REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, POLITICAL STRATEGY, AND THE DILEMMA OF POWER

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One of the most troublesome dilemmas encountered by Marxist movements and regimes is how to effectively combine two distinct sets of tasks—the *instrumental*, which includes above all the struggle to conquer and maintain political power, and the *prefigurative*, which expresses the ultimate ends of the revolutionary process itself: popular self-emancipation, collective social and authority relations, socialist democracy. Historically, the three archetypical strategies—Leninism, structural reformism, and anarcho-communism—have all failed to integrate these two dimensions. One debilitating element of this failure has been the inability of the radical tradition to produce a conception of the transition to socialism that gives *political form* to the theoretically-prescribed goals of human liberation. The structural character of a democratic socialist state, for example, has never been clearly articulated by any of the major strategies; on the contrary, they have in one way or another only obscured this political side of revolutionary transformation by polarizing the instrumental and prefigurative spheres. They have led to bureaucratic party-states (classical Leninism, the Soviet model) or assimilation into existing bourgeois institutions (Social Democratic and Communist parties in advanced capitalist societies), or retreat from politics altogether (Council Communism, the new left). In the absence of any comprehensive theory of *socialist* authority relations, these strategies have either created new types of domination or simply adapted to established ones. Such a predicament goes to the very core of revolutionary praxis, for it dramatizes the need for concrete political mediations that connect long-range objectives and immediate struggles in some consistent way.

Lacking any systematic political theory, and thus any clear commitment to uniquely socialist forms of authority that would supersede the established institutions of domination, Marxist movements have allowed themselves to reproduce and even extend some of the most repressive features of the

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bureaucratic state. This political void within Marxism cannot be attributed to the evil machinations of "Stalinism" or "revisionism," for it is instead a product of the entire Marxist tradition—at least the major organized expressions of it. Lucio Colletti explains this phenomenon by noting that Marx (and even Lenin) thought that communism on a world scale would appear organically and also quite rapidly. Colletti adds:

> The result was that the sphere of political structures remained little examined or explored. One could formulate this paradoxically by saying that the political movement inspired by Marxism has been virtually innocent of political theory. The absurdity and danger of this situation are manifest, now that it has become clear that the so-called phase of transition to socialism is actually an extremely protracted, secular process whose length was never foreseen by Marx or Lenin, during which Communist leaderships exercise power in the name of Marxism, in the absence of any real theory of this power—let alone any control by the masses over whom they rule.[1]

As Colletti implies, a full-blown conception of socialist transformation is nowhere to be found in Marx; whatever strategic directions can be unravelled from his work are ambiguous and often inconsistent.[2] *Capital* is largely a critique of political economy, a theory of the workings of the capitalist system that in crucial respects remains confined to the very paradigm it seeks to transcend. Gramsci was correct in emphasizing, following the Bolshevik Revolution, that praxis could only be advanced through a "Revolution against *Capital*" because Marx's great opus—despite its analytical brilliance—tended to stifle transformative political vision since its categories were so much a product of the bourgeois epoch.[3] Marx apparently presumed that socialist transformation would resemble the transition from feudalism to capitalism, at least to the extent that changes in civil society would necessarily precede, and anticipate, the actual transfer of political power—but he never set out to actually conceptualize this process or take up the problem of political strategy.

Though Marx himself never reduced politics to any "underlying" economic structure, he did supply Engels and the orthodox Marxists of the Second International with enough theoretical justification to sustain their own flight from politics. What the rigid materialism and scientistic objectivism of early Marxism did was to collapse the issue of political strategy—indeed, every aspect of subjective, human intervention—into a productive apparatus that became the "fundamental" driving force of history. The supposed mechanics of capitalist development undercut the need for a conscious, well thought-out

scheme of transition or any real elaboration of new socialist structures. "Crisis", collapse, breakdown—these fatalistic, even metaphysical, conceptions propelled Marxism toward the most naive, almost apolitical, faith in progress. Insofar as capitalism was expected to disintegrate as a result of its own internal contradictions (e.g., through the falling rate of profit, crises of overproduction, immiserization of the proletariat), the transitional moment was never viewed as problematic. The goals and forms of socialist revolution stood as immanent to the logic of capitalism itself, as automatic mechanisms that rendered superfluous any concerted effort to *build* new social and authority relations throughout all stages of struggle. Marxists from Engels to Kautsky to the Austro-Marxists agreed that the *real* objective was a new system of production, a new material base upon which a rational, egalitarian order could be constructed. Attempts to specify the actual character of this transformative process were dismissed as exercises in utopian speculation. The revolutionary process was viewed as growing out of dialectical "necessity," rather than political intervention.[4]

The strategic paralysis created by this schema is too well-known to require further elaboration here. But the schema itself was, and still is, theoretically significant. Concepts like "dictatorship of the proletariat" and "withering away of the state"—even the idea of the "seizure of power" itself—were remote, deferred to the distant future. Meanwhile, with no *socialist* political theory to guide them, European Social Democratic parties found themselves situated within the prevailing bourgeois structures by default. Liberal assumptions about power, representative democracy, and authority shaped the operational norms of such parties in practice. In both its Kautskian and Bernsteinian forms, Social Democracy represented the culmination of the bourgeois revolution precisely to the extent that it brought into the liberal political arena previously excluded social forces such as the proletariat. It led to an adaptive and integrative politics not because its leaders betrayed the masses but because its narrow, instrumentalist strategy could provide no ideological alternative.

The disintegration of this Social Democratic "strategy" was hastened by the Russian Revolution and the political success of the Bolshevik model which overcame the paralysis by means of a centralized, disciplined vanguard party, prepared to *smash* the bourgeois state and seize power on behalf of the workers and peasants. It overturned the sterile objectivism represented in Russia by Plekhanov and the "legal Marxists," and brought into Marxism the element of political interventionism that would ensure revolutionary identity and effectiveness where Social Democracy had failed. It concretized the dictatorship of the proletariat by seizing political power and harnessing the

state apparatus for purposes of "socialist construction." Given its tangible, instrumental tasks, the Leninist-Jacobin strategy emerged as the unquestioned model for anti-imperialist movements in Third World countries, especially since World War II. But "success" in these terms, most notably in Soviet-type Communist systems, has in time generated new forms of political domination that have reduced the emancipatory, democratic goals of socialist transformation to a farce.

In the advanced capitalist societies, classical Leninism has generally given way to the strategy of "structural reforms," which possesses theoretical affinities with the Marxism of the Second International (and which is also in some ways an extension of the Comintern Popular Front politics of the 1930's) but which has sought to develop a positive, transformative strategy grounded in a political theory of transition that both Social Democracy and Frontism lacked. Most clearly elaborated by Palmiro Togliatti and the Italian Communists after World War II, it is a strategy that sees socialism evolving *within* and *through* the structures of bourgeois society on three fronts: parliament and elections, trade unions, and local government. But the contradictions of this strategy are such that movements pursuing it have universally lost their revolutionary identity and transformative potential for the sake of political effectiveness and a measure of power within the dominant political framework.

This historical evidence suggests that neither of these models, whatever power and economic objectives they have achieved, can provide the framework for *socialist* transformation; their primary thrust, in fact, is toward rationalization of the bourgeois order, toward one variant or another of state bureaucratic capitalism. This has already been the developmental pattern of many Leninist regimes, and will probably be the legacy of parties of structural reform in the near future. In different ways, both strategies represent the *culmination* of capitalist development, rather than its supersession. Devoid of any revolutionary conception of authority and tied to a pragmatic economism and productivism, they have comfortably adjusted to the bureaucratic, alienated politics of state capitalism—hierarchy, authoritarian social relations, the bourgeois division of labor, discipline of the work force, instrumental rationality. Whereas Leninism reproduced the essential features of capitalism, including commodity production and alienated labor, in a new and more total form, structural reformism has extended, refined, given "content" the already existing forms. The one, emerging out of pre-industrial, traditional society, tends increasingly toward bureaucratic centralism; the other, appearing at a more advanced stage of capitalist development, builds on the liberal, pluralist tradition within which it operates. In both cases, as I

shall indicate with reference to the Soviet and Italian Communist parties, the goals of socialism (which were either instrumentalized or deferred to the distant future) became absorbed by bureaucratic structures and now serve to legitimate new forms of statism.[5]

A central dilemma of Marxism, then, has been how to create a revolutionary praxis that would avoid reproducing in some way the values and institutions of bourgeois society. The strategic outlook most consistently sensitive to this problem has been anarcho-communism, which actually owes more to the various anarchist and syndicalist traditions than to Marxism itself. Its unifying theme is the idea of *prefiguration:* creating local, collective small-scale organs of socialist democracy (e.g., workers' councils, soviets, action committees, neighborhood associations) that can give expression to the spontaneous and total energy of popular struggles because they are more closely merged with such struggles. Councillism thus rejected both the dictatorship of the proletariat and the strategy of transformation through established structures, insisting that the outcome in both cases was nothing more than the conquest of existing state power rather than its supersession. Under such circumstances, there could be no anticipation of the future in the present; the egalitarian, liberatory ends of socialism would inevitably be suppressed by the contradictory methods and forms used to advance them. Yet the council movement, in its very hostility toward politics, could not move beyond the level of critique. In actuality it never elaborated any theory of transition, the logical result of a spontaneism and localism that encouraged a certain escape from questions of the party and state. From the early Russian and Italian council movements, to the anarcho-communism of the Spanish Civil War, to the new left of the 1960's, the councillist tendency (more a *tendency* than a coherent strategy) has appeared during moments of ferment and upheaval, but in the end has foundered in its own political impotence.

