and classes organized or disorganized outside the political arena, e.g., the bourgeoisie on the bourse or running factories.

A further set of questions concerns the relations of the political organized classes to one another, particularly as expressed in the relations of different

parties to one another. How do we understand the various alliances among parties? Poulantzas takes over the notion of power bloc or historical bloc from Gramsci to characterise the configuration of the different dominant classes or fractions to one another. The power bloc is a contradictory unity, cemented by a hegemonic fraction or class which presents its interests as the interests of all fractions of the power bloc. Then there are classes "allied" to the dominant classes. Frequently the petty bourgeoisie finds itself in such a position. There are also supporting classes which, in contrast to the allied classes, receive no concessions from the dominant classes but whose interests lie in the protection of the existing social formation and who are threatened by its transformation. The peasantry of the Second Empire might fit this category. These are the sorts of issues which confront any concrete analysis of the organization of classes in a given social formation in a given conjuncture. Precisely how one constructs such a map or configuration of classes is suggested in Marx's own analysis to which we will eventually turn.

#### D. Class Struggles

If classes are known by their effects, then the mechanism of production of those effects is class struggle. In the class-in-itself-for-itself problematic, struggles represent the subjective aspects that turns the objective class into a self-conscious agent of change. Ideological and political factors are regarded in a uni-dimensional manner. What is unique about the structuralist position is its abandonment of the base/superstructure mataphor and its replacement by the distinction between structures and practices. Politics and ideology have an objective structure, just as the economic. Practices, class practices or class struggles are the product of the combination of the different "levels", "instances" or structures. In other words, there are two notions of causality. The first is a notion of determination within limits of the relations among structures, that is among the economic, political and ideological instances. This is what we earlier referred to as "determination in the last instance by the economic." The second notion is also a determination within limits, but this time it refers to the way class struggles are shaped by the combination of structures and how these in turn are altered, again within limits, by the same struggles.

This involves an analytical distinction between the form of state and the form of political class struggles. We can pose a series of guiding questions. Where do the struggles occur--in the legislative assembly, on the streets, in the fields, etc.? Which classes are involved in the struggles and how are the classes represented or organized--parties, mobs, trade unions, etc.? What are the objectives of the struggles, that is specific institutions--the state or particular parts of the state (legislative assembly, throne, etc.), the means of production, ideological apparatuses (schools, newspapers, etc.)? What are the objects of class struggle--changes in the economic, the political or the ideological?

#### E. Concessions and Expropriations

The outcomes of struggles, irrespective of the object or objective, are of two types. The first affects the very form of regime or state while the second refers to changes within the framework of a given regime or state. The latter generally take the form of concessions granted to or expropriations extracted from different

classes. Thus, it is important to see which classes receive concessions or the dividends of expropriations. How are these redistributions arrived at? An enlightened bourgeoisie may voluntarily make concessions to forestall further struggles while a reactionary bourgeoisie can only be forced to part with resources through the intensification of struggle. What form do the concessions/expropriations take--are they economic, political or ideological? One way of examining these outcomes would be to analyse the processes of legislative and executive enactments.

#### F. Transitions between Forms of State and Regime

If the form of state/regime shapes class struggle, it is also true that class struggle can in turn affect the structures of politics. What are the bases of instability in any form of state or regime which make such a transition possible? Under what conditions will class struggle bring about a crisis leading to the transformation of political structures? Is there anything peculiar about the form of class struggle at points of transition? What is the relationship between economic and/or political crises and transitions in the mode of politics. Can we say anything about the role of economic and ideological structures at points of transition?

To follow the six point agenda outlined above for the period 1848 to 1851 in France would be a tall order. Carried out systematically, each of the five periods would require a book unto itself. It is also difficult to follow the agenda using Marx's texts alone since he is necessarily selective in what he reports. Therefore, our questions will serve a heuristic purpose of focusing on certain issues as we thread our way through the texts, examining each period in turn. We shall also find that the questions are tightly interwoven, so much so that no one of them can be properly answered without answering others. Accordingly we will orient the discussion in another way, namely around the two alternative constructions of the Marxist theory of state, as we discussed them in the last session. The most natural place to begin such an investigation is with the final period--Bonapartism itself. What is the relationship between Bonapartism as a historically concrete and as a theoretically elaborated form of state? What is normal and what is pathological about it? This will lead us quite naturally to its antipode--the July Monarchy which existed prior to February 25, 1848. Just as there is no dispute that the Bonapartist state had some measure of autonomy so there is equally little dispute that the July Monarchy was an instrument of the bourgeoisie, or a fraction of the bourgeoisie--the finance aristocracy. For Miliband, then, the July Monarchy is in some sense the normal and Bonapartism the pathological form of state, while for Poulantzas the opposite is true. We can shed more light on the validity of the competing theories by increasing the sample of state forms and including first the transitional forms of state between February 1848 and June 1849 (Part II) and then in Part III the constitutional bourgeois republic. In combination does Marx's study of all these forms of state constitute a theory of the state? What do his analyses suggest with respect to theories elaborated by his followers?

#### II: Bonapartism - from December 2, 1851

We shall motivate our investigation through the study of Bonapartism. What

did Marx and Engels have to say about the Second Empire as a concrete historical phenomenon? What did they have to say about Bonapartism as a particular form of state? In what sense, if any, can it be construed as containing the seeds of the stable, normal or prototypical capitalist state? To what degree was Bonapartism a unique form of state--the product of a "balance among warring classes"?

Marx talks of two features that characterise the Bonapartist state, viz. the domination of the executive over the legislative and the independence or "autonomy" of the state, in particular the executive.

...the victory of Bonaparte over parliament, of the executive power over the legislative power, of force without phrases over the force of phrases. In parliament the nation made its general will the law, that is, it made the law of the ruling class its general will. Before the executive power it renounces all will of its own and submits to the superior command of an alien will, to authority. (EB: 120-1)

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

The modern bourgeois state is embodied in two great organs, parliament and the government. Parliamentary omnipotence had during the period of the party of order republic, from 1848 to 1851 engendered its own negative--the Second Empire--and Imperialism, with its mere mockery of parliament, is the regime now flourishing in most of the great military states of the continent. (Second Draft of Civil War in France, p. 196)

The peculiarity of the Bonapartist state--its independence--is captured in relation to its predecessors. The difference is between the "dictatorship of the saber over bourgeois society" and "the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the saber" (CS: 66-7). Or more explicitly:

...under the absolute monarchy, during the first Revolution, under Napoleon, bureaucracy was only the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Under the Restoration, under Louis Philippe, under the parliamentary republic, it was the instrument of the ruling class, however much it strove for power of its own. Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent. As against civil society, the state machine has consolidated its position so thoroughly that the chief of the Society of December 10 suffices for its head... (EB: 122-3)

Does Marx specify the form of state expressed in this "Independence"? He writes of the "executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization" (EB: pp. 121 and 129); "the domination of the priests as an instrument of government...as the annointed bloodhound of the earthly police" (EB: 129-30); "the

preponderance of the army" (EB: 130), and even hints at a permanent state of seige (EB: 35). But the independence of the state is expressed most specifically in its relations with the various classes in society. We have already expressed this in Marx's contrast of Bonapartism with its "Instrumentalist" precursors (EB: 122)-- "the usurpatory dictatorship of the governmental body over society itself, rising alike above and humbling alike all classes..." (Second Draft of Civil War in France, p. 196). Marx has a long passage documenting, in his inimitable style, the subjection of the bourgeoisie to the will of the executive, personified in Bonaparte (EB: 113-9).

