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To elicit some sense of logic out of current events - with America firmly ensconced in the rôle of 'World Policeman' and the entry of NATO on to the Balkan scene - it is necessary to recall some crucial events from 1917 onwards.

The vast wealth amassed by the Vanderbilts, Astors, Morgans and other such like at the turn of the century fuelled the extraordinary growth of the American mass-production machine, and the resultant corporations were soon looking abroad with the intention of extending their interests. On the other hand, the Bolshevik's seizure of power in Russia in 1917 created, in effect, a call to wage-earners worldwide for the setting up of a Marxist system of social distribution of wealth - the very antithesis of the capitalist system of garnering profit from the wealth created by labour. The corporatists now had little option but to commit themselves to the destruction of this subversive, Marxist threat, even though this entailed the dubious - if not impossible - concept of the destruction of an Idea, an Ideal! Above all, they had to avoid this dichotomy being seen as one of ideology per se, the inequity inherent within their capitalist system being too vulnerable to scrutiny. No, the struggle had to be seen by their public as one of 'Good Nation' against 'Evil Nation'; 'White' against 'Red'. This would be made easier both by ownership of the means of communication - the media - and the subordination of political parties of all shades outside of America (as in Italy post-World War 2): the weak Left in America itself would be squashed by bâton and gun.

Such was the ideological impasse that lay at the root of all subsequent events. It is therefore essential to look more closely at the rôle of Corporate America, the key stall-holder in the world market, and the group that would stand to lose the most in the case of failure. For them, political control was now important: politicians could not be entrusted with the task of avoiding, repudiating the temptations of this new ideology. Control was accomplished in two ways:

(1) By direct secondment of top corporate executives to high government posts, thus skirting the democratic process. An example of this was the fact that in the first two years of Truman's presidency, of the 125 principal appointments made: 56 were corporate lawyers, industrialists and bankers (one of whom, James Forrestal of Dillon, Read & Co., was probably the earliest and most vigorous promoter of what was soon to be known as the 'Cold War'); and 31 were high-ranking military officers.

And (2) by the formation of influential 'advisory' groups. A survey of these reveals that, contrary to the popular view of America as the epitome of a pluralistic, competitive society of 'rugged individuals', it's corporations display a very high degree of cohesion of purpose, and this cohesion is exemplified by their manifest urge to form cabbalistic groups, many of a pseudo-social character. This is a phenomenon that should come as no surprise to anyone who has attended an American university, with its fraternity-ethos which invariably leads to the masonic lodge on graduation. Indeed, when it is recalled that its first president, Washington, and nine of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence in 1776 were known Freemasons, and that the subsequent rituals used for both Washington's inauguration and the laying of the Capitol's cornerstone were Masonic - then it would seem that this phenomenon has certain traditional roots.

The result is groups such as:

(1) The Business Council: Formed in '33 by businessmen and bankers as an advisory body to the US Department of Commerce, they were subsequently commissioned by FDR to draw up his Social Security Act of 1936 - thus defusing a potentially revolutionary situation - since when they have held immense political clout in Washington. This is borne out by the fact that, for example, in '72 the chairmen/presidents of 26 of the 50 largest industrial corporations were members. It is interesting to note that, from FDR onwards, the only time the Council withdrew its advisory status was during JFK's presidency after its confrontation with him.

(2) The Bohemian Club, with its prestigious membership and its 127-lodge Grove Camp north of San Francisco on the Russia river - where, for instance, the atom-bomb Manhattan Project was conceived in 1942 at the prompting of physicist Professor Ernest Lawrence.

(3) The Euro-American Bilderberg group, formed in 1954 to serve as a forum for lobbying at the highest political level in order to ensure that consensual policies were adopted by the West in general, and signatories to the NATO alliance in particular. On the international scene it is almost certainly the most influential and prestigious of these groups/cabals. Implicit within the structure of this group, with its publicised claim to having no formal organisation; no 'membership' as such; no

charter, and no elected officers is its unaccountable, autocratic nature. However, the very fact that it has a chairman (currently Lord Carrington), a steering committee, and annual conferences surely means that - contrary to the claims above - it has a formal organisation. All doors to the seats of power are open to the Bilderberg.