Another alternative to the instrumentalist strategies, which I shall call Jacobinism-II, is the Gramscian-Maoist variant of Leninism. It represents a synthesis of the global, centralizing features of the vanguard party and the localist, prefigurative elements of anarcho-communism—but maintains emphasis on the former. Gramsci and Mao sought to broaden Lenin's revolutionary strategy in a way that would restrain its natural tendencies toward elitism and bureaucratization. They stressed the "national-popular" character of the party and the role of ideological-cultural struggle as counterweights to Lenin's single-minded preoccupation with the seizure of state power. Most important, they suggested a theory of transition that is rooted in local structures of authority as well as the party itself. The key problem here is how to ensure that the Jacobin dimension does not, by virtue of its all-power-

ful centralizing function, suppress the self-activity of the masses.[6] Jacobinism-II has never really overcome the most serious limitations of classical Leninism itself. In its failure to develop a thoroughgoing critique of statism and domination, in its failure to produce a comprehensive theory of transition rooted in everyday life, it has all too often fallen victim to the imperatives of bureaucratic politics.

Jacobinism and the Soviet Experience

The major revolutions of the twentieth century have all been carried out by the Leninist vanguard party. Jacobinism can therefore claim "success"—at least insofar as the conquest of power is concerned—as one of its major advantages. From Lenin's earliest theoretical writings on revolutionary strategy in *Iskra*, through the formation of the Bolshevik party, the October Revolution, and the post-revolutionary consolidation of power, Leninism consistently stressed the danger of "spontaneity" and the need to develop a unified, centralized, and flexible revolutionary organization that would be different from the "open," disaggregated Social Democratic parties of the Second International.[7] The Leninist party was designed less for the supposed ordeal of underground battle (a theme that has been vastly overplayed) than for the task of achieving a "minority revolution."[8] Two important conditions shaped this strategy: a small proletariat coexisting with a vast peasantry in an overwhelmingly pre-industrial society, and a weak state with precarious ideological support and subject to extreme crises of legitimacy.[9] All of the celebrated features of the classical vanguard party—quasi-military command structure, the professional cadre, power orientation, ideological unity—make sense in this context.

For Lenin, everything hinged on the *immediacy* of the revolutionary struggle for power. As Lukács noted, Lenin succeeded in overturning the "laws" of capitalist development and injected politics into Marxism; the strategy was one of *Realpolitik*.[10]. The object was not socialism—that remained in the distant future—but the seizure of state power for the purpose of establishing the *preconditions* for socialism. Leninism thus advanced the subjective element, but it was tied to an instrumentalist concern for methods and techniques. The state itself, through the intervention of the combat party, becomes the primary weapon of class struggle. After the manner of Machiavelli's *Prince*, the party-state emerges as the agency of political rejuvenation and the embodiment of a new "collective will." Since the dictatorship of the proletariat (expressing the interests of the oppressed majority) was a qualitative advance beyond the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, domination was not taken up as a problem by the Bolsheviks; what counted was the *purposes* for

which power was used. The vaguely anarchistic vision of participatory democracy that Lenin sketched in *State and Revolution* would have nothing to do with the actual *transition* from capitalism to socialism. Form and content would have their own separate realities. Bureaucratic centralism and statism were thus built into the Leninist model from the outset, confined as that model was to the theoretical and political limitations of the Russian situation.

If in Leninism seizing state power became the first priority, with socialist construction to follow afterwards, then the party-state was inevitably superimposed on an amorphous and even hostile population. Mediating structures such as factory councils and soviets that could help democratize the revolutionary process had little space to flourish, and were ultimately obliterated. The transformation of social and authority relations could be undertaken only by the vanguard apparatus itself, a contradictory task that could only perpetuate the gap between state and civil society typical of Russian society as a whole. An ideologically encapsulated stratum of professional revolutionaries became the primary theoretical and political bearer of socialist objectives, which produced two separate levels of discourse, two realms of activity: one expressed through the radical culture and language of intellectual activists, the other through the manipulated responses of the popular strata.[11] As early as *What is to Be Done?*, Lenin accepted the rudiments of a theory that would lead to such consequences. Following Kautsky, he argued that Marxism was the product of an intellectual rather than a working class tradition and would have to be brought to the proletariat from outside the class struggle, through the intervention of the "external element".[12]

The continuity that developed from *What is to Be Done*? through the October Revolution and beyond can only be understood through the dialectical relationship between theory and practice that shaped Bolshevik struggles in Russia. Fundamental to such continuity is that Lenin forged a cohesive revolutionary instrument designed to conquer power at a moment of grave crisis in the traditional order, and that he brilliantly accomplished just this in the absence of any broad popular support and without a prior society-wide build-up of ideological hegemony favoring socialism. Since the state appeared as the "weakest link" in the Tsarist system, the schema did not call for a broad transformation of civil society preceding the actual transfer of power. Thus, while the Bolsheviks succeeded in their political objectives, the immediate isolation and popular opposition they encountered rendered their long-range transformative vision utopian and unrealistic. Their urban base among workers and intelligentsia was precarious, and they had barely begun to penetrate the countryside. The only way to maintain a revolutionary regime under these conditions was to embrace the centralized vanguard; beyond that,

the task of actually *transforming* such a society would call for the massive use of control, manipulation, and force from above. Bureaucratic centralism, and with it the perceptuation of class society, was therefore the inescapable logic of the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia.

Jacobinism thus finds itself caught in a dilemma. Insofar as it strives toward absolute conquest of power and transforms the masses whom it "represents" into manipulated objects, it increasingly adopts an instrumental rationality. That Leninism does not advance a conception of total socialist transformation, let alone a theory of democratic socialism, is hardly accidental. As François George argues, Lenin's whole approach is that of the revolutionary technician who concentrates on the methods, tools, and organizational means of revolutionary struggle rather than its ultimate purpose.[13] This suppression of the teleological element enables Lenin to employ the very premises of capitalism to achieve its overthrow: hierarchical organization, the authoritarian-submissive personality, alienated labor, the separation of politics from everyday life. In George's language, the party-state functions as a new "sovereign power" with its "directors of ideology" presiding over a new mode of domination. Socialist goals are beyond the present, part of a "future" world that has no organic relationship to the period of the struggle for power. Ultimate ends are never questioned or discussed, with the result that the *means*, in effect, become the institutionalized ends.

From the earliest days of the post-revolutionary period in Russia, instrumentalism had two main thrusts: on the one side, administrative centralization and rationalization, on the other industrialization. In order to consolidate power and develop economically, the early Bolshevik leadership was forced to move rapidly and make compromises. Its overriding preoccupations were those of productivity, efficiency, and control–ambitious goals that required the growth of science and technology. Lenin's conceptualization of the revolutionary process as two distinct stages is meaningful in this context; only with full expansion of the forces of production could transformation of the "superstructure" (social and authority relations, cultural life, etc.) become a realizable task. To reach this second stage, all human and technical resources would have to be mobilized as part of the drive toward political-administrative control and economic growth. Here Lenin urged the adoption of a wide range of capitalist techniques, including Taylorism, assembly-line production, "one-man management," and material incentives. Such "neutral" instrumentalities, implemented to lay the economic-technical basis for the transition to full-scale communism, served in fact to subvert those ends and push Soviet development toward state bureaucratic capitalism. As the Flerons have shown, the authoritarian and narrowly economistic methods that sub-

sequently extended the bourgeois division of labor were implemented in the earliest days of the Bolshevik regime and were consistent with the major theoretical premises of Leninism.[14]

Bureaucratic centralism was thus neither an historical aberration nor a Stalinist imposition; it was the logical outgrowth of Jacobin strategy. The impetus toward "modernization" and the administered society could hardly be avoided once the original (Leninist) path was chosen. The use of the state as a vehicle of "socialist construction" in an economically backward society where the revolutionary movement could claim only minimal support virtually guaranteed future bureaucratic development. While the Bolshevik leadership counted heavily upon insurgency abroad, Jacobinism also presupposed a certain element of risk and even isolation. Post-revolutionary conditions – economic chaos, civil war, left opposition–reinforced centralist tendencies but did not *cause* them, since the strategy itself was designed to anticipate and confront such conditions. The historical situation was not inconsistent with the assumptions of Leninist politics.

With the nascent Soviet regime largely cut off from the countryside, resting upon a very narrow and insecure ideological base, and facing militant opposition from both left and right, democratization was an unthinkable and impossible goal. Thus, in the period 1918–1920, the Bolsheviks already moved to eliminate opposition within the party (which culminated in the ban on factions at the 10th Party Congress in March, 1921) and managed to subordinate or destroy the hundreds of mass organizations that had been the backbone of revolutionary struggle in 1917. The soviets became auxiliaries of the party and quickly lost their political content; the trade unions were reduced to the status of "transmission belts"; the workers' opposition was eliminated; the factory councils succumbed to the logic of one-man management; leftist and anarchist critics were driven from the party and finally subdued by military force at Kronstadt and in the Ukraine. Conflict and crisis in Russian society strengthened the Jacobin tendency toward restoration of order, thereby cutting short experimentation with new popular forms of authority. "Unity" became the rallying banner of the party leadership. In the absence of an effective counter-force within civil society, the party-state became the unchallenged locus of all initiative and policy decisions.

Centralization and the closing off of democratic control after the October Revolution did not go unopposed within the party. The Left Communists, including Bolshevik leaders such as Osinsky, Radek, Shliapnikov, Smirnov, and Kollantai, and whose public voice was the journal *Kommunist,* argued against the primacy of the party and for a return of power to the local

assemblies.[15] Many felt that bureaucracy itself was the main enemy of socialism and argued that the goals of the revolution (which presumably included the political ideals set forth in *State and Revolution*) had already been forgotten. They stressed the issues of workers' control, local autonomy, and open debate within the party. Lenin's consistent response (which was also Trotsky's and Stalin's) was to defend hierarchy, centralized planning, and labor discipline against such "utopian" and "syndicalist" critiques. The debate between the Left Communists and Centralists continued through 1921, but the leftists had insufficient organizational leverage to mount an effective attack. Moreover, one of their central premises—that revolutionary initiative should be taken away from the party and "returned to the class"—was clearly unrealistic given the small, weak, and isolated proletariat in Russia, not to mention the vast historical pressures.

