WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

**11**

# COMMON SENSE

*Journal of Edinburgh Conference of Socialist Economists*

# *11*

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**Editorial Committee for this issue:**
*Werner Bonefeld, Bob Goupillot, Richard Gunn, Brian McGrail.*

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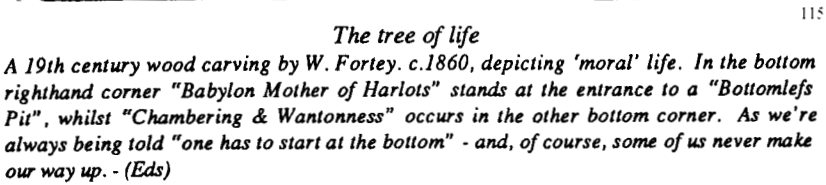
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# Contents

*The tree of life*

*A 19th century wood carving by W. Fortey. c.1860, depicting 'moral' life. In the bottom righthand corner "Babylon Mother of Harlots" stands at the entrance to a "Bottomlefs Pit", whilst "Chambering & Wantonness" occurs in the other bottom corner. As we're always being told "one has to start at the bottom" - and, of course, some of us never make our way up. - (Eds)*

# Editorial

The ten issues of *Common Sense* which have appeared since its foundation in 1987 confirm the value of its initial project: we said our aim was to overcome the grip of academic specialism on the life of the mind. Publication of articles on politics and philosophy, of poems and short stories and of reviews and topical commentary has met with a response which demonstrates the liveliness of debate once it ceases to take place just within (or indeed just outside of) academic walls. Walls can come down in more ways than one.

Beginning with issue 10 *Common Sense*, hitherto a wholly informal journal, has allied its forces with the Conference of Socialist Economists (CSE). *Common Sense* is currently the journal of the Edinburgh CSE. A statement of the aims and objects of the CSE is supplied at the back of this issue. This alliance sustains our original project in that a symbiotic practice ties breadth of coverage to a political project. This project is one of maintaining debate within a world where, notwithstanding media enthusiasm, the shutters on the life of the mind seem more and more to close. Everyone (whether or not she or he has a career) is a careerist now.

As in previous issues, *Common Sense* 11 presents a blend of literary genres and a juxtaposition (or constellation) of international and Edinburgh-participatory ideas. Additionally, in this issue you can find an explanation of our title. Read on, contribute and help us to ensure that the social division of labour which separates theory from practice continues to break down. *Common Sense* is less a journal destined for the shelves of libraries - although you can find it there! - than a relay station for the exchange of ideas.

Finally, in this issue we introduce a new section for works of a speculative and topical kind - *Beyond The News* - which will ensure the journal always has a lively start. This time its a play about the political goings on inside the Kremlin, but who knows what it could be next issue? If you have any ideas for this section you are more than welcome to make a contribution.

*"Nip out and get me a Big Macrappieburger, with extra a cheese, will you? There's a good boy. And don't forget the relish!"*

# A Truly Russian Coup?
## A Play for the Day about the Soviet Summer of '91

### By *Common Sense Playwrights*

**(Act 1):**     **The day after the G7 summit. . . .**

**News has come through and a conversation begins in a quite corner of a Kremlin hallway. Two disgruntled government officials worried about their political futures as part of the world's elite talk about the implications of the G7's decision not to give the U.S.S.R any extra cash.**

**Yanayev:**     Well?

**Pavlov:**     Nothing! Not a sausage.

**Yanayev:**     So much for making reforms then. They've given us enough rope to hang ourselves. They get us to do all their dirty work - increase transport prices, remove food subsidies, close down factories. But do we benefit from making any of these changes?

**Pavlov:**     Of course not. The separation between politics and economics which for years we used to our own advantage has now been turned against us. Right now the West is coming in and taking up all the economic advantages of cheap labour but not once have they had to legitimise themselves politically. Mikhail takes on all the political responsibility for the management of the country, but he doesn't have a free hand in the running of the economy?

**Yanayev:**     No. There would be no point in that. If he ran the economy he would be of absolutely no use to the West. Would he?

**Pavlov:**     That's right! The whole point is that he acts a Trojan Horse. A politically acceptable ruler, of Russian extraction, for the *whole* region who introduces *their* economic measures over that region.

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> We know their political and economic systems can't cope with the break-up of the Soviet Union just as much as we can't, but a wee bit of nationalism here and a wee bit of nationalism there helps them to keep us on our toes.

Yanayev: It's true. They keep us in constant crisis management. Bush and the others have us by our balls, but they are very unkeen to take them off us, they're still ours to play with. But where exactly does that leave "us". Our planning of "our economy" suited us for years - it gave us status in the world. And for years it suited Western rulers as well. Think of all the profits they made spending public money on armaments for God's sake. Hey, I like that. You know? It's funny! It used to suit us being an ugly, hideous monster.

Pavlov: But it no longer suits them. I mean the world the way it was. They couldn't go on like that - all those expensive social welfare systems and high wages to pay to boot. And all that money being spent on out-of-date and labour intensify military equipment and structures. They had to look East, towards us, as 'economic' competition in order to bring their own working classes into line, but you can't do that if you're still blowing wind about us being the "Evil Empire". *They* ended the Cold War.

Yanayev: Well, in truth we both did, together. We were in crisis too. We needed to borrow their cash and they needed access to labour which was tied up producing for our benefit. They had to 'free' that labour and turn it into a new labour market. We both had to adapt, however, things being they way they were it was us that had to bring ourselves into line with them. But, you know, the more we rundown our own economic system, through these reforms. . .

Pavlov: Which, I'll tell you, aren't favourable to the working classes either! All these reforms have done is turn our workforce into a bunch of idle Yankee-loving beach-bums who refuse to work their way out of a crisis! Now, where is that going to get the working class?

Yanayev: . . . the harder it is for us to legitimise our political rule and the easier it is for them to build popular support, from discontentment with us, and push for yet more reforms. We're the fall guys every time and what does Mikhail do? Nothing!

Pavlov: Worse still, he positively trips us up. We're losing our grip fast,

and we'll soon be out of the $500,000-yacht owners club! That's for sure.

Yanayev:    Yes, that's right! We've got to do something to re-assert our influence. Let them know the game is up. We'll reverse the process. Mikhail has been taking the reforms first and money later approach, but the G7 summit has shown this to be, not only unfruitful, but, a complete sham. They're not only making fools of us but revealing their true nature - they want everything. Access to a new labour market in return for nothing. Instead we have to say "money now, then reforms".

Pavlov:    Sssh! Not so loudly. Anyway, here's Rayazinov. We'll ask what he thinks. We need more than the two of us if something is to be done. And there is a lot of discontentment within government ranks. Perhaps the time is ripe.

(Act 2):    **A phone call from the Kremlin to the Russian Parliamment. Gorbachev has now returned from the G7 summit with some very bad news - not only for his own federal government, but for all the pretenders to the world political stage.**

Gorbachev:    Hello, hello . . . Boris, is that you?

Yeltsin:    Yes?. . . . Please? Who is speaking?

Gorbachev:    It's Mikhail!

Yeltsin:    Mikhail?. . . . Mikhail who?

Gorbachev:    Mikhail Gorbachev.

Yeltsin:    Mikhail Gorbachev! What the hell do you want? I don't think we have anything to talk about.

Gorbachev:    Listen! I think we do. Its about the G7 summit. Whilst I was sitting there, being patronised by a bunch of wealthy school boys, it suddenly dawned on me. You know - this question of "nationalism" - about who represents *who* in terms of international diplomacy. About who *we* are. To tell the truth, they just don't care so long as they can treat all of us as one politically, economically and militarily weak unit, but they have one real problem in this regard. That is, they haven't got any money.

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Yeltsin:          You can't be serious! Really. No money?

Gorbachev:        Yep! That's why the summit wasn't just embarrassing for us but
                  a real embarrassment for them. You see, all these people in the
                  West were expecting the G7 summit to support the reforms I had
                  made so far, and they just couldn't deliver.

Yeltsin:          Oh, come on now. I think you're deluding yourself there, old
                  mate. I see things rather differently. You've been far too slow
                  for their liking and they want you to bend the knee a bit further
                  and a bit quicker in future. That's what G7 was all about. It's
                  you whae cannae deliver.

Gorbachev:        But don't you see? The two are related. It goes to show how
                  much shit they're in themselves. Of course they want me to
                  deliver, but I always thought they had a plan of what they
                  wanted. I mean, if that was the case, it should have been quite a
                  simple transaction. I give them what they want in return for,
                  shall we say, "compensation" which would pay for the necessary
                  political and economic reforms. But G7 shows they can't even
                  pay for the limited amount of reforms that I have already
                  implimented. Hence, what am I supposed to do now? Push
                  through more reforms they say, but upon what precedent, upon
                  what basis? That they've given their "word"? But we need more
                  than "words" and "democratic ideals" Boris! All the Western
                  "democracies" cost their governments tons and our democracies
                  will be no different. A Russian or Estonian democracy may have
                  all the trappings of a "democratic constitution", an independent
                  parliament, plurality of parties and elections, but without real
                  material wealth to go with it these peoples are only being fooled,
                  will eventually see this, and we won't last long.

Yeltsin:          I see. So in your estimation the 'empty bowl' decision of G7
                  will affect us republics just as much as it will affect your Soviet
                  government? But I still don't think your're right. It's true that
                  our political independence will cost us, but it isn't going to cost
                  us alone. For example, the "idea of democracy" has been
                  implanted into the minds of the people by Western politicians,
                  such as Comrade Margaret Thatcher, just as much as it has been
                  by us. Thus, they are implicated as well. I'm sure they want to
                  politically legitimise their economic interests in the Russian,
                  Ukrainian and Baltic republics - so *they* must pay for *our*
                  political gravy-train. They *must* otherwise the last five years are
                  a disaster for them too!

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Gorbachev:     Not quite.  It is true we are now becoming a problem they would like to get rid of, but can't.  Yet, it is only a disaster for them if we slipped back into a Cold War situation.  Between the Cold War scenario, and the "free democratic republics" one, there is a third possibility for the West - a "friendly" *undemocratic* regime.  This situation would be neither 'Cold War' nor would it involve the expense of an accountable, elected "popular government".  I mean, why should Western leaders care whether our republics have democratic governments or not.  It doesn't seem to matter in the Middle East, South East Asia or Africa.  It mattered to them at first when they thought that they would only get their own way by replacing the Supreme Soviet with an elected parliament.

Yelstsin:      And who was it that proved them wrong on that score?  Haven't you fitted the bill for just such a friendly but undemocratic government?

Gorbachev:     And haven't you yet realised that that's the point?  Reagan and Thatcher were only too pleased to have me.  Unelected as I was.  They need us to pay our bills Boris and their own experience tells them that 'democratic governments' are always in two minds about who to pay off first - the electorate or the creditor.  They can afford to be unpopular here.  They don't give a shit anyway.  But they can't *afford* to keep us popular even though they want us to implement more reforms in their favour.

Yeltsin:       Ah!  What you are saying is not quite true.  It was *you*, not Western leaders, that required popular support in order to push through *your* reforms.  And it was you who borrowed heavily in order to get these reforms under way.  But once you started the reform programme, which was designed to save your own skin, you found yourself becoming too unpopular within your own one-party government.  It was then that you had to slow up on the reform programme, but this let up meant that you could no longer pay your foreign debts.  You see, you were not resolute enough.  The West is unhappy that you did not take their side more fervently.  The Donbass miners should have been crushed by Perestroika

Gorbachev:     I still think I am right about the money, but I fear you are right about me no longer being the person for their job - I must cost too much.  Eh?  The West must now be looking for someone else who is not so attached to the old regime.  Who doesn't have to pander to it every time a new piece of legislation is passed.  Or bail it out in the popularity stakes as well.  In their estimation I can no longer keep the Soviet Union together, which

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is one of their dearest hopes. You as a Russian must also feel this way. The British find it just as difficult to shake off their imperialist traditions. I am no longer acceptable throughout the Soviet Union - someone is needed urgently who can do the job. I suspect the counrty itself and also the world community is looking for someone who both comes from one of the newly elected republican governments and is a symbol of complete change. Can you think of anyone in government who fits such a description, Boris?

Yeltsin:        Why, Mikhail . . . what about myself?

Gorbachev:      Well.... we'll have to talk about *that*. I mean before things get too bad. Something has to be done. The country's in uproar. Let's invite some of the "dries" along as well, say Yanayev?

Yeltsin:        Ok. If your willing to hand over the reins I'll go along with that. See you soon.


**(Act 3):**     **News comes through that the miners will go on strike demanding the provision of soap. Yeltsin, Gorbachev and Yanayev talk of how to respond to this threat to communist work ethics and the rule of the party.**

Gorbachev:      Comrades, we face a serious threat to existing socialism in one country. The workers are taking history into their own hands. The achievements of Perestroika are in danger. Comrade Yanayev, you mentioned the possibility of reasserting our socialist ideals by ....

Yanayev:       Yes indeed!

Yeltsin:        I agree. We need to impose work-discipline. Comrade Gorbachev, lack of this today is your fault. I mean, by 1985, it was clear that the only way to make the workers work was to introduce sustained market reforms like Comrade Thatcher did in little England. But what did you do? You introduced prohibition! Our Russian blood consists of alcohol! I agree, we have to encourage drunkenness. That is the only way to impose the market forces. I mean, only a drunk would ....

Gorbachev:      Excuse me Boris, the prohibition of alcohol was ... nevermind ... what am I talking about, Boris, is this - Comrade Yanayev proposes to save our Russian fatherland by accelerating Perestroika through military force.

**Yeltsin:**       That is impossible! Our prisons are already overcrowded!

**Yanayev:**       That is not the issue, Boris. Mikhail's reforms have been obstructed by the workers. They just do not work hard enough. Something has to be done! Mikhail's plan to save our fatherland through glasnost has failed. These ungrateful workers simply refused to criticise in a constructive way. They make not a single proposal as to how to increase productivity. Instead, they go on strike! They also want to get rid of our communist planning system! We failed to uproot the spirit of Kronstadt, 1921. They want to take over our (sic!) factories! They demand self-determination! I propose to obliterate this autonomous, anarchist element once and for all.

**Yeltsin:**       I do not think that our Russian workers will accept a military coup. I propose to accelerate market reforms. You see, our late Comrade Marx was quite right when he spoke about the impersonal disciplining force of the market. We have to take that seriously. Anyway we are Marxists. See how well Comrade Thatcher did.

**Gorbachev:**   Yeah, she did well. But she had big problems with debt. That is why this new guy, Major, rejects giving us any more money. We have not got a market. But we have debt.

**Yanayev:**       The only way to achieve what Boris proposes - and I agree with what he said - is through a military shake-up. We have to root out the negative and disruptive attitudes of the workers. Only then will we be able to do what Boris suggests.

**Gorbachev:**   I agree. Incidentally, Bush implied something similar. However, Comrade Yanayev, who will take the responsibility? I mean, somebody has to do it. And this somebody will have to be held responsible afterwards. I mean, what will happen if the workers do not accept the coup?

**Yeltsin:**       I cannot do it. I am known for my free-market road to discipline. Comrade Yanayev, you will have to do it.

**Gorbachev:**   I agree.

**Yanayev:**       I accept. However, I want to remind you that the coup might fail. What will happen to me then?

**Yeltsin:**       I will take over and .... .

Gorbachev:     No! You will not!

Yeltsin:     Be realistic Mikhail. If the coup fails, you too will have lost any credibility in the eyes of our great Russian people.

Yanayev:     But I will have lost my credibility too!

Yeltsin:     Yes, you will! I propose that I take over. Mikhail and I will form some sort of alliance. We will make the workers work through market reforms. We will reorganise the relationships between our Republics and control them through the market.

Yanayev:     That is a good idea, Boris. But what will happen to me?

Gorbachev:     Somebody needs to do it! You agreed to that! You also agreed that the somebody is you!

Yeltsin:     You will go to court and from there to prison. But we will make sure that you'll be set free. Did you not say the other day that you would like to join Comrade Honecker in Chile? Why do you want to wait?

Yanayev:     I take you at your word. But what will happen if the coup succeeds?

Gorbachev:     The coup won't succeed!

Yeltsin:     I'll see to that. Let's talk about how to organise the coup tomorrow.

Gorbachev:     I am happy with all what that's been said so far. But I do want to play a role after the coup. I am still president of our fatherland. I won't step down for you Boris!

Yeltsin:     Mikhail, we need you. You know that. So don't be such a prick! All we want to do is accelerate the implementation of your ideas!

**They shake hands, singing the International.**

## New Titles published August 1991

AK Press, situated north of Hadrian's Wall, is a new up and coming Scottish publishing house. This summer we published three new titles. We publish everything from poetry and politics to post-modern philosophy, from a Scottish and International perspective.

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# The Theory and History
# of the Mass Worker in Italy

## *Sergio Bologna*

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**Introductory Note by Red Notes:** This article was written in 1987. It is an archaeological examination of the roots of one of the fundamental terms of the Italian revolutionary movement post-'68 - that of the *mass worker.*

The article found no outlet in Italy. As a result the first sections were translated into German (later sections were written directly in German), and the piece was published (over 3 issues) in the Hamburg-based *1999 - Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20 and 21 Jahrhunderts,* the journal of the influential Hamburg Institute for the Social History of the Twentieth Century.

We have translated some of the article from Italian, and some from German. Where necessary the Italian and the German versions have been compiled in order to make a final text.

In this abridged version prepared for *Common Sense* the footnotes (which make up about a third of the total) have been omitted. They will be published, together with the unabridged text, in a forthcoming publication by Red Notes *Selected Writings of Sergio Bologna.* For further details, write to Red Notes, BP15, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1.

**Editorial Note by Common Sense:** We publish Bologna's article in two parts. The second part will appear in *Common Sense* no 12.

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1] 1987 was the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Antonio Gramsci, the founder of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI). The year saw many initiatives and publications aimed at marking the occasion by remembering his work, bringing to light new evidence about his life, and putting fresh

interpretations on his political-cultural message. In particular, there was an initiative which addressed itself to one of Gramsci's most stimulating works in an attempt to open up new interpretations. Namely his article "Americanism and Fordism".

In this article, which he wrote in prison, Gramsci seeks to continue the debate, which he had initiated, on developmental trends within the working class, and among motor industry workers in particular. He embarks on an interpretation which was made possible for him by his experiences as a trade-union and political organiser among the workers of Turin (and among FIAT workers in particular) and which he had further developed as a theoretician of the workers' councils in the journal *Ordine Nuovo*, during the period of the factory occupations in September 1920.

Gramsci's interpretation of Fordism, which was written after the Great Crisis of 1929, stresses above all its "social-hygienic" aspects. In this framework he is concerned to analyse the "sexual Restoration" implicit in the "puritan" initiatives undertaken by Ford: the corps of factory overseers was set up to control the private lives and most particularly the sexual behaviour of Ford workers, the company's policy in relation to company housing, which was reversed for married couples, and so on.

In his analysis, Gramsci establishes the connection between these initiatives and the policy of Prohibition. The "new worker" was expected to reserve his physical and psychological energies for factory work, he was therefore expected to have stable sexual habits, regulated within the nuclear family, and he was also to refrain from alcohol. In this way he could be expected to maintain his psycho-physical energies intact, and avoid spending his wages in bars and brothels.

Although this sexual Restoration affected women just as much as men, and probably more so, Gramsci stressed the progressive "masculinisation" of labour power in the Fordist factory. Sexual Restoration and Prohibition, according to Gramsci, supplement the regulation of working-class behaviours in the factories initiated by Taylorism. Taylor's intention had been to conserve and rationalise the workers' psycho-physical energies inside the factory. Ford - who saw the worker not only as a producer of goods, but also as a consumer of the wage - sought to conserve the workers' psycho-physical energies outside the factory too.

The second aspect that Gramsci identified in Fordism was a further evolution in the rationalisation of work by means of technological innovation. But in his discussion this aspect remains of secondary importance. Gramsci shares the viewpoint of the communist movement of the 1920s, whereby technological development and the scientific organisation of work were seen as progressive. In one passage he makes the

point directly, that 'the Italian workforce has never, either as individuals or as a trade union, whether actively or passively, taken a stand against innovation, where this has aimed at the cutting of costs, at the rationalisation of work, and at the introduction of improved automation and technical organisation of the company complex.'