The inevitable interlocking of membership among such groups resulted in the creation of an intricate web of influence (The Bohemian Club, with tongue in cheek, cautions its members - and equally influential guests - on entry to the Grove: "Spiders Weave Not Here!" - as if a spider could exist without weaving its web!). The following table covering nine of such clubs/groups illustrates concisely the complexity and scale of the web, as it existed in the early '70's (Two points: The Bilderberg is not included because of its structural ambiguity noted above, and it must be kept in mind that each figure represents a top-ranking executive in the American military/industrial/banking complex):

	BO	PU	CA	RA	LI	CE	CFR	CED	BC
BO									
PU	252								
CA	136	96							
RA	40	20	45						
LI	67	69	33	1					
CE	22	8	7	1	57				
CFR	34	25	15	1	108	332			
CED	20	24	17	2	60	23	52		
BC	27	24	14	2	77	12	42	49	

KEY: BO = Bohemian Club PU = Pacific Union
CA = California Club RA = Rancheros
LI = Links Club CE = Century Club
BC = Business Council CFR = Council for Foreign Relations
CED = Council for Economic development

Table from "The Bohemian Grove" by G. William Domhoff (Harper '74)

Three notorious, well-documented examples of the use to which this influence was put are:

(1) In Iran, mid-'53, the Americans deposed Mossadegh, who had nationalised the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (latterly BP) in 1951, and installed the Shah by means of a CIA operation codenamed 'AJAX'. Legal counsel for the AIOC had for years

been the distinguished New York Corporate law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell, the senior partners of which were the Dulles brothers (another partner was Arthur Dean, who was later a co-chairman in the Bilderberg for some years). At the time of the coup, John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State; Allen Dulles was CIA Director. It is worth adding here that the AIOC was financed from its early years by the Industrial Bank of Iran, an offshoot of the German Schroeder banking house (about which, more later).

(2) In Guatemala, June '54, a CIA-sponsored coup d'état removed the reformist, constitutionally elected government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman (a land-owning, military officer), and replaced it by a military dictatorship. Arbenz had, in 1953, expropriated, as part of his much-needed agrarian reform, large, uncultivated tracts of land belonging to the American United Fruit Company, whose earlier predatory incursion into Central America had caused the area to be known as 'the Banana Republics'. For years, the counsel for the UFC had been Sullivan & Cromwell, and at the time of the coup the Dulles's still held the posts they had held in 1953. Indeed, John F.D. was also a large stockholder in the UFC. This coup, incidentally, was a blatant violation of Article 15 of the US-inspired Organisation of American States (OAS) which specifically forbade any interference - political or military - by one state in the affairs of any other state.

(3) Chile, Sept. '70: the CIA, with the collaboration of International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT) and Pepsi-Cola, tried - unsuccessfully - to mount a military coup in order to prevent the left-wing Salvador Allende winning the presidential election. They planned this coup without the privity of the American ambassador, Edward Korry, who was opposed to such intervention. This did not stop the CIA and its corporate allies: in September '73 Allende was overthrown - and killed - and the dictatorship of General Pinochet installed. Among those who played an active, influential rôle in the above were: Harold Geneen (Pres./Chm. of ITT), John McCone (Board of ITT, Dir. of CIA '61 - '65, Bohemian Club), and Donald Kendall, (Chm. of Pepsi-Cola, Business Council - and friend of Nixon).

These examples of corporative power-wielding reveal the lack of any democratic accountability, as well as a disregard of national frontiers, this latter aspect due largely to the now-multinational nature of the corporations. There were even a number of cases in the '30's and '40's when such activities militated against the national interest of their own country - to the benefit of Germany in the instances that follow.