During 1920–1921, Lenin harshly attacked the Left Communists for their "purism" and for advancing "unreal demands." Here it needs to be emphasized that Lenin did not primarily defend the strengthening of centralized authority on grounds of temporary expediency. On the contrary, he viewed the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional democratic structure in that it expressed the historical interests not of a small ruling class but of the majority, i.e., the working class. Lenin equated workers' power with the actuality of Bolshevik rule, mocking the "petty bourgeois illusions" of leftists who clamored for greater democratic participation. After 1921, "democratic centralism" gave way to bureaucratic centralism, the principles of command and subordination clearly emerged, and a narrow, inaccessible corps of *appartchiki* gained control of the party. These organizational features were later extended to new dictatorial heights under Stalin, but the architect of "socialism in one country" hardly created them *de novo* after he took power.[16]

Lenin's inevitable failure to stem bureaucratization reflects the fact that the Bolshevik tradition ultimately lacked the necessary theoretical-strategic principles to establish any real democratic socialist alternative. Throughout the internal party debates between the Left Communists and Centralist Leninists, the always unchallenged frame of reference remained Jacobinism; because of its catastrophist preoccupation with crisis and its commitment to the primacy of the party (and state), it was the most compelling strategy in Russia. In the final analysis, the only comprehensive approach to socialist transformation one finds in Lenin is that which is actually followed *in practice*—a kind of adaptive, flexible tacticism that guarantees by default a reliance on statist strategy. It is a political pragmatism that readily accommodates Lenin's firm instrumentalism and scorn for the prefigurative. The impotence of the Left

Communist attack, despite its lofty anti-authoritarianism, therefore becomes intelligible; with no theoretical alternative beyond the vague spontaneist slogans of the soviets, and with Russia in the throes of crisis, their critique appeared shallow, moralistic, and devoid of any real strategic direction.

The problem of the transition to socialism was thus never squarely confronted by classical Leninism. Counterposed to the actuality of bureaucratic centralism and statism are the anarchistic and abstractly formulated theories in *State and Revolution*, which by-pass the question of the party and are *not* representative of Lenin's general strategic orientation.[17] Viewing the total context of Bolshevik theory and practice from 1903 to 1921, the party clearly emerges as the dominant element of revolutionary struggle, and after 1917, the party-state. Beyond the party-state preoccupation, which did not really challenge the traditional authority patterns, the Bolsheviks scarcely raised the question of structures. What political forms, authority relations, and organizational practices could give substance to the transitional period and to the Marxian vision of a classless and stateless society? What *political* mediations could most effectively pave the way toward the "withering away of the state," where political institutions would lose their repressive functions and equal participation would be realized? These questions generate yet another, more difficult one: can the authoritarian forms that so naturally emanate from Jacobinism ever be transformed internally to give way to a qualitatively new stage of democratic socialism?

These and other similar questions have never been taken up within the Bolshevik tradition. For Lenin, the goal of revolutionary politics was to create a dictatorship of the proletariat, the characteristics of which always remained unspecified. His demand for "all power to the soviets" was a slogan and not a theory, and in any case had no relationship to post-revolutionary developments.[18] In Lenin's thinking, the soviets merely constituted stepping stones to the conquest of power—not ends in themselves or the nucleus of a new socialist state. The party always took precedence over the soviets and, in reality, strove to limit their autonomy. True to Lenin's emphasis on administrative tasks, his vision of socialism was apparently anchored in large-scale organization.[19] Even in *State and Revolution* he argued that popular control was no longer possible under conditions of production in advanced industrial society, that "complex technical units" such as factories, railways, and banks could not operate without "ordered cooperation" and subordination.[20] This, along with Lenin's willingness to take over the bourgeois work process, "ready-made from capitalism," helps to explain his fascination with "state capitalism" as a necessary stage in the transition to full communism. Implementation of workers' control, self-management, and other "syndicalist" schemes could only undermine this compelling schema.

The predominance of the Bolshevik practice of proletarian dictatorship over the Leninist political theory in *State and Revolution* is therefore hardly contradictory; it does not result from the failure of the Bolsheviks to translate thought into action because of historical pressures. Having "smashed" the authoritarian state, Lenin in the end recreated it. The democratic prescriptions contained in *State and Revolution* were so vague and lacking in structural articulation that they could never be integrated into revolutionary strategy. Relegated to a mystical future of the "withering away of the state," they remained "beyond" politics, outside of history. One major theoretical source of this problem was Lenin's adherence to a narrow class-determined conception of state. He assumed that after the bourgeoisie was evicted from the seats of power and the state, through the intervention of the vanguard party, became the agency of the working-class majority rather than a ruling-class minority, all coercive and authoritarian functions would gradually disappear. The dictatorship of the proletariat, by definition, was a democratic instrument for advancing the class struggle. This simplistic Leninist view of the state not only undermined any self-conscious, theoretical elaboration of the transitional process; it also ignored the possibility that the "proletarian" party-state, developing according to a more complex dynamic, could constitute itself as a new type of Leviathan.

Less than a decade after Lenin departed from the political scene, Stalin would argue as follows: "We are in favor of the state dying out, and at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represents the most powerful and mighty authority of all forms of state which have existed up to the present day. The highest possible development of the power of the state, with the object of preparing the conditions of the dying out of the state—that is the Marxist formula."[21] This "dialectical" style is clearly Stalin's, as is the blatant embellishment of state authority, but its extreme Jacobinism is hardly a radical or mystical departure from the political theory that preceded it.

Though Marxism itself was originally an anti-statist theory, Soviet development since Lenin has produced what Stojanović calls the "statist myth of socialism."[22] Within Jacobin strategy, "socialism" became inseparable from the idea of state activity: control, ownership, planning, capital accumulation, employment of the work force. Statism subjugates the working class through a new ruling bureaucratic stratum that perpetuates its hegemony by carrying forth the banner of Marxism. The party-state, once having consolidated power, gradually asserts its domination over civil society, and expropriated private property is converted into a bureaucratic form of ownership: "the statist class is composed of the entire state apparatus having transformed

itself from the representative of the working class into the collective owner of the means of production".[23] The impact of statism in the Soviet Union, and in other countries where Jacobin strategy has been successful, is to *extend* the system of domination while destroying the basis of popular control. In its fetishism of centralized organization it tends to reproduce the submissive, passive character structure prevalent in any class society.[24] The masses enter the political arena as manipulated objects rather than as active, self-emancipating revolutionary subjects. Here again the transition to socialism assumes a mystical quality; the kind of consciousness, social relations, and political practices necessary to constitute the new order would seem to spring up out of nowhere, with no prior lengthy and organic process of transformation *within civil society* to generate them. The bureaucratic penetration of civil society in the USSR reduced the ideas of "advanced democracy," "state of the whole people," and "withering away of the state" to illusory, ritualized dogmas. The very notion of a transition to *socialism* is myth so long as there is no political theory to guide it.

The phenomenon of "state socialism" can therefore hardly be confused with Soviet reality today; it is a contradiction in terms. More accurately, it should be understood as "state bureaucratic capitalism" insofar as the historical function of the party-state was to destroy the vestiges of feudalism and carry out the bourgeois revolution through the state itself rather than the bourgeoisie. The centralization of capital accumulation, planning, and production allowed for a more rationalized, but nonetheless equally repressive and exploitative, economic system.[25] State bureaucratic capitalism of the Soviet genre can evolve only where the indigenous bourgeoisie is extremely weak, as in pre-revolutionary Russia. Under such circumstances, the proletariat itself, owing to its similar position of structural and ideological weakness, could not possibly be the agency of development.

The classical Jacobin model thus never was and never could have been a strategy for socialist revolution. That it would become a mechanism for *capitalist* transformation is hardly surprising. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, whatever their deepest theoretical and political motivations, were logically bound to the narrow instrumentalist logic of productivism and bourgeois authority relations. The opportunities for constructing a social democratic theory of transition were not immanent in the historical situation. In this sense, Leninism never did actually transcend the theoretical premises of the old determinist Marxism it set out to destroy: economism, denial of subjectivity, and failure to specify the forms and overall character of the transition to socialism.

The Strategy of "Structual Reforms": The Politics of Transition in Advanced Capitalism

Whereas Jacobinism flourishes best on the terrain of pre-industrial, colonialized countries with weak systems of authority, the strategy of structural reforms becomes the dominant paradigm of socialist politics in the advanced capitalist societies where bourgeois institutions are firmly implanted. The major Communist parties still functioning in the advanced countries, including the Italian, French, Finnish, and Japanese, have all abandoned Jacobinism for structural reformism, although residues of vanguardism often survive in the form of rhetoric and even some organizational practices.

The theory of structural reforms appears on the surface to be a reversion from Jacobinism to the Orthodox Marxism of traditional Social Democracy, a retreat from Lenin to Kautsky. In small part this is true. But the version developed by the Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti and others is actually a more sophisticated conception of the transition to socialism than appeared in the Second International. It is a positive, *active* strategy that seeks to by-pass the extremes of Jacobinism and spontaneism by participating within and *extending* institutions of bourgeois democracy—a gradual transformation of structures that imparts new content to the old forms. The underlying assumption of structural reformism is that a Marxist movement in advanced capitalism cannot gain hegemony until the ideological-political balance of forces in civil society strongly favors it. The transition occurs not through exploding the wage labor-capital contradiction but by the mobilization of a multi-class social bloc against the parasitic monopoly bourgeoisie. Unlike Jacobinism, it does not look to crisis or the breakdown of capitalism as the catalyst for a transfer of power; it rejects the scenario of a vanguard minority smashing the bourgeois state and setting up a dictatorship of the proletariat through armed insurrection.[26] Against the ultra-left, it offers a "realistic," tangible strategy that seeks intermediate objectives and struggles *within* the national culture and historical traditions instead of opposing the system totally by means of symbolically dramatic but politically ineffective struggles. The affirmative, transformative vision of structural reformism also takes it beyond the narrow, defensive tactics of Popular Frontism.

The experience of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), where this strategy is probably most advanced, reveals its paradoxes and contradictions most clearly: while appearing to transcend the vanguardism and instrumentalism of Jacobin strategy, it ends up reproducing them through another, more circuitous route. Indeed, structural reformism fails to produce a *political* theory of transition consistent with the goals of socialist democracy; it does not

advance a revolutionary mode of authority insofar as the forms of transition are those of bourgeois parliamentary democracy itself.