Although Gramsci was aware that a positive attitude vis-à-vis technological innovation and the rationalisation of work could have negative consequences for the theory and practice of the communist world, he identified these dangers in the methods of militarisation of labour which, in his opinion, Trotsky was adopting in the Soviet Union, rather than in the policy of 'rationalisation by means of machinery' as such.

The third aspect of Fordism which Gramsci highlighted was the close relationship with the need for planning at the level of general economic and wage policies. It was only via these instruments that the Fordist policy of mass production of motor cars and engines for civilian use was able to develop within an adequate economic context. (Given the conditions of his imprisonment, and his death in 1937, Gramsci was unfortunately unable to analyse the Rooseveltian New Deal experiment in similar detail.) Thus far 'Americanisation and Fordism.'

2] It was not until the start of the 1960s that it was possible to re-open a theoretical debate within the Italian workers' movement on themes of the organisation of work and technological innovation. This came after a long period in which these questions received only scant critical consideration - a hiatus which was due to the strategy, developed by the Italian Communist Party under Togliatti, of active collaboration in economic development.

It is no accident that this debate opens, precisely, on to the problems and ambiguities contained in Gramsci's thinking. The theme of the relation between people and machines, between the working class and technological innovation, which receives an ambivalent treatment in Gramsci, and to which he devotes less attention than questions of "social hygiene" and of economic policy, was now to become central.

The prime mover in this debate was Raniero Panzieri, a leading figure in the left wing of the Italian Socialist Party, a cultural organiser, and founder of the journal *Quaderni Rossi* in 1961.

During the whole period of the 1970s, the figure of Raniero Panzieri was that of a "tolerated heretic" within the Italian workers' movement, the initiator of that major political-cultural current known as *operaismo* ("workerism"). In recent years there has been considerable interest in Panzieri on the part of historians whose political experiences had previously been within the extreme Left, but who today have joined the

intellectual Court of Bettino Craxi. One of these historians, Stefano Merli, the writer of a pioneering work on the origins of the industrial proletariat in Italy, published in 1987 a volume of Raniero Panzieri's letters, which cover the decisive years of his activity as a militant up to his premature death in 1964.

Panzieri began his considerations on the relation of the working class to technological innovation with a re-reading and interpretations of the "Fragment on Machinery" contained in Marx's *Grundrisse*. Panzieri maintains that this reference to Marx's text is important, in order to be able to criticise the objectivist and fatalistic view of technological progress as exemplified in Italian trade unionism, which limited its demands purely to correcting the excesses of technological development, without understanding that such development serves only to strengthen the authoritarian structure of the factory. Panzieri wrote: "Capitalist despotism takes the form of technological rationality." He maintains that the trade unions accepted a situation in which the occupational characteristics of labour power were framed by technological development, and that they collaborated in this definition in terms of wage structures, workload, recognition of gradings, and so on. According to Panzieri, the union did no more than attempt to correct the "distortions and dysfunctions", while at the same time accepting the order of fixed capital as "technical rationality". Thus, according to Panzieri's analysis, labour power was condemned to perpetual subordination to machinery. Only if it organised itself collectively, and only if it demanded control over the production process, could the working class find its political identity.

Panzieri wrote: "The subversive power of the working class, its revolutionary capacity, appears (potentially) stronger in the developed areas (*punti di sviluppo*) of capitalism, where the crushing relation of constant capital over living labour - with the rationality that constant capital embodies - immediately confronts the working class within the question of its political enslavement."

So saying, Panzieri implicitly provided a methodological suggestion for research into "the political history of technology".

3] Panzieri's reflections stimulated a number of field research projects, mainly built around direct interviews with workers in the major factories of Turin - principally FIAT - and in factories with particularly advanced technology, such as the Olivetti plant in Ivrea. This was the moment when Marx's "worker's inquiry" was introduced on a more solid theoretical basis, and more strongly in the western tradition, than the "Maoist inquiry" which Italian followers of the Chinese Cultural Revolution were to try to import into Italy a few years later. With the work of Panzieri and the *Quaderni Rossi*, the preconditions were laid for an alternative history of the

Italian working class in the post-War period. The groundwork was laid for a debate on questions of trade union organisation, and there was a real renaissance in studies in the sociology of work. This research involved members of the *Quaderni Rossi* group who were close to Panzieri, while other activists placed experimentation with new forms of class organisation at the centre of their political activity, and devoted themselves as intellectuals to principally politological forms of activity. This was the group that founded the journal *Classe Operaia* in 1964. Among the projects and debates of *Quaderni Rossi* - here I am referring to the first three numbers of the journal, after which splits appeared which led to the publication of *Classe Operaia* a few months before Panzieri's death - there was also a project for a renewal of historiographical studies, around which Umberto Coldagelli and Gaspare De Caro had elaborated a series of interpretative models and key concepts in the third issue of the journal. Under the title "Some Hypothesis for Marxist Research into Contemporary History", Coldagelli and De Caro proposed a working project which took as its starting point a critique of Gramsci's national-popular conception, whereby the working class was to fulfil within Italian society a function as a driving motor for reform of the system, thereby freeing the system from its protocapitalist and late-feudalist leftovers.

In Gramsci's conception, elaborated during the years of his imprisonment, the working class was seen as functioning as a "modernising factor", both in relation to the economic system and in relation to the political institutions, and it was seen as carrying though to fulfilment the process of democratisation that had been cut short by Fascism.

Coldagelli and De Caro counterposed to this conception of history a very different view of the nature of the fascist regime; they stressed the way in which it represented a modernisation of the capitalist system: "The policies of the fascist regime corresponded fully, from the start, to the new requirements of Italian capitalism. Industry was to be re-organised over the space of a very few years during which all industrial sectors were to achieve extremely high increases in productivity, higher than the West European average."

For Coldagelli and De Caro it was necessary to rewrite the history of the Italian working class from the viewpoint of its organic relationship with capitalist development and its concrete relationship to work, and to abandon the subaltern interpretations which dealt with working-class history only separately from direct relations of production. Such interpretations had been the norm in left-wing (and particularly Communist Party) historiography.

4] In 1963, when these working hypotheses were published, Italian economic historiography was in a rather underdeveloped state.

In the *Annals* of the Feltrinelli Institute for the year 1959, the historian Giorgio Mori had written a well-grounded overview of studies in Italian economic history and the industrial history of the post-War period. In the case of FIAT, Alfa Romeo, Lancia and Autobianchi he was unable to cite one single work which was not written from the companies' point of view. All the available publications on FIAT (7), Alfa Romeo (2), and Innocenti (1) were in some shape or form company propaganda. The same was true of the liberal historian Rosario Romeo: in 1963, when he published the second expanded edition of his "Brief History of Italian Industry" (*Breve Storia della Grande Industria in Italia*, first published in October 1961) he was unable to cite one single monograph on the history of the auto industry. There were studies of the steel industry and the textile industry, but these were also few in number. There was a complete lack of a general history of contemporary Italian industry, and there was very little written on the history of the banking sector. In 1963 - when Coldagelli and De Caro were formulating their working hypotheses - there were also very few works available in the area of general economic history, particularly as regards the economic history of Fascism. The only worthwhile ones were strongly polemical in tone - works which were compiled during the period of political emigration and clandestinity by anti-fascists such as Grifone, Morandi and Sereni; or they were personal testimonies from people who had personally been involved in the reorganisation of banking and industry under Fascism - people such as Felice Guarneri, who at the time had been a senior official in the Ufficio Italiano Cambi.

If one wanted to find out about the history of the auto industry under Fascism, one had to turn to the interesting presentation which Vittorio Valletta (general manager of FIAT from 1929 right through to 1964) made to the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry in 1946, or to the factory communiques of the clandestine communists, which at the time were published in the emigre press, and which, after the War, were made available to a wider public in the Feltrinelli Reprints series.

There were also testimonies and reconstructed accounts by the leading figures of the strikes of March 1943, as well as the works of Paolo Spriano, the official historian of the PCI, on the Turin working class, although his researches end with the year 1918. Finally, there were the writings of the Turin *Ordine Nuovo* group, the journal which had been founded by Gramsci and had been the organ of the Workers' Council movement in 1920, which were now being read with a new political commitment.

All in all, one was dealing only with fragments of a history which was still waiting to be written. As De Caro and Coldagelli had correctly pointed out, it would first be necessary to go beyond the view of Fascism as a period of "forced economy" *(economia forzata)*, which had hindered the full unfolding

of the productive power of capitalism. This was a viewpoint cultivated in the ideology of the anti-fascist bourgeoisie.

5] In 1967 a seminar was organised at the Faculty of Political Science at Padova University, by a number of former editors of the magazine *Classe Operaia*. On this occasion I delivered a paper on the Workers' Council movement in Europe, which was published five years later, by Feltrinelli in 1973, and was also translated into German by Gisela Bock.

In that paper I formulated a series of research hypotheses on the history of the working class, and I attempted a social-historical definition of the *mass worker* which would match the workers' inquiries and the militant activities being pursued by the *Quaderni Rossi* and *Classe Operaia* groups.

I had written my university thesis on a topic of contemporary German history, and I had worked for years in the Feltrinelli Library, which owned an almost complete collection of journals and publications on the workers' councils in the Weimar Republic, as well as documents of the Profintern and much other material relating to the international working-class movement.

The political contacts that we had with groups of the working-class left in the USA, in whose political consciousness a formidable "class memory" lay buried, and our great familiarity with anarchist militants who had emigrated from Italy, plus the fact that some of us had relatives or people we knew who had worked in the USA (my grandfather, for example, had been an auto worker in the factories of Detroit) - all this opened the possibility for us to become acquainted with the struggles of the American workers and the legendary experiences of the Industrial Workers of the World, through little-known publications and oral traditions. Many of us were intellectuals who had been abroad as part of our studies and we were familiar with the libraries of half the world. As a result, we had a good fund of bibliographical information, which was augmented through the collective nature of our work. But above all we had the experience of direct militant activity with factory workers: we had taken part in the mass assemblies and the strikes; we had been involved in strikes and meetings; we had been on the picket lines at FIAT and Lancia in Turin, and at Alfa Romeo, Innocenti and Autobianci in Milan, and some of us had experience in the trade unions (I had been in the FIOM, the engineering wing of the CGIL). We had written and distributed dozens of leaflets, we had fought with scabs and had taken part in street clashes during demonstrations. As a result, we tried to make use of this direct experience in the formulation of our historiographical judgements, combining it with our bibliographical knowledge and what we had gathered from the oral history tradition.

The company archives of the big firms were closed to the public, and even

if they had been open, we would certainly never have been given permission to use them. The archives of the trade unions - in a state of hopeless confusion - were similarly inaccessible. As a result, our hypotheses sometimes came out as schematic or sectarian, but they had an explosive force in certain political and trade-union circles; the "scientific community", however, remained indifferent to them; they only first noticed us after the student protest movement.

The most useful hypotheses contained in my paper twenty years ago, in the light of our experience of the intervening years, turned out to be the ones that dealt with the relationship between technological composition and the political composition of the class. Moving from the observation that, despite the different degrees of capitalist development and despite differences in political regimes, working class struggles since the beginning of the century had developed in large *international cycles* which had homogeneous characteristics, I posed the problem (this was the theme of my editorial article in *Classe Operaia*, no. 2) of the circulation of struggles - in other words, of communication between working-class collectivities, and I asked whether technological standards in fact acted directly as a vector of communication of disciplinary actions which sparked reactions of insubordination.

This whole problematic naturally brought to the fore the relationship between the spontaneity of the struggles - conceived as a culture of collective insubordination - and the organised labour and trade union movement. From an analysis of the ideology of the workers' councils in the Weimar Republic and the ideology of the Italian factory councils in Gramsci's time, I formulated the hypothesis that their shared positive attitudes towards technology and production, their project of managing the factories in collaboration with the technicians, sprang essentially from their professional position as highly skilled workers. I suggested that the reason underlying the remarkable spread of the workers' council movement in Germany was that the socio-professional composition of the German working class was characterised by a very high percentage of highly skilled workers, especially since the driving sectors of German industry were high-skill sectors.

I used the term "technical composition" to define the totality of socio-professional contents and its associated culture of work, and I defined as "political composition" the totality of autonomous and class conscious ways of behaving and their associated culture of working-class insubordination. Finally I advanced the thesis that Fordism as a technological-social system - operating via the modification of the labour process and the introduction of the assembly line - was aimed at destroying the figure of the highly qualified skilled worker, in order at the same time to destroy the cultures of autonomy and control and self-management of

production, which had expressed themselves in exemplary fashion in the shape of the Soviets and the workers' councils. Fordism created a new figure, that of the mass worker, in order to destroy the history and memory of that generation of the working class which - albeit only in one part of the world - had produced a communist revolution. I thus ascribed a fundamental importance to the auto-sector, not only because it was the sector in which the assembly line was furthest developed, but also because it was within this sector that the mass worker was created as a new social class. The auto industry was thus a laboratory of social engineering, inasmuch as class conflict in this industry was readable as a kind of thermometer for overall class relations. In this interpretation, technology was understood as an instrument which produced social classes and social relations even before it produced commodities.

6] When I read the chapters of the *Daimler-Benz Book* dealing with the Weimar years, it brought to mind several observations that I had made twenty years previously, as well as a series of further developments, among them the book of Karl-Heinz Roth and Elizabeth Behrens on *The Other Working-Class Movement.* Inasmuch as Daimler-Benz had maintained throughout the whole period of Weimar a pre-Fordist technology and therefore a "high skill" technical composition of labour-power, and inasmuch as this "conservatism" at the level of technological innovation had resulted in a paralysis of Fordisation in the entire sector of auto components and accessories, the effects on the overall composition of the working class were even more conservative: the emergence of the mass worker was retarded and the social hegemony of the highly-skilled worker was prolonged until 1933 and beyond. From this point of view, Germany appears as a late-comer in the history of the mass worker. Is it possible to interpret other aspects of the class conflict in the Weimar period in the light of this delay? Did this state of affairs also continue into the following decades, when the role of the mass worker was covered essentially by foreign labour-power? Quite conversely, the protagonists of class conflict in Weimar Germany were more the unemployed and the marginalised elements than was the case in other countries. On the one hand the high-skilled sector of German workers, and on the other, poverty. The class composition of the Weimar Republic is a Janus-headed thing: of the poor and the highly-skilled. What were the consequences in terms of social ideologies and forms of social behaviour?

7] The problematic of the relationship between people and machinery was considerably deepened by the mass movement of 1967-68. A sizeable component of the student protest movement in Italy chose as its theoretical axis the "critique of the capitalist use of science". Marx was given a new reading, via the interpretation offered by Panzieri and other comrades of the workerist *(operaista)* tendency. In the science faculties we saw the spread of an alternative view of technology: as "a power that is hostile to the class".

May 1968 in France showed that the factory working class was an active political subject in the movements. In the Italian auto factories the "base committees" and the "worker-student assemblies" began to develop. As of May 1969, the FIAT workers in Turin began a series of strike actions that were to last right through the summer. The whole elite of the Italian student movement flooded to the gates of the Mirafiori and Rivalta FIAT factories to support the strikes, which were conducted outside of the trade union organisations.

Within the trade unions a profound tactical shift began to take place, and with the beginning of the negotiations on the Metalworkers' contract a new historical phase began which was to become known as the "Hot Autumn". This phase led to the creation of a widespread network of factory councils *(consigli di fabbrica)*.

These events had a major cultural and political significance. The concept "mass worker" became a term of everyday usage, and the concepts which had been developed in the workerist studies of the 1960s became widely accepted, in sociology, in political science, and last but not least in historiography. The commitment of the student movement and the trade unions to the workers' struggles gave rise to an extensive political-propagandist literature, which today provides an essential source for the reconstruction of the history of Italian industry in this period, and for the auto industry in particular. The intention of all this was to "let the workers speak", and the "workers' inquiry" was being used by everyone - albeit sometimes in ways that were debased and populist - and not only by the Maoists.

8] 1970-71 saw the appearance of two major works on the history of the auto industry, and of the FIAT workers in particular: Valerio Castronovo's biography of Giovanni Agnelli (the father of the present head of FIAT), and Liliana Lanzardo's book on the PCI and the working class at FIAT from 1945 to 1949.

Castronovo's book is a classic of Italian "entrepreneurial history". This was the first time that a historian had been permitted access to the FIAT company archives. He worked in FIAT's historical documentation office, and relied on materials that the company's press office had collected. An important element of his reconstruction was the archives of the Turin employers' confederation, and government archives in Rome, especially on questions of the relations between Agnelli and the central government.

Castronovo gives us the principal outlines of the history of the auto sector, along with a wealth of incidental detail. The creation of the company from its origins through to the First World War, the big phase of technological

modernisation during the War, the background to the company's relations with the reformist area of the labour movement and with the communist sector during the revolutionary phase before the rise of Fascism. Finally, he documents from the inside, *for the first time*, the relationship between the management of a major industrial company and the Mussolini regime. The most novel (albeit not the best) part of the book describes the creation of what was, by the standards of its day, the ultra-modern Lingotto works, through Fascism, the years of the Great Crisis (1930-1) and the imperialist *intervention* in Ethiopia (1935-6). Although Castronovo focuses principally on the personality of Giovanni Agnelli and his political and financial dealings, the book also provides detailed information on aspects of the organisation of work, on wage policies, and on the internal hierarchies. In short, while one might be puzzled by some of his interpretations of actual events, the history of FIAT is finally laid before us with a wealth of documentary detail.

The book by Liliana Lanzardo, on the other hand, who had previously been on of the group around *Quaderni Rossi*, analysed the history of FIAT from a quite different point of view. Her book was based on a source of prime importance, namely the documents and archives of the *consigli di gestione* ("self-management committees"). These were bodies which had been created in the immediate post-War period (1945) by the newly-founded parties and the trade unions with a view to the self-management of the factories. The experience of these *consigli di gestione* is of great historical interest, inasmuch as it reveals the extent to which the Communist Party of Italy, at the moment of its greatest political power, was or was not intending to remove the management of production from the capitalists. Lanzardo's book thus presents itself as an essay on the relationship between class, party and capital in the phase of revolutionary "euphoria" following in the wake of the Resistance.

It is clear from the book how fast the PCI had dropped its plan for workers' management of production and had accepted managers who had been compromised under Fascism being brought back into the company's management structure. These managers - among them Vittorio Valletta - had formerly (in the period after the Resistance, when the partisans in Italy and particularly in the north, were still armed) been removed from the company's management.

The book also makes clear that the workers had perceived the *consigli di gestione* not as technical organs, but as real organs of power.

The ideology and practice of the *consigli di gestione* brought to light the positive achievements, but also the contradictions, from the time of Gramsci. They revealed deep splits within the class composition of the period, but also the great unity and solidarity which the Resistance had

created among blue-collar and technical workers. They brought to the surface people's hopes for a "new way of producing" and for developing a new, more humane organisation of work. The *consigli* were opposed by the Allies, and were seen as the "seeds of Bolshevism". The industrialists, on the other hand, had an ambiguous attitude to them: they tried to turn the productivist ideology of the *consigli* to their own profit, but at the same time they saw them as a hostile force when they set out to place limitations on management, or even went so far as to declare them "unnecessary". However, when the power relations in society changed, the *consigli di gestione* were deprived of power, and then completely swept away. Liliana Lanzardo's researches set the whole problematic within a very complex framework of socio-political relationships. It became an important text for the ideological formation of the extra-parliamentary movements, because in their eyes it demonstrated that the PCI had "betrayed" the working class and the Resistance not only on the question of armed revolution, but also as regards the organisation of production.

9] Both these important monographs on the history of FIAT were published at a time when studies of economic history in Italy had already taken an important step forward, adopting highly sophisticated research methodologies and theories of economic analysis.

The Ford Foundation-funded Social Science Research Council in New York had, in 1963, entrusted Simon Kuznets and Moses Abramowitz with the coordination of an international historical research project on the economic development of the industrialised countries. The research leaders for Italy were Professor Giorgio Fuà (and for Germany Gottfried Bombach and Rolf Krengel). The findings of this research were published in three volumes, of which the first appeared in 1968-9; they contained numerous essays on particular aspects of the development of the Italian economy during the past hundred years. This was an event of great cultural importance, because these studies provided - at the level of research method in history and the history of industry - a moment of modernisation, bringing Italy into line with the most recent development of post-Keynesian economic theory and historiography. The methodological approach was macro-economic and quantitative in nature, with the extensive use of statistical series of growth indicators, and an almost total exclusion of socio-political problematics. Nonetheless, this was the first time that people had addressed themselves to the problems of actually using the statistical sources that were available on the history of the Italian economy. The macro-economic approach meant that the history of the auto industry was subsumed within the more general history of the development of means of transport.