It is one of the paradoxes of the Bonapartist state, or at least Marx's analysis of that state, that while it subordinates all classes to itself, it also rests on their support. Above all, it relies according to Marx, on the support of the most numerous class--the peasantry.

And yet the state power is not suspended in midair. Bonaparte represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small-holding peasants...They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself. (EB: 123-4)

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

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

These are indeed important words! The capitalist state, that is the state required for the reproduction of capitalism, rests on the illusions of the most numerous class (the peasantry). Moreover, the illusions must go; they are an anachronism; they must give way, under the force of material circumstances, to the peasantry's conscious recognition of its "true" interests. When this occurs, the end of the capitalist state is in sight. We have here the first intimation that Marx regards Bonapartism ("the centralization of the state that modern society requires") as an expression of the general form of the capitalist state. What Marx underestimates, however, and we will discuss this at greater length when we come to Gramsci, is the capacity of the state to reproduce a specific ideology, or in his terms the hallucinations of the dominated classes. By talking the language of "false consciousness" (hallucinations, illusions), he adopts a mechanical (and historicist) view of ideology and its reproduction.

If the Bonapartist state does not represent the interests but the hallucinations of the peasantry, whose interests does it represent?

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

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

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

Nevertheless, he (Bonaparte) is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of this middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks upon himself as the adversary of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power, he generates its political power anew. The cause must accordingly be kept alive; but the effect, where it manifests itself, must be done away with. (EB: 131-2)

Protection of the independence of the state involves safeguarding capitalist relations of production while undermining the political power of the capitalist class. But how can this happen?

But above all, Bonaparte looks upon himself as the chief of the Society of December 10, as the representative of the lumpenproletariat to which he himself, his entourage, his government and his army belong, and whose prime consideration is to benefit itself and draw California lottery prizes from the state treasury. (EB: 132)

In this class basis of the state apparatus, lies the specific "autonomy" of the Bonapartist executive. The social origins of Bonapartism account, at least in part, for the capacity of the state to simultaneously protect the bourgeois order and its political independence of both capital and labor. While we have already shown that the protection of the bourgeois order is a condition for the political independence of the state, I shall suggest later that political independence of the state is also a condition for its protection of the bourgeois order.

How does the Bonapartist state manage to fulfill both its tasks--to protect bourgeois relations of production and undercut the political power of the bourgeoisie? What does this mean for the organization of classes, of class struggles and for the distribution of concessions and expropriations? Marx does not say a great deal about the organization or rather disorganization of the various classes, with the exception of the peasantry.

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. (EB: 124)

Marx is careful to point out that he is here talking about the conservative and not the revolutionary peasants. Indeed, Marx documents the peasant risings under the parliamentary republic which "had freed a part of the French peasants from the Napoleonic illusion and had revolutionized them...For the first time the peasants made efforts to behave independently in the face of activity of the government" (EB: 125) but they were violently repressed by the bourgeoisie. (See, also CS:90-1) Moreover, Marx clearly foresaw the possibility, if not inevitability, of peasants seeking an alliance with the proletariat.

The interests of the peasants, therefore, are no longer as under Napoleon, in accord with, but in opposition to the interests of the bourgeoisie, to capital. Hence the peasants find their natural ally and leader in the urban proletariat, whose task is



the overthrow of the bourgeois order. But strong and unlimited government...is called upon to defend this "material" order by force. This "ordre materiel" also serves as the catchword in all Bonaparte's proclamations against the rebellious peasants. (EB: 128)

Strong and unlimited government created the circumstances in which "...struggle seems to be settled in such a way that all classes, equally impotent and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt" (EB: 121). And this was the only way in which the bourgeois order could be safeguarded.

The empire, professing to rest upon the producing majority, the peasants, apparently out of the range of the class struggle between capital and labour (indifferent and hostile to both the contesting social powers), wielding the state power as a force superior to the ruling and ruled classes, imposing upon both an armistice (silencing the political, and, therefore revolutionary form of class struggle), divesting the state power from its direct form of class despotism by breaking the parliamentary and, therefore, directly political power of the appropriating classes, was the only possible state-form to secure the old social order a respite of life. (Second draft of Civil War in France, p. 198.)

However, to avert the possibility of all classes arraying themselves against the state Bonaparte organizes a series of distractions and, by continuously redistributing concessions and expropriations, plays one class off against another (EB: 132-3). "But he cannot give to one class without taking from another" (EB: 133) and so his balancing acts threaten the stability of his rule.

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

But the Second Empire and Bonapartism survived for twenty years! How could it survive? It surely could not be in such a state of anarchy, and unstable equilibrium, which Marx depicts in this passage. (The only passage in The Eighteenth Brumaire that could be construed as viewing Bonapartism to be the product of class balance.)

In fact Marx later revised the interpretation he offers in 1852, when he writes some twenty years later that on the European continent Bonapartism has "become the

only possible state form in which the appropriating class can continue to sway it over the producing class" (Second Draft of Civil War in France, p. 196)

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

There is little intimation of class balance in this analysis. To the contrary Bonapartism becomes the prototypical form of capitalist state in which labor is subordinated to capital. What happened to the unstable equilibria to which Marx referred in 1852? The conclusions he drew and their extrapolation rested on the assumption of zero-sum class conflict--what you give to one class you take from another. Marx did not anticipate the success of the Bonapartist state in promoting economic growth and Imperialism and thereby allowing the dispensation of concessions to the dominated classes without threatening the corporate interests of the dominant classes. Sensitive as he was to the importance of concessions during the parliamentary republic, Marx tended to underestimate their subsequent impact as bolstering the bourgeois order just as he underestimated the enduring significance of dominant ideologies.

What did Engels have to say about all this? In 1866 he wrote to Marx:

So Bismark has made his universal suffrage coup, even though without his Lassalle. It looks as if the German bourgeois will agree to it after a little struggle, for after all, Bonapartism is the real religion of the modern bourgeoisie. It is always becoming clearer to me that the bourgeoisie has not the stuff in it for ruling directly itself, and that therefore where there is no oligarchy, as there is here in England, to take over, in exchange for good pay, the management of the state and society in the interests of the bourgeoisie, a Bonapartist semi-dictatorship is the normal form. The big material interests of the bourgeoisie carry this through, even against the opposition of the bourgeoisie, but allow the dictatorship no share in the real power. The dictatorship in its turn, on the other hand, is forced against its will to further these material interests of the bourgeoisie. (Engels to Marx, Manchester, 13 April 1866)

In other words, Engels is saying that the state which rules independently, or at

least appears to rule independently of the bourgeoisie is the normal form of the capitalist state. This position is very different from the one he offers in 1884.