Since the end of World War II, after the PCI's leading role in the Resistance transformed it into a mass party of two and a half million members, the party directorate has pursued a "new course" geared to creating new power bases within the liberal institutions that were set up after the demise of fascism. Although the *Via Italiana* did not achieve political impact until after 1956, its genesis can be found in the strategy Togliatti formulated between 1944 and 1947.[27] The *Via Italiana* has been refined and amended since the late 1940's, but it continues to shape PCI practice in three basic ways: (1) the development of an alliance strategy that includes collaboration with the "middle classes" and Catholicism; (2) acceptance of the Republican Constitution, pluralism, and bourgeois democracy, with the goal of "democratizing" it while eliminating the corrupt, irrational, and parasitic residues of the past; and (3) modernization of the economy and redistribution of resources, including agrarian reform, industrialization of the South, elimination of monopoly control, and development of a more far-reaching welfare system. Several historical factors converged in the immediate postwar years to reinforce this strategy—the legacy of frontism, the extremely heterogeneous mass base inherited from the Resistance, the moderating influence of the Soviet Union, and fear of right-wing resurgence.

The PCI's objective at the outset was to create a parliamentary coalition of leftist forces—a "new majority"—that would undermine Christian Democratic hegemony and initiate the transition process. The "new majority" would be built from a broad electoral bloc, including workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals and students, and professionals united in an anti-fascist, anti-monopoly struggle. Vying for a power leverage within the framework of the Constitution, the PCI used a combination of populist, economistic, and anti-fascist appeals in an effort to broaden its popular support (which was already 25 percent of the electorate) and fulfill its "national-popular" mission.[28] To mobilize a cohesive "social bloc" large enough to assure the PCI entrance into the national government, the *Via Italiana* could not dismiss or alienate any important stratum, which is why it consistently appeased Catholics and the *ceti medi* (a vaguely defined "middle class" category that includes professionals, technicians, intellectuals, and some white collar workers).[29] The Togliattian vision of a "new majority" necessitated the commitment of vast resources to electoral campaigns, to the trade union movement, and to the maintenance of regional, provincial, and municipal power bastions. Alliance strategy also meant encouraging an open, non-sectarian mass membership and a less insulated, more loosely-structured cadre network than in the Leninist vanguard party.

"Anti-monopoly" strategy was constructed by *Via Italiana* architects for the purpose of isolating the extreme right and detaching the mass base of Christian Democracy from its reactionary, sectarian leadership wing. To gain votes, the PCI found itself downplaying "class" issues and socialist objectives while establishing local working agreements with the Catholics and other dominant interests. It thus immersed itself in pressure group politics and created elaborate patronage systems where it controlled local administrative structures.[30] Ideologically, the first step toward a successful alliance strategy was to neutralize Catholicism. Togliatti stressed the theme of co-existence between the PCI and the Church, Marxism and Catholicism in the 1940's and even earlier, arguing for the need to arrive at "convergence points" on the basis of a "mutual recognition of values;" but it was not until the 1960's, after left tendencies within the Church itself grew stronger, that Italian Communism took real initiatives in this direction and began to openly court the Church and the Christian Democrats.

The political effectiveness of this strategy has been impressive, at least on its own terms. The *Via Italiana* has produced a steady build-up of electoral strength—from 19 percent of the vote in 1946 to 27.2 percent in 1972, with its greatest success 34.7 percent of the vote in the 1975 regional elections—to an extent that it is now challenging the DC for political supremacy. It has elected mayors in almost every major city, and it has constructed a massive regional power base through its local administrative control (often in alliance with the Socialists) in the "Red Belt" area that extends from Lazio in Central Italy to Piedmont in the North. With a membership still exceeding one and a half million, the PCI has a strong presence in virtually every realm of Italian life.

These successes and new opportunities, dramatized by the failure of the Center-Left and the erosion of DC hegemony in recent years, have pushed the PCI even further along the *Via Italiana*. Since 1972, the "new majority" has been extended into the "historical compromise," whereby the PCI would steer its way into the government in coalition with the Christian Democrats. Inspired by Giorgio Amendola and Enrico Berlinguer, the "historical compromise" goes well beyond the idea of the PCI (or even a leftist coalition) broadening its own base to establish socialist hegemony.[31] It represents a policy of *elite* alliances with bourgeois parties, suggesting in part a return to frontism where socialism is not viewed as an immediate or even transitory objective.

The second characteristic of the *Via Italiana,* inseparable from its alliance strategy, is its firm commitment to the Constitution, the principles of

pluralism, and the structures of bourgeois democracy. However tactical and ambivalent this stance may have been in the early post-war period, by the 1960's it had become a strategic, normative involvement in every area of political activity. Togliatti originally conceived of the PCI as the agency of a new type of "mass democracy" that would supersede the traditional representative model. Instead of *destroying* liberal institutions and replacing them with a dictatorship of the proletariat, however, the socialist objective would be to *democratize* them by bringing the working class and other previously excluded strata into the pluralist system. The increasing sovereignty of the proletariat would bring about a gradual modification of structures, breaking down the centralized and inaccessible executive and bringing new vitality to mass politics and local government.[32] For Togliatti, and every PCI strategist since, the "parliamentary road to socialism" was no mere justification of electoral politics; socialist transformation and democratization of bourgeois structures were part of the same historical process. The state itself was essentially neutral, a "lay state," to be utilized by one political force or another for its own purposes but never to the exclusion of competing groups. Pluralism too was integrated into the normative framework of Marxism.[33]

The PCI pursues a range of policies that are consistent with this theme of "democratization of the state". One of its major goals is to rationalize and decentralize the existing political machinery by whittling away the power of private interests. To create a new atmosphere of democratic participation and administrative efficiency, the PCI argues for revitalizing parliament, local popular assemblies, and the regions vis-à-vis the bureaucratic executive; eliminating patronage, corruption, waste, and nepotism in government while building a more competent, professionalized civil service; simplifying the ministry system and making public agencies more open and accessible; developing national coordinating bodies for the planning of technical and scientific research, yet simultaneously *reversing* nationalization in some areas; and so forth.[34]

Economic "modernization"—the final component of the *Via Italiana*—is designed to supplement the goal of "democratization". The aim here is to rationalize production by eliminating the vestiges of backwardness and parasitism in Italian capitalism: undermine monopoly power and impose limits on the "distorted privileges" of certain sectors; encourage greater productive efficiency and competitiveness through government development of scientific and technological programs and support for small and medium-sized businesses; implement a national system of "democratic planning" and stimulation of social consumption; correct the imbalance between North and South, industry and agriculture, by means of sustained economic develop-

ment in the *Mezzogiorno;* and develop a broad welfare system—including free health care, more public housing, better retirement benefits, greater access to the educational system, and the setting up of public child-care centers.[35] The PCI assumption is that only this kind of systematic rationalization and redistribution of resources can avert the perpetual crises of a retarded capitalism. Interestingly enough, its strategy does not necessarily point to greater state ownership, (about half of the GNP is already produced by the public sector), let alone collectivization of agriculture; on the contrary, it stresses the role of local, regional, and private initiative and the importance of employing Keynesian fiscal policies—for example, credits to small businesses—to assist "modernization" and growth.

The PCI's relationship to the labor movement and to the peasantry in the South has reflected these strategic priorities. In the early postwar years, the party maintained a strong organizational presence in northern factories and dominated the large (3,500,000 member) Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), largely molding it into an instrument or "transmission belt" of PCI *political* objectives. By the late 1950's, however, this relationship had changed dramatically under the impact of the *Via Italiana:* parliamentarism and alliance strategy set in motion forces favoring the division between party and unions, politics and economics, elections and contract struggles. Themes of working class "autonomy" or "unity" and the principle of "incompatibility" between the PCI and CGIL articulated this development.[36] With the PCI devoting more and more of its energies to electoral politics and to mobilizing workers as *voters,* the unions necessarily established their hegemony over workplace struggles. The CGIL, while clinging to a broadly socialist ideology, seized upon its growing independence to push for contractual bargaining at the plant level—stressing local agreements between management and union leadership premised upon securing wage increases and maximizing output and efficiency. The task of achieving general reforms in the public sphere would be the responsibility of the PCI operating primarily as a *political* agency. This dynamic of *l'unificazione sindicale*, which has continued uninterrupted to the present time, indulges (and mirrors) the two dialectically related extremes of the *Via Italiana:* corporativist economism in the unions and electoralism in the party. At the same time, the unions emerge on their own as powerful instruments of the PCI's goal of economic rationalization.[37]

For Italian Communism in the South, "modernization" has been viewed as a two-fold process—industrialization and democratization. Though historically weak in the *Mezzogiorno,* the PCI has firmly established the *Via Italiana* thereby successfully appealing to populist demands for agrarian reform (breaking up the feudal estates and distributing small plots of land to the

rural poor). To this end it has constructed an extensive regional organization through its own system of patronage and personalism.[38] Economic development would depend not only upon destroying the remnants of feudalism—an immense barrier between North and South—but upon a systematic program of capital investment in the *Mezzogiorno* as the first step toward creating a modern structure of production and a new, proletarianized work force that would gradually "merge" with the rest of Italy. Democratization would thus build upon this process. The PCI leadership has encouraged greater peasant involvement in politics as the foundation of a modern-day *Risorgimento.* Such a transformation, however, would be channelled mainly through the electoral process, although "democratic reform" of local government along with broadening of the peasants' associations and cooperatives is seen as vital.[39]

What can we say about the overall political impact and meaning of the PCI's strategy of structural reforms? Without doubt, the *Via Italiana* has accomplished remarkable results on two levels: it has extended its popular support and strengthened its institutional position within the system. The PCI has all the characteristics of an open, dynamic, and successful Marxist political organization. But the question must be asked: on what terms has this "success" been achieved? Have years of structural adaptation and electoral compromise destroyed the PCI's capacity to oppose capitalism? Can the *Via Italiana* really be described as a strategy for the *transition to socialism,* or was it a morass of contradictions from the outset?