The Appendix to the third volume of this research contained a bibliography of the works that it considered "essential reading" in the field of Italian economic history. Under the heading "Industry" there was still no single

published work on the history of the auto industry.

The omission of socio-political problematics in the Ford Foundation study, and the overall quantitative approach meant that the Fascist period was in no sense problematicised. Paradoxically, this was grist to the mill, as far as militant historians were concerned, because the statistical tables spoke for themselves, and confirmed the correctness of the thesis advanced by Coldagelli and De Caro, that, in its initial period, Fascism in Italy had brought about a significantly faster rate of capitalist development than had been the case in other countries.

It is a far cry from the Ford-financed study to the essay written by Ester Fano on the question of the economic stagnation between the two world wars, which appeared in 1971. Ester Fano had been a collaborator of Raniero Panzieri at the end of the 1950s, and here, for the first time, basing herself on the work done by Josef Steindl, she tackled the problem of the relationship between economic development and stagnation during the Fascist period - and this in terms which were judged as acceptable in both political and economic historiography.

As Steindl had already shown for the USA, stagnation was not at all in contradiction to a strengthening of the power of capital between the two world wars; it was a far more general phenomenon in western countries, which was not attributable so much to the individual economic policies of individual countries as to the particular ways in which capitalist restructuring had proceeded between the wars. This restructuring had either massively replaced living labour with machines, thereby producing a cycle of "over-accumulation" (as Grossmann would have put it), or it had "frozen" productive capacities, inasmuch as plants were employed at only a fraction of their capacity (as Daimler-Benz appears to have done) while being supported by public funding.

The particular characteristic of the Italian economy was that this tendency to stagnation - which was more characteristic of the 1930s than of the 1920s - went hand in hand with a continuing low productivity of agriculture, due to specific measures taken by the regime (maintenance of a semi-feudal situation, population policy, etc).

Ester Fano's study was an isolated instance in the panorama of Italian histories of Fascism. It was read with very great interest by young researchers in the Institutes concerned with the history of the Resistance; the reaction of the academic milieu was one of respect, but at the same time embarrassment, because, while this study paved the way for further debate and research, it also threw into crisis some of the conceptual models of bourgeois anti-fascism. Fano came in for particular criticism from the liberal categories of the Left, for whom Fascism had been a parenthesis

within Italian economic development.

A further important phase in the history of economic research into the Fascist period was the project *L'economia italiana nel periodo fascista* (The Italian economy during the Fascist period), which was organised by the "Luigi Einaudi Association for the Study of Money, Banks and Finance", in Rome, whose results were published in a special issue of the journal *Quaderni Storici*, published in 1975. Among the significant essays in this collection were - alongside an article by Ester Fano on agriculture under Fascism - an essay by Vera Camagni on industrial wages during the dictatorship, and an essay by Ercole Sori on migration movements. All this brought us closer to laying the basis for a "social history of Fascism" which had been ignored by both political historians (the history of governing institutions, political parties and organisations) and by quantitative economic historians.

These attempts to write a social history of Fascism were, moreover, regarded with mistrust: in 1975 the results of the investigation were published as a collection of essays by *Il Mulino* publishing house, edited by two historians, Ciocca and Toniolo; the studies by Ester Fano and Ercole Sori were excluded from this volume.

*Translated by Peter Martin.*

# Poetry

## Now Harder to Acheive

No Vietnam Victory today.
They're celebrating Afghan girls unlearning how to read.
The Intifada, fewer friends today.
No free Angola
Everything more difficult today.

The simplest thing
now harder to acheive.

\*

It's the triumph in the t.v. voices I shudder at
the arrogance of these little people
the cowardice of their privilege
bought by money,
in this land of money,
bought cheap.

One bright young thing
all dressed to kill
is mouthing off about how now
house music's big in Leningrad
(renamed).
She's sussed it all
her shades and stupid camera angles telling us
how up- to - date we are compared to them.

She takes the piss endlessly.
Easy to take the piss
out of bureaucrats and greyness and people who think that
tractor production matters more than record production.
She'll have spent the Summer before college
on some fucking daft kibbutz,

so she'll know all about the world.
She'll think that famine's really bad
but there's not just one simple cause.
We British, young and bright,
Oh, we know all about the world.

And for the masters of these minions, more
markets, labour and resources to exploit.
And how.
The gates are open now.
The gates are open now.

\*

I hate what they have done.
But more, much more,
I hate that we won't see what they have done.

\*

Socialism's no 'idea'.

It's steelworks built,
Bread in mouths,
Children taught to write.
And all defended
time and time again.

War
As soon as it was born
to strangle it,
to kill a flame they couldn't chance would catch.
Tanks and terror hardly with a break
"We decimate then we say it does not work"
but on it worked,
against embargoes, trade restrictions,
unpoetic things.
Unpoetic things
 that count.

Now new leaders squabble over market shares and borders
thats how its going to be now.
The people who beat the Nazis side by side
are arguing amongst themselves
dividing up the land
for sale.

And as this all goes on before our eyes
before our t.v.- filtered eyes
just ask:
who wins from this
who loses?

No Vietnam Victory today.
They're celebrating Afghan girls unlearning how to read.
The Intifada, fewer friends today.
No free Angola
Everything more difficult today.

The simplest thing
now harder to acheive.

*Colin Chalmers*
*August 1991*


## Self Determination

in its time

a country
will determine
the future
of ordinary people

this is called
democracy

in their time

ordinary people
will determine
the future
of a country

this is called revolution
pick your side

*Bobbie  Christie*
*May 1991*

# A Talk Wae Mike

whit dae yi dae
aboot thi hoose yi live in

things yi huv saved
oor thi years

then someone says
under law

am takin that - that
n that

n you say
ah hiv a small gun here

which yi can take
against yir heid

*Bobbie Christie*
*June 1991*

# So Now For Peace?

desert
rain
has cleared
sun
breaks
clouded sky
&
now over
their land

peace
for a time!
killing has stopped

*Bobbie Christie*
*March 1991*

# Speech to the "Death Rules Over Germany" Demonstration
### Berlin, 3 November 1990

## *Karl-Heinz Roth*

Friends, comrades

Our demonstration today takes place in Berlin, the capital city where, just over 50 years ago, the elites of the Nazi dictatorship embarked on the social and physical annihilation of entire sectors of the population, which was to be the core of their programme for the conquest of power. The so-called Reichskristallnacht [the "Night of the Broken Glass", in which Jewish shops and synagogues were attacked] of 9 November 1938 marked a decisive turning point in this regard.

In the early period, the political and racist persecution of the Jews and the Left of the workers' movement took systematic shape, alongside the persecution of the mentally and physically handicapped. Preparations for war were already far advanced, and within that framework priorities were established, the mechanisms for the seizure and isolation of the victims were standardised, and, under the management of the Gestapo, the official seal of approval was given to acts of the most utter depravity. The experts of the big banks in charge of the "Arianisation" project were well aware, as were the SA commanders around the corner, that it was now becoming possible not only to humiliate still further the people who were the targets of their greed and aggression, but also to have them disappear silently from history.

As from 9th November 1938, clearsighted observers could already sense that the annihilation of German and European Jews was on its way. One year later they observed that the mechanism of deportation and mass murder were likely to be directed against the so-called "social outcasts" (Gemeinschaftsfremden) - the gypsies, the population of Poland, and the

population of Eastern Europe as a whole. Immediately after the outbreak of War, the official murderers of the "Action T4" set about killing the inmates of mental hospitals in the occupied Polish territory, and then within Germany itself. As of January 1940, the upper echelons of the SS and the Police put into effect their "next step" - the deportation of Jews and Poles from annexed territory in West Poland. New concentration camps, among them Auschwitz, orginiated as transitional stations between the "extermination through work" project and genocide.

Then, after the invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the Germans began the massacres of the operational groups in areas behind the operational lines. This was accompanied by the Wehrmacht's intentional starving to death of Soviet prisoners of war in the Autumn and Winter of 1941-2. This same period saw the beginning of the mass deportations of German and European Jews. They were taken, by means of a thoroughly rationalised system of human collection and transportation, to extermination camps in occupied Poland. There they were liquidated with the assistance of technical procedures that the Fascists' doctors had developed during the extermination of the inmates of the mental hospitals.

The extension of the mass murder of the Jews to the population of Eastern Europe was not put into effect at once, since the course of the war during 1942-3 had altered the Germans' priorities regarding their occupation and extermination policies. So it was that Nazi Germany, in 1939-40, became the organisers of an officially planned and enacted process of mass murder. The war served as a backdrop. When it ended six years later, with the Liberation, the perpetrators were confined, only in order to blot out the tracks. The facts and the outcome of this genocide were to become widely known. However, as regards the background and the motives for it, our understandings are still hazy. Any attempt to identify the perspectives and motives of the people who perpetrated all this has been regarded as taboo, since it obviously raises the question as to whether Auschwitz could happen again, and if so, how. There has been a massive resistance by establishment historians, mass media and politicians to any attempt to look at these questions. But a few worthwhile understandings are beginning to emerge.

1) The basis of the Nazis' extermination planning was anti-semitism and racism, combined with aggression and a chauvinistic intention to achieve world power. All the elites of the dictatorship were united around the notion of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, a national ethnic community - this notion united the economic sector, the military, the ministerial bureaucracies, and the Nazi party. Their common aim was war, and war was to be the vehicle for a social-racist New Order of exploitation and domination in Europe.

2) In the course of the pre-War armaments boom, a number of economic and socio-political bottlenecks had arisen, which prompted Germany's elite to take the racism and anti-semitism that had already been embraced as a national philosophy, and translate it into comprehensive bureaucratically planned techniques of domination. The "Aryanisation" of companies and of capital assets speeded up the rationalisation of the arms industry. But it also made more housing space available: the first deportations of 1938-9 were designed to ease the shortage of housing in the big cities, while the expulsion of gypsies and the "work-shy" was aimed at disciplining Germany's wage workers and reducing social welfare costs.

3) The learning process based on the economic and socio-political exploitation of racist and anti-semitic exclusion policies advanced more vigorously once the war began. In two ways: first, the War, with its attendant military atrocities, provided a useful social and economic safety valve for the "final solution of the Jewish question" and the solution of "social questions" within the Reich. Second, in the newly occupied territories, the war created an available mass of people for the establishment of a "New Order" in social, economic and demographic policy. The deportation and extermination of the Jews, and subsequently of the Slavic population of Eastern Europe, was seen by its perpetrators as a precondition for sociologists ("ideas people") to be able to elaborate the model of an occupation regime, which could be translated into long-term development plans. The planned "extermination" policies of the Reich security organisation went hand-in-hand with a "General Plan for the East" (*Generalplan Ost*), which incorporated models of territorial organisation, agrarian policy, and social and demographic policy designed to create a system of development which would be dependent on the Nazi metropolis.

4) The carrying-out of these two mutually interlocking programmes - of mass extermination on the one hand, and an imperialist "New Order" on the other - was a complex process, in which all the economic, state-security, scientific and administrative bodies of the Nazi regime played active parts. Extermination and economic developments fused into a single, unified planning concept, which was shared by *all* the various German elites. The Auschwitz concentration camp provides a telling example of this. From the SS point of view, Auschwitz represented a decisive step towards setting up a forced-labour supply for their own industrial combine, which could also be hired as contract labour to the arms industry; at the same time, Auschwitz was also seen as an intermediary station in the long term plan of mass extermination. Add to this that the policy makers dealing with the territorial organisation of Upper Silesia treated Auschwitz as an instrument for demographic "segmentation" of agricultural and industrial planning. Despite shortages of materials and labour-power, the top management at I.G. Farben invested in Auschwitz with a view to creating a central location for the development of an internationally competitive factory for the post-

war manufacture of profitable future synthetic materials.

Auschwitz represents precisely that mutaul inter-relationship of genocide, regional planning and economic development which the economic bosses, the intellectuals and the SS High Command had been elaborating. It is perfectly possible for Auschwitz to repeat itself, for as long as this background remains concealed from public view; for as long as the abuse of knowledge in our society is not checked; and for as long as we fail to draw the existential and political conclusions from what this analysis shows us. For as long as that is the case, the lessons of the victims of Auschwitz will remain unlearned.

Comrades, Berlin, the former capital of the state planning of mass murder is now, once again, about to become the capital of Germany. This is the result of the annexation of East Germany by West Germany, as has happened in the course of this past year. The ideologues of the ruling class and their historians have triumphed. They proclaim that with the abolition and incorporation of the GDR (a state whose anti-Fascist break with the continuity of German history had been congealed into a really-existing socialist state), Auschwitz had been overcome as an "identification barrier" to the development of a positive German national consciousness. In view of the fortunate outcome of the particular path of Nazi-imperialism, they recommend to the subjects of the newly-restored Greater Germany a new form of conscious disposal of the past. And in so doing they insult the memory of the victims of Auschwitz, and of the Jews who were exterminated in Europe.

Now, what are these people trying to do?

First, they are attempting to outlaw any work, any thinking which attempts to analyse the murderous logic of capitalist expansion and racist nationalism as expressed in the case of Auschwitz. They want to eliminate our understanding that the Nazi combination of extermination and economic development, with all its international consequences, can only be answered by a position that is anti-capitalist and at the same time determinedly anti-nationalist. In order to pander to the recently-felt and growing need for national consensus, for national solidarity, Auschwitz is to be allowed to vanish from our memories.

Second, the opinion-makers who create our national consensus want to divert attention from the fact that Auschwitz itself represented only a culmination point of German nationalist thinking. The very foundation of the German state, in 1871, was based on "Blood and Iron". The Prussian creator of that state, Bismark, had waged war against the other German states and then against France. What was declared at the time as "belonging

together" only in fact "grew together" following the annexation of Alcase-Lorraine, and after indirect participation in the massacre of the Paris Communards. Since then, nationalist annexationist chauvinism and capitalist expansion have gone inseparably hand-in-hand in Germany; these were the drives that led to the re-arming of the German fleet, the First World War, and the development of the obscene science of gas warfare. After 1918 the defeated German elites tolerated Weimar only as a temporary transitional phase. They then exploited the political destabilisation resulting from the international economic crisis so as to carry through a second attempt at world domination, on the basis of an alliance conceived in terms of a "national community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*). After the failure of this second attempt, German history appeared definitively discredited as a national history: internationally by means of Yalta and Postdam, and within the former Reich by the construction of two antagonistic territorial entitites. Now, 41 years later, this is done away with, because in the meantime the state which broke with the continuity of German history has been dismantled.

History does not repeat itself as a linear process. But it reproduces itself and becomes more extreme for as long as the given structure of power and domination continues to prevail. Now the apparent "excess" of Auschwitz is to be excised in order to move close to Bismark, the Iron Chancellor of 1871. But even so, we are still left with the dimension of a "Knuto-German" Reich - remember how both Michael Bakunin and Friedrich Engels, quite independently from each other, studied the process by which the German state had been set up, and concluded that Germany's officers and industrial magnates carried the seeds of bureaucratised mass murder in their hearts. How far will today's push for the restoration of a Greater Germany actually go? These days, following the fall of the GDR, anyone who lives between the River Oder and the Rhine has no choice. We have to adopt positions that are not only anti-capitalist, but also anti-nationalist if we want not only to survive a dire catastrophe, but also to prevent it.

Thirdly, what has weighed heaviest has been the method whereby this Greater Germany has been restored, in the course of 1989-90. The West German ruling class has quite cynically exploited the East German democracy movement of Autumn 1989, when the people moved against the dead hand of state-socialist domination. The intention of the West German ruling class is to destroy the GDR by means of an economic blitzkrieg and to incorporate it into its own sovereign territory. The basic outlines of the programme developed by the big banks and by a fraction within the Bundesbank were already laid down in the State Chancellor's office by the end of November 1989, and by March-April 1990 were technically perfected. The East German economy was to be split off from its markets by means of currency and fiscal policies, and driven to ruin, in order that it could then be annexed politically on terms that were totally one-sided. This

economic blitzkrieg has been an unqualified success for the West German ruling elite. But it was not only (as is now becoming clear) a master stroke of monetary double-dealing; it was also faciliated by the fundamental willingness of the East German reformist intelligentsia to capitulate in the period after the Modrow government. Even before the "Deustchmark elections" on 18th March, any attempt at a democratic socialist renewal of East German society and its economy was paralysed by the slogan *"Deutschland einig Vaterland"* - "Germany - United Fatherland". After April the national-reformist and conservative forces of the GDR limited themselves to merely modifying the economic, and later the political, annexation plans.



Comrades,
This part of Berlin in which we are presently standing will find itself under the economic (as of 1st July 1990)  and political (as of 2nd October) rule of West Germany. The process of destroying the social and economic structures has already resulted in production being halved. It has harnessed all income to the West German national exchequer, has made one third of all wage-earners unemployed, and administration and policy-making has been surrendered    to    the    commissars    of    the    West    German "Annexation/Unification" faction.

As the destruction accompanying this annexation process continues, so the social consequences will become increasingly dire.  The more the mass of

the West German people become socially demoralised by the reaction to wage pressure, immigration, and all-round deregulation, the more the powers-that-be in Greater Germany will fall back on the myth of a national *"Voksgemeinschaft"* - community of nation. The professorial mercenaries of the Deutsche Bank and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation began this campaign a long time ago, in alliance with the barking dogs of social democracy. A disillusioned and psychologically demoralised population are expected to find long-term respite in a self-generated "national solidarity" awakening. That way there're supposed to feel better.

This is where immigrants and "foreign" workers come to serve a useful purpose, because they provide a safety valve for aggression. In order for popular racism to be given an official dignity, in the last few days the state constitutional court has explicitly declared that there is an internal relation between nationhood and "Germanic nationality" (*deutsches Volkstum*). The popular and institutional racism which is once again unfolding today is the logical consequence of an annexation strategy which has just ruined an entire society - not by using guns and bombs, but simply by the crushing weight of its economic power, by its instinctive urge to conquer, and by the prospect of a glittering post-modern culture of fast money - all this in order to expropriate East Germany's state assets and to subject it as a territorial entity.

Comrades,

The economic offensive of the West German ruling class and the gutless capitulation of the East German reformist elite have unexpectedly thrown us, and our counter-culture and our identities, into an existential crisis. Whether we like it or not, we are going to be forced into a radical perspective of resistance. Our chances of survival depend on our capacity to analyse the class relations of the new Germany, the way in which it is deeply split by the contradictions of boom and depression, but also by overweening power and a powerless experience of foreign rule. We shall have to develop a fresh viewpoint on our relation to the exploited and the oppressed, while remaining aware that a promising perspective of mass resistance is not going to be easy to arrive at.

There is, however, one position which is clear, and which could perhaps serve use as a common starting point: the boycott of the national parliamentary election on 2nd December 1990. Quite independently of our reservations about the parliamentary road and its relevance to mass resistance, these elections have to be boycotted:

- because they are an insult to the victims of Fascism, and at the same time represent a rehabilitation of those responsible for Fascism;

- because at this moment they are excluding five million non-German

fellow-citizens, and are seeking to turn the German Republic into an apartheid state;

- because we don't want to become accomplices of this annexation crime perpetrated by the West German ruling class;

- because we want to fight the coup d'etat that Chancellor Kohl has staged, with the economic assistance of finance capital;

- because we can function as anti-imperialists within the metropolis of Greater Germany only if we remain truly anti-nationalist;

 - because we are proud, and because we won't be put down.


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*Translated by Peter Martin*

# The Economics of
# the Final Solution:
## A Case Study from the General Government

*Götz Aly and Susanne Heim*

On 31 July 1941 Hermann Göring commissioned Reinhard Heydrich to make the organisational preparations for the murder of the European Jews. Göring did this in his capacity as Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, a position in which he had already successfully directed both Aryanization and forced emigration. He was also responsible for the economic rationalisation and the increasingly more effective economic exploitation of the German Reich and the occupied territories. In this, he was advised by a committee of state secretaries and experts, who can be considered as the actual 'crisis managers' of the Third Reich.