By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both. Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held the balance between the nobility and the class of burghers; such was Bonapartism of the First, and still more of the Second French Empire, which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The latest performance of this kind, in which ruler and ruled appear equally ridiculous, is the new German Empire of the Bismark nature: the capitalists and workers are balanced against each other and equally cheated for the benefit of the impoverished Prussian cabbage Junkers. (From The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Tucker: 653-4)

What possessed Engels to change his mind, to return to the closing pages of Marx's premature assessment of the Second Empire in the closing pages of The Eighteenth Brumaire? At any rate, what does class balance mean? What evidence is there for class balance in one situation and not another? Is it the independence of the state? Then why is the state independent--class balance? Is he just trapped in a tautology? Further, is it plausible to believe that the Second Empire was caught in a precarious class balance for twenty years?

We have exhausted the implications of Marx's analysis of Bonapartism for his theory of the state. Let us turn to the prototypical instrumentalist state--the July Monarchy. If Bonapartism is the exceptional state and its independence the product of class balance--then the July Monarchy must be the normal stable form of capitalist state. On the other hand if Bonapartism is the stable form, and independence of the state a necessary condition for the protection of the bourgeois order, then the July Monarchy should be found to be inherently unstable.

### III: The July Monarchy - until February 24, 1848

The July Monarchy was the rule of the finance aristocracy--bankers, stock exchange kings, railway kings, owners of coal and ironworks and forests, and a section of landed proprietors. "It sat on the throne, it dictated laws in the Chambers, it conferred political posts..." (CS: 34). It was at "the head of the administration of the State, had command of all the organized public powers, dominated public opinion through facts and the press..." (CS: 36). "The July Monarchy was nothing other than a joint stock company for the exploitation of French national wealth, the dividends of which were divided amongst ministers, Chambers, 240,000 voters and their adherents. Louis Philippe was the director of this company..." (CS: 36). "A limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king" (EB: 23). In other words the state was staffed and directed by a fraction of the French Bourgeoisie.

In whose interests did it rule? None other than the finance aristocracy itself! The July Monarchy depended on the finance aristocracy to provide it with loans and credits which increased the state deficit and thereby augmented the power of finance. The industrial bourgeoisie had an interest in cheap government and a balanced budget, but this was precluded under the rule of the finance aristocracy whose interests lay in expensive government and unbalanced budgets (CS: 34-5).

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

Who bore the burden of the rule of finance--"the resurrection of the lumpenproletariat at the top of bourgeois society" (CS: 37), whose principle was "to get rich not by production, but by pocketing the already available wealth of others" (CS: 36)? The July Monarchy sacrificed, to varying degrees, the interests of every class but the finance aristocracy itself. "The industrial bourgeoisie saw its interests endangered, the petty bourgeoisie was filled with moral indignation, and imagination of the people was offended, Paris was flooded with pamphlets...in which the rule of the finance aristocracy was denounced and stigmatized with greater or less wit" (CS: 37). France's national glory was sacrificed on the altar of finance since war unsettled the stock market. The eruption of general discontent and the overthrow of the July Monarchy was precipitated by two economic crises--the potato blight and bad harvests of 1845 and 1846 and a general industrial and commercial crisis in England in the autumn of 1847 (CS: 37-3). During the hand to hand fighting that broke out in February between the army and the people, the National Guard--of petty bourgeois background--adopted a passive role and the July Monarchy had to give way to the Provisional Government.

As a particular state form what were the internal contradictions of the July Monarchy? They lay in the power of the finance aristocracy to subordinate the state apparatus to its own immediate interests. In so doing it arrayed all classes against itself. Through the direct manipulations of laws, state expenditures, political posts and so forth the finance aristocracy was able to pursue its own economic interests at the expense of other fractions of the bourgeoisie and thereby undercut its long term interests, that is its political interests. Just as the rule of finance prevented the consolidation of a power bloc among the dominant classes, turning common interests into antagonistic interests, so equally in its relations to the dominated classes it failed to cement alliances or establish support. To the contrary it turned potential allies and support into its bitter opponents. The finance aristocracy made no attempts, through, for example, the dispensation of concessions, to present its own interests as the interests of all. In short, it failed to organize its hegemony both in relation to other fractions of the bourgeoisie and in relation to the dominated classes.

Marx's comments, therefore, support the conclusion that because the state was unable to achieve sufficient autonomy from one fraction of the bourgeoisie it could

not protect the common interests of the whole bourgeoisie, and as a result the fate of the July Monarchy was sealed. But history can only partially uphold such a conclusion. For, given the overwhelming discontent with the rule of finance, as depicted by Marx, it is by no means clear how to account for its stability and longevity--eighteen years of uninterrupted rule. Were Marx's descriptions only germane to the later years of the July Monarchy? Had the state greater autonomy in the early years? Perhaps the more intense struggles between capital and labor had provided a basis for the industrial bourgeoisie to support the finance aristocracy on the one hand and the dispensation of concessions to the working class on the other? There is a hint that ideology played its role, that the rule of the bourgeoisie was concealed behind the throne. In referring to the effects of universal suffrage--how it throws all fractions of the bourgeoisie to the helm of the state and tears from them "their treacherous mask," Marx contrasts:

...the monarchy with its property qualification only let definite fractions of the bourgeoisie compromise themselves, and let the others lie hidden behind the scenes and surrounded them with the halo of a common opposition. (CS: 54)

Notwithstanding these qualifying remarks, we have offered reasons why one particular form, an extreme form, of "instrumentalist" state might be unstable. What about other forms? For example, what happens when the control of the state by the bourgeoisie or a fraction of the bourgeoisie is mediated not through a monarchy but through a political party? Before we can examine such forms in Part III, we will have to turn to transitional forms of state reflecting different balances of political power.

XIII - THE STATE AND CLASS STRUGGLE: PART II

What would our two theories of the state--the "Instrumentalist" and "relative autonomy" positions--have to say about the form of state and its relations to different classes in a period of political transition? For Milliband exceptional periods, particularly those of a transition, are defined by some notion of class balance in which the state, as a result, assumes a measure of independence from the dominant classes. For Poulantzas the state is to some degree independent of the dominant classes during normal times. It is only in crisis periods that the state shows its true colors--its fundamental unity and affiliation to the dominant class (c.f. Chile). In a period of transition, then, the state is likely to appear as an instrument of the bourgeoisie rather than "relatively autonomous" from the bourgeoisie. The dominant class will use the state to safeguard its interests in the passage from one form of state to another. (Indeed, this is an aspect of the meaning of "relative" autonomy, that is, autonomy only so long as the bourgeoisie is not directly threatened.) From the time of the collapse of the July Monarchy to the establishment of the bourgeois republic in June 1849, one transitional form of state followed another. Which of our two theories approximates the historical process the more closely?