The postwar history of Italian Communism suggests that the *Via Italiana* has corroded even its own narrow premises; the very conditions of political activity specified by the strategy—namely, the *forms* of struggle it envisaged—served to negate its revolutionary *substance* and ultimately reduced socialism to an abstract goal. Since ends and means are politically interconnected, the PCI's strategic involvement in bourgeois institutions was bound to create a separation between its pragmatic, ongoing activity and its professed ultimate objectives. This process unfolded at three levels: (1) the strategy, like Jacobinism, provided for no prefigurative forms that might be developed during the transitional period and that might counter institutionalization; (2) parliamentarism undercut any commitment to grassroots mobilization and cultural transformation, which distanced the PCI from many spheres of everyday life and destroyed its counter-hegemonic potential; and (3) years of alliance strategy geared to electoral success have turned the PCI into a party of interest group politics—an organization that advances the particular claims (economistic, populist, patronage) of constituencies within legitimate structures. At each level, the *Via Italiana* became the victim of its own logic;

despite growth and dynamism, despite the progressive content of its goals, it could never do more than *extend* the structures and values of Italian capitalism. The increasingly conservative programs and policies embellished by the PCI today parallel these larger tendencies: economic development through private entreprise, the kind of minimalist welfare program Social Democratic parties have long accepted, opposition to liberalization of abortion laws, acceptance of the Common Market and NATO, etc. Beyond this, the PCI defends the established political and economic structures at times of crisis (e.g., during the Italian "May" of 1969), pushes for trade union control and discipline over the labor movement, and generally functions as an institution of social control. It is suspicious of militant, direct action of any kind, which it condemns as "adventurist" or "syndicalist," preferring to see issues and demands brought into the more orderly legislative framework.[40]

The strategy of structural reforms, where it has succeeded or is likely to succeed in the future, emerges as a sort of progressive or "radical" extension of bourgeois development in Italy—a rationalization and democratization of liberal capitalism that the bourgeoisie (whether through Christian Democracy or the Center-Left) has been unable to achieve. The "modernization" of the South, the emphasis on ridding the economy of waste, parasitism, and irrationality, the goal of administrative efficiency and decentralization, faith in the role of technological innovation, the encouragement of interest group politics, and the broadening of parliamentary powers all point in this direction. The PCI's vision of the *Via Italiana* as the modern-day *Risorgimento* is therefore probably not far-fetched, except that the strategy is more likely to be the *full realization* of the bourgeois revolution rather than the socialist incarnation Togliatti had in mind.

Virtually every Communist party in the advanced capitalist societies that has pursued electoral politics as a strategy has, like the PCI, become an institutionalized fixture within the system it originally sought to overthrow. The very conception of politics underlying electoralism is limited, partial, bourgeois: the aim of winning votes and "representing" constituencies follows a different logic than the revolutionary imperatives of mass mobilization, contestation for popular control, and transformation of consciousness. Electoralism minimizes the importance, even the possibility, of ongoing work designed to transform everyday life. Instead of activism and initiative it instills passivity, alienation, and liberal styles of participation—people listening to periodic campaign rhetoric on TV or at rallies and then trudging off to the polls once every few years to elect national and local candidates. In this context traditional patterns of thought and action are reinforced rather than challenged, among both the candidates and the electorate. "Socialism"

as an alternative gets obscured, distorted. As Macciocchi writes of her own experience as a PCI candidate for parliament, electoral campaigns tend to degenerate into spectacles and oratorical contests filled with shallow platitudes. She found it difficult to raise substantive issues; the PCI leadership was too frightened of alienating potential recruits to its "new majority" electoral alliance.[41]

Mass political involvement predictably declined once the PCI decided to pour the bulk of its resources into electoral activities. By the late 1940's it had already turned away from the "dual power" movement (e.g., the *Consigli di Gestione,* or management councils) that grew out of the Committees of National Liberation in the North during the war. Today, political life in most PCI sections (the basic structural unit) is moribund, except during electoral campaigns.[42] Situated squarely in the existing legislative and administrative organs of the Italian state, the PCI lacks sufficient social involvement to counter bourgeois hegemony or make socialism a live popular issue. In actuality, the PCI's presence in civil society is still as extensive as ever—except that it is now of a *political-representational* instead of *social-mobilizational* nature.[43] Electoral work carried out by PCI functionaries is tied instrumentally to winning votes and is rarely premised on the expectation of transforming the social life of the community; nor is there any sense of immediate demands being linked to larger socialist objectives.

The failure of structural reformism to transcend this sort of instrumentalist "politicism" is also reflected in its conception of the state as a neutral, essentially autonomous structure that stands "above" the class struggle. The idea of state "neutrality" is historically part of a theory of the transition that looks to bourgeois institutions as mechanisms for advancing socialism. The state is viewed as a technical instrument that can be wielded for any purpose—in the case of the *Via Italiana*, by an anti-monopoly "social bloc" to bring about a gradual shift in the equilibrium of class forces favoring the left. As with Jacobinism, the state (in this case pluralist rather than the dictatorship of the proletariat) develops apart from civil society and becomes the agency of a much more limited process of social reconstruction. Since the established political structures become the main locus of transition, "socialism" is easily reduced to a program of curbing monopolies and substituting a new stratum of executive and managerial personnel for the old, thereby changing leadership roles while leaving the institutions intact.[44] What this model of state activity implies—though the PCI has not yet accepted all the political implications of the theory—is the possible emergence of a state capitalism much less centralized than the Soviet Union but one that performs many of the same historical tasks: capital accumulation, planning and

coordination to overcome market anarchy, technological rationalization, legitimation.

What structural reformism fails to see is that the bourgeois state is inseparable from civil society, the product of an entire epoch of liberal capitalist development. The political institutions that grew out of the bourgeois revolution are too deeply embedded in that tradition to be somehow miraculously lifted out of it and forged into instruments of socialist transformation. What Gramsci and Rosa Luxemburg noted long ago still applies: liberal democratic structures, born on the terrain of capitalism, function above all to *legitimate* bourgeois society by reproducing its structural and ideological premises.[45] They mystify the nature of domination by *narrowing* the range of politics to equate "democratic" participation with parliamentary activity that is remote from people's concrete existence. The fetishism of the state expressed here differs from that of Jacobinism but through a similar instrumentalist logic it suppresses the popular and prefigurative element in much the same way—it fails to situate the revolutionary process firmly in civil society and in the unfolding of new political forms. The Italian Communist experience shows that the complex bourgeois state apparatus is laden with value, not just in the immediate partisan sense but in larger historical and structural terms; it cannot simply be taken over and reshaped from above for revolutionary purposes. Three years of Popular Unity rule in Chile also demonstrated this, with a more tragic outcome than is likely to be the case in Italy.

In recently developing its "historical compromise" the PCI has presumably taken pains to avoid the Chilean disaster. The electoral victory of the Allende coalition actually exacerbated the crisis of legitimacy. The PCI, with its powerful institutional and electoral presence along with a more elaborately worked out alliance strategy, is better prepared not only to manage bourgeois institutions but to rationalize and legitimate them. This is yet another way in which the *Via Italiana* represents the culmination of capitalist development: a "Marxist" party, by containing the worst irrationalities of monopoly capitalism and integrating the working class into the political system, can better control and minimize (but not solve) the crises of bourgeois society than the old ruling elites who are paralyzed by myths of competitive capitalism and religion. This dynamic is merely a new version of the "Social Democratization" that has been a phenomenon in Northern Europe since World War II. The capacity of even "modern" technocratic capitalism—which is afflicted by ineffective coordinating mechanisms, uneven development, severe fiscal problems, unemployment, and "undisciplined" labor forces—to mobilize consent and stave off crises is diminishing. In Italy where the hegemony of the Church, Christian Democracy, and the corporate bour-

geoisie is waning, ideological space is available for a leftist political force like the PCI to intervene and rescue the structures at a time of mounting crises. This is the "radical" solution to the capitalist legitimation crisis—the "reactionary" one being the authoritarian fascism that first appeared in the 1920's and 1930's.

As Habermas argues, the transition from liberal capitalism to "organized capitalism" reflects the need for an expanded and rationalized state apparatus to regulate conflict and contain systemic crisis. But the system-crisis itself is actually transferred, in more concentrated form, into the public sphere as a legitimation crisis; the imperatives of planning and administrative control extend even further the established modes of domination and thus require a new basis of legitimation.[46] A "Marxist" or "socialist" movement like the PCI can, where it comes to power, supply precisely this missing element in a rationalized capitalism in two ways: by contributing political-ideological direction to administrative structures and by "democratizing" the system—making public institutions more accessible, implementing egalitarian social programs, and, most important, mobilizing workers and other excluded or marginal strata into the existing framework. Indeed, one precondition for effective and *legitimate* state planning in advanced capitalism may well be the integration of the working class into the political system by its "own" parties.[47]

If structural reformism produces any kind of transition, therefore, it will not be from capitalism to socialism but from a chaotic, crisis-ridden corporate liberal capitalism to a more rationalized state bureaucratic capitalism. It would be an extension of the Keynesian revolution, keeping intact the class divisions and structures of domination that define the capitalist epoch as a whole while modifying its priorities and jettisoning its most unproductive and irrational features. Despite a commitment to pluralism, it thus embellishes the statist myth of socialism in a different guise—the state itself becomes the prime mover, the source of all initiative and solutions, the main arena of participation.[48] In the end, structural reformism and Jacobinism end up (potentially) as two radically diverse strategies of "socialist transformation" that lead to the same state bureaucratic capitalism—the former a representational-pluralist model with origins in liberal capitalism, the latter a vanguardist-centralist type with origins in feudalism.

The Anarcho-Communist Alternative: a Prefigurative Revolution?