These experts did not primarily use an ideological approach, but one of pragmatic rationality. They constantly used such concepts as 'solution' (*Lösung*) or 'total solution' (*Gesamtlösung*). They did not revel in myths of blood and race, but thought in categories of large-scale economic spaces, structural renewal, and overpopulation with its attendant food problems; and

they were resolved to effectuate more rational methods of production, standardise products, and improve social structures. They always thought and acted at the expense of minorities, whose stigmatisation and discrimination were prescribed by Nazi ideology. In this way, they attempted to secure advantages for the majority of the population, or at least guarantee its social status, by subjecting the minorities to extreme social disabilities and ultimately ended in death.

The policy of destruction in the Third Reich, it seems to us, must be understood as a systematic constituent of the social policy practised at that time. In the context of our work on the murders committed against psychiatric patients, we have come across the connection between modernisation and destruction. Thus in the 'euthanasia operation', therapeutic process and the advances made in the organisation of traditional institutional psychiatry were explicitly intermingled with the killing of incurable patients who failed to respond to therapeutic treatment. We encountered the same relationship in our investigation of economic planning in occupied Poland. There the draft of an economic development programme was linked to the increasingly outspoken demand that Jews be eliminated from the artificial creation known as the General Government.

In line with our working hypothesis, we are not interested in the irrational and pathological personalities traits of a few Nazi leaders, who seem to us far more intelligent and discerning than is generally assumed; rather, we are concerned with the many institutions of the regime involved with planning, the gathering of statistics, and statistical analysis. After 1938 these institutions became increasingly influential and counted such men as Fritz Todt, Albert Speer, Herbert Backe, and Reinhard Heydrich among their political representatives. They based their decisions on the work done at such research institutes as the German Labour Front Institute for Spatial Research, certain departments of the SS Security Service (SD, the National Board for Economy and Efficiency, the Institute for German Projects in the East (*Ostarbeit*), the German Foreign Institute (*Auslandsinstitut*), as well as many others.

It is our hypothesis that between September 1939 and the summer of 1941, various of Germany's educated elite involved with planning devised the 'final solution' for logical reasons and implemented it in conjunction with the war against Russia. The 'final solution' evolved from studies and proposals of subordinate planning officials, gradually moving from the lower to the higher bureaucratic echelons. It should be carefully noted that these planners, who did not always appear to be of importance within the hierarchy, did not themselves make the decisions but suggested them to superiors.

# 'Polish Conditions'

The invasion of Poland confronted the Nazi planners with social problems they had not previously encountered in their own territorial sphere of domination. Nevertheless, the confrontation was not unexpected. Already during the 1930s, German social scientists from all disciplines had been concerned with the poverty, overpopulation, and structural underdevelopment of Eastern and Southeastern Europe; and professors such as Theodor Oberländer and Peter-Heinz Seraphim, Oberländer's former student, had acquired an exact overview of the situation from their social scientific outpost at Königsberg. In 1935 Oberländer already stated:

> The extraordinarily high agrarian density, combined with the lack of capital, creates especially for the zone adjacent to Russia the danger of heading, just as in Russia, towards a social upheaval arising from internal tensions and overpopulation pressures.

The Nazi space and economic planners - and not they alone - viewed Poland as being overpopulated. Her economy suffered from too little labour productivity, that is, from a deficient labour organisation and lack of capital. It was not by accident that the mixture of inefficiency, disorder, and poverty in Polish factories and farms was in Germany commonly referred to as 'Polish conditions' (*polnische Wirtschaft*); ... .

In order 'to tie the eastern agrarian states to the Central European space' and subject them to the notion of the economy of large-scale spaces (*Großraumwirtschaft*) under German hegemony, it was particularly important to solve the social question and break through this self-satisfied underproductivity. Thus, if conditions in Poland, as measured by German notions of economic and political order, had already appeared untenable to the Germans long before their invasion, then the situation must have deteriorated considerably after the so-called incorporation of western Poland into the Reich. With the conquest of western Polish provinces, Germany incorporated not only the most important industrial regions of Poland, but also those agricultural regions where the surplus that was produced provided the Polish population with food and kept the foreign trade balance on a somewhat even keel. By contrast, the 'remainder of Poland' (*Restpolen*), organised as the General Government, was for the Germans 'a creation with little economic prospect'.

Originally Hitler had intended to leave the General Government to its own devices. In late autumn of 1939, the Germans regarded it as a 'heap of rubble' and a manpower reservoir. They began to dismantle its industrial plants and used this territory, reduced in size by the war and sandwiched between German and Soviet spheres of influence, as the regions designated

for dumping the unwanted and expropriated. The deportees were to vegetate there under the worst conditions and, if need be, die from tuberculosis, typhus, hunger and deprivation. But when the German civilian government developed the ambition in March 1940 to create a 'Germanic development programme', every planning step amounted to an attempt to decrease the density of the population or, at least, prevent further population growth.

The Germans could achieve this if they found a way to eliminate the sizeable Jewish minority from the total population. After all, they constituted a good 10 percent of the population, and often much more in the cities that were difficult to control and provision. The extreme poverty of most Polish Jews precluded from the outset the application of traditional anti-Jewish techniques and policies (*Judenpolitik*), consisting of threats and expropriations forcing Jews to purchase their emigration at high prices. the so-called Eastern Jews (*Ostjuden*) thus represented a social 'mass problem' whose 'solution' would disappear. In November 1939 the Hamburg *Wirtschaftsdienst* published an article by Peter-Heinz Seraphim on 'The Economic Significance of Polish Jews'. Seraphim focused programmatically on the relationship between Jewish poverty and the social question:

> In Poland, as in the entire East European area of habitation, the Jewish question definitely is a mass problem. ... Particularly in Poland, we find a large group of destitute people, the so-called Jewish *Luftmenschen*, that is, a people who live off air, from hand to mouth, thoroughly proletarianised, for the most part a demoralised element that is mobile in location and occupation. Several factors have reinforced this process of impoverishment in the postwar period. If one is to make a rough estimate of the extent of the pauperisation of the East European Jews of Poland and understands by the Jewish pauper a character who is unable to maintain himself on the basis of his own economic strength without charity and outside Jewish help or whose standard of living is considerably lower than that of small peasants and industrial workers, then one can regard approximately 35 percent of all Jews in Poland thus defined as pauperised.

Moreover, the poverty of Polish Jews increased massively due to the war and the discrimination that immediately followed in its wake.

Even earlier, in December 1939, an official of the German foreign Institute mentioned the connection between poverty and the desirability of destruction in a report about his trip through occupied Poland. This official, Dr. Eduard Könekamp, reported his observations on the first mass resettlements from the annexed western part of Poland to the eastern edge of the newly formed General Government:

> Many Germans probably see Jews in such masses for the first time ... . [The ghettos] are among the filthiest things imaginable. Here the Jews vegetate in quarters that are sometimes as much as four flights underground. The prevailing hygienic and moral conditions here are ghastly.

The kind of 'criminal Jewish types' milling about, his report continued, far surpassed the ones depicted by the *Stürmer*. But now 'they are most vigorously enlisted to do labour, [and] those who do not appear for work are shot'. The latter assertion, however, corresponded to Könekamp's imagined desires rather than the reality at the time.

Könekamp, who after World War II was appointed Deputy Mayor of Stuttgart by the Allies, described in his 1939 report what were no doubt common German reactions when confronted with the poverty, exacerbated by wartime, of the Polish-Jewish residential quarters:

> The destruction of this sub-humanity (*Untermenschentum*) would serve the interests of the entire world. But this destruction poses an extraordinarily difficult problem. Executions will not work. Also, one cannot allow women and children to be shot. Here and there one can also count on the losses incurred during evacuations, and 450 are said to have perished during a transport of 1,000 Jews from Lublin. ... All the agencies concerned with the Jewish question recognise the inadequacy of these measures. But a solution to this complicated problem has not yet been found.

It took two more years until such visionary schemes of destruction, conceived by mid-level bureaucrats, were implemented. During this time German administrative practices produced conditions that made genocide appear reasonable and useful.

# Tabula Rasa

The scientists and experts who worked in the General Government and built their careers there were on the average quite young. Generally speaking, Germany probably never had a younger, more mentally agile, and more active administrative elite than during the Nazi period. Until the end of 1941, the power and influence of these 25- to 35-year-old managers grew as Germany expanded, enabling them to pay progressively less attention to obstinate realities while developing their plans. As Helmut Meinhold, one of the experts, wrote:

> [In the General Government] the economic planner is confronted
> with a totally new situation. The issue is not the location of a
> new industrial plant or the most advantageous development of a
> transportation network under a given set of economic conditions.
> Rather, in the economic sphere on basically finds oneself close to
> a *tabula rasa*.

It is self-evident that no such tabula rasa actually existed in the densely
populated General Government. It first had to be created by the appropriate
terrorist policies. And since the economic factors such as capital, energy,
raw materials, or transport capacities could not be manipulated and were,
quite simply, in ever shorter supply as the war progressed, the only
remaining economic factor that planners of his ilk could actually modify
was the number and composition of the population. In a study on the
'Expansion of the General Government to the East', Meinhold, who was
then 28 years and after the war became one of the most important advisers
on social policy in the government of the Federal Republic of Germany,
focused exclusively on 'migration' (*Siedlungsbewegungen*), which he
regarded as an absolute prerequisite were every additional annexation 'to be
economically useful'. Although Meinhold never contemplated the
construction of a single railroad line, he did consider 'removing part or all
of the Poles' to the East in order to solve 'the problem of overpopulation'.
The Jews, however, he wanted 'resettled' in any case.

In the view of such planning officials, the General Government served as a
colonial zone for experimentation with respect to racial ideology, *völkisch*
politics, population policy, economics, or whatever else one wants to call
it. Like every young and power-hungry elite, these men pressed forward
when the opportunity arose; they were determined to implement their ideas.
This opportunism also explains why after 1945 the same men (moved by
both indignation and self-pity) with agility and little effort found their way
into new positions after their 'reeducation'. Their basic rule for planning and
implementing policies was to clear away everything considered to be a
nuisance, including every unpopular minority and the Jews in any case. At
this point, their planning concepts intersected with racial ideology. And
from the amalgam of both elements, resulted the plans for and
implementation of the destruction of millions of human beings.

## Population as a Variable

The German spatial planners and economists considered 'overpopulation' the
main problem of the economic order in the General Government. This
troublesome condition, however, was not caused by too high population
density per square mile. Overpopulation was - and always is - defined
relatively and by its proportion to insufficient productivity and
underemployment, that is, to the inadequate utilisation of the available

labour force. Moreover, the additional factor of 'mentality' explained why the labour force in the General Government was 'less efficient than the German one' since it 'generally lacked what was natural to the German worker, namely the motivation to organise his own work with the purpose of attaining the highest labour efficiency possible ... [and also lacked] the impulse to reach a higher standard of living by increased productivity'.

From this perspective, 'every other person in Polish agriculture' represented 'nothing more than dead ballast'. In economic terms, it was the system of self-contained home industries that determined the unprofitable conditions in the Polish villages. Money hardly played a role at all in the system. The rural population produced not only foodstuffs but practically all basic commodities; at most, they engaged in a kind of barter trade with other home industries located in the villages or surrounding region, so that in the view of the economic planner Helmut Meinhold, who worked at the Institute for German Projects in East in Cracow, 'there basically existed no economy in actual sense of the term'.

Concepts such as 'marketing', 'market control', or 'development' made the self-sufficient conditions of life in the Polish villages appear absurd. The self-contained home industries were an economic factor that could not be moved at will, but rather were a barrier to the plans of economic planners, population policy makers, and SS officers. Not only did the villages provide the social backing for the resistance - how else could both hunted partisans and those who had evaded forced labour exist? - but they also assured the survival of the rural population itself. Given the system of subsistence economy, the occupation forces, determined to cart agricultural products off to Germany, could enforce the steadily increasing delivery quotas only with difficulty, even after the hunger of the Polish population had already been calculated as part of the quotas. It was impossible to draw profits from this economy. Furthermore, it resisted every kind of rationalisation. On the one hand, unemployment did not for the most part manifest itself openly; and on the other hand, a natural economy made the accumulation of capital, as a prerequisite for investment for the purpose of raising the productivity level, virtually impossible.

According to such analyses, the agrarian overpopulation not only spelled disaster for agriculture itself, but gradually also affected an increasing number of other economic sectors. A natural produce economy and barter trade (that is, production for the local and, at best, regional markets) resulted in only small surpluses in agriculture-related trade and industry (partly also in home industries such as, for example, blacksmithing and cart making) and also an extremely low labour productivity. To rationalise these not easily transparent relationships within the self-sufficient economies of the Polish households, villages, and districts, Meinhold was not satisfied with just describing the phenomena of overpopulation and the 'law labour

return'; he also postulated the mathematical relationship of the two factors to each other. He adopted from Oberländer the so-called Mombertain Formula, which reads as follows:

> The space available for food (*Nahrungsmittel*, or N) equals the size of the population (*Volkszahl*, or V) times the cost of living (*Lebenshaltung*, or L).

In abbreviated form: $N = V \times L$.

The actual function of this formula lies in its being abstracted from its substantive content and thereby suggests the possibility that individual factors can be manipulated and written, for example, as:

$$V = N/L.$$

(Population size equals the space available for food divided by the cost of living.) But if the space for food was limited and the cost of living had already been reduced to a subsistence level, then the thing to do would be to reduce the size of the population (V).

Thus expressed in manageable terms, population size became a magnitude that was, alongside others, variable as well. Mass murder, forced resettlements, invasions of others' countries, or the deliberate policy of starvation were equated with 'reduction of the size of the population', 'expansion of nutritional space', or 'reduction of living costs'; and, thus, metamorphosed into sanitised scientific terms, they became part of the repertory of economic planning.

A less aggressive possibility of expanding the space for food lay in increasing the yield per hectare of land, but Meinhold dismissed this as an alternative, since it did not provide new work opportunities to alleviate the agrarian overpopulation. As he concluded, 'Thus the only possibilities left are the reduction of the size of the population or the extension of the space allotted to food production to non-agrarian sectors'.

Without intervention from the outside, however, the demographic conditions in the General Government would constantly deteriorate due to the excess of births over deaths by about 140,000 people per year and the deportations from the annexed western provinces of Poland: 'Indeed, one can even foresee the time when the rural population will sink below the subsistence level, although by German standards it has been below the minimum of economic subsistence for several decades'. This did not necessarily upset the German intellectuals in Carcow. What it did mean to them, however, was 'that the region ... becomes a burden on the rest of the

grand region (*Großraum*), and therewith practically on the Reich itself, at least as far as covering the costs of administration, transport, and economic organisation are concerned'.

In his calculations, Meinhold also used the 'greatest possible labour productive in the grand region' as a yardstick to apply to the General Government. According to this criterion, he ascertained the 'size of the labour force ... that would be needed if agricultural labour were organised correctly' and compared 'this size ... to the size of the labour force actually available.

Thus, a country was ultimately considered overpopulated to the degree that its labour productivity lagged behind the greatest possible labour productivity within the 'European grand region'. Therefore, a subsistence economy that hardly produced surpluses had automatically to be considered overpopulated if measured against such thoroughly capitalised states as the German Reich, no matter how many people lived in it. Finally, Meinhold calculated the effect of two variants (the same organisation of labour as in the Reich, or a somewhat less favourable one) and arrived at a surplus population amounting to 4.5 million or 5.83 million people, that is, roughly 30 percent of the total population of the General Government.

Once a beginning had thus been made, the entire project assumed gigantic proportions, which did not remain limited to the General Government. In Southeastern Europe, 'in the case of a radical solution of the agrarian labour problem', a decision to use migratory labour meant that '12 to 15 million workers ... [would be] set into motion'. And that was not all, since these workers also had families so that 'a rough total of 50 million people would have emerged out of their hitherto virtually self-contained home economies and, in accordance with this, market relations too would experience major changes ... It is a task fit for the the notion of the grand region and a basis for the ideological justification of the grand region as a concept'. The 'ideological justification of the concept', however, had a material side to it. Since previously 'the market in the whole overpopulated zone is not worth much despite the large number of over one hundred million inhabitants', favourable market conditions would first have to be created by a restructuring process. 'It is therefore quite certain with respect to the eastern and southeastern territories that the reorganisation, even if it occurs in conjunction with the industrialisation, can only expand the market for German industry'.

Meinhold's planning led to an obvious conflict of goals. The released labour force, amounting to millions of workers in the occupied European countries, would try to find both work and bread, while migrating from the east to west. An even greater 'population pressure' would result for the eastern districts of the Reich, and the Germanisation projects would simply

*Too many human beings . . . . . . .?*
*(S.S. Doctor Klein overviews his work)*



*Not enough cars . . . . . . .?*

be undermined by economic mechanisms, threatening the social stability of the grand region. This would have to be counteracted 'through the following measures ... implemented either singly or in concert":

> (1) Labour in the Reich, especially migratory labour, will be regulated by law in such a way that it will represent no threat, in terms of its nature and extent, to the German national terrain.
>
> (2) The number of available jobs in the General Government will be increased as much as possible.
>
> (3) The population density in the General Government will be reduced.
>
> (4) The extent and pace of the economic use of the organisation of labour in the General Government will be adjusted as far as possible to the other three measures as they become effective.

In conquered Poland, the number of industrial jobs had declined under German domination. Meinhold knew this; he was well informed about current statistics. Thus his proposal 'to reduce the density of the population in the General Government', which he thought appropriate in addition to labour deportations, gained in importance.

Finally, Meinhold concluded that 'above all, the possibility [should be] mentioned ... that by settling the Jewish question a number of jobs will become available and, at the same time, a reduction - albeit not a sufficiently large one - of the size of the population will occur'. Thus, 'considerable relief for the strained labour market ... could temporarily alleviate the situation in the General Government' .

For this, however, speed was required, as Meinhold's assistant, Hans Kraft Nonnenmacher, noted:

> As overpopulation increases, the chances of eliminating over-population decreases, and the results will contribute to still more overpopulation. For with constantly diminishing labour productivity, the population is no longer capable of saving the capital necessary to heighten the efficiency of the factories. But this heightened efficiency, in turn, is the precondition for creating new employment opportunities, in agriculture as well as in industry which, if savings were accumulated at a higher rate, would gradually rebuild itself. Here we see ourselves confronted by a vicious circle, which steadily leads to the growing pauperisation

(*Verelendung*) of the population. The manifestations and further
consequences resulting from this condition are manifold.

This notion did not imply that the 'excess' population would just be killed.
After all, that did not happen. The destruction of part of the population
through hunger and deportation was a means to break through the diagnosed
vicious circle of underproductivity, that is, to force an opening into the self-
contained economic system and thereby create the prerequisites for
rationalising the entire economy as well as the productive utilisation of the
rest of the population.

Evidently, these theories also achieved popularity in the planning staffs of
German firms. In 1942, the economic department of IG Farben considered
the massacres of several hundred thousands of Serbs by the Croatian Ustaha
as a constructive contribution to the solution of the overpopulation
problem in the Balkans. In the camouflaged language of the time, a report
about the economic structure of Croatia stated:

> Furthermore, in connection with the removal of numerous Serbian
> peasants, it is hoped that the problem of the large agrarian over-
> population of particular regions - for example, Zagoria, Dalmatia,
> and the Lika - will be solved by a generous internal colonisation.
> At the same time, the crop yield per hectare, still far below the
> European average, is to be increased by a more intense cultivation
> of the land.

# The Transformation of Racial Science into Sociology

To segregate the Jews according to plan, the General Government's ministry
of interior, known as the Central Office (*Hauptabteilung*) for Internal
Administration, set up from the beginning a special office and assigned it a
name with many facets: Office for Population Policy and Welfare
(*Abteilung Bevölkerungswesen und Fürsorge*). The significance of this
office for the destruction of the Jews living in the General Government has
hardly been examined thus far; that is, its assessment in the literature is
flawed. The office was first directed by Dr. Fritz Arlt, a member of the SS
Security Service. A student of Arnold Gehlen, Arlt was a theologian,
sociologist, and population specialist, who had gathered relevant
experiences in Silesia and Leipzig in connection with his bureaucratic
activity of sorting out minorities, in particular Jews. In his first progress
report of May 1940, he provided the following summary: Among the most
necessary instruments of a German National Socialist administration over
alien peoples (*fremdvölkische*) is an official agency that is specifically

concerned with the ethno-political (*volkspolitische*) structure of the region, because ethno-political knowledge of all kind - national, racial, statistical, historical, and so on - is basic for every practical administrative task, ranging from the calculation of the expected tax revenues to the distribution of the police force.