I: The Social Republic - February 24, 1848 to May 4, 1848

The July Monarchy gave way to the Provisional Government--a compromise among the antagonistic groups that had overthrown the monarchy, viz., the republican bourgeoisie, the republican petty bourgeoisie, the working class, and the dynastic opposition. The February Republic, declared under pressure from the Paris proletariat, was a bourgeois republic surrounded by social institutions. Although forced to make concessions to the working class, it was nevertheless a bourgeois republic. Given the maturity of the proletariat, it could not be otherwise.

What was the nature of the relationship of classes and the state under the new regime? The February Republic hurled whole classes, hitherto condemned to political nullity, into the "circle of political power" (CS: 40-1). Moreover, the rule of the bourgeoisie became transparent since the republic "struck off the crown behind which Capital kept itself concealed" (CS: 41). The provisional government attempted to strip the republic of its anti-bourgeois appearance, effectively exiling the representatives of the working class to the Luxembourg Commission. In reality the February Republic had been won by the workers for the bourgeoisie.

If Marx is unclear as to which fraction prevailed within the government itself, there is no doubt in whose interests the February Republic ruled. The only way it knew of consolidating its position as a bourgeois republic, that is a republic which protected "property, family, religion and order", was to restore the confidence of finance. Rather than ignore the Bourse and the Bank, the Provisional Government went out of its way, and at considerable cost to other classes, to "strengthen and enlarge the bankocracy which it was to have overthrown" (CS: 48).

The Provisional Government, having honored the bill drawn on the state by the old bourgeois society, succumbed to the latter. It had become the hard-pressed debtor of bourgeois society instead of confronting it as the pressing creditor that had to collect the revolutionary debts of many years. It had to consolidate the shaky bourgeois relationship, in order to fulfill obligations which are only to be fulfilled within these relationships. Credit becomes a condition of life for it and the concessions to the proletariat, the promises made to it, become so many fetters which had to be struck off. (CS: 49)

It was not direct control over the executive (or the army, courts and administration which had remained in the hands of the "old dignitaries") that assured the domination of the finance aristocracy, but the dependence of the government's very existence on the support of high finance. In this way the Provisional Government appeared autonomous when in reality its freedom was narrowly circumscribed. By making concessions to some classes and allowing representation for all classes under universal suffrage, the state could even present itself as "classless".

The phase which corresponded to this imagined liquidation of class relations was fraternité, universal fraternization and brotherhood. This pleasant abstraction from class antagonisms, this sentimental equalization of contradictory class interests, this fantastic elevation above the class struggle, fraternité, this was the special catch-cry of the February Revolution. (CS: 44-5)

Just as no amount of scorn can eliminate the real basis of an ideology of "classlessness" both in the Provisional Government and, of course, in the more recent forms of capitalist state, so no amount of optimism can portray the "illusions" of the Paris proletariat as a temporary aberration. It is true that the February Republic rested on the support of the working class which sought to put through its interests along with those of the bourgeoisie (CS: 42). Given the underdevelopment of the forces of production, the strength and independence of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry standing between capital and labor, and the political immaturity of the French proletariat, Marx argued that the latter were necessarily incapable of comprehending, let alone accomplishing or even staging their own revolution. (CS: 55) They were blinded by the euphoria of the February victory--a victory that had to be laid low in the defeat of June before it could be revealed for what it was. However, it was not just capital that the Paris workers were defending in the February Republic, but their interests within the framework of capitalist relations of production--a set of interests as real today as they were then, despite the development of the forces of production, a history of class struggles, the virtual elimination of the peasantry and the transformation of the petty bourgeoisie. We see again, as we saw in his analysis of the peasantry under Bonapartism, how Marx, in adopting the language of "false consciousness" and a mechanical relationship between the economic and the ideological underestimates the capacity of the state to organize and reproduce a commitment to particular sets of interests, irrespective of the development of the forces of production. Far from winning "the terrain for the fight for its revolutionary emancipation" (CS: 40), the proletariat had won the terrain of their eventual incorporation within the political structures of capitalism.

What more can we say about the organization of classes and class struggles? As yet, no well defined parties had been established but tentative alliances had been drawn up. The middle sections were captured by the bourgeoisie and stood more or less opposed to the working class in the elections of May 4 (CS: 52). Why should the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie side with the very class responsible for their oppression? The interests of any class are not "given" outside a particular historical conjuncture defined by a particular arrangement of economic, political and ideological structures. We can see in the organization of struggles, the distribution of concessions (the outcomes of struggles) and the dissemination of ideology, how the bourgeoisie was able to secure the support of the middle sections of French society.

The February Republic was a bourgeois republic. It protected the bourgeois order. As Marx said, it could not but be a bourgeois republic (CS: 55). Yet, it was a republic which made minimal but real concessions to the working class. Moreover, it was a republic which was brought into being at the behest of the proletariat (CS: 52). It appeared to be a Republic which preserved the material welfare of the working class at the expense of other classes. Thus, when the Provisional Government sought the support and confidence of the finance aristocracy it introduced a 45 centime tax for the peasantry (CS: 48), (though they had secured the commutation of the hated salt tax (CS: 76), and delivered the petty bourgeoisie into the hands of its creditors--big finance, the middle sections of society saw their own material sacrifices as improving the position of the proletariat and not as restoring and strengthening the domination of the bourgeoisie. There was a material basis to their interpretation of their relationship to the February Republic, since the government had created the Luxembourg Commission (an apparent concession, in fact a way of nullifying the power of the workers' representatives) (CS: 42), the ten hours act (CS: 63) and above all the National Ateliers. While nothing more than workhouses in the open, they were presented as a major concession to the demands of the working class. The petty bourgeoisie were outraged by these "state pensions for sham labour" (CS: 52).

We observe a radical disjunction in Marx's analysis of interests. On the one hand, he talks of the "true" interest of the proletariat, bourgeoisie, peasantry, etc., that is an "imputed" interest which must ultimately make itself felt. But the postulation of this imputed interest does not appear to hinder Marx's realistic analysis of the way classes act in the political scene and the determination of interests through a combination of economic, political and ideological factors. But how must we and how did Marx understand the relationship between imputed and actual interests? Are imputed irrelevant to the concrete analysis of a particular historical situation? What is their theoretical role? Do they merely express some directionality of social change common to all capitalist social formations? I have already suggested that Marx's use of imputed interests, or at least of the particular imputations he makes, leads him to underestimate the capacity of the political, ideological and even economic structures to organize and reproduce interests which conform to the reproduction of capitalism itself. Does this mean we have to dispense with the notion of imputed interests? (Or at least restrict their use to political appeals and the understanding of capitalism at the most general level.) Or should we merely confine their use to the two major functions which define the capitalist mode of production, namely capital and labor?