One of the most striking theoretical limitations of the entire Marxist tradition is the virtual absence of any systematic critique of bureaucracy. Bureaucratic

domination has usually been understood as a manifestation of the more "fundamental" dynamic of class relations. This deficiency is closely linked to the poverty of political theory discussed earlier, in particular to the lack of a strategy of transition rooted in new forms of authority. The main attack on bureaucratic centralism has indeed come from *outside* Marxism—from anarchism, council communism and other prefigurative tendencies that rejected in principle the struggle for state power. The relationship between anarcho-communism and organized Marxist movements has been one of tension and hostility—for example, between Bakunin and Marx in the First International, between the Makhnovist anarchists and the Bolsheviks, between the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists and the Soviet-inspired Communists, and between the new left and present-day Marxist-Leninists. At the same time, it has profoundly influenced Marxism, as the source of both critique and alternative strategies such as Luxemburg's "spontaneism."

The first principle of anarcho-communism is uncompromising hostility to statism; the goal is to *replace* centralized political structures with popular organs rather than to "smash," seize or transform them. Anti-statism expresses three basic concerns: (1) fear of reproducing hierarchical forms of authority under a new ideological rationale; (2) criticism of leftist parties and trade unions because their bureaucratic organizations perpetuate the split between leaders and masses and fail to carry out revolutionary objectives; and (3) commitment to a vision of prefigurative struggle through local, intimate structures that anticipate a future liberated society and "state." But anarcho-communism has all too often been trapped in its own spontaneism,[50] so that it too has failed to work out a strategy of transition. To some extent this can be explained by its *partial* character. Having emerged in response to organized Marxism, its fate has often been one extreme or the other: flailing away helplessly from the outside, or integration into Marxism itself. But there is another, deeper reason for this predicament—namely, a flight from politics that stems from its consistent anti-statism.[49]

Yet there is within anarcho-communism the embryo of a political theory of socialist democracy that cannot be found in Jacobinism and structural reformism. Its preoccupation with small, face-to-face, "organic" institutions of popular control reinvigorates and democratizes praxis by stressing the subjective, self-activating principle against the "external element". While in some sense anti-political and partial, it nonetheless resists suppressing prefigurative goals for instrumental needs. Closer to everyday life, it more effectively confronts problems of consciousness. It seeks to generate a leadership that is part of the collective life of the community and directly accountable to it. Through small-scale organization, it can combat bureaucracy and

the social division of labor. It can incorporate a wider range of issues, demands, and needs—for example, by not reducing the transformation of social and authority relations to questions of production. Finally, by constructing forms that encourage social and political involvement *centered* outside the dominant institutions, its potential to counter deradicalization (indeed, to advance a more total vision of socialism) is enhanced.

Anarcho-communism thus advances one side of the dialectic. But it is not yet a complete theory of socialist transformation, and in some of its variants (e.g., anarcho-syndicalism, the new left) there are hardly the glimmerings of such a theory. The dilemma persists: how to combine prefiguration with the instrumental concerns of political *effectiveness.* One difficulty—encountered by the early anarchists and more recently by the new left—is that spontaneism can easily be confined to its own immediacy without the intervention of an "external element." To the extent that a revolutionary party is required for coordination and organizational strength, any strictly prefigurative strategy inevitably finds itself overwhelmed by the traditional bureaucratic forces that surround it as well as by competing vanguardist movements on the left. The anarcho-communist response is that a lengthy period of ideological-cultural struggle can generate new ways of thinking and new modes of authority that will gradually erode and supersede the prevailing, seemingly indestructible institutions of state power. Strategically, this seems utopian, given the history of prefigurative movements that have been crushed because they allowed the bourgeoise to monopolize the political terrain. The difficulty of maintaining democratic structures within a repressive order only exacerbates this dilemma; for self-management or workers' control to function efficiently, it must be universalized.

From the Marx-Bakunin debates of the late 1860's until World War I, the relationship between "Marxism" and "anarchism" was one of polarized conflict: organization vs. spontaneity, leadership vs. self-activity, centralism vs. localism, etc. In some ways this polarization was intensified by the Bolshevik Revolution, when the success of Jacobinism forced anarchists into retreat everywhere. At the same time, there were new attempts within anarcho-communism to bridge the gap and construct a new synthesis—the soviets and "dual power" structures in Russia, the factory-council movement in Italy, and the appearance of the Council Communist tendency in Germany, Holland, and elsewhere. While still suspicious of parties, trade unions, and "political" activity, councillism did seek to transcend the either-or dichotomy of previous debates by integrating the best elements of both traditions. Council Communists such as Pannekoek and Görter, for example, dispensed with a rigid prefigurative commitment to spontaneous struggles, localism and

everyday life; they sought to incorporate the needs for structure, leadership, and coordination within the approach without destroying its liberating potential. It was this strategic alternative to Jacobinism and parliamentarism that Lenin attacked in *Left Wing Communism.*

As Pannekoek envisaged them, the councils would be the primary agency of socialist transformation—instruments of popular control at the point of production and in communities, mediating structures between proletarian self-activity and revolutionary goals. He anticipated that councils would flourish particularly at times of crisis, accompanied by mass strikes, occupations of plants, and other forms of direct action. Councils alone would not be enough, however. They would have to be coordinated by a Federation of Councils that would presumably emerge as an institutionalized mechanism of authority in the post-crisis period. The *party* too would play a certain role in the revolutionary process, though it would not take precedence over the councils since only they were capable of remaining in touch with the masses and resisting bureaucratization. Pannekoek, like Gramsci, emphasized the struggle against ideological domination in establishing a new system of authority. He saw the failure of the Bolshevik Revolution to do this as the source of its early degeneration.[50] While the theory went beyond the more simplistic anarcho-communist tendencies that preceded it, the council movement soon collapsed of its own inertia and isolation. It remained confined to a few provincial centers—its extreme vagueness about the role of the party compelling it to rely on the councils as the *only* type of organization—so that the Communist and Social Democratic parties easily asserted their hegemony on the left. Its social composition was also a restricting factor. Most of the German councils recruited mainly from the ranks of skilled or technical labor, where "control" meant sharing managerial functions within the existing productive apparatus and where revolutionary impulses were absorbed into a quasi-syndicalist framework.[51]

The successes—and failures—of the Italian council movement were more dramatic. In the period 1918–1920 large numbers of factory councils (*consigli di fabbrica*) sprung up at Fiat and other factories in Turin, transforming the city into a "Petrograd of Italy." Built around the *Ordine Nuovo* movement, the councils became the catalyst of massive demonstrations, general strikes, factory occupations, and street actions. They challenged not only the bourgeoisie at the point of production but the Socialist Party and trade unions organizations as well. Gramsci, the leading theoretical force behind *Ordine Nuovo,* heralded the *consigli* as the beginning of a "new era of humanity"; he saw in them the bearers of a revolutionary momentum advancing "beneath the political institutions of bourgeois society." In

breaking down the old habits of obedience and passivity, in creating social relations at the point of production, the councils appeared as the nucleus of a new socialist state—a state where centralized authority and hierarchy would become superfluous. Gramsci envisaged the councils, which were not yet fully developed organs of workers' control, as the main instruments in the struggle against bourgeois ideological hegemony. They helped to instill in the proletariat a "psychology of the producer" that would enable it as a class to overcome its prevailing sense of despair and impotence. Gramsci also stressed the prefigurative role of the councils: they would liberate that which is potentially socialist within capitalism by carrying out the ends of socialist revolution in the present.[52]

The historical reality of the Italian councils, of course, fell far short of this visionary Gramscian theory. For one thing, while the *consigli* upheld direct democracy and attacked the principle of "delegation," in practice they operated according to delegation and elected a small council of commissars to direct all activities. Coordination between councils, vital during the period of occupations, was never effectively worked out and factory operations ran into insurmountable logistical and financial obstacles brought about by economic isolation. "Socialism in one city" turned out to be a political fantasy. Beyond that, the council movement was totally cut off from the Socialist Party and the unions; isolated politically as well as geographically and economically, *Ordine Nuovo* was vulnerable to the armed might of the bourgeois state, which finally brought its power to bear during the factory occupations of April-May 1920 and resolutely crushed the council insurgency.[53]

Though council communism was crushed or died out in Italy and Central Europe after World War I, the tradition lived on, to reappear again in new contexts: in Spain during the Civil War, in Italy again during the Resistance, and in most advanced capitalist societies during the 1960's. The French upheaval of May, 1968 spawned an unprecedented number and variety of local groups—action committees, factory councils, student communes, groupuscules, neighborhood groups—most of which disappeared after the moment of crisis. In Italy this dynamic was not so spectacular, but the forms that grew out of it, such as the *comitati di base,* survived longer. This revival of anarcho-communism in the contemporary period helped to rejuvenate a European left that had long been suffocated by the Soviet model of bureaucratic centralism. It kept alive the prefigurative ideal and illuminated the bankruptcy of the established Marxist parties. New left currents such as situationism, though not theoretically pretentious, actually went *beyond* traditional anarcho-communism in their glorification of spontaneity and

subjectivity, their celebration of everyday life and the cultural dimensions of revolution, and their redefinition of popular self-management to extent beyond the workplace. Since much impetus for this "new radicalism" or "post-scarcity" anarchism came from students and intellectuals, the points of divergence are explicable; so too is the intensified conflict between an even more amorphous new left and organized Marxism.[54]

New left spontaneism eventually reproduced the limitations of prefigurative strategy in even more exaggerated form. Because of its tendency to *avoid* politics it could never build an effective revolutionary strategy. The French May provides a good example: mobilized by the millions, students and workers were unable to transform their uprising into a *movement* that possessed leadership, structure, and direction, with the result that popular energy dissipated as quickly as it appeared. The French Communist Party contributed to this debacle, but *gauchisme* nonetheless had its own internal logic. To one degree or another, this was the trajectory of the new left everywhere: in its fear of the "external element" (leadership and organization), in its retreat into extreme manifestations of subjectivism, and in its uncompromising abstentionism, it never realized its transformative potential.

Even where its ideological impact was extensive, the new left never gave any strategic expression to the immense vision of liberation it inspired. It mounted a many-sided attack on the values and institutions of bourgeois society, but the means it employed—mass direct action politics on the one hand, small isolated groups on the other—were primitive. This paralysis was in turn the legacy of the entire anarcho-communist tradition, which in contrast to both Jacobinism and structural reformism affirmed the actuality of revolutionary *ends* over instrumentalism, thereby rendering itself impotent. In rejecting a fetishism of the state, it ignored the state; in stressing the prefigurative, it forgot the instrumental. And like the organized Marxist movements, which were *also* present during the French revolt and likewise failed to provide revolutionary leadership, the prefigurative "strategy" suffered from its own poverty of political theory. It too failed to articulate the basis of a unified, democratic socialist theory of transition.