Such a comprehensive task required experts who were qualified and interested; Arlt as well as his successor Lothar Weirauch fulfilled such requirements. Both were not only convinced race researchers, who as members of the master race made no secret of their arrogance towards Poles and Jews, but also clear-thinking social planners and demographers. The most pressing task of the office was the racial assessment of people and their division into different ethnic groups. The divisions not only were expressed in statistical terms; they also determined the sum total of the material conditions of life. Hence, alongside the desks for social welfare, state welfare, resettlement, statistics and the procurement of lineage certificates (*Sippenamt*), there were, respectively, special desks for Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, and ethnic Germans. As was stated, 'each individual ethnic group will be handled by a special desk (*Referat*)'. And the tie to welfare was said to be necessary 'in order to influence indirectly the ethnic policy (*volkspolitische*) situation.'

This was thus a graduated system, sometimes positive and sometimes negative, of social services and discriminations, ranging from food allocations for resettled ethnic Germans to compulsory labour for Jews. Later on, the office for Population Policy and Welfare coordinated and directed (*federführend*) ghettoisation and the deportations, with the SS and police providing official assistance (*Amtshilfe*).

Weirauch, who after the war described his work as having been purely charitable and received from former co-workers written confirmation that he had resisted the ethnic population policy of the SD by acting in favour of the Polish population, characterised the office under his supervision at the beginning of 1943 as follows:

> Since my office is in charge of all ethnic policy issues - also including those dealing with resettlements - that concern the administration of the General Government, I have always been informed of the essential features of every evacuation and resettlement (*Aus- und Umsiedlung*) ... May I point out that in 1940 and 1941 my office managed the reception and accommodation of the evacuees from the incorporated eastern regions and, in addition, centrally managed and supervised all military defence settlements that had been created earlier or are now being set up. As the government's central agency for all ethnic

policy questions, I am presently involved in two military defence planning project.

On 27 October 1942 Weirauch, at that time director of the Office for Population Policy and Welfare, participated as the General Government's representative in the third 'Conference on the Final Solution.' A private letter of his depute, Walther Föhl, documents the daily routine of the office:

> Every day we receive and take care of trains from all over Europe, each carrying over 1,000 Jews. We put them up more or less provisionally or, for the most part, push them off into the White Ruthenian swamps, in the direction of the Arctic Ocean where, if they have survived (which the Jews from the Kurfürstendamm or from Vienna and Bratislava certainly will not), they will all congregate toward the end of the war, but not before having built some highways. (But one should not speak about this!)

Arlt and his men, among them the informant of the Foreign Institute in Stuttgart, Dr. Hans Hopf, were faced in the General Government with a wealth of qualitative and quantitative problems. Thus Weirauch lamented the incapacity of the Polish workers and peasants to be civilised: 'Just as each individual person is at a great loss to understand the most primitive requirements concerning his bodily cleanliness, so the workers and peasants as a whole demonstrate little love of order, organisation, and little determination to achieve something.'

Arlt admitted that the racial hatred of the German occupation forces for the Polish 'subhumans' and the Eastern Jews in the General Government was identical with the hatred of the propertied for the poor, thus reclassifying class differences as racial categories: 'The social stratification of the population in the General government is therefore simultaneously a racial stratification.' Racial policy was associated with a social regrouping process, and thus the Office of Population Policy and Welfare regarded it as the task of the German administration in the General Government to

> eliminate the influence exerted by the Polish upper classes that was damaging to the whole of the country but, at the same time, give them the opportunity to do useful work for the general reconstruction. In addition, it was necessary to pull the mass of Polish workers and peasants out of their dull inertia and encourage them to engage in production activity.

The factor disturbing the statisticians of the Office for Population Policy and Welfare in this task was the overpopulation in the General Government, 'for the size of the population corresponds in no way to the possibility of satisfying the needs of the population.' As with Meinhold, the way to

resolve the situation was through the 'expansion of the space for food,' which meant land improvement and increased crop yields per hectare in agriculture, or else the 'reduction of the size of the population.' In this respect, a beginning had already been made. As Arlt calculated, 'thousands have dropped out of the population stock as victims of war.' Moreover, 'due to the consequences of war ... mortality [is] higher ... than it has been until now.' Infants, old people, those who are too weak to live, the infirm and the sick are 'the groups most subject to the dying-off process.' Yet at the same time, the activity of Arlt himself intensified the problem of overpopulation. He reported in June 1940:

> We helped to implement the evacuations and resettlements from the *German eastern territory*, the 1st *immediate plan* (40,000 Poles and Jews), 2nd *current plan* (120,000 Poles and Jews, as well as a portion of the 35,000 *gypsies* who were announced to us. In cooperation with the district chiefs, the number of resettlements have thus been established district by district and the necessary provisioning as well as the transports have been taken in hand.

In addition, there was a plan for the 're-emigration of escaped and prisoner-of-war Poles from *Hungary and Rumania.*'

> We are dealing here with approximately 40,000 men from each country. 450,000 Jews are to be deported to the region of the General Government *from Greater Germany*. [Moreover,it is] planned to resolve the *gypsies* question by deporting approximately 35,000 *gypsies* into these parts.

The groups forcibly driven into the General Government burdened its economic structure all the more as all their possessions had been seized:

> In view of the high degree of overpopulation, the problems of the General Government can no longer be solved without recourse to the public welfare system. There is the added factor that the number of those who cannot support themselves on their own, or must be supported in their daily lives by the public at large, is constantly rising.

The solution Arlt proposed was not only to cut down population growth by means of forced resettlements, but also to remove at once the original overpopulation. And like Meinhold, Arlt too wanted to combine the expulsion and destruction of human beings with the 'rehabilitation' of both economic and population policy, as well as the modernisation of the General Government. With the removal of the Jews, 'the living space of the General Government would be relieved of about 1,500,000 Jews.' Population density would thus be reduced from 126 to 110 people per

square kilometer, a size which, 'while the possibility of seasonal migration to German labour markets is maintained,' promised to be a 'successful, constructive solution.' Thus,

> At first, a great number of employment opportunities would be provided for the local, non-Jewish population; that is, that part of the Polish population that is unemployed or underemployed would experience essential relief. ... by way of a sociological restructuring process, some of these Poles could then occupy the positions in industry, trade, and the crafts that the Jews had previously possessed. This would constitute an essential contribution to the social recovery of the Polish agricultural proletariat. At the same time, such relief for the majority of rural workers would provide further opportunities for dealing constructively with the problem of overpopulation.

The sociological concept of 'social regrouping' - 'socially regrouped Jews' (*Umschichtungsjuden*) were also mentioned - became a synonym for deportation. For Arlt and Weirauch, the destruction of the Jews was a matter of population policy; and they also knew how to assert that way of looking at things outside their office and impose it even upon the coterie of their opponents.

In December 1942, the public health officer (*Amtsarzt*) in Warsaw, Dr. Wilhelm Hagen, wrote a worried letter to Hitler. At a meeting on tuberculosis, he had learned from Weirauch that while resettling 200,000 Poles 'so that German military peasants (*Wehrbauern*) could be settled,' it was intended 'to proceed against a third of the Poles - 70,000 old people and children under ten years old - in the same manner as against the Jews, that is, to kill them.' Hagen suspected that 'the idea probably arose because at the moment there seems to be no space for the Poles that are to be resettled, insofar as they cannot be utilised directly for labour work in the armaments industry.'

Hagen's scruples, however, involved only the fact that it was intended to proceed against the Poles 'in the same manner.' He objected because, on the one hand, this would supply new grounds for agitation to the Reich's opponents in the General Government as well as in foreign countries and, on the other hand, in terms of the population policy, he thought such a procedure unreasonable:

> From the perspective of population policy, thorough considerations have convinced me that we have no interest in the

reduction of the size of the Polish population or the impairment of the upward population trend. Of all foreign labourers, the Poles should be regarded, in racial sense, as an element that is close to us and very much less of a danger than the races of the southeast, whose population pressures we will not be able to withstand permanently with just our own strength.

If one follows Hagen's line of argument, then genocide based on population policy was indeed something worth discussing, something already practiced; and Hitler and Hagen obviously agreed that, insofar as the Jews were concerned, population policy required that they be killed.

• • • •

A few months after the German defeat, Helmut Meinhold was commissioned by the British military government to write an expert review about the economic reconstruction of Hamburg. In this report he also analysed the opportunities that were offered through the immense destruction. The tabula rasa returned with him and with men of his ilk from occupied Poland to the society of the killers (*die Gesellschaft der Endlöser*). Thus Meinhold saw 'Polish conditions' in Germany: high overpopulation due to the refugees, destroyed production facilities, and lack of capital. From this perspective, the loss of human beings through the war had not kept step with the loss of capital, at least not for the Germans.

In this situation, Meinhold saw only two solutions: either 'the granting of credits' or the delivery of machinery for production in return for agrarian products along with the simultaneous reduction of food imports. In Poland, the German economic administration had taken the latter path. 'Hence', Meinhold wrote in the summer of 1945, 'one part of the population would have to die of starvation or, at least, perish through diseases of malnutrition.' If there was not credit forthcoming in this situation of crises and shortages, either capital would be literally exhausted because it was being used up to cover the minimum needed for existence, or people would have to starve to death for the benefit of capital formation. 'Even for the sake of creating work', Meinhold wrote, 'Germany cannot afford to have the kind of work done that uses up materials and thereby engenders a reduction in vitally necessary substances.' This also meant that emergency public works projects 'would have to be consistently left undone', even if they 'hardly utilise any materials' as, for example, in clearing up the rubble of destroyed cities.

The analysis considers labour at a level below the given state of technology as tantamount to the destruction of capital, since invested capital can pay for itself only if the labour force is more effectively utilised. Such an amortisation, however, could not be achieved in occupied Poland through

emergency public works projects and simple gang labour, and thus Meinhold could consistently claim that 'overpopulation [manifests itself] as the effective erosion of capital' If one thinks of this notion the other way round, then the killing of human beings, for whom there are no meaningful work places available that correspond to the existing technological level, signifies a form of indirect capital amortisation. Moreover, if little is being invested, as in wartime, then there will be less capital erosion.

In his Hamburg study, Meinhold explains this theory, which could conceivably be called mass murder as a factor of economic reconstruction:

> Hitherto we have presumed the intention (and we will do so likewise in the future) that at present it must be the economic aim to preserve rather the whole population, even if only wretchedly so, than to supply one part of the population with more food and let the other part perish. On that basis it is thus more correct to employ only 50 workers out of 100, who will then carry (*durchschleppen*) the other 50 until the situation improves again, than to have 75 people work and 25 starve to death. The prerequisite for this, however, is the possibility of improvement later on ... .

> It is also possible, of course, to take another point of departure, especially if the aforementioned possibility is in doubt. Therefore, on could say: in the struggle for existence, it is better if the 75, who have proven themselves capable, stay alive and the remainder die at once than if, in the last analysis, all 100 perish. Such a standpoint would be justified if in fact selection (*Auslese*) was at issue.

In Poland, 'one' had chosen this other 'point of departure' and made the concomitant 'selection'.

The economic calculations of a Helmut Meinhold explain why the Germans did not have the Jews simply dig canals after the Germans had deprived them of their rights and their property, but instead used up transport, labour, and materials to kill them: The death of the Jews provided the simplest and most viable means of slowing down capital erosion and of keeping open the possibility for an economic upswing in occupied Poland. Helmut Meinhold, ..., as well as many other German intellectuals, were engaged in what can be called the political economy of the 'final solution'. This was an activity that, precisely because it appeared so abstract and neat, tells us more about the causes for the destruction of the European Jews than do the actions performed by subordinate executors.

Through the activities of these men, an originally racist concept such as the

'solution of the Jewish question' underwent a fateful change of values. The intellectual planners did not use the concept emotionally, as if they were filled with hatred, but scientifically as technical terminology. Hate and base motives were transformed into the necessity of population and structural policies. Only thus, rendered rational endogenously, could the 'final solution' be implemented with the appearance of being a reasonable measure.

# Requiem For
# Two Or Three
# Scottish Miners...

*Ed Emery*

*Libera animas*

*de poenis inferni*

*et de profundo lacu*

Pit. Pits, as was. Ter and trice, thrice threefold, around and
around, and then one closed and then one was closed and was capped, both
the one and the other, capped with concrete, and the one hole remains,
driven into the foreshore

of a sea that has raged but today is calm

Deliver the souls

from the pains of hell

and from the bottomless pit

One hole remains.

"This pit closed, well, it must be nigh on twenty-one
year ago, now. A fire it was. The coal here, d'ye see,
is very combustible. Aye. The moment it makes contact with
the air, it's likely to burn spontaneously at a moment's notice.
They had
terrible trouble even on the coal ships. It would burn in the hold
..."

We picked coal along the foreshore, from a narrow seam. Sandstone
etched into layered whorls, a thumbprint. And along the line of the high
tide were:

the shredded strands of the mine's conveyor belts
                                that carried the coal and
one or two blackened boots and the broken handle
                                of a pit shovel and twisted
wires and cables and for some reason the shattered
                                porcelain of the shower
and toilet fittings where the day's grime was washed off and
                                shitted away
shattered and scattered among sparse grass and plastic
                                bits-bits-bits all

        washed up and along the very blackness of it all where the
        beachstone sandstone has coal somehow engrained into it

and black sludge

and orange sludge

brilliant black

and brilliant orange

        that changed the tonalities of all that you then looked at.

        *Ne absorbeat eas*

                *tartarus, ne cadant*

                        *in obscurum*

        "It must be nigh on twenty-one years ago now. A fire
        there was.
        And there's two or three of the lads still down there."

STILL DOWN THERE.

Still down there.

Still. (Still, I said). Down.

Down there down.

## THERE, THERE, DOWN THERE AND THERE AND THERE.

## STILL.

*Dies Illa*

*Dies Illa.* That was the day. That day. A day like another. A day when (we do not have the date, for no memorial records it in the austere churchyard, and perhaps, who knows, the lads were communists, because that would not have been surprising when you have seen what we saw) the myriad voices of the world talking, whispering, shouting, crying, singing all about their daily business, of love and hate and fear and joy, and things consequential andinconsequential and there was the dull silence, above ground, of a population, listening to the dull silence, underground,

of a pit fire ...

"And there's two or three of the lads still down there"

### (PARENTHESIS FOR TWO BOY SOPRANOS)

"I remember the day in fact. There was
the rugby international on the televsion. All
of a sudden the screen went blank. I thought it was a
power cut. It wasn't. It was these lads come down with a
hacksaw to steal the cables because they thought the mine was
shut and closed. It wasn't. Thirty thousand volts through those
cables.
They took the lad to the house of the pit electrician. The
pit electrician's wife put his hand in a bowl of cold water he was
screaming he was, screaming so much, the hacksaw was still in his
hand, burned to his hand.
I do not know how anybody could have lived
after that. But he did.
I still remember it. He had
steam coming off the top of his head.
I still remember it he had steam coming off the top of his head."

### (PARENTHESIS ENDS)

### (EXORDIUM PARTIS SECUNDAE)

There is, about the pit at Wemyss, a clearly explicit set of class relations embodied in the political organisation of space. I was grateful for this. The structure of domination felt no need to soften its hard edges.

**FIRST**: There is a huge landed estate. It stretches for acres. Green grazing ground. Outhouses. Stables. Yards. Gardens. Trees and shrubs tonsured.
Castle, perhaps. Almost. But not built for defence. A ruler who is sure enough of his power to have windows on the ground floor.
The gravelled drive to the front door, a large spread of frontage, and inside all this the dowager duchess or somesuch. A hundred years old.
On her own. In all that space. Cousin, they told us, of the queen mother.

**SECOND**: The landed estate is bounded by a wall. Onto which pheasants jump to look out to sea and then hop back again.
Beyond the wall is a no-man's-land of green. And then the village. Signposted and named Coaltown of Wemyss. Why Coaltown? We have yet to find out.
Mean little houses. Mean little houses in Plantation Row. The architecture of domination. Packed in together. Single storey shacks, probably one room apiece. Two-storey houses for the overseers. Red-tiled, in the Flemish manner. Red tiles brought from Flanders by the same ships that carried coal abroad.
And the bricks of all this marked with the noble's name of Wemyss.

I have to hand the collected pamphlets of the Communist Party library, the coal section, sold to me some years ago, and dating from 1927 to 1953, and including, from the closing months of the War, the tract entitled: Miners Indict the Coalowners of Scotland, by William Pearson of the Scottish Mineworkers. Regarding housing, he states:

> "The Committee made a tour of the principal parts of the
> Scottish coalfield to see the housing for themselves. Many
> relics of the old miners' rows were inspected and found to
> be still occupied, in all districts. These hovels are the
> most depressing places in the country and are a national
> scandal and eyesore. Many of these houses had water in
> them, yes, the water came through the roof when it was
> raining. In some of the houses the coal had to go below the bed;
> no privacy for any member of the family and lavatories that are
> nothing but breeding dens for disease..."

Wemyss brought this to mind.

**THIRD**: Principal buildings of Coaltown: The chapel. The Miners' Institute. Built and dated 1925, the year before the General Strike,

what does that tell us? And the Wemyss School of Sewing. For the wives. And the daughters. And why?

**FOURTH**: But most of all, the upness and the downness of it all.

While the mineowner sat **up** in his landed splendour, and his view over green fields and pheasants and the Firth of Forth and his ships carrying coal to Edinburgh and to countries beyond the seas, the miners that he employed

sat **down** at the bottom of a pit, at the bottom of three pits, down two thousand feet of gut-wrenching black mineshaft vertigo in the bowels of the earth, hacking out coal, the coal that paid for every brick in that fucking mansion not once but many times over.

### (PARS SECUNDA)

*Dona eis requiem sempiternam.*

> "we think it desirable to state in the clearest possible terms that the Mineworkers Federation of Great Britain does not regard the present rates of compensation for disability as being at all inadequate..."

And the parts proportional were, by due compilation comprised, serially and individually, as laid down:

> Loss of both hands or amputation at higher sites.

> Double amputation, through thigh, or through thigh on one side and loss of other foot, or double amputation below thigh to four inches below knee.

> Double amputation through leg lower than four inches below knee.

> Amputation of one leg lower than four inches below knee and loss of other foot.

But there are also the cases of men

consumed by fire

*flammis acribus*

### LACRIMOSA DIES ILLA

## LACRIMOSA DIES ILLA

## LACRIMOSA DIES ILLA

And wasn't it sad when that great pit went down. And the fires burned and burned, and there was neither the will nor the way to stop its burning, and the mine was closed, and still the fires burned, and with what little air there was, burned and burned, and the times changed, and nobody wanted coal, and the pits were closed for reasons other than fires burning, and the ghosts of those dead and buried lamented alone under the bleak roaring of this sea shore.

But what of justice? What of the Lord of the Fucking Manor, who for decade after decade had sat in his greenery while his miners sat in their black?

There is a certain justice, or so we like to imagine.

For the pumps still pump water from the mine.

The deep pumps pump the deep water from the deep mine.

The pumps have been relocated up the mine shaft. From two thousand feet to one thousand feet. The bottom half of the mine has been let to flood.

The sea water has consumed the bottom shafts of the mine. Nature has returned to take her own.

And pit locomotives that were left down there have turned to rust.
And the miners that were left down there have turned to molecular accretions of that rust.

And the pumps pump up that water
and the rust
and the bits of the
pit locomotives
and the bits of the miners.

And pump it all out to sea.

And on a clear day when the sea is calm, from a great height,

which is to

say from the casement windows of the stately house

overlooking the Firth,

there appears a great yellow orange stain on the water, as the pumps

pump out

the bits of the pit locomotives

and the bits of the burned miners

## (PARS TERTIA)

And to myself I say a small prayer,
I pray, small-ly to myself.
A prayer in small words, and an ardent hope.
hoping, as I keep small fires alive.
I say:

> **AND LACRIMOSA DIES ILLA**
>
> **THAT DAY WILL BE ONE OF WEEPING**
>
> **QUA... JUDICANDUS HOMO REUS...**
>
> **WHEN THE GUILTY MAN WILL BE JUDGED**

And I open a chapter which is called "The People's Justice", and
I wonder what lies therein.