The 1920's had been a particularly crucial period in Germany because of the extraordinarily rapid rise to power of the Nazis:

what had been a rag-tag of street dissidents had, within a decade, become a well-uniformed, well-organised, and obviously well-financed organisation. Above all, it projected a very marked anti-Bolshevik bias. This attracted Corporate America, and contacts were soon made. ITT and Sullivan & Cromwell were among the more high-profile firms to do so. In the case of both firms, the German contact used was Dr. Gerhardt Alois Westrick, Hitler's financial agent - and through him deals were made with Baron Kurt von Schroeder of the Schroeder banking house (see AIOC above). This bank was a channel for funds for the Nazi Party in general, and the Gestapo in particular (it was in von Schroeder's villa in Köln on the 7th January 1933 that Hitler and Franz von Papen had met to plan details for their subsequent seizure of power, and von Schroeder was later made SS Gruppenfuehrer).

In ITT's case, in return for directorships for both Westrick and von Schroeder in ITT, the latter acquired a number of German firms, the most intriguing of which was a 28% share in the Focke-Wulf aircraft company, whose aircraft saw much service in the ensuing World War 2 - much to the discomfiture of Allied servicemen and civilians. Moreover, in 1967, ITT were paid $25 million in compensation by the American government for war damages to its factories in Germany!

For its part, Sullivan & Cromwell acquired as clients:

(1) I.G.Farben, the German chemical conglomerate which, in 1937, developed the deadly nerve gas, Tabun.
(2) The well-known Swedish ball-bearing manufacturer, SKF, which supplied 60% of its production to Germany - primarily for its armaments.
(3) The Schroeder banking house itself, Allen Dulles becoming a director of its New York offshoot - a post he held until 1944. Inasmuch as it exposes one of the filaments of the 'Corporate Web', it is pertinent to note here that the man who initially approached Sullivan & Cromwell on behalf of Schroeder was the latter's vice-president, John L. Simpson, the chief confidant of Steve Bechtel Sr. (of Bechtel Corporation) who was a member of the most influential 'Camp' in the Bohemian Grove, Mandalay Camp (Bechtel was later to supply the US Government with such figures as John McCone, George Schultz and Caspar Weinberger).

Implicit in the political unaccountability of the American corporate oligarchy is its secretiveness. We are thus justified in assuming that the few examples that are in the public domain - as above - must mean that there are many more of like import and gravity not in the public domain, and any concerned curiosity about such unpublicised activities, or hidden agenda, is therefore equally justified.

At this point it is necessary to recall that at the end of World War 2, America emerged with three-quarters of the world's invested capital and two-thirds of the world's industrial capacity - Russia with its infrastructure decimated. The distribution of American aid that followed was significant in the choice of countries so aided, and the relative amounts involved. Russia was denied aid, and the reason given by the US for this denial (which, incidentally, circumvented UN agreements) was that, at the critical Moscow Conference which started on the 10th March 1947, the Russians had spurned America's gestures of compromise - conveniently disregarding the fact that on the 12th March 1947 (just two days into the Conference) Truman had dropped his bombshell of a speech to Congress - his 'Doctrine', which was, in effect, an ultimatum to Stalin: you're either with us - or against us! The Marshall Plan was announced three months later. What is conveniently forgotten today is that, under this Plan, more aid was distributed to the right-wing, fascist régimes of Turkey, Greece, South Korea, South Vietnam and Formosa, than to Europe. George Kennan, who was head of the US State Department Planning Staff in the late '40's (and protégé of James Forrestal), supplied the official rationale that lay behind the above facts concisely in articles he wrote at the time under the pseudonym of 'Mr.X'. He stated "..the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate..and..to promote tendencies which eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power". Prophetic words!

These irreconcilable ideological differences between Russia on the one hand, and Britain and America on the other, meant that their wartime alliance had been an alliance of convenience, of pragmatism (e.g. contrary to America's assurance to Russia in May '42 that a 'second front' would be opened later that year, this, in fact, did not occur until June '44 - when it became clear to the Western Allies that the Russians were advancing inexorably westwards). Thus, at war's end in 1945, the Western Allies, for their part, immediately reverted to their pre-war anti-communist strategy, and given their common, fervent anti-communist bias, it was also inevitable that there would be co-operation between Corporate America and the Vatican. Examples of this co-operation were the setting up of the anti-communist propaganda radio stations: Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, joint ventures of the CIA (for funding) and Knights of Malta (SMOM) members J. Peter Grace (W.R.Grace Corp.) and Frank Shakespeare (CBS-TV, RKO & US Information Agency) - among others. This group - the SMOM - was the most active catholic group which so co-operated. Although membership of the Order was opened to Americans only in 1927, it is a measure of that country's influential standing that by the 1940's the American Cardinal Spellman held the post of 'Grand Protector' within the Order, whereas King Leopold and Queen