Some Conclusions

As part of assessing its history, Marxism must constantly re-examine its goals and the strategies for realizing them as well as the concepts it employs for analyzing capitalist development. A basic assumption of this article is that all three elements of theory are dialectically interrelated. Failure to achieve ultimate goals cannot be reduced to "objective" conditions or failures of

leadership—though these factors may enter in—but must also be understood as part of deeper theoretical and strategic inadequacies that impose limits on praxis. The failures of classical Marxism, Jacobinism, and structural reformism thus cannot be explained as deviations from an original socialist path, as "revisionist" transgressions or whatever, but must be seen as the outgrowth of what was from the beginning a bourgeois conception of transition. In the case of Jacobinism and structural reformism, as we have seen, there is indeed an undeniable *consistency* between initial strategic formulations and political practice. The "Socialist" component of these strategies has been obliterated by the imperatives of statism and instrumentalism.

The Jacobin and structural reformist models therefore cannot point toward a strategy of socialist transformation for the advanced capitalist societies—they are but two paths to state bureaucratic capitalism. In their statism they negate the potential for self-activity and total change that is necessary to advance socialism. Anarcho-communism at least avoids this logic, but has failed to build upon its own creativity and popular energy; its spontaneism and extreme subjectivism are often compelling but are also politically wasted until integrated into a broader strategic framework. Such a synthesis—incorporating into a single strategy both spontaneism and the "external element," consciousness and structural transformation, prefigurative and state power struggles—would have to be the basis of future revolutionary politics in the advanced capitalist countries.[55] Its realization would mean restoring that element of *political theory* Marxism has historically lacked, in turn necessitating a broader reconstitution of the concepts of class, production, ideology, and even politics. While such theoretical efforts are under way, the recent history of *organized* leftist movements reflects a polarization between anarcho-communism and statist strategies that reinforces the extremes in both and rules out synthesis. In the United States, the degeneration of the new left into fragmented modes of primitive rebellion (mysticism, terrorism, therapy) and the simultaneous emergence of dogmatic, super-vanguardist "Marxist-Leninist" sects exemplifies this reciprocal process.

One strategic direction within Marxism—the Gramscian-Maoist approach, or what might be called "Jacobinism-II"—does seem to challenge this traditional dualism. Beginning with the basic organizational and strategic premises of classical Leninism, it attempts to counter the worst features of vanguardism and bureaucratic centralism by bringing in the prefigurative, "national-popular," and ideological-cultural dimension. Jacobinism-II seeks to "democratize" the one-dimensional, statist Leninism of the Bolshevik Revolution, as an alternative to the Soviet model. Its clearest embodiment has been the Chinese Revolution, where Mao's conceptions of the "mass line," pro-

tracted total struggle on all fronts, and cultural revolution have produced a greater balance between instrumental and prefigurative spheres, though the Jacobin party remains the dominant political agency.

To what extent does the Gramscian-Maoist strategy constitute a new synthesis? Without question it is an advance beyond the traditional strategies, but its contribution is yet partial and ambiguous. At least two major problems remain: (1) despite the coexistence of prefigurative and Jacobin-instrumentalist-statist elements in the strategy, the coexistence is vague and haphazard, with the Jacobin imposition ultimately predominating; and (2) the prefigurative dimension still lacks any coherent institutional expression. In Gramsci, we encounter vacillations from one side to the other but never any fusion of the two. In the *Prison Notebooks,* he finally moves toward a Jacobin-Machiavellian primacy of politics with little mention of *Ordine Nuovo* or the councils. Gramsci does, however, elaborate the philosophical basis of synthesis in the *Prison Notebooks* but once again he develops no structural mediations (beyond the party) to concretize it. The vision of a counter-hegemonic movement, led by "organic" intellectuals striving toward a new "integrated culture," lacks strategic specificity—until the party appears on the scene, and Jacobinism wins by default. A similar dynamic has unfolded in China, at the level of practice, where the Communist Party dominates the local organizations (e.g., revolutionary committees, people's assemblies, work brigades) and takes initiative on major issues and programs, although the most repressive and elitist manifestations of bureaucratization were arrested by the Cultural Revolution. The fact remains that Mao's thought has not given systematic structural definition to the "mass line," though its continued presence as an *ideological* force helps to combat authoritarian excesses of the leadership. And the schema of repeated cultural revolutions, while crucial for the same reason, lacks a sufficient organic and stable presence in everyday life to be prefigurative. In China, moreover, the powerful requirements of economic development are likely to reinforce the tendencies favoring instrumentalism and Jacobinism.

The Gramscian-Maoist alternative thus constitutes a modification of classical Leninism rather than any fundamental new synthesis. Insofar as there exists a fusion between Jacobin and prefigurative elements, the Jacobin side is clearly hegemonic: the party-state directs the process of revolutionary transformation, with initiative towards "democratization" coming primarily from above. In contrast, the new Marxian synthesis would reverse this relationship by asserting the predominance of the prefigurative over the Jacobin-instrumental. For the party by definition is essentially an *instrumental* vehicle designed for concrete political tasks rather than the cultural objectives of

reshaping everyday life and abolishing the old social division of labor; it tends naturally to be an agency of domination rather than of prefiguration. Since the prefigurative function can be fully carried out only through local structures, it is they—rather than the party-state—that must become the *primary* agencies of the revolutionary process. Hence the party would not be superimposed upon mass struggles as prime mover, but would emerge out of these struggles as a coordinating mechanism. Only vital popular institutions in every sphere of daily existence, where democratizing impulses can be most fully realized, are ultimately capable of fighting off the repressive impositions of bureaucratic centralism and activating the collective democratic involvement that is the life-force of revolutionary praxis. In this, as the history of revolutionary movements shows, the traditional strategies have failed.

NOTES

1. "Interview with Lucio Colletti," *New Left Review*, no. 86, p. 15.
2. Stanley Moore, *Three Tactics: the Background in Marx* (New York, 1963).
3. "The Revolution Against *Capital*," in Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, eds., *History, Philosophy, and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1975).
4. See, for example, Andrew Arato, "The Second International: A Reexamination," *Telos* (Winter, 1973–74), pp. 3–12, and Giacomo Marramao, "Theory of the Crisis and the Problem of Constitution," *Telos* (Winter, 1975–76). On the tendency of 19th century Marxism to collapse politics into a more "fundamental" underlying social and economic reality, see Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, 1961), ch. 9.
5. The idea of the "statist myth of socialism" is developed by Svetozar Stojanović in *Between Ideals and Reality* (New York, 1973), ch. 3.
6. An interesting discussion of the Jacobin-spontaneist dilemma can be found in Lucio Magri, "Toward a Marxist Theory of the Revolutionary Party," *New Left Review*, no. 60. Gramsci vacillated on this question, initially focusing on the factory councils as the bearers of a "new era of humanity" but then, after the destruction of the councils and the rise of fascism, he moved irresistibly toward Jacobinism. With Mao, of course, the Jacobin-spontaneist predicament is not merely theoretical and cannot be separated from the historical process of the Chinese Revolution. The problem is obscured by a number of factors: the early stage of the revolution itself, conditions of economic underdevelopment, and international pressures. Yet the evidence from China already indicates the ascendancy of bureaucratic centralism and the possibility that a Soviet-styled pattern of evolution cannot be ruled out.
7. Contrary to the notion that there are "many Lenins," the overall theory and *practice* of Lenin and the Bolsheviks suggests a definite continuity. To look for scriptural variations in the writings of Lenin, and then weigh these against the actual practice of the party, seems like an exercise in scholasticism. My concern here is to concentrate on the most general historical development and impact of the Leninist vanguard party. On the thesis of "many Lenins," see Louis Menasche, "Vladimir Ilyich Bakunin: an Essay on Lenin," *Socialist Revolution*, no. 18, and Antonio Carlo, "Lenin on the Party," *Telos* (Fall, 1973).
8. The concept of "minority revolution" is elaborated by Stanley Moore, *op.cit.*
9. The common assumption that the Leninist strategy is most effective where the state is strong does not seem to be valid. On the contrary, it is where political institutions

are *weak*—where a crisis of authority has broadened over a lengthy period of time, as in Russia—that Leninist revolutions have typically occurred.

10. Georg Lukács, *Lenin* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), *passim.*
11. On the development of a specific Marxist intellectual culture, see Alvin W. Gouldner, "Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals," *Telos* (Winter, 1975–76).
12. Thus, Lenin writes that *"there could not have been* Social Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness . . . The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals." From *What is to be Done?*, in James E. Connor, ed., *Lenin on Politics and Revolution* (New York, 1968), p. 40 (italics in original).
13. François George, "Forgetting Lenin," *Telos* (Winter, 1973–74). See also Frederic and Lou Jean Fleron, "Administrative Theory as Repressive Political Theory: The Communist Experience," *Telos* (Summer 1972).
14. Flerons, *op.cit.*, p. 79.
15. On the development of the Left Opposition before and after the October Revolution, see Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution* (New York, 1960), especially chs. 3–6, and Maurice Brinton, *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control* (London, 1970), *passim.*
16. Lenin, in the period before his death, began to recoil from the behemoth he helped create and expressed his misgivings about the bureaucratic tide already sweeping the party, but his belated protest could be little more than a feeble gesture. See Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (New York, 1968).
17. This point is developed in Robert Daniels' excellent essay, "The Withering Away of the State in Theory and Practice," in Alex Inkeles and Kent Geiger, eds., *Soviet Society* (Boston, 1961), p. 113.
18. On the decline of the soviets after 1917, see Oskar Anweiler, *The Soviets 1905–1921* (New York, 1975).
19. See, for example, the Flerons, *op.cit.*, and Ulyssess Santamaria and Alain Manville, "Lenin and the Problem of Transition," *Telos* (Spring, 1976), pp. 89–94.
20. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, in Connor, *op.cit.*, pp. 227–228. Lenin criticized the "utopians," with their "anarchist dreams," for wanting to dispense with administration and subordination: "No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they already are, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control, and 'foremen and accounts.'" He adds: "We, the workers, shall organize large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers." *Ibid.*, p. 212.
21. Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (New York, 1933), p. 402.
22. Stojanović, *op.cit.*, ch. 3.
23. Stojanović, *op.cit.*, p. 38.
24. Stojanović contrasts the "bureaucratic-authoritarian" to the "democratic-socialist" personality, noting that Lenin's concept of the professional revolutionary fits perfectly the former with its emphasis on iron discipline, sacrifice, and self-negation. See *ibid.*, ch. 8.
25. Samir Amin sees this "unprecedented level of centralization" as part of the larger trend of world capitalism toward a totalitarianism of the "1984" model. See his "Toward a Structural Crisis of World Capitalism," *Socialist Revolution,* no. 23, pp. 20–27 and 40–44. On the "autonomous" character of state bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, see Antonio Carlo, "The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR," *Telos* (Fall, 1974), pp. 32, 44–45.