It is, perhaps, time for a politics of revenge.

And I wonder, again, about revenge, and was it a worthy notion to guide
politics.

And *is* it.

And whose part is it to exact that revenge.

And once again

## DIES ILLA, DIES IRAE

takes on a new meaning.

For that day will be a day of anger.[1]

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[1] **Editorial Note:** The author of the *Requiem* is looking for a musically-skilled collaborator
with a view to stteing the piece to music. If anyone is interested please contact the journal.

# In the Beginning
# was the Scream

*John Holloway*

In the beginning was the scream.

When we talk or write, it is all too easy to forget that the beginning was not the word, but the scream. Faced with the destruction of human lives by capitalism, a scream of sadness, a scream of horror, above all a scream of anger, of refusal: NO. The starting point of theoretical reflection is opposition, negativity, struggle.

The role of theory is to elaborate that scream, to express its trength and to contribute to its power, to show how the sream resonates through society and to contribute to that resonance.

That is the origin of Marxism, not just of Marx's Marxism, but presumably of our own interest in Marxism. The appeal of Marxism lies in its claim to be a theory of struggle, of opposition, of negation. But that is not what Marxism has become.

Today Marxism is probably more discredited than ever, not just in the bourgeois press or in the universities, but also as a theory of struggle. The experience of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has been crucial in this respect; the identification of marxism as the official ideology of the state has meant that the struggles against the state have taken the form not of struggles inspired by a 'truer marxism', as was hoped by many in the west for so long, but of struggles against marxism as such. But it is not only in the East that the statification of Marxism has led to its rejection. In the West too, the surge of marxism into the

universities in the late 1960s and early 1970s has led in some degree to its dessication. Born into the universities on a wave of working class struggle, marxist theory has tended to be sucked into the general separation of theory from practice which characterises the university as an institution. As the wave of struggle which provided the basis of marxism has ebbed, many Marxist academics have completely abandoned Marxism; even worse, perhaps, many have not, but have carried their marxism with them as they adapt to the institutional structures and professional pressures of the university. Often this is not the result of conscious choice, but rather the result of the dynamics of non-choice; work in the university has its own dynamic which constantly tends to separate theoretical work from any political base. The result is often a Marxism which is far more sophisticated but no less determinist than the old 'orthodoxy' of the communist parties.

In both cases, the state ideology of the east and the sophisticated academicism of the West, Marxism has lost its scream. Class struggle remains a category, but the simple statement at the start of the Communist manifesto, that 'the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle' is in fact abandoned. Class struggle in these theories is still seen as being influential, but only within a broader framework, variously interpreted as the conflict between the forces and relations of production or simply as the 'laws of capitalist development'. Class struggle is important - of course (so of course that it can simply be taken for granted) - but it must submit to the 'inescapable lines of tendency and direction established by the real world' (Hall 1985, 15). Struggle is subject to structure, and since structure is the structure of capitalist society ('the real world'), marxism in this version becomes quite simply a theory of capitalist reproduction. The 'inescapable lines of tendency and direction established by the real world' are quite simply the functional requirements of capitalist reproduction, so that these theories are not only structuralist, but functionalist. And then, with all thought of rupture or revolution long forgotten, these theorists move from analysing what is necessary for capitalist reproduction to prescribing what is necessary, to making policy suggestions and advising the state, still, of course, using the language of Marxist theory and making obeisance to the importance of class struggle. It is little wonder that many who are actively involved in anti-capitalist struggle feel little attraction to such Marxism.

And yet a theory of the scream is more urgent than ever. It is more urgent than ever because capitalism is both increasingly fragile and increasingly terroristic. The scream will continue as long as capitalism does, but there is a real danger that marxism as the language of the scream, as the theory of protest could get lost. Marxism as a theory of determinism and as an ideology of the state is discredited, but it is more urgent than ever to develop marxism clearly as a theory of struggle. There is of course a long tradition of emphasising struggle as the central element of marxism, a long tradition of what one might call 'left marxism', but it is a diverse and often subterranean tradition, without very clear continuities. Many of those who politically have insisted on the self-organisation of the working class have retained theoretical concepts that against the articulation of the power of labour (as in Pannekoek's discussion of crisis, for example); and many of those who have made important theoretical contributions to theorising working class power have adopted often ambivalent political positions in practice (Adorno, Bloch, for example). The crisis of the regimes of Eastern Europe is, or can be, a liberation of marxism from much of the baggage acquired over the last century, but it is very important to try to be clear about the foundations of this liberated marxism.

The most obvious point to be made about a theory of struggle is that its basis is uncertainty. If the world is to be understood in terms of struggle, then there is no room for determinism of any kind. Struggle, by definition, is uncertain, open, and the categories which conceptualise it must be understood as open too. The determinism of Marx's more triumphalist moments (such as the end of section 1 of the Communist Manifesto, chapter 32 of Vol. 1 of Capital, or the 1859 preface which is so important for the 'orthodox' Marxist tradtion) must go, so must any idea of historical necessity, nor nay suggestion of a final inevitable victory of socialism. As Adorno put it, after the experience of fascism, it is no longer possible (if it ever was) to think of a smooth dialectical progression ending with communism as the resolution of conflict, the inevitable negation of the negation. We can only think of the dialectic as being a negative dialectic, a dialectic of negation with no certain synthesis. In a world of untruth, the only concept of truth that we can have is negative. There is no certainty in Marxism: its only claim to truth is the force of its attack on untruth. This leads perhaps to a dizzy, dizzying vision of the world (cf Adorno 1990, 31), but the dizziness lies not in the vision but in the reality of a world hurtling who knows where.

The dialectic of negation is the struggle of the working class. In a world of struggle, there is no neutrality. The perspective is the perspective of our struggle. As Tronti put it in an article which provided one of the strating points for the theory of autonomia in Italy: "We too had a conception of capitalism that put capital in first place and the workers in second. That was a mistake. And now we must reverse the polarity and start again from the beginning. And the beginning is the class struggle of the working class". The beginning is the struggle, our struggle, our scream, the scream of negation. As Rosa Luxemburg put it, "The secret of Marx's theory of value ... was that he looked at capitalism from the point of view of its transcendence, from a socialist point of view". It is only from the standpoint of negation that Marx's categories make any sense at all, without that, they are quite literally meaningless. That is why there cannot be any continuity between bourgeois theory and Marxist theory: the basic presuppositions which underlie their categories are totally incompatible. Underlying bourgeois theory is an assumption about the stability of capitalism, the power of capital to retain control of society indefinitely. The basis of marxist theory is just the opposite: the instability of capitalism, the power of labour to overthrow capitalism.

It is essential to retain the idea that the starting point must be the struggle of the working class. Linton Kwesi Johnson has a wonderful expression when he describes the violent reaction of a group of blacks to police harrassment: "the bile of oppression was vomited" (Five Nights of Bleeding). If we are to avoid the structural-functionalism that characterises so much of Marxist theory, it is important to think of our work in those terms: as a vomiting of the bile of oppression.

However, there is a difficulty here, and it is a difficulty presented by a lot of left theory. The focus on the struggle of the working class leads very easily to a conception of the working class as purely external to capital. From (correctly) emphasising the subjectivity of labour and the antagonism between labour and capital as the starting point, such approaches easily move to simply counterposing the subjectivity of labour to the objectivity of capital. The one-sided emphasis on subjectivity (voluntarism), although it appears to be the opposite of objectivism (determinism), is actually its logical complement. Both operate with the assumption that there is a distinction between class struggle and the laws of economic development: the difference lies only

in the primacy attached to one or the other. Alternatively, all notion of the 'logic of capital' is abandoned and capital is seen as a purely external subject, manipulating and controlling labour. Class struggle is then seen as the clash of two opposing armies, as a battle that goes back and forth, to and fro. At this level there is no history, or rather history is a formless thing, without shape, without tendency.

Marx's conception is different: in the clash of the two opposing armies of capital and labour, there is something that gives direction and shape to the struggle. That is the fact that the two sides are not in fact external to each other: capital is nothing other than alienated labour, the objectivity of the 'real world' is nothing than our own alienated subjectivity. The basis of both sides of the class struggle is the same: the power of labour. Capital is nothing other than alienated labour. This is the basis of the labour theory of value, which was seen even before Marx, by both the radical Ricardians and their critics, as an assertion of the power of labour. At its most basic, the power of labour is the power to create, and therefore also the power to destroy. When Marx distinguished between the worst architect and the best bee by saying that the former plans the construction before executing it, he might also have added that the architect is also more likely to fail in the construction. The power of labour is the power of uncertain creation, the power of that which is not, the power of non-identity (Adorno), of the Not Yet (Bloch), of the working class No (Tronti).

When labour and capital confront each other, this is not an external confrontation. The power of labour meets the power of labour, but in the form of its antithesis. Contradiction is "non-identity under the aspect of identity" (Adorno), negativity under the aspect of positivity, labour under the aspect of capital. The substance of capital is the power of labour; the power of labour exists under the aspect of capital: it assumes the form of capital, the fetishised form of capital. Once the relation between capital and labour is seen as an internal relation, then the question of form becomes crucial. Unlike the Ricardians, who were content to show that the substance of value was labour, Marx was concerned with the form of value, with the question why the product of labour took the form of value - and indeed he saw the question of form as being the crucial dividing line between his theory and bourgeois theory, for which the question of form is meaningless (*Capital* Vol. 1, 80). The whole of Marx's *Capital* is a study of the (more and more fetishised) forms of the power of labour. The 'pivot' for an understanding of the

different forms of social relations is the dual existence of labour as concrete and abstract labour, the fact that concrete, useful labour takes the form of abstract labour, the fact that useful, creative labour confronts itself in meaningless, alienated form.

If capital cannot be understood as external to labour, it cannot be understood as something economic. The movement of capital can only be understood as the movement of the contradiction (internal to capital itself) between capital and labour, the movement of struggle. The notion of 'Marxist economics', one of the most unfortunate creations of the 'orthodox' Marxist tradition, in so far as it suggests a separation of capital from struggle, must be abandoned. But if the movement of capital can only be understood as the movement of struggle, the movement of struggle can only be understood as a movement in-and-against capital. The notion that you can understand the movement of struggle or of society in abstraction from the particular form which it takes, the notion that underlies the concept of 'Marxist sociology' must also be abandoned. (The absurd notion of a Marxist political science, an idea raised by Poulantzas, need not even be mentioned).

Discussion of form (or form analysis) often appear to be very far removed from any political concern, so it is important to emphasise why the concept of form is important for developing Marxism as a theory of struggle. The central issue is the articulation and recognition of the power of labour. A concept that emphasises struggle, but sees struggle as being external to capital, recognises only one aspect of the power of labour. It hears the scream but is deaf to the resonance of the scream within capital itself. It sees the power of labour in strikes, in demonstrations, in armed struggle, but does not see it in the contradiction between productive and money capital, in the inadequacies of technology or in the internal disorder of the state. IT sees the power of labour in the response of the state to overt struggles, but does not see it in the very existence of value as an uncontrollable chaos at the heart of capital. It is the presence of the power of labour within capital that makes it ineradicably crisis-ridden, and that allows us to speak, not of laws of capitalist development, but of certain rhythmns and tendencies in the development of struggle.

It is important, to see that the concept of form here implies contradiction, instability. The power of labour appears in the form of its antithesis, the power of capital. Class struggle takes the form of

relations or 'things' (value, money, profit, etc) which appear to be neither class relations nor antagonsitic. Class "exists in the mode of being denied" (Gunn). As forms of class struggle which deny their own substance, the social forms of value, money, state, etc. are inevitably characterised by a constant tension betwenn form and content. The content is not contained within the form, but constantly breaks its banks and overflows. To quote Adorno again: "The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy" (1990, 5). The power of labour is not contained within the forms of capital, it constantly overflows and forces these forms to reconstitute themselves, to re-form, in order to contain the uncontainable. Fetishism in other words is not an established fact, but a constant process of fetishisation.

This distinction between fetishism and fetishisation is crucial for the way that we understand society and the way that we understand marxism. If fetishism is total, if class antagonism is completely contained within its forms, then revolution as the self-organisation of the working class becomes theoretically impossible. If fetishism is total and the wokring class cannot see through the forms in which class struggle presents itself (as neutral things), then there are only two possibilities: either one sees the working class within the structures of capitalism and gives up hope of revolution - the understandable but destructive pessimism of the Frankfurt School - or else one sees the only possibility of revolution as lying in the intervention of a deus ex machina, a vanguard party who will come from the outside. But there is no outside, just as there is no inside: there is only an inside-outside, an overflowing, an in-and-against-and-beyond. The only possible way of resolving this dilemma, the dilemma common to Leninism and the Frankfurt School theory, is to see that fetishism is not total. It is not an established fact, but a constant process of fetishisation. Labour does not simply exist in the form of capital: it exists in-and-against-and-beyond those forms of capital. Class struggle does not simply exist in the form of value, money, state, etc. It exists in-and-against-and-beyond those forms. The forms of value, money, state, etc., are better thought of as form-processes, as processes of valorisation, monetisation, statification.

The state, to take an example, is not an institution in the sense of a thing that is outside us, nor is it simply a form of social relations in the sense of a link in the chain of capitalist reproduction: it is rather a form-

process, an active process of forming social relations and therefore social struggles in a certain way. It is not just an aspect of fetishism (the neutral state) but, as part of the general struggle of capital against labour, an active process of fetishisation that systematically channels class struggles into non-class forms, into struggles on behalf of citizens, struggles for democracy, for human rights, etc. - forms which systematically deny the existence of class and therefore promote the disarticulation of the power of labour.

Or money, to take another example, is not a fetishised form of social relations. It is a process of monetising life, of subjecting human existence to the command of money, which implies a constant and violent struggle. The intensity of that struggle is reflected, for example, in all the conflicts surrounding the unprecedented expansion of debt throughout the world, and in the equally unprecedented rise in theft and 'crimes' against property.

Or, to make the point more generally, if the dual existence of labour as concrete and abstract labour "is the pivot on which the comprehension of political economy turns", then it is important to see the abstraction of labour (the 'imposition of work' as it is sometimes referred to) as a process, as a struggle which permeates not only the workplace, but the whole of society - a point emphasised but without differentiation in the concept of the 'social factory.

Capital's reproduction depends on the fetishisation, on the containment of a struggle that always goes beyond it. The relation between labour and capital is neither external nor internal: it is both, but with no clear dividing line. Labour does not simply exist within capital; it exists in-against-and-beyond capital (again with no clear dividing line between in, against and beyond, and therefore no clear distinction between class-in-itself and class-for-itself). Labour overflows from capital. Capital is not simply the form of labour; it is the process of forming labour, it is the constant process of self-reconstitution to contain labour. Class struggle is the movement of the overflowing-and-containment, or, in other words, class struggle is the movement of fetishisation/defetishisation. This is not to say that class struggle is theoretical, although theoretical reflection is clearly part of it. The process of fetishisation/defetishisation is a practical one. Fetishisation is the process by which social interconnections are broken down and become impenetrable. It is the decomposition of the

working class. Defetishisation is the opposite movement: the movement by which, through struggle and the theoretical reflection that is part of it, interconnections are established and the working class is recomposed. Fetishisation is the containment of the power of labour, defetishisation is the overflowing of the power of labour, the screm of negativity. Fetishisation is the smothering of the scream, the assurance that "things are so". Defetishisation is the unleashing of the scream, the awareness that the only truth is that things are not so, that truth is not yet, or simply not.

Marxism is defetishisation, the theory of the power of labour in-against-and-beyond capital, the theory of the scream which shows that the scream does not exist only in overt militancy (in what is usually called 'class struggle'), but that it is much, much more powerful than that because it reverberates in the very concepts of capital, because it reverberates in the deepest silence of vereyday life. As Linton Kwesi Johnson puts it:,

> Inside our ears are the many wailing cries of misery,
> Inside our bodies, the internal bleeding of stifled volcanoes,
> Inside our heads, the erupting thoughts of rebellion.
> How can there be calm when the storm is yet to come?
> ("Two Sides of Silence")

The 'internal bleeding of stifled volcanoes' inside our bodies, the 'erupting thoughts of rebellion' inside our heads, the existence of non-identity under the aspect of identity, the presence of the not-Yet in the Now, the power of labour in-against-and-beyond capital are the instability of capital, its constant tendency to crisis. Crisis is the manifestation of that power and for that reason the central concept of Marxism. Crisis is the eruption of the power of labour.

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# Marxism and Common Sense

## *Richard Gunn*

The title of the journal *Common Sense* derives from the Scottish school of common sense philosophy which flourished during the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth; the content of *Common Sense*, on the other hand, has quite frequently been inspired by ideas and themes drawn from Marx. The traditional concerns of the common sense philosophers - epistemology,[1] theories of perception, ethics, generalist education as a needful mitigation of the social division of labour which obtains in modern 'commercial' society - are precisely those which Marxism holds suspect. Conversely, Marxism's emphasis on social revolution and class struggle is just the sort of thing which the common sense philosophers would have anathematised. The prevailing ethos of common sense has been one of political moderation, grounded in a 'secular Calvinism' (Davie 1986; 1991 p 129) that forbids radical scenarios constructed around (cf. Passmore 1970) an alleged 'perfectibility of man'.

Can, therefore, the relation between Marxism and common sense amount to anything more than reciprocal antagonism? Does not an attempt to link the one to the other succeed only in diluting, eclectically, the claims of both? I shall argue that this is far from being the case: Marxism needs common sense and *vice versa*. This is not at all to say that Marxism stands in need of a political moderation. Quite the reverse; it is common sense which becomes drawn on to radical ground. In what follows I supply, first, a brief and selective sketch of the Scottish common sense tradition; after that some relevant aspects of Marxism are introduced. Then comes the substantive argument, contending for the interdependence of Marxism and common sense. My closing sections develop some issues arising from Hegelian phenomenology as a means of making the practical and experiential bearings of my argument clear.

# Common sense

The *Oxford English Dictionary* reports two meanings of the term 'common sense' which are pertinent to the Scots. 'Common sense' means (i) 'the common bond or centre of the five senses' such as sight and touch; and it means (ii) 'the general sense...of a community', i.e. public or shared sense (or *sensus communis*, to give it its Latin name). It will be noted that *neither* of these meanings connotes things like "gut feelings" or "self-evident convictions", that is, 'common sense' in the colloquial meaning of the term. What common sense philosophy appears to suggest is that common senses (i) and (ii) are interdependent (cf. Davie 1986 Part III; Gunn 1987a and 1991). We can relate to one another only as autonomous or "totalised" agents, and, conversely, it is only through our relations with others that we can totalise ourselves. Only if our sensory experience is coherent and has a 'common bond' are we competent to interact with our fellows; but it is only through such interaction *(sensus communis)* that we can make our sensory experience, and ourselves, "add up". There is an interesting tension in this interdependency. Someone who thinks that a landscape (sense of sight) is a symphony (sense of hearing) needs to talk to others about the matter; but on the other hand these others may need to talk to him or her about it since after all a landscape may *be* a symphony in a certain set of aesthetic terms. Interaction is thus the therapy for the *pathology* of common sense (i) taken on its own *and* for the potential *conformism* of common sense (ii) considered in isolation. Pathology and conformism are the Scylla and the Charybdis between which the thesis of the interdependence of common sense as 'common bond' and as *sensus communis* attempts to steer its way. To the extent that its navigation is successful something like Critical Theory in the twentieth-century meaning of this term is the result.

The three heroes of the Scottish common sense tradition are Thomas Reid (1710-96), Adam Smith (1723-90) and James Ferrier (1808-64). *Reid* dwelt especially upon common sense in its meaning (i). In fact, he seems sometimes to invoke the notion of "self-evident convictions" because he avers that there are 'principles...which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe' and that 'these are what we call the principles of common sense' (Reid 1983 p 20). Matters are not so straightforward, however, because (as Davie 1954 emphasises) Reid in numerous passages urges that our experience is judgementally rich. That is, he appeals not to self-evidence but to our capacity to evaluate *in and through* what seems evident the way in which we should take any "evidence" on board. Further, *sensus communis* hovers on the margins of Reid's texts: his rough idea is that the evidence of experience is

innocent until proved guilty. This is a metaphor drawn from the law-courts, and thus from a "public" or interactive world. But although this metaphor (of legal judgement) is recurrent in Reid it is never systematically integrated with common sense in meaning (i). Reid was well aware that common sense is, or should be, shared sense, but this awareness stands at one remove from the central epistemological concerns of his published works.