Wilhelmina were mere 'protectors' within their respective countries! To name but a few of its members, past and present, is to reveal its élitism and power: Juan Péron, CIA Directors John McCone and William Casey, King Juan Carlos, Ex-NATO Commander and ex-Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Joseph Kennedy and Nazi Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen, who negotiated the Hitler/Vatican Concordat of 1933.

This Concordat was an agreement that meant, in effect, that a government with an ostensibly strong anti-religious bias had taken the seemingly extraordinary step of imposing a church tithe on its populace! To understand this apparent paradox it is necessary to recall the ties that bound Germany to Rome for some eight centuries (926 - 1806) under the aegis of the Holy Roman Empire, with its succession of German kings. The unavoidable conclusion to be drawn here is that these ties were still alive in 1933, and the setting up of the puppet states of Slovenia and Croatia in 1941 are thus comprehensible. That these ties still exist today is attested to by the facts that (1) the Concordat is still in effect, and (2) since World War 2 the German political scene has been dominated by Christian Democratic (Catholic) Parties. Indeed, there can be no other rational explanation for Germany's extraordinary action on the 15th January '92 when, following on the Vatican's recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, and contrary to the advice and warnings given them by the UN, EEC and Bosnia itself (Itzebegovic had even gone to Bonn in a vain attempt to dissuade them from taking this step) they broke the universally accepted rôle of not interfering in the domestic affairs of a foreign, sovereign nation, and unilaterally recognised the independence of Slovenia & Croatia, thereby sanctioning the violent outbursts of nationalism that had occurred as a result of the earlier Declarations of Independence by those two autonomous members of the Yugoslav Federation. It was inevitable that the German action would lead to the Bosnian débacle - and it is difficult to believe that Germany was not aware of this (about which, more later).

Any further historical review of the region would be inadequate if it did not include the rôle that religion in general, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, has played in it - but in view of the schism that exists in the Church between the oligarchic 'Integralists' and the liberal 'Base Communities', it should be noted here that any reference/s to 'the Church' is/are directed towards the former: the autocrats in the Vatican. The involvement of the Church in the region was inevitable, given its geographical juxtaposition to, and historical association with Slovenia and Croatia - long regarded by the Church as a bastion against both the Orthodox Serbs (since Pope John 10th's crowning of Tomislav as King of Croatia in 925 AD) and later, the Muslim Ottomans. The Roman/Orthodox split in the Christian Church and the subsequent five centuries of Muslim Ottoman rule ensured that the

Yugoslavia that was to be formed in 1918 would be a land simmering with religious discord - a situation not eased by the earlier incursions of the Habsburgs from the north and the Bulgars from the east. The setting up of the Catholic state of Croatia under the fascist Ustase in the wake of the German invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 ignited this discord, resulting in large-scale massacres of Orthodox Serbs, jews, muslims and gypsies. Another area of discord during the war - and one of pertinence to the current crisis - was the split within the Serbs between the nationalist/royalist Cetniks under Mihailovich and the communist/republican partisans under Tito - most of whom were Serbs. The British and Americans were well aware of this schism, the British having seconded Brigadier Fitzroy McClean to the partisans, and the Americans Robert McDowell of the OSS to the Cetniks.

One significant aspect of the Vatican/Yugoslav relationship during the early post-war period was that, whereas the Polish government (a Russian satellite) had intervened far more in the internal affairs of the church than had Yugoslavia (which had broken off relations with Russia), the Vatican had adopted a far more intransigent attitude towards the latter (as exemplified by their opposition to Tito's agrarian reform, their stance over the Istria confrontation, and their ban on priests joining the long-established Priests' Associations) than towards the former. This could only have been a case of political opportunism aimed at Tito's comparative weakness - it was certainly not a case of religious principle.