Whatever we decide to do with imputed interests, it is clear that a Marxist analysis will remain inadequate so long as it does not develop a theory of interests, to explain, for example, the different alliances between classes, or fractions of classes. It is not enough for us to say that the interests of the black working class are X because it acts in way Y, and it acts in way Y because its interests are X. This is mere tautology--a practice that nevertheless pervades both Marxism and political sociology. A theory of interests will help us understand how interests are produced by a particular combination of political, ideological and economic structures. (Or are interests only produced in struggles or absence of struggles?) We must examine the political texts of Marx for an implicit theory of interests.

To return to the February Republic. The elections of May 4 spelled the eventual demise of the proletariat, culminating in the June massacre. But what can we say about instability of the February Republic as a particular form of state? It might be argued that of all the forms of state which appeared in the period we are considering, the February Republic most closely approximated to a modern bourgeois democracy, in that it elicited the active support of the proletariat through the dispensation of concessions (however minimal). Struggle between capital and labor was held in temporary abeyance. Yet the balance of forces under the February Republic failed to reproduce themselves after May 4 for at least two reasons. First, the Provisional Government had been unable to relinquish the hold of the finance aristocracy and had been forced to protect its interests at the expense of other classes, in particular the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Second, the immaturity of the specifically capitalist mode of production meant that the distribution of concessions to the working class could only jeopardise the bourgeois order itself. What distinguishes the February Republic from the modern bourgeois state, and in this lay its instability, was the underdevelopment of the forces of production. But the consequences of the development of the forces of production are not those Marx foresaw. Their development did not automatically promote a class conscious proletariat or unchain class struggle. Rather it fostered a state which could protect the common interests of the whole bourgeoisie without being dependent on any one fraction of the bourgeoisie and, at the same time, could extend concessions to the dominated classes without jeopardizing the capitalist economy.

## II: The Making of the Bourgeois Republic - May 4, 1848 to May 28, 1849

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

Marx refers to the period we are about to examine as the period of the Constituent National Assembly (CNA). Its history is the history of the domination and disintegration of the republican fraction of the bourgeoisie. Under the July Monarchy, the bourgeois republicans had been part of the official opposition.

It was not a faction of the bourgeoisie held together by great common interests and marked off by specific conditions of production. It was a clique of republican-minded bourgeois, writers, lawyers, officers and officials that owed its influence to the personal antipathies of the country against Louis Philippe, to memories of the old republic, to the republican faith of a number of enthusiasts, above all, however, to French Nationalism, whose hatred of the Vienna treaties and of the alliance with England it stirred up perpetually. (EB: 27)

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

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

The different phases of this period of transition are also reflected in the organization of classes, of class struggles and of the relations of classes to the state. We shall deal with each in turn.

#### A. The Organization of Classes

Analysing how classes come to be organized during the CNA presents some difficult problems. Because it is a transitional period, it becomes particularly important to view the relationships among classes at two levels; first,

as they occur in the political scene (or as Marx says the "circle of power") and second, as they occur between class representatives within the political scene and the represented outside the political scene. Thus, it is not enough to examine the formation of parties and their struggles in the legislature or even between the legislature and the executive, since during this period (and particularly as a result of universal suffrage) crises are precipitated by the collapse of electoral support for parties, that is the detachment of parties from the class or class interests they represent.

Our guiding star must be the bourgeois republicans, since they embody the fortunes of the CNA. Just as Lamartin represented the February Republic itself--"the common uprising with its illusions, its poetry, its imagined content and its phrases" (CS: 39)--so the bourgeois republicans represented the CNA, that is the making of the bourgeois republic. They did not represent any "large fraction of their class resting on economic foundations. They had only the importance and historical title...of having asserted under the monarchy the general regime of the bourgeois class, the nameless realm of the republic, which they idealized and embellished with antique arabesques, but in which, above all, they hailed the rule of their coterie" (CS: 88-9). Once they had founded the republic and muted its enemies, their historic role had been played out and their demise followed.

During the first phase--the Executive Commission--all the major classes, insofar as they were represented in the political arena, were organized under the hegemony of the bourgeois republicans in opposition to the proletariat. The two fractions of capital linked to the royal houses of Orleans (the big bourgeoisie) and Legitimists (landed property) "only dared to show themselves under the mask of bourgeois republicanism" (CS: 54). The proletariat was excluded from representation in the Executive Commission, while the democratic petty bourgeoisie secured representation in the person of Ledru-Rollin. In the assembly he led the party of petty bourgeoisie--the Mountain--whose influence in the power bloc formed under the hegemony of the bourgeois republicans was in direct proportion to the strength of the proletariat.

So the June defeat inaugurated the period of the dictatorship of the bourgeois republicans and the fall from power of the democratic petty bourgeoisie. The royalist factions of Orleans and Legitimacy, as labels for the different fractions of capital, cautiously formed an independent party--the party of Order--"...but the military dictatorship and the state of siege in Paris permitted it to put out its antennae only very timidly and bashfully" (CS: 61). The assembly remained the exclusive representative of the bourgeois republicans--assured of the support of the Mountain when the form of the bourgeois republic was threatened and of the support of the Party of Order when the content of the bourgeois republic was threatened (CS: 61-2).

But while it maintained supremacy within the assembly, its support from outside collapsed. Hence Marx refers to them as a "coterie" rather than a "party." ("A few weeks after their victory they fell from a position of party to that of coterie")(CS: 70). Referring to the guarantees they introduced into the constitution to protect their own power, Marx writes:

Thereby they merely made the impotent attempt still to exercise power--when only a parliamentary minority, at which they already saw themselves in their mind's eye-- a power which at the present time, when they commanded a parliamentary majority and all the resources of governmental authority, was slipping daily more and more from their feeble hands. (EB: 33)

They fell from power as naturally as they rose to power. They were "...the advance fighters of the old society against the revolutionary proletariat" (CS: 70) and could only hang onto power by conjuring up the dilemma of June-- the realm of the republic or the realm of anarchy.

Accordingly, their illusions were shattered by the Presidential elections of December 10, 1848 when Cavaignac was trounced at the polls by Louis Bonaparte by a margin of six million to one million votes. December 10 saw the peasantry enter the political scene as a force for the first time. They voted en bloc for Bonaparte. With the assumption of power by a new government, including a ministry chosen by Bonaparte from the royalist factions of the bourgeoisie, new alignment among parties and classes were forged inside and outside the national assembly. The bourgeois republicans forfeited control of the state apparatuses, saw their power dwindle outside the legislature and therefore clung all the more desperately to their power within the assembly. But here too, their fortunes were changing. Their supremacy was challenged and undermined by the party of Order which now revealed its royalist colors--a synthesis of the Restoration (Legitimists) and the July Monarchy (Orleans) and beneath that the contradictory unity of two opposed fractions, capital and land (CS:88). In its struggle with the bourgeois republicans, the party of Order found a staunch ally in the arm of the executive represented by Bonaparte. The spokesmen of the democratic petty bourgeoisie--the Mountain--were able to reassert their earlier power in coalition with the socialist representatives of the proletariat. Together they formed the Red Party which stood opposed to the party of Order in the elections of May. Between the two stood the bourgeois republicans under the name of the Friends of the Constitution.