*Smith*, by contrast, approaches common sense from the diametrically opposed direction. It is common sense (ii) - *sensus communis* - which is uppermost in his mind. His contention is that we can never 'survey our own sentiments and motives', nor form 'any judgement concerning them' unless we view them through 'the eyes of other people' (Smith 1976 pp 109-10). As it were, we need to see ourselves as others see us. The most explicit reason Smith gives for this is an ethical one, and turns upon the category of 'sympathy' (or empathy) which is much foregrounded in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: supposing that I have toothache and that you sympathise with me, your sympathy, however lively, cannot approach the intensity of feeling my toothache causes to me. If, then, *I* see my toothache through *your* sympathetic eyes I gain perspective on it, and may feel bound to moderate the groans and cries of pain I should otherwise intrude upon the public world. In other words I learn, from seeing myself as you see me, the Stoic virtue of self-command. This said, however, epistemological as well as ethical considerations are bound up with what Smith says. His phrase 'our own sentiments and motives' connotes *ourselves*, and the 'judgement' we form concerning ourselves involves self-*knowledge*, and knowledge of others as well. It is as cognitive beings that we count as ethical beings, and *vice versa*. Indeed, for Smith, epistemological competence is a condition of political or public competence. Epistemological competence - the interrelation or common bond of our five senses - was precisely the concern of one of Smith's early essays (Smith 1980). The same concern surfaces in his *Wealth of Nations* where it is argued that educational programmes are necessary in order to offset the debilitating consequences of a social division of labour which, in the same movement as it generates prosperity, divides us in and against ourselves (Smith 1979 pp 788ff).

Whereas Reid emphasises common sense (i) and Smith common sense (ii), although indeed Reid so-to-say abuts on to Smith and Smith on to Reid, it is *Ferrier* who raises the best claim to have synthesised common sense in its two-fold meaning. I shall not attempt an overall summary of the complex - and undervalued - contribution of Ferrier here (but see Davie 1961 Part 4; Passmore 1968 pp 52-3; Thomson 1985). It suffices to record two points.[2] The first is to the effect that Ferrier, in a

remarkable series of articles dating from the 1840s, pioneers a phenomenology according to which the data supplied to us by any one of our five senses is comprehensible only *via* its relation to data which one or more *other* sense supplies for its part (Ferrier 1864). As it were, an interactive republic of the senses (common sense (i)) parallels the interaction of self and others (*sensus communis* or common sense (ii)). Secondly, in a no less remarkable passage from a series of lectures unpublished in his lifetime - and still awaiting complete publication today - there occurs a passage where common senses (i) and (ii) appear to be drawn together quite explicitly. 'Sympathy,' says Ferrier (1986 p 106), alluding to Smith and thereby to *sensus communis*, 'seems...to play the same part in the moral world as touch does in the physical world': 'touch' had been advertised by Ferrier as a potentially totalising sense in his articles of the 1840s, and so the allusion is to common sense (i). So far as a synthesis of the senses of common sense is concerned this looks like game, set and match. But is it? Does the passage do more than establish a parallel or *analogy* between common senses (i) and (ii)? The phrase 'the same part' is ambiguous, inasmuch as it may be held to summon the sameness of identity, of totalisation - the terms which play the 'same part' being internally related - or of analogy and comparison, merely. Ferrier in other words remains inconclusive. And here my selective and all-too-brief history of common sense philosophy ends.

What can be concluded from it is that a synthesis of common sense as the 'common bond' of the senses and as public or shared or interactive sense hovered on the tip of the Scots' tongues. Smith and Reid turn towards one another. Ferrier sees the issue but never quite gets the thing said. Did they perhaps all take it for granted? Or is the question of synthesis which I have put to the common sense philosophers wrongly posed? My suggestion is that common sense requires a Marxist deepening before the tongues can be loosened and common sense can say what, as above documented, it thought it meant. A converse suggestion will be made in due course.

# Marxism

My presentation of Marxism can be brief, not least because diverse approaches to Marxist theory have been debated in earlier issues of *Common Sense*. Marxism, I propose, appears strong where the common sense tradition is weak and weak where the common sense tradition appears strong. It is upon what I take to be important strengths of the Marxist tradition that this section builds.

In 1845 Marx says that theoretical 'mysteries' find their rational solution in 'human practice and the comprehension of this practice'; in 1857 he contends that 'even the most abstract categories' possess their 'full validity' only for, and within, 'historic relations' (Marx/Engels 1975, Vol. 5, p 5; Marx 1973 p 103). These passages bring two issues before us, viz., the relation *between theory and practice* and the status of *abstraction*.

From a large number of Marx's writings of the 1840s - just when Ferrier, who like Marx had studied in Berlin, was working out his notion of the republic of the senses - it can be gathered that a very precise conception of the relation between theory and practice surfaced in Marx's thought (cf. Gunn 1987b). This conception goes forward as follows. Theory is in the first place *distinct from* practice, because to change our interpretation of the world does not amount to changing the world itself; but in the second place theory subsists in a relation of *unity with* practice because the way we think (what counts as "obvious" or self-evident to us, for example) is bound up with the practical and social world wherein we stand. *Either* to elide practice with theory (to fail to mark the distinction between them) *or* to treat theory as something wholly disconnected from practice is to become 'idealist', in Marx's view. In contradistinction to idealism, Marx proposes that we regard theory as a *moment* of practice considered as a *totality* (Gunn 1987b, again). Theory is practice-related and practice is theory-inclusive. Both of the seemingly contradictory theses of the *distinction between* and the *unity of* theory and practice are, on this approach, given their due. Theory is distinct from practice because the 'moment' is not the whole; theory is in unity with practice because it is *as* and *in* and *of* practice that theory subsists.

In Marx's view, this conception of theory's status imposes quite specific requirements on theory itself. It is not enough that theory be *reflexive*, i.e., that it be able to reflect on itself and give some account of the validity of the terms, categories, truth-criteria and so forth that it employs; theory must be *practically* reflexive in the sense that *in the course of* asking after the validity of its categories it must needs ask after its social and political situatedness and *vice versa*. Only in this way can it problematise the seeming "obviousness" of categories which form part and parcel of the world within which it, for its part, inheres.

Another way of putting this is to say that Marxian practical reflexivity deepens, and renders coherent, the dimension of *critique* which all self-reflection involves. (By 'critique', I understand not so much outright opposition as critical and self-critical interrogation which holds open the possibility of arriving at oppositional results.) To be self-critical or

indeed self-knowing involves entertaining the possibility that the categories which strike us as reliable touchstones may carry this aura of "reliability" only because they are aspects, so to say, of the self-presentation of a specific social life. Reflexivity *qua* critical thus entails practical reflexivity, and non-practical reflexivity (even on the part of theory) amounts to a self-reflection which is insufficiently carried through.

Here, already, we find a point of contact between Marxism and the philosophers of common sense. Common sense thematises reflexivity, and indeed practical reflexivity, when it suggests that we can totalise ourselves ourselves (common sense (i)) only in and through our social interaction with others (common sense (ii)); and we have seen how Smith, for example, deepens this line of thought into a reflection upon the social division of labour's alienating effects. Adam Ferguson (1966 pp 182-4) carries these ideas even further. Conversely, when common sense urges that only totalised individuals - so to speak, people "with their heads together" - are capable of competent social interactions (remembering always that it is through our relating to others that this self-togetherness comes), what is summoned is precisely the notion of critical self-reflection in Marx. Thus, common sense philosophy figures as one amongst the schools of thought which are Marxism's progenitors. In fact it would be surprising if this were not the case. Ferrier, for instance, had read Hegel and Feuerbach; Hegel and Marx had read their Ferguson and Smith. The point is not so much to chart precise lines of influence as to signal an international debate which all parties to it took for granted and, hence, a common pool of reciprocally fertile ideas.

I round off my (highly abbreviated) comments on Marx by glancing at the notion of *abstraction* which Marx's thought employs. Marx, we saw, reckons that abstract categories possess their 'full validity' only within specific 'historic relations'. We misunderstand him, I suggest, if we take this to mean just that certain abstractions hold good only for particular societies; for such a reading relies upon a logic of "genus" and "species" which (cf. Gunn 1992) is one among the objects of Marx's attack. Rather, Marx is saying that within the world of capitalist social relations abstractions *have practical existence*: the category of 'abstract labour' in *Capital* Vol. I is the clearest example, but it is arguable that abstractions like 'class' and 'value' should be understood in the same way too (Gunn 1987c). In other words, the categories of Marxist theory are "substantive" or "determinate" abstractions; abstractions like labour or class or value (or 'money' or 'wages' or 'the state') are for Marx *modes of existence* - *'forms'*, in his terminology - of the capital/labour relation. It is in and through these forms that, however contradictorily,

the social relations of a capitalist existence reproduce themselves, and subsist.

Thus Marx, in his later work, *deepens practical reflexivity into determinate abstraction.* In the present connection the importance of this point is that such a deepening represents *the most intense possible unity of common senses (i) and (ii)*: the categories we use to "get our heads together" - i.e. to "theorise" - are those in and through which we exist, socially; and the categories in and through which we exist, socially, are those upon which we must needs reflect, (self-)critically, whenever we think.

# Marxism and common sense

So far, some areas of connection between Marxism and common sense have been indicated but only in an interpretive and more or less impressionistic way. Uncontroversially, Marx was indebted to the Scots (cf Pascal 1938; Meek 1976) but the usual story concerning this indebtedness dwells upon social to the exclusion of epistemological points. The Scots, like Marx, addressed questions of the social division of labour and so on. The force of the argument presented above, however, is to the effect that Marx *and* the Scots were led to the conclusion that social and epistemological issues have to be addressed together, so to say in the same breath. These issues count as differing moments within the same problematic, or indeed contradictory, whole. In the past, all manners of theories of knowledge and of methodology have been foisted on Marxism, externally, under the mistaken impression that *as merely a social theory* Marxism lacks an epistemology.[3] My suggestion is that Marxism contains no such lack because - practical reflexivity and determinate abstraction allow us to say this - its social theory *is* its epistemology and *vice versa.* Reflection upon the validity of categories and upon social situatedness - common senses (i) and (ii), again - go hand in hand. Nothing counts as external; epistemological issues remain in play but there is no *separate* discipline named 'epistemology' just as, and for the same reason that, common senses (i) and (ii) imply one another. In his early writings, indeed, Marx comes very close to characterising the common bond of the senses as a social bond.

Thus, the relating of Marxism to common sense in no way amounts to offering Marxism yet one more epistemological crutch; instead, it brings to light what is intrinsic to Marx's claims. Conversely, it brings to light what is intrinsic to common sense's claims (despite the

political moderation of the Scottish common sense philosophers) because it enables us to relate the common bond of the senses to *sensus communis* in a practical and not *merely* in a theoretical-epistemological way. This is important because *sensus communis* sheerly *has to be* as practical category, if only because it involves what Hegel (1977 pp 110-12) terms 'recognition': how we are seen by others (and how we see the others who see us) is constitutive, in effect and *in practice*, of what we are. The intersubjective and subject-constitutive play of recognition is a practical play. Smith and Ferguson both acknowledge this when they reflect on the epistemological implications of a division of labour. However, as we have seen, Scottish common sense *never quite* drew together its social and epistemological wings. Even Ferrier, the hero of the synthesis, remains ambiguous. This being so it is arguable that common sense requires the notion of practical reflexivity pioneered by Marxism, just as Marxism is in part indebted for this notion to the philosophy of common sense.

The interrelation of Marxism and common sense can, I suggest, be made clear by means of two complementary diagrams:

| COMMON SENSE / MARXISM | 'common bond' (common sense (i)) | *sensus communis* (common sense (ii)) |
|---|---|---|
| theory | **1** | |
| practice | **2** | |

Figure 1.

| COMMON SENSE / MARXISM | 'common bond' (common sense (i)) | *sensus communis* (common sense (ii)) |
|---|---|---|
| theory | **1** | **3** |
| practice | | |

Figure 2.

Marxism projects a unity of theory and practice just as common sense

projects a unity of common sense *qua* 'common bond' of the senses and *qua sensus communis*. Bear in mind in what follows that, as explained earlier, 'common bond' connotes individual autonomy and totalisation - for only someone with a coherent experience can act non-pathologically, which is to say autonomously - as well as purely epistemological points: this is why box 2, as well as box 1, falls under the heading of common sense as the common bond of the senses in Figure 1.

What Figure 1 reports is so to say a first-off attempt by Marxism to construe theory and practice as internally related. Theory and practice are taken *as they spontaneously present themselves* in bourgeois society, i.e., as the theory and practice of individuals (cf. Marx 1976 pp 279-80). *Monological* theory and *atomised* practice are recurrent assumptions in, for example, twentieth-century philosophy of science and political theory: what can *I* know? and what should *I* do? The salutary force of these questions, thus posed, is that they address us in the first person; they keep the issue of our autonomy alive; but their equally undeniable weakness is that they elide first-person addressment with solitude, which is a conceptual abstraction. ('No man is an island' although, emphatically, individuality can be, and is, an abstraction of a 'determinate' sort.) Now, monological theory *cannot* be united with atomised practice. Once it joins forces with such practice it amounts to a crude pragmatism which carries relativism in its train. For by what criteria does one judge practical success/failure? If it is *theory* which supplies the criteria then an appeal from theory to practice leads nowhere. If it is *practice* which supplies the criteria then one might as well say that what *feels* good *is* good, and of course the difficulty here is that what feels good differs as between people and within the same person at different times. The case of a sheerly monological theory is in fact even worse than this, because if it does not appeal to practice it then faces a dilemma between *either* vicious circularity (it has to attempt to validate itself or pull itself up by its own bootstraps *à la* Althusser and Balibar 1971 p 59) *or* infinite regress (inasmuch as it needs a metatheory to justify the categories of its first-order theory, and a meta-metatheory to justify the categories of its metatheory...and so on, without hope of halt).

How then might theory and practice be united? My suggestion is that they link up (internally) *via* the shaded area in Figure 1, that is, through *sensus communis*. I shall substantiate this suggestion in due course. Any *direct* link between boxes 1 and 2 is self-defeating. Might, then, common sense help Marxism loosen the mental cramp inherent in a theory and a practice construed in terms of the categories of self-presentation of a bourgeois world?

What Figure 2 reports is, similarly, a first-off attempt by common sense philosophy to unite common senses (i) and (ii). We have seen how even Ferrier gets not much further than a relation of parallelism or analogy between the republic of the senses (i.e. common sense *qua* common bond) and interaction or *sensus communis*. Equally, we have seen how a unity of (i) and (ii) hovers on the tips of the common sense philosophers' tongues. This being so it can be proposed that whenever common sense *remains sheerly on the plane of theory* - boxes 1 and 3 - it can never get beyond an analogical relation between the two aspects of its meaning. As it were, it remains trapped in the reciprocal mirroring of society and the individual upon which Plato's *Republic* depends. In order to break out of this trap an appeal not to the analogy of practice but to the intensivity of practice is required. The Scots themselves know this, as for example when Smith and Ferguson relate epistemological questions to questions of a social division of labour. Might it then be that it is *via* the shaded area in Figure 2 (viz., practice) that common senses (i) and (ii) - boxes 1 and 3 - can achieve their synthesis? Might the Marxian thesis of a unity between theory and practice help common sense to say what it always seemed to mean? Here, too, is a proposal which I shall work through: a *direct* relation between boxes 1 and 3 is precluded, no less than is a direct relation between boxes 1 and 2.

## From common sense to Marxism

What it is needful to show is that common sense requires an appeal to practice; that it can make this appeal; and that it can achieve its synthesis once this appeal is made. The first two points can be cleared up in short fashion: it *requires* this appeal because it construes common sense *qua* common bond as autonomy and totalisation - both of them practical categories - and not just as epistemological theory. This is evident enough from Reid's marginal metaphors, from Smith's invocation of sympathy (or 'recognition') and from the circumstance that whenever a phenomenologist like Ferrier interrogates the interrelation of - say - the senses of sight and touch he invokes a *practical situation* wherein we seek to know that we see and feel the same thing. To employ twentieth-century terminology: it is as practical beings that we individuate objects. Further, common sense *can make* the appeal to practice because it itself invokes not just a public "sense" but a public "world" wherein socio-political disputes and divisions of labour all occur. Whereas monological theory (box 1) always drew its strength from a disseverance of theory from practice *and had to do so if* it was to remain pure, inasmuch as publicity slips over into politics which slips over into practice, common sense draws its strength from

its reference, however marginal and metaphorical, to *sensus communis*; and this latter *already* signals self-reflective or 'critical' presence in a practical world.

It is of course the third point which is controversial. Can reference to practice achieve the synthesis of common senses (i) and (ii)? It can do so for this reason: when and only when we see ourselves as others *whom we recognize in practice* see us can we be self-reflective about the judgements we ourselves make. *Real* ('actual', in Hegel's terminology, or practically existing) others do indeed allow us to establish a critical distance from ourselves. Against this it may be objected that these "others" may be all too complicit in the judgements, concerning ourselves or anyone or anything at all, which we make. Boon companions are not impartial spectators. However, this objection fails, because it assumes interaction between self and others to be a closed process, in which only a finite number of individuals (or of perspectives) is involved. Once *real* others are brought on stage their number and the number of their (possible) perspectives becomes indefinite. The image of an open conversation supplants that of a seminar behind closed doors, and it is the openness of the conversation (to all comers) which supplies its condition of rigour: a rigour much more severe than any methodological or monological testing can supply. The arrival of Alcibiades at the Socratic feast reported in Plato's *Symposium* captures this point exactly. A *sensus communis* which opens on to practical arrivals abuts on to truth - to be sure, always a conversationally changing truth - and, hence, on to the first-person totalisation and autonomisation of our practical selves. The turn to practice allows us to say that through interaction with others - through 'recognition' - we draw together a sense, however indefinite and provisional, of our own projects and individuations. The thesis of a unity of theory and practice underscores what I have reported as the two-fold meaning of common sense.

## From Marxism to common sense

Tracing now the converse and complementary direction of the argument, what it is needful to show is that Marxism requires an appeal to common sense; that it can make this appeal; and that it can achieve its synthesis of theory and practice once this appeal is made. In the preceding section it was shown, admittedly all too sketchily, how common sense can free itself from the grip of merely analogical relations *via* themes emphasised by Marxism (and adumbrated by common sense itself). Can common sense return the favour? Can Marxism exorcise the spectre of a merely pragmatic conception of the relation of theory and practice (see

earlier) *via* a summoning of common sense?

That Marxism *requires* and *can make* an appeal to common sense *qua sensus communis* is easy enough to show because Marx himself says it: invocation of 'human practice and...the [reflexive] comprehension of this practice' is the therapeutic salve for theoretical 'mysteries' *quite precisely because* the standpoint of 'social humanity' rather than that of egoistic 'civil society' is the appropriate one (Marx/Engels loc. cit.). In other words practice is to be addressed as dialogical, and (reflexively) in a dialogical as opposed to a monological, or solitary, voice. Indeed, quotations apart, it is not too difficult to see what Marx's dialogical appeal means. In effect it is an appeal to the Hegelian category of recognition. In attempting to 'comprehend' the practice of myself and/or others I *address* others, inasmuch as practical reflexivity implies the notion of an *audience* which for its part - those whom I address being *real* others - is a notion (cf. Hegel 1977 pp 43-5) of a thoroughly practical kind;[4] and conversely any attempt to address others involves an attempt to comprehend myself. This of course was just Smith's point, about the interrelation of social and epistemological competence. Hegel had read his Smith and Marx had read his Smith (and his Hegel). However, the controversial point is again the third one: can reference to *sensus communis* achieve the synthesis between theory and practice which Marx seeks?

It can, because when one recognizes others as practical beings one recognizes them as theoretical or epistemological beings too. A theory which is practically reflexive situates itself *within* practice and, thus, it situates itself in relation to others *in a first-person way*. Unless it opens itself to the challenges presented by what others have to say it situates itself above and beyond practice, i.e., it is no longer practically reflexive. (Authentically) practically reflexive theory is (authentically) dialogical theory and *vice versa*. A practically reflexive theory, thus, relates itself to practice *in and through sensus communis* because, as it itself understands, the audience *to* whom it speaks are those *about* whom it speaks (and *vice versa*).