Another post-war event that was to play a crucial rôle in Yugoslavia's future was the Greek civil war. The popular communist-led Party, EAM - with its military wing, ELAS - would have assumed power in Greece in 1944 had not the British intervened militarily with two divisions, as a result of the (then) secret deal Churchill had made with Stalin in October '44: in effect, allowing the British a free hand in Greece in return for Russia having a free hand in Bulgaria and Romania. The British installed the right-wing Tsaldaris as dictator of Greece, and thus found themselves embroiled in a civil war which they could ill afford. In February '47 they notified the Americans of their intention to withdraw from Greece, as a result of which Truman made his crucial speech calling on the West to rally to his crusade against the "...un-American communist way-of-life": the Truman Doctrine, as it became known. America had now replaced Britain as the broker in the Balkans - and was faced with the fact that ELAS was an effective military force due primarily to the aid/backing it was receiving from neighbouring Yugoslavia.

June '48 saw the Tito/Stalin schism, resulting in the former being expelled from the Comintern. The West's reaction to this was best spelt out by Pavlowitch in his book "Yugoslavia": "The American and West European governments were faced with a

dilemma. Should they help a now weak and isolated, but otherwise successful, instance of communism, while 'containing' communism generally?". On the one hand "..if Yugoslavia were left to collapse, only the Soviet Union would benefit. If, on the other hand, Tito's regime were helped to survive economically, his rift with Moscow could be widened to the point where no reconciliation was possible any longer, and his independent position could then entice other East European régimes to follow his example. Thus, at the same time as the states of Western Europe and North America were grouping together to constitute the North Atlantic Alliance, it was decided, as a calculated risk for a long-term advantage, to assist Yugoslavia without asking its government to alter its domestic policies in any way."

In July '48 America released Yugoslavias' frozen gold-assets, which had been blocked earlier when the latter had refused to compensate for nationalised American property - as a result of Yugoslavia now agreeing to pay such compensation! The following year America relaxed export controls to Yugoslavia and instigated a series of loans and grants totalling some 2 to 2_ billion dollars up to '59. Tito then stopped assisting ELAS, thus ensuring the latter's defeat. Yugoslavia had now embarked on a debt-ridden course which would eventually lead to the dissolution of its Federation - helped in no small measure by Tito's setting up, in '74, of a New Constitution which, in effect, split the Republic of Serbia into three parts by giving its provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina a higher degree of autonomy than it had previously held - thereby exacerbating underlying dissidences of a political, ethno-religious nature.

The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that Yugoslavia's usefulness as a tactical foil to the Soviets (see above) had now lapsed, leaving it - Yugoslavia - in the vulnerable position of now being one of only two remaining nominally communist states in Europe- the other being Albania. Moreover, as noted above, American aid had ensured that Yugoslavia would be a country heavily in debt, and with an economy in turmoil. This was a situation exacerbated by the disparate economies of the various Republics within the Federation, and the historical ethno-religious discord of the region. Disintegration was inevitable, and was to begin in 1990.

On the face of it, and in simplistic terms, the resulting turmoil in the region was just another anarchic stew of religious ingredients. After all, there had been many such throughout history (indeed, still are!), usually characterised by the cruel acts of the warring parties (which begs the question: when is a war not cruel? Can it be that it is when, by the simple, dehumanised act of pressing a button, or pulling a lever, a nuclear or napalm bomb is sent on its way?). Be that as it may, such a simplistic approach to the Balkan maze, not taking into account the inexorable rationality

of historical events leading to the débacle, has led to many a dead-end of irrationality in this crisis - epitomised by the many diplomatic statements and journalistic reports.

Intervention by the West, in the form of the EEC and UN, soon followed, but the initial attempts to bring the warring factions together, punctuated as they were by frequent about-turns of tactics - were of such an irresolute nature as to nurture doubts as to their aim. For a start, peacebrokers of questionable qualifications were appointed: Carrington, an eminent Bilderberger and his successor, Owen, had each served as Foreign Secretary of a country, Britain, that had for years been (and still is!) conspicuously unsuccessful in solving its own Balkan/Irish problem. Again, Carrington and Vance, Owen's co-broker, were board members of arms-dealing businesses: the former with Kissinger Associates (of Iran/Iraq infamy), and the latter with the prestigious General Dynamics. Surely, a case of 'conflict of interests?'