Outside parliament the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry--the great middle sections of French society--split their support for the two major parties, as they had to a much lesser extent in the Presidential elections of December 10. Then, certain advanced sections of the two classes, rather than voting for Bonaparte, had voted for Ledru-Rollin (the democratic petty bourgeoisie) and Raspail (the revolutionary proletariat) (CS: 72). Now the revolutionary elements in the army, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat found their revolutionary hero in Ledru-Rollin, the leader of the Mountain and the Red Party. The conservative middle sections of French society were won over to the side of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie--the party of Order (CS:90-2). The party of Order was victorious and sent a large majority into the Legislative Assembly.

## B. The Organization of Class Struggles

The organization of classes and the alliances, coalitions and "blocs" they form with one another must be viewed as the outcomes of struggles. Class struggles, in other words, are those struggles which have as their effects the formation of classes. It is through its struggle with capital that labor is shaped into a class, that is a real historical force that makes historically significant acts. It is in this sense that Marx sees the June defeat as a positive development, since it marked the emergence of the proletariat as a historical actor. But how should we characterize the struggles of this transitional period? More specifically what was the object of these struggles? Given that the outcome of the struggles led to a transition from the social republic to the pure bourgeois republic, the significant struggles had as their object the form of state.

But as Gramsci continually informs us class struggle takes place on the terrain of Ideology and Marx refers to the "ideological forms in which men becomes conscious of this conflict [between forces and relations of production] and fight it out" (Preface in Tucker, p. 5). What does this mean for class struggle in a period of transition? It means that struggles were struggles for hegemony in which different classes sought to put through their own interests as the general interests. Thus in the first phase the bourgeoisie sought to put its interests forward as the interests of all classes except the proletariat; in the second phase the repression of struggle meant that the bourgeoisie could ignore the general interest and concentrate on its narrow and immediate interests; in the third phase the struggle between those who created the republic and those whose interests it was designed to protect, between the republic in the making and the republic in being was couched in terms of an appeal to the common interests of all classes. During this period there was no entrenched hegemonic class. As Marx wrote, "society is [has to be] saved just as often as the circle of its rulers contracts, as a more exclusive interest is maintained against a wider one" (EB: 27). French society is indeed saved many times between February 1848 and December 1851, but never so frequently as in the period of the CNA.

The struggle between labor and capital at the barricades in June 1848 was an unmediated struggle over the bourgeois order. It was a struggle for hegemony which, according to Marx, the proletariat had to lose due to political immaturity and the underdevelopment of the forces of production. The working class had not and could not have secured that critical condition for mounting a successful assault on bourgeois society, namely the subordination of the middle sections of society beneath a proletarian leadership. Indeed, rather than assuming a directed and deliberate engagement with the guardians of the bourgeois order, the proletariat had been forced into battle by the Executive Commission. After a series of provocations, such as the restrictions on entry into the National Ateliers, the Paris workers "...were left with no choice: they had to starve or start to fight" (CS: 56). But the workers could only be crushed in the name of the republic, in the name of the general interest and not in the name of the exclusive interest of the bourgeoisie. In their

ability to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie in the name of the republic and to thereby constitute the narrow interests of the bourgeoisie as the interests of all, we find the basis of the rise to power of the bourgeois republicans.

After June the bourgeois republicans deliberated and drafted the new constitution. During most of this phase class struggle was suppressed by the enforcement of a state of siege. The final constitution was one which protected the narrow interests of the bourgeoisie and withdrew concessions made to subordinate classes before June. Class struggle was only renewed through the elections of December 10.

The republic had announced itself to this class [peasantry] with the tax collector; it announced itself to the republic with the emperor. Napoleon was the only man who had exhaustively represented the interests and the imagination of the peasant class, newly created in 1789. By writing his name on the front page of the republic, it declared war abroad and the enforcing of its class interests at home. Napoleon, for the peasants, was not a person but a program. With banners, with beat of drums and blare of trumpets, they marched to the polling booths shouting: ...No more taxes, down with the rich, down with the republic, long live the emperor! Behind the emperor was hidden the peasant war. The republic that they voted down was the republic of the rich. (CS:71)

Marx terms December 10, 1848 as "the day of the peasant insurrection" (CS:71), but it was also a day on which other classes engaged in electoral struggle against the "republic of the rich". Bonaparte was all things to all classes; he was able to represent the common interest of all classes in the defeat of the bourgeois republicans. Cavaignac, on the other hand, was only able to represent the interests of a "coterie"--a group which had no social or economic basis outside the political scene and whose strength lay in a period that was rapidly passing away.

The election of Napoleon, for the proletariat, meant the deposition of Cavaignac, the overthrow of the Constituent Assembly, the dismissal of bourgeois republicanism, the rescinding of the June victory. For the petty bourgeoisie, Napoleon meant the rule of the debtors over the creditors. For the majority of the big bourgeoisie the election of Napoleon meant an open breach with the fraction of which it has had to make use, for the moment, against the revolution, but which became intolerable to it as soon as this fraction sought to consolidate the position of the moment into the constitutional position...Finally, the army voted for Napoleon against the Mobile Guard [that had been created and favoured by the bourgeois republicans], against the peace idyll, for war. (CS: 72)

In both the initial and final phases of the transition the object of struggle was the form of state; in the first phase between the social republic and the bourgeois republic in the making and in the third phase between the republic in the making and the bourgeois republic itself. Just as in the first phase the proletariat and bourgeois republicans entered into struggle with one another so in the third phase it was Bonaparte and the party of order who combined in a struggle with the bourgeois republicans; the executive of the republic in being versus the legislative of the republic in the making. Hostilities were conducted by appeals to the population at large; each side sought to present its own actions as in the interests of all and actions of its opponent as motivated by narrow self interest. Bonaparte and the party of Order solicited petitions from the regions demanding the national assembly dissolve itself. When this did not work, Bonaparte and his ministry attempted to incite the assembly to mutiny but to no avail. And so on January 29 the assembly found its building occupied by the military and proceeded to decree its final dissolution, but only after it had completed its work. On March 21 the CNA violated the constitution by having a bill restricting "rights of association" forced upon it by the ministry and on May 11 rejected a bill of impeachment against Bonaparte and his ministry for their proclamation of an active alliance with the European counter-revolution (CS: 83-7). Each time the bourgeois republicans, still a numerical majority in the assembly, did not dare precipitate a show-down with the ministry for fear of the military might of the executive and their weakness outside the assembly. Even when they drew upon the support of the Mountain (CS: 84), their protest was of no avail.