Unlike the pragmatist/monological version of the unity of theory and practice, the *sensus communis* version of the unity is adequate, because it shows how truth-claims can be sustained. It shows this because it allows us to see social self-reflection as epistemological reflection and epistemological self-reflection as social reflection. In sum, it allows us to address autonomy (answerability to ourselves for what we say and believe and do) and relatedness to others in the same breath. It makes *conversation* the crucible of truth (cf. Gunn 1989). Relativism for example is avoided because, our answerability to ourselves being also

our answerability to others, no conversational voice is deemed incompetent in an *a priori* way. Conversely dogmatism is avoided because, our answerability to others being also our answerability to ourselves, no perspective (whether advanced by ourselves or others) is presumed valid prior to the conversation which unfolds. Likewise, the monological dilemma of "vicious circularity or infinite regress" (see earlier) is avoided because, so to say, the indefinite extension of a regress and the closed circularity of viciousness are recast as the open circle of an ongoing (an indefinitely extended) conversation itself.

To be sure, there is no prospect of an unchanging or fixed-and-given truth advertised here. However, the changeability of truth equates with relativism only if a phenomenology of conversation is unable to present the enunciation of novel categorial perspectives as an enrichment (rather than as an undermining) of rigorous conversation itself. In fact (Gunn 1989), it is easy enough to show that, without any degeneration into mere rhetoric at all (*pace* Lyotard 1985), conversation *can* and quite frequently *does* take place, rigorously, across categorial bounds. What is presupposed by such conversation - "good" conversation, in the sense that conversations which *either* take categorial agreement for granted *or* which break down in mutual incomprehension are deeply boring - is 'recognition'. We should however be careful here. Recognition is not to be understood as an external precondition of conversation (a view which would throw us back into relativism, inasmuch it would make conversation dependent on pre-agreed truth rather than truth dependent on conversation); it is rather to urge that recognition must be a stake in and through and as a consequence of the conversation itself. Recognition (in order to remain recognition) has to remain *dialogically* in play, just as a phenomenology of conversation has to remain a conversational (a dialogical) phenomenology for its part.

When we see ourselves in relation to others we raise our particularity towards universality. When we see others in relation to ourselves we bring their (and our) particularity into view. We can see others in relation to ourselves only in the same movement as we see ourselves in relation to others: this effects the Marxian synthesis. As it were, in consequence of the openness - i.e. the rigour - of conversation, the synthesis can never be definitive. It has continually to be made and remade. I take it that this was one of the points that Marx had in mind when he described communism, not as a condition of society or social *telos*, but as the real - the actual, or practical - movement of the working class.

However, some questions remain open. *Just how* does our relation with

others go forward? *What kind* of sense does a Marxism mediated through common sense (or a common sense mediated through Marxism) speak? A reader who has followed the argument thus far may be forgiven for thinking that, as it were, everything is too polite. Just as the phrase 'class struggle' is anathema amongst traditional common sense theorists, the word 'conversation' tends to make Marxists role their eyes. In the event, however, *nothing* here is polite, and the open question is: do we have, here, a synthesis or just an *intersection*? Allowing all the interconnections I have established, should not Marxism and common sense merely shake hands and then - each with its own (to the other) generous rigour - *pass on*? On the basis of what has been said above the reader can make up his or her own mind. But two further sets of reflections supply food for thought.

# Violence

Nothing at all has been said which implies that "conversation" need be confined within the limits of bourgeois or academic civility. What *is* implied is that it must needs go forward dialogically, i.e. reciprocally: but this is a requirement that can be met in a number of ways. Not all of them are polite ways. Once monological dictation of terms is precluded, the area of reciprocity which remains is one which encompasses not just civil debate but some aspects of (actual or potential) "violence".

Quite often (e.g. by Arendt 1973), violence and civility are seen as mutually exclusive: dialogical relations end where violence begins. This view relies on an assumption, which Arendt makes explicit, that violence is a wholly *instrumental* process. That is, it not merely *employs* instruments (machine guns, policemen's batons, etc.) but relates to others as *objects* of instrumentation in much the way a dentist, say, attacks an unhealthy tooth. Instrumentality is always monological. On this instrumentalist view the only question can be that of the legitimate or illegitimate *use* of violence (an "instrument" being something that we "use").

Unfortunately for this tidy conception, non-instrumental and dialogical dimensions can be discovered within violence itself. To be sure, when violence *is* deployed instrumentally dialogical relations are sundered; in Hegelian terms, recognition disappears. It is however the possibility that at least some violence can be recognitive, and hence as it were conversational, that should give us pause.

There are at least three heroes of communicative violence: Sartre, Georges Bataille and the Hegel of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (and

perhaps Lenin, when in a thoroughly Bataille-like passage he describes revolutions as 'carnivals of the oppressed'). No detailed discussion of these theorists is possible here, and so I shall confine myself to a few indications. Sartre (1967a; 1976) characterises violence as a 'practical bond', by which he means not just that we tend to huddle together in the face of a common enemy but that the possibility of violence *amongst ourselves* can in certain circumstances throw into relief our reciprocal recognition. The (recognized) possibility that any one of us may, so to say, break recognitive ranks serves to heighten our awareness of what is at stake in recognizing others. (To recognize an other includes recognition of his or her *freedom to* break ranks.) Hence, it serves to intensify the play of recognition - the play of "conversation" - itself. For Bataille (1985; 1990) the same effect is achieved through the imagery of 'sacrifice'. Sartre draws upon Bataille; both Sartre and Bataille draw upon Hegel - or at any rate upon Hegel as mediated through Kojève (1969) - and, especially, upon Hegel's characterisation of the French Revolution (Hegel 1977 pp 355-63). Standing liberal conceptions of violence as anathema to civility on their heads, what Hegel there argues is that absolute freedom can indeed be maintained in and through Terror (cf. Gunn 1988). Under the sign of Revolutionary terror, says Hegel, being 'suspect' has the same significance as being 'guilty': who will break ranks first? That the French Revolutionary *drama of suspicion* sustains mutual recognition is possible, for Hegel, because within the 'tumult' of the Terror - no-one knows which faction will be on top tomorrow - there is no clear social division of labour between citizens and rulers or between executioner and executionee. The executioner renders himself acephalus in the person of his victim, and his victim beheads himself through the executioner's act. Only a technical (as opposed to a social) division of labour obtains here: 'each...always does everything', Hegel says, as though recording the realisation of the dreams of Rousseau or, indeed, Adam Smith. The force of the point can be grasped by reflecting on the intensity of an evening's conversation about the course of the Revolution if none of the Revolutionary participants in the conversation knows who, on the morrow, will be killing whom. Hegel in fact generalises this point by arguing (1977 p 394) that the possibility if not the actuality of bad faith is intrinsic to the play of all recognition (including mutual recognition) inasmuch as recognition of the freedom or autonomy of others, for its part a condition of conversation because each participant has to be freely answerable for their views, includes recognition of their freedom to dissolve conversational bonds. The possibility of the "internal emigration" of speaking in bad faith includes, as a limiting condition, the possibility of violent recourse; that is, of external emigration from the conversational group. What we recognize in others *the more intensively we recognize them* is their capacity to step out of

line. A drama of suspicion remains intrinsic to recognition - and is even heightened by it - however 'mutual' or reciprocal the recognition may be.

Just reflections of this sort are, of course, what the politically moderate Scots deplore.[5] Hegel himself - the man now, and not the philosopher - deplored them too.[6] Nonetheless they present a challenge to the Scots if only because they show how difficult it is to equate *sensus communis* with bourgeois and civic norms. Conversely, Marxists for their part tend to distance themselves from the theme of violence-as-conversational in Hegel because they, like the liberals and Arendtians, tend to think of violence in instrumentalist terms. When Marx (1976 p 916) says that '*Gewalt* is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one' it is the metaphor of the dentist once again. Perhaps, then, *if* Marxism and common sense intersect rather than merely shaking hands they should dwell in one another's company for a few steps longer. For then Marxism's revolutionary commitment could thematise, for the common sensers, the potentiality of violence summoned by *sensus communis* (or 'recognition'); and the notion of *sensus communis* (once disentangled from political moderation) could illumine, for Marxists, the inadequacy of construing violence in a sheerly instrumental way.

These are bleak reflections, and so their implications should be made clear. Whoever talks about participatory or recognitive or conversational violence is liable to be accused of making a cult out of violence for its own sake (only considerations of the "use" of violence can delimit it). However, it remains open to someone who endorses Sartre's and Bataille's and Hegel's points to renounce *all* violence *insofar as violence figures as instrumental*; for it is the instrumentality of (some) violence which casts *sensus communis* to the winds. If one reckons up instances of violence, it becomes apparent that the liberal-instrumentalists sanction many more deaths that do the "Hegelians". All *wars between states*, for example, become disallowable if participatory violence is the only species of violence one is willing to endorse. In fact, it is arguable that the Sartreian/Batailleian/Hegelian view is the closest approach to outright pacifism that can reasonably be made.[7]

## Japan and the USA

Returning to the box-diagrams introduced earlier, boxes 2 and 3 suggest reflections of their own. Box 2 (taken on its own) signifies the United

States and box 3 (taken on its own) stands for Japan. This undeniably obscure suggestion can be clarified through reference to a lengthy footnote in Alexandre Kojève's seminal *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Kojève 1969 pp 158-62). The point of the argument which now follows is to set the argument of my preceding section in reverse gear. There, it was proposed that Hegel saw beyond the horizons of Marxism and/or common sense. Now, it will be contended that an alliance between Marxism and common sense can resolve a fundamental difficulty in Hegelian thought.

Hegel believes that, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, *history has ended*: 'until spirit has...completed itself as world-spirit [i.e. historically], it cannot reach its completion as *self-conscious* spirit' (Hegel 1977 p 488), and it was just this self-consciousness which Hegel thought he himself could supply. What, then, might a *post-historical* existence be like? This is the question taken up by Kojève in the footnote cited above. Kojève offers two suggestions. His first is to the effect that it involves 'the definitive annihilation of Man properly so called or of the free and historical Individual', i.e., it involves a *re-animalisation* of 'Man' . History ends only once desire is definitively satisfied, and once desire is definitively satisfied (as in a sort of post-historical Land of Cokayne) we have no more reason, or possibility, to stand ahead of ourselves in an open and desiring and self-determining way. If, then, self-determination is intrinsic to human existence the end of history must be the end of human existence too. We become 'natural' rather than distinctively 'human' beings. When Kojève wrote this he thought that history had ended in the USA, where individuals figured as consumers rather than as (self-)producers in any self-determining way. And this is just what is signalled by box 2 in Figure 1. Atomised practice, dislocated from self-reflection and from *sensus communis*, is just the practice of the consumer who aims to maximise his or her benefits and satisfactions. A whole host of contemporary Rational Choice theories (e.g. Elster 1985 for a *soi disant* Marxist version) bear this contention out. According to such theories the element of self-determination is excised from production, *pace* Marx, or at most it features as just one more consumer benefit; and production appears as merely the first stage in a process to which consumption is the key. There is no more *work*, in the sense of self-determining practice, to be done.

Amongst Kojève's pupils was Bataille. In 1937 Bataille drafted an open letter to Kojève arguing that the end of history need not equate with an end of 'Man'. *Even if* desire is definitively satisfied, and there is no longer any need for the 'negating' action of work, one can perfectly well imagine a 'negativity without employment' (Bataille 1989):

indeed, Bataille, invoking his favourite themes of sacrifice and of economic wastage or uselessness,[8] offers himself as just such an example of a negativity without work to do.

It may well have been communication to this effect from Bataille which compelled Kojève to take stock. At any rate, in the 1955 edition of his *Introduction* he urges that history had ended not in the USA but in Japan (which he had visited while on holiday). It is 'specifically Japanese snobbery' exemplified by 'Noh Theatre, the ceremony of tea and the art of bouquets of flowers' which counts as post-historical (loc. cit.). The idea here is that, after history ends, *recognition* remains in play - but now it is a purely formal recognition, in which nothing historically substantial is at stake. Whereas in Kojève's first version of an end of history sheer consumerism eclipses recognition and, with it, 'Man', in his revised version 'Man' survives the end of history because the distinctively human attribute of recognition continues (however "uselessly") to exist. Returning to the box diagrams, Kojève's 'Japan' is the signification of box 3 in Figure 2. *Sensus communis* stands prised away from all practically substantive questions (the division of labour, work, revolution and so forth) and amounts only to a formal play of theoretical signs. In effect box 3, considered in isolation, contains *post-modernism*, just as box 2 considered in isolation contains the referent of Rational Choice. Post-modernism's play of signs referring only to themselves or to other signs amounts to Kojèveian formal recognition *and* (cf. Bellamy 1987) to an *ahistorical* play which can occur only once history has ended, or been set at nought. If one likes, one can say that the Kojève of 'Japan' was a postmodernist *avant la lettre*. Be this as it may, one can just as well say that his second and revised conception of the end of history is no less barren and depressing than his first.

Naturally, gloom and despond are no objections to a well-made argument: but *need* Kojève have oscillated between the USA and Japan? On this score the intersections signalled in Figures 1 and 2 *and the complementary character of the two figures* (imagining them superimposed on one another) has something to say. What is depressing about atomised individuality (box 2) is its refusal of common sense *qua* recognition or *sensus communis*; what is depressing about post-modern Japanisation (box 3) is its denial of individual answerability and autonomy (we are merely *loci* of the play of signs). The mood of gloom is lifted once 3 and 2 are understood as interrelated: once autonomous practice is deepened into *sensus communis* and once *sensus communis* is deepened into practice for its part. But this *was just* the twofold project of Marxism and common sense as described earlier, and we saw that it was not merely a needful project but a project

which could succeed. We can speak for ourselves in and through our speech with others and *vice versa*. Others are not merely obstacles to our autonomy, as on liberal conceptions of freedom, but enable and empower and expand it. This said, it should be stressed that 'Japan' and the 'USA' *change their significance* once 3 and 2 join forces. The legitimation of Rational Choice is undermined through *sensus communis* and the legitimation of post-modern formalism is undermined once we can be held answerable, as autonomous agents, for what we say and do. As Marx has it (in the 'Theses on Feuerbach') the 'human essence' just is the 'ensemble of the social relations' *and* (in *The Poverty of Philosophy*) social relations are 'produced by men': the "and" should be understood in both directions (cf. Hegel 1977 pp 263-4). Just as conversation does not equate with politeness, Hegelian post-history is far from equating, however despairingly, with a celebration of the Pacific Rim.

Assuming Kojève to be roughly on the right lines in his interpretation of Hegel, we can say that Marxism/common sense unfreezes the notions of definitive satisfaction and of purely formal recognition, alike: it unfreezes and unlocks Hegel. For it enables the theoretical play of signs to be deepened into issues of practical substance, and it enables the play of practice to expand beyond the individual into a public and social world. *Sensus communis* relates to theory *via* practice and practice relates to theory *via sensus communis*. Marxism and common sense and Hegel form what might be called a totality: it is the combination of any two of them which allows the third to have its say. Marxian practical reflexivity unlocks the tongues of the common sense philosophers and *vice versa*; Hegel, who seems to overarch both common sense and Marxism, comes into his own in the light of the Marxist and common sensical conversation which unfolds. Post-history contains real issues because it challenges individuals: because it *challenges* individuals it escapes the USA and because it is *individuals* that it challenges it evades the fate of Japan; and because its challenge is dialogical or 'mutually recognitive' (Hegel) it remains post-historical. Both the *sheer universality* of a play of signs without signifieds and the *sheer particularity* of benefit-maximisation are surpassed. But neither the bourgeois civility in terms of which the Scots present themselves nor the instrumentalist reflections of the liberals can effect this synthesis. It may be that it is within the area of pacifistic violence or violent pacifism that Marxism and common sense can most fruitfully join hands.

## Notes:

1  The term 'epistemology', meaning theory of knowledge, was coined by the common sense philosopher Ferrier (1854).

2  For both of the points which follow I am indebted to George Davie.

3  The first of such externally introduced epistemologies was Engelsian 'reflectionism', codified in Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* of 1908. More recent offerings include structuralism, methodological individualsm (Elster 1985) and realism (e.g. Bhaskar 1989).

4 Admittedly one can also address a 'virtual' or not-yet-existing audience, in the sense of Sartre (1967b). But virtuality remains a practical category inasmuch as illumes the capacity of practice *qua* practice to stand ahead of, or indeed to alienate, itself.

5  See, however, Davie's essay on the late nineteenth-century common sense social theorist and Free Church enthusiast, Robertson Smith. In terms prefigurative of Bataille he emphasised the role of cannibalism and human sacrifice in primitive social cohesion. 'This communal drinking of the warm blood and eating the gobbets of throbbing flesh, newly killed, of their fellow tribesmen would revitalise the unity of the group and heal the fractures and tensions within it' (Davie 1991 p 131). It is precisely *communicative* violence which is involved here.

6  Cf. Cullen 1979 p 31.

7  A pacificism which conceives of violence solely as instrumental remains trapped in a needless implausibility. The conventional argument against pacifism is to the effect that it can sometimes be justifiable to kill a small number of individuals so as to save a greater number's lives. So far as I can tell, the sole rigorous answer that the instrumentalist pacifist can provide to this is to say: human life being sacred, and the reason for refraining from the taking of life being a matter of absoluteness or of principle, killing a million individuals is no greater a sin than killing one. The internal consistency of this position is unassailable, but it is simply an *inversion* rather than a *rejection* of the instrumentalist/consequentialist view (on the moral intuitions underlying which, see Honderich 1980). The alternative - the non-instrumental - angle of attack is to say that only when the notions of the sacred and the sacrificial dovetail, for all concerned, is violence tenable. *All statist wars* are thereby ruled out of court, although certain categories of spontaneist or crowd violence may be a different matter. (As it were, the argument I report endorses *less* violence than does that of the liberals, and thereby amounts to an immanent critique of their instrumentality; but the violence it - sometimes - endorses is just the violence which liberals deplore, and the violence it anathematises is just the violence which - sometimes - liberals defend.)

8  See 'The Notion of Expenditure' in Bataille 1985; Bataille 1987 ch 5;  and Bataille 1990.

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CSE Conference 1992

# Has Capitalism Won?

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## *Call for Papers*

**CSE 92** will take place on 10th – 12th July 1992 in London. The Conference will consist of a number of plenary sessions and a wide range of individual workshops organised along broad themes. The central theme will be consideration of whether capitalism has won the battle of Labour and Capital in the economic, political and international arenas.

The areas to be covered include Green Political Economy, the Third World, local government and the welfare state, Europe, the aftermath of the Gulf War, militarism, peace and disarmament, the rise of the new right, fundamentalism, technology, the market, the media, mental health, the reproduction of capital, philosophy and culture.

The Conference Committee would welcome suggestions for additional topics and papers from anyone with something to say on the issues that need addressing.

In particular, we would welcome offers from people willing to organise a workshop stream (or series of workshops on a theme).

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For further details about the Conference or to offer a paper please write to

> Conference Committee,
> CSE 92,
> 25 Horsell Road,
> London
> N5 1XL

*(Sidebar: CSE 92 — CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST ECONOMISTS)*

# Note About the Conference of Socialist Economists

The Conference of Socialist Economists was formed in 1970 and are committed to developing a materialist critique of capitalism in the revolutionary tradition within the labour movement. Membership of CSE covers a broad political spectrum which generates wide-ranging debates, unconstrained by divisions into economics, politics, sociology, history, etc.

Subscribers to the journal of the national CSE - *Capital & Class* - automatically become members. This enables them to attend the annual CSE conference and to play a part in the work of CSE local groups. CSE also organises many working groups which presently cover areas like: new technology, money & finance, public sector, law & state, regionalism, the internationalisation of capital. Every member of CSE receives the journal *Catalyst*, which has up-to-date economic and political analysis and acts as a noticeboard for CSE.

*Capital & Class* is available from the national office (priced £12 full rate, £8 reduced) at CSE, 25 Horsell Road, London N5 (Telephone 071 - 607 9615).

There are also the following local groups:
**Edinburgh** Werner Bonefeld (031 228 1669).
**Coventry** Simon Clarke, Sociology Dept, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.
**London** Liz Spiro (081 767 2596).
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(details about other local groups are available through *Catalyst*).

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