26. Though only recently (in November 1975) did the French and Italian Communist parties explicitly disavow the "dictatorship of the proletariat," for years their actual theoretical pronouncements – not to mention their practice – took such a disavowal for granted.
27. Togliatti's early postwar writings are contained in two volumes: *Il partito* (Roma, 1964) and *La via italiana al socialismo* (Roma, 1964).
28. The vision of the PCI as a "national-popular" party– the *socialist* vehicle of a national unification that was only partially carried out by the *Risorgimento* – was elaborated by Gramsci at the Lyons Congress of the PCI in 1926.
29. For an examination of the PCI's overtures to the middle class and Catholics, see Stephen Hellman's "The PCI's Alliance Strategy and the Case of the Middle Classes," in Donald L. M. Blackmer and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *Communism in Italy and France* (Princeton, 1975). The idea of "social bloc," multi-class alliance, or united front does not make the PCI's Marxist strategy unique, as is often assumed. All Communist movements have pursued such alliance strategies. What makes the PCI special in this respect is the *electoralism* that gives shape to its alliance commitments.
30. See, for example, "The PCI at the Local Level: A Study of Strategic Performance," in Blackmer and Tarrow, *op.cit.*
31. The *compromesso storico* was first outlined at the 13th Party Congress in March, 1972, but was not elaborated until Berlinguer's series of articles in *Rinascita* in early 1973. The military overthrow of the Allende government on Chile in late 1973 helped to solidify this reformulation of alliance strategy; according to the mainstream PCI analysis, Allende's downfall was precipitated by the failure of the Popular Unity coalition to broaden its leftist base and stave off polarization between the "middle classes" and proletariat.
32. Togliatti's views on pluralist democracy and the transition process are scattered throughout his writings. See *La via italiana al socialismo*, pp. 59–90; 187–198; 199–222.
33. According to Berlinguer, the socialist state is one "that cannot and must not identify itself with any one party or any one particular political and ideological conception, nor give preference to any one religious faith or church or cultural current at the expense of others . . ." Enrico Berlinguer, "Report to the XIV Congress of the PCI," *Italian Communists* (March-May, 1975), p. 50. For a comprehensive recent statement see Pietro Ingrao, "Democrazia borghese o Stalinismo? No: democrazia di massa," *Rinascita* (Feb. 6, 1976). On the commitment of PCI leaders to the norms of pluralist democracy, see Robert D. Putnam, "The Italian Communist Politician," in Blackmer and Tarrow, *op.cit.*
34. The PCI's program of political "renewal" is historically linked to its struggle against fascism, since the Christian Democrats largely inherited a central bureaucratic apparatus left behind by the Mussolini regime. "Administrative efficiency" is therefore partly a euphemism for weeding out the fascists and destroying the DC patronage network, while "decentralization" signifies strengthening those areas of public life (e.g., the regions) where the PCI has accrued the most power.
35. The PCI's plans for economic development are outlined by Berlinguer in a report to the Central Committee, December 10, 1974. See *Italian Communists* (March–May, 1975), pp. 34–44. See also Fernando Di Giulio, "The Political Commitment of the Working Class for Economic Development, Reforms, and Democracy," Report to 6th Communist Workers' Conference, February 8–10, 1974, *Italian Communists* (Jan.–Feb., 1974).
36. The theoretical foundations of union "autonomy" were initially formulated by Antonio Tabo in *Critica marxista* no. 1 (1964). Tabo distinguished between two moments of struggle – the "sindical-economic" and the "political-ideological," the one resisting capitalism and the other transcending it ideologically. A recent, more

refined statement of these principles can be found in Fernando Di Giulio, "La politica, i partiti, e il movimento sindicale," *Rinascita* (April 9, 1971), and "Unita sindicale e nuovo blocco di forze sociali e politiche," *Critica marxista* (Nov.–Dec., 1970).

37. This emphasis on the role of the trade unions in economic modernization permeates the proceedings of Communist workers' conferences in recent years. See, for example, the Di Giulio report cited above.
38. The best analysis of this phenomenon is Sidney Tarrow's *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (New Haven, 1967).
39. See Gerardo Chiaromonte e Giancarlo Pajetta, *I communisti e i contadini* (Roma, 1970), especially pp. 59–60, 64–65, 82, and 106.
40. The more the PCI has played out its role as "constructive opposition" force in parliament, the more it has frowned upon forms of direct action and popular mobilization *outside* of the established structures. By the early 1960's PCI leadership had developed an institutionalized attachment to parliament that precluded or minimized other action alternatives. This was the basis of the *Il Manifesto* critique that came to the surface in the late 1960's. The issue was debated intensely within party circles as well. See *La questione del "Manifesto"* (Roma, 1969) for a variety of positions on this issue.
41. Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, *Letters from Inside the Italian Communist Party to Louis Althusser* (London, 1973), *passim.*
42. A graphic account of this is contained in Marcello Argilli, *Un anno in sezione: vita di base del PCI* (Milano, 1970).
43. See Lucio Magri e Filippo Maone, "L'organizzazzione comunista: structure e metodi di direzione," *Il Manifesto* (September, 1969), pp. 29–32.
44. For a general theoretical discussion of this Marxist conception of the state, which is misleadingly referred to as the "revisionist" approach, see Wolfgang Müller and Christel Neussüss, "The Illusion of State Socialism and the Contradiction between Wage Labor and Capital," *Telos* (Fall, 1975).
45. Gramsci's views on the political *immobilisme* of the party system, unions, and parliament are scattered throughout his early writings. Perhaps the best overall summary is in "Per un rinnovamento del Partito socialista," *L'Ordine Nuovo* (May 8, 1920), in Paolo Spriano, ed., *Antonio Gramsci: Scritti Politici* (Roma, 1967). Luxemburg's position is spelled out in her *Social Reform or Revolution,* which is reprinted in Dick Howard, ed., *Selected Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg* (New York, 1971), pp. 52–134.
46. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1973), part II.
47. See Bill Warren, "Capitalist Planning and the State," *New Left Review* no. 72, p. 25.
48. José Baptista analyzes bureaucratization as a universal process that engulfs the left and appears as the major enemy of socialist revolution. See "Bureaucracy, Political System and Social Dynamic," *Telos* (Winter, 1974–75), especially pp. 71–73.
49. Although the schemes vary greatly here, the strategic dilemma remains. See Daniel Guerin, *Anarchism* (New York, 1970).
50. See the examination of Pannekoek's ideas in Richard Gombin, *The Origins of Modern Leftism* (London, 1975), pp. 87–97.
51. Sergio Bologna, "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party at the Origin of the Workers-Council Movement," *Telos* (Fall, 1972).
52. Gramsci's theory of the factory councils is developed in a number of places: "Sindacato e consigli," *L'Ordine Nuovo* (October 11, 1919); "Il consiglio di fabbrica," *L'Ordine Nuovo* (June 5, 1920); and "Controllo operaio," *L'Ordine Nuovo* (February 10, 1921), all in *Scritti politici.* For an assessment of Gramsci's theoretical approach to the councils, see my *Gramsci's Marxism* (London, 1976), ch. 4.

53. With the political-military repression of the Turin councils, the defeat of revolutionary hopes in the period 1918–1921, and the subsequent rise of fascism in Italy, the limitations of a strictly prefigurative strategy were dramatically revealed. Gramsci realized that the councils alone were not enough; the absence of centralized leadership left *Ordine Nuovo* impotent against its well-organized adversaries. After 1920, and especially after the Italian Communist Party was formed in early 1921, Gramsci paid more and more attention to the role of the party, embracing it as a counter to the spontaneism of the *consigli.* This "Jacobin" force was in fact the dominant concern of Gramsci's later PCI writings (1924–1926) and permeates his prison writings as well. See "The Modern Prince" as well as sections in "State and Civil Society" of the *Prison Notebooks.* The best English language reference available is Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, eds., *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London, 1971). The most likely political explanation for Gramsci's silence on the councils in the *Notebooks* was the rise of fascism and Gramsci's subsequent conclusion that only through centralized organization could the left survive in Italy. In the midst of fascism, the council theme must have appeared utopian to Gramsci in prison.
54. A forceful new left critique of organized Marxism is Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit's *Obsolete Communism: The Left Wing Alternative* (New York, 1968). Other such critiques abound – for example, Murray Bookchin's *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (Berkeley, 1969), ch. 2. One of the more comprehensive recent discussions of this problem from the perspective of democratic participation is Raymond B. Pratt's "Revolution for What?: Toward a Critical Theory," paper delivered at the American Political Science Association convention in September, 1975.
55. In Europe, theoretical efforts in this direction have been well under way for at least the past decade–witness the contributions of Andre Gorz, Serge Mallet, Rudi Dutschke, Lucio Magri and the *Il Manifesto* group, Jean-Paul Sartre and *Les Temps Modernes,* and many others. In the United States, where such efforts are behind those of Europe, the dualism between new left-spontaneist tendencies and "Marxism-Leninism" is more pronounced.

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