The changed balance of forces found their clearest expression in the election of May. The main contenders were the party of Order, proclaiming the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the Red Party, proclaiming the rule of proletariat and petty bourgeois elements in coalition. Each sought to put through its interests as the interests of the majority. Marx writes of the party of Order, "Naturally it represented its class rule and the conditions of its class rule as the rule of civilization and as the necessary conditions of material production as well as of the social relations arising from it" (CS:89). As for the Red Party:

In the same measure as the party of the National, in accordance with its half-and-half nature, had allowed itself to be put down by the royalist ministry, the party of the Mountain, which had been brushed aside during the omnipotence of the National, rose and asserted itself as the parliamentary representative of the revolution...The party of the Mountain...represented a mass wavering between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whose material interests demanded democratic institutions...The Mountain therefore represented the truth of the revolution...(CS:92-3)

But in the battle of persuasion at the polls the party of Order commanded far superior resources.

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

Here Marx provides us with a succinct analysis of how the outcomes of elections based on universal suffrage can be systematically biased in favor of the dominant class, that is he illuminates the mechanisms of imperfect competition in the political sphere. In this sense he prefigures many of Gramsci's insights into the nature of ideological struggle, and its relationship to force and consent.

But we can discover an opposed view of electoral struggle in Marx, a view which regards universal suffrage as severing the subordinate classes from their "illusions."

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

To be sure universal suffrage unchains class struggle in the sense that it throws all classes into the political arena, but whether in fact it throws all fractions of the bourgeoisie to the head of the state will be a matter for further discussion. What is important here, however, are Marx's statements concerning the ideological effects of universal suffrage. His conclusions seem to rest on the fallacy of "romantic pluralism" in that they presume that all classes, more or less, are equally well placed to wage electoral struggles. Rather than unmasking the "illusions" of the subordinate classes, universal suffrage has proven to be an instrument of their reproduc-



tion. Electoral competition has come to be used as a weapon through which the bourgeoisie can present its interests as the interests of all. The mechanisms are well described in the passage cited above.

There is a tension here between two views of class struggle which not only threads through Marx's work but also through the works of those who followed in his footsteps, such as Lukacs and Lenin. On the one hand, we discover the view as expressed in the German Ideology, that the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. In other words the subordinate classes are infested with the dominant ideology in which case class struggle takes place on the terrain of the dominant ideology. On the other hand, we discover a notion expressed in the Poverty of Philosophy (and also the German Ideology, Communist Manifesto, etc.) that through struggle and the development of forces of production the subordinate classes will arrive at their own true class consciousness in which case class struggle is the struggle between ideologies. Whereas, of course, any given conjuncture can be looked at from both points of view, their political implications are very different.

### C. Classes and the State

If the form of state defines the broad limits within which class struggle takes place, e.g. universal suffrage shapes struggles over the form of state into struggle for hegemony, then we can typify each government by reference to the relationship of classes to the various apparatuses of the state.

The Executive Commission saw its task as nullifying the power of the proletariat. It provoked the Paris workers to insurrection and then in the name of republic crushed the rising in the streets. During this first phase both the legislative and executive branches of the state were wielded as the instrument of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

The June revolution is the ugly revolution, the repulsive revolution, because things have taken the place of phases, because the republic uncovered the head of the monster itself, by striking off the crown that shielded and concealed it... By making its burial place the birthplace of the bourgeois republic the proletariat compelled the latter to come out forthwith in its pure form as the state whose admitted object is to perpetuate the rule of capital, the slavery of labor. (CS: 57-8)

The proletariat laid low, the bourgeois republicans could now begin drafting the constitution. This was the phase between June and December when the bourgeois republicans "...took possession of all state offices, of the ministries, of the prefecture of police, the post office management, the positions of prefect, the higher posts of army officers now vacant. At the head of the executive power stood its general, Cavaignac..." (CS:61). In short he controlled the state apparatuses and had "the monopoly of rule" (CS: 83). But in whose class interests did they rule? Marx claims that the government was forced into the yoke of the finance aristocracy (CS:66) and that the bourgeoisie in general were the "mainstay" of the

government (CS: 69). He goes so far as to say that the national assembly was a tool of the bourgeoisie (CS: 87), that it was not the dictatorship of the saber over society but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the saber "and of the soldier they now required only the gendarme" (CS:67).

The actions taken by the government make its relationship to other classes transparently clear. Thus, many of the concessions won by the Provisional Government were withdrawn, the guarantee of work was abolished (CS: 68), the proposed progressive taxation was abandoned (CS: 69), the irremovability of judges was restored (CS: 69). (See also Marx's discussion of the organic laws in EB: 29-32). All concessions to the subordinate classes were treated as a threat to the republic. "They put bourgeois reform on the same level as proletarian revolution" (CS: 69).

We have already described the relationship of classes to the various branches of the state in the last phase of the CNA. Although the bourgeois republicans dominated the national assembly, they had been stripped of their power in the executive branch and their support outside had continued to dwindle. Though still a minority of the assembly, the coalesced royalists who formed the party of Order became increasingly powerful through the support of Bonaparte. As the head of the executive, Bonaparte had chosen a ministry composed of royalists. Until the bourgeois republicans were dismissed from the assembly in the elections of May, 1849, these two powers--the party of Order and the President--"lived in conjugal relations" (EB: 37).

But in whose interests did the state act? We can best assess the consequences of the battle between the executive and the legislative in terms of the concrete actions taken. On the seventh day of his presidency, Bonaparte proposed the retention of the salt tax which hit the peasantry and with this he lost his revolutionary salt (CS: 76). Later Bonaparte's ministry forced the assembly to pass a bill restricting right of association and extracted an approval for France's alliance with counter-revolutionary forces in Europe. None of these measures were designed to alleviate hardship among the dominated classes. The bourgeoisie through its representative--the party of Order--was able to push through legislation safeguarding its interests and at the same time could rely on Bonaparte to manage the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. Despite the struggle within the dominant class, the state was wielded as an instrument of the bourgeoisie.

### III: Conclusion

What can we say about the state and class struggle for the period February 1848 to June 1849? During the CNA the state was an instrument for the prosecution of the narrow economic interests of the bourgeoisie. During the February Republic it also made concessions to the working class--concessions which threatened the economic interests of the bourgeoisie. The survival of the bourgeois order depended on the proletariat being driven from its position of relative power. This occurred in June. The entire period provides evidence in support of Miliband's formulation of the Marxist theory

of the state. The Provisional Government assumed a limited autonomy from the bourgeoisie due to the strength of the proletariat, but this couldn't last and it had to be replaced by a more normal state of affairs in which the state became an instrument of the bourgeoisie. (We talk about the bourgeoisie as a whole here for the sake of simplicity; we should distinguish among the various fractions of the bourgeoisie and also among the various middle sections of society.) But then why were the subsequent states so short lived? The Interpretation of Poulantzas would be very different. The February Republic far from being exceptional contained in embryo the normal form of capitalist state. It was only the underdevelopment of the capitalist mode of production that rendered it so ephemeral. The low level of accumulation permitted only the most minimal of concessions. By contrast, the CNA was to be seen as a transitional and therefore abnormal period in which one form of state was replacing another. Under such circumstances the state's affiliation to the dominant classes becomes transparent; it intervenes so as to safeguard the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie and ensure its safe passage through the transition. According to this interpretation under the new (constitutional) republic (the period of the Legislative National Assembly - LNA) the state should become more independent of the dominant classes, or at least to the extent that it is stable. Miliband, on the other hand, would not expect any significant change in the relationship between the state and dominant classes in the constitutional republic.

FRANCE 1848 - 1851: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1830 In response to their demands for universal suffrage workers set  
July Monarchy - Orleanist - Louis Philippe - Aristocracy of Finance
- 1845 & 1846 Potato blight and bad harvest.
- 1847 Industrial and commercial crisis in England
- Feb 24 1848 Overthrow of Louis Philippe
- Feb 25 1848 Declaration of Republic (Provisional Government)
- Mar 16 1848 First demonstration by National Guard against Ledru Rollin,  
followed by demonstration of workers in support of Prov. Gvt.
- Apr 16 1848 Prov. Gvt. sounds alarm that workers are organizing to overthrow  
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- May 4 1848 CNA meets with RB at the helm. Behind them representatives  
of different fractions of capital.
- May 15 1848 Proletariat forces its way into CNA. Repulsed and leaders (Blanqui,  
Barbes and Raspail) jailed.
- May 24 1848 Elections (?)
- Jun 21 1848 Forcible expulsion of unmarried workers from National Ateliers
- Jun 22 1848 Capital vs. Labor. June Insurrection. Fight for preservation/  
destruction of bourgeois order.
- Jun-Dec 1848 Exclusive rule of RB in CNA. Rep. petty bourg. pushed aside.
- Aug 22 1848 CNA rejects petty bourg. demands for liquidation of debts.
- Sep. 22 1848 Election to Paris of Bonaparte, Raspail, Fould. A vote against  
CNA and Cavaignac.
- Sep-Oct 1848 RB work on constitution.
- Dec 10 1848 Louis Bonaparte elected President. Cavaignac defeated by 6m to  
1m votes. Marx terms this a peasant insurrection.
- Dec 20 1848 B. takes office. Barrot first minister. (+ Falloux and Foucher)
- Dec 27 1848 B.'s ministry proposes retention of salt tax.
- Jan 29 1849 Coup d'etat by B. and PO against CNA. Forces CNA to dissolve itself
- Mar 21 1849 Prohibition of free association - violation of constitution.
- May 8 1849 Active alliance of France with Uropean counter-revolution (Holy Alliance)
- May 13 1849 Elections. PO wins majority.
- May 28 1849 LNA meets.
- Jun 11 1849 Ledru-Rollin brings Bill of Impeachment against B. for bombardment  
of Rome.
- Jun 12 1849 LNA rejects Bill of Impeachment
- Jun 13 1849 Mountain defeated in streets by PO and Changarnier. Insurrection  
of workers in Lyons.
- Jul 8 1849 By-elections in Paris. Fresh victories for PO
- Aug-Oct 1849 LNA adjourns.
- Nov 1 1849 B. dismisses Barrot-Falloux ministry and instates d'Hautpoul Min.
- Nov 14 1849 Fould expounds new system of finance. Retention of wine tax.  
Repeal of income tax.
- Dec 20 1849 Anniversary of B. LNA decrees restoration of wine tax.
- Jan-Feb 1850 Laws directed at departments and peasantry. Education law. 45 centimes.
- Feb 5 1850 Cutting down tree of liberty as an act of provocation.
- Mar. 10 1850 By-elections. Victory of Mountain. B. and PO thrown into one  
another's arms. (Revoking Jun 48, May 49, Jun 49, Dec 49)
- Apr 28 1850 Election of Eugene Sue in Paris. (Mountain loses initiative.)
- May 8 1850 Project of 17 burgraves for new election law brought before LNA
- May 31 1850 New Election Law passed. Abolition of Universal Suffrage.
- Aug-Nov 1850 LNA adjourns.

Oct 3,10 1850 B. organizes feasts for army, designed to turn this into his own private army. Leads to breach in army and between Changarnier and B.  
 Dec 20 1850 Duprat interpellates ministry concerning Gold Bars Lottery  
 Jan 3 1851 Cabinet interpellated about order of the day which would refuse LNA troops.  
 Jan 12 1851 Changarnier dismissed. Army comes under B.'s control.  
 Jan 18 1851 No confidence vote in ministry.  
 Apr 11 1851 B. restores Ministry of Jan 18.  
 Jul 19 1851 Revision of constitution rejected.  
 Aug-Nov 1851 Impotent LNA withdraws for recess.  
 Oct 10 1851 B. announces intervention to restore universal suffrage.  
 Nov 13 1851 LNA rejects motion to restore universal suffrage (355-348 votes).  
 Nov 18 1851 Amendment to law on municipal elections loses by one vote.  
 Nov 25 1851 B. regales industrial bourg. in the mane of tranquility.  
 Dec 2 1851 Coup D'Etat.

#### Abbreviations

CNA = Constituent National Assembly  
 LNA = Legislative National Assembly  
 RB = Republican Bourgeoisie  
 P. = Party of Order  
 B. = Bonaparte (Napolean III)

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- May 31 1850 New Election Law passed. Abolition of Universal Suffrage.
- Aug-Nov 1850 LNA adjourns.

Oct 3,10 1850 B. organizes feasts for army, designed to turn this into his own private army. Leads to breach in army and between Changarnier and B.  
 Dec 20 1850 Duprat interpellates ministry concerning Gold Bars Lottery  
 Jan 3 1851 Cabinet interpellated about order of the day which would refuse LNA troops.  
 Jan 12 1851 Changarnier dismissed. Army comes under B.'s control.  
 Jan 18 1851 No confidence vote in ministry.  
 Apr 11 1851 B. restores Ministry of Jan 18.  
 Jul 19 1851 Revision of constitution rejected.  
 Aug-Nov 1851 Impotent LNA withdraws for recess.  
 Oct 10 1851 B. announces intervention to restore universal suffrage.  
 Nov 13 1851 LNA rejects motion to restore universal suffrage (355-348 votes).  
 Nov 18 1851 Amendment to law on municipal elections loses by one vote.  
 Nov 25 1851 B. regales industrial bourg. in the mane of tranquility.  
 Dec 2 1851 Coup D'Etat.

#### Abbreviations

CNA = Constituent National Assembly  
 LNA = Legislative National Assembly  
 RB = Republican Bourgeoisie  
 P. = Party of Order  
 B. = Bonaparte (Napolean III)

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