In the middle of these peace-brokerings came Germany's recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence (as noted above), which ensured that the conflict would spread to neighbouring Bosnia-Herzgovina with its potentially explosive mixture of three ethno-religious groups. On the face of it, it would seem that, having been given the chimerical task of untying the Balkan Gordian Knot by the Germans, the peace-makers had little choice but to make the best of it. However, in view of the clonal nature of the EEC/NATO partnership (of which, more later), it is hard to believe that fellow-members were not party to Germany's action on recognition: were not two crucial NATO posts held by Germans at that time (Werner as Secretary General, and Weggener as Assistant Secretary General of Political Affairs)? Indeed, the fact that NATO was to adopt a more overt rôle in the Yugoslav crisis from hereon calls for scrutiny of that organisation.

The collapse of the communist states in the East caused many in the West to query the future need for NATO. It is now evident that this query was based on two grave misconceptions: (1) that NATO had been set up solely to resist Soviet expansion, and (2) that the collapse of the latter had meant the end of the Marxist ideal. Had this been so, logic would have decreed immediate redundancy for NATO! From its birth in April '49, NATO has operated under American patronage and hegemony: patronage whereby, under its article 3, it finances the organisation ; hegemony, as attested to by a glance at NATO's command structure which reveals that both its commands', (1) Allied Command Europe (ACE) - with its two sub-commands SHAPE and SAFEUR (in Brussels), and (2) Allied Command Atlantic, ACLANT (in Virginia) come under statutory American control (It is significant that the third command-that-was - CINCHAN - the only command previously not under statutory American control, was recently

disbanded). NATO's true role since its formation has been to act as a counter-revolutionary, counter-reformist arm of the Corporate West. This was clarified by no less a person than George Kennan (once again) when, at the BBC Reith lectures in '57, he stated that the State Department had created the organisation as a shield behind which the West could meet "the communist danger in its most threatening form - as an internal problem - that is, of Western society, to be combated by reviving economic activity". In plain English: NATO had been formed to deal with the internal political problems of Western society - and if anybody should have known, it was he: was he not Head of Planning at that time? This was a statement, moreover, that conformed precisely - and understandably - to the tenets of Corporate America. That this was indeed its mandate, and that NATO was not subject to any democratic accountability can be attested to by the fact that, in 1959, under its Article 9, which empowered the setting up of 'subsidiary bodies', GLADIO (aka GLAIVE, aka ZWAARD) was brought under the control of SHAPE's Clandestine Planning Committee. GLADIO was a secret anti-Left terrorist group set up by the CIA and British Intelligence in Italy in 1950, with the aim of countering the influence of the communist party in that country. Subsequent judicial investigation revealed that it had been actively involved in such as the Bologna station bombing.

Kennan could have added that NATO had another, more immediate, rôle to play. In the immediate post World-War two period, well aware of the potentially lucrative markets that would result from the reconstruction of war-damaged Europe, Corporate America, with its vast capital reserves, was determined to benefit from it. The first step towards this end would be the Marshall Plan, which, in turn, would be implemented by the Congressionally passed Economic Cooperation Act of '48, the aim of which was clearly spelt out by its Administrator, Paul Hoffman (of Studebaker) who called for an integrated Europe, "the substance of such integration.." being "..the formation of a large single market within which quantitative restrictions of movement of goods, monetary barriers to the flow of payments and eventually all tariffs are permanently swept away". A Common Market if there ever was one! But some Europeans, fearing loss of sovereignty and suspicious of America's motives, opposed such integration. The following year, 1949, NATO was formed, and by incorporating these crucial, dissenting nations (Britain being one) under the guise of shielding them from any move west by the Soviets, America thereby attenuated such dissension and gained a valuable foothold in Europe. NATO had thus played an important rôle in the formative stage of what would ultimately become the Common Market-cum-EEC-cum-EU. Any doubt as to the close relationship between the two is dispelled by a glance at recent events in Europe: before an applicant country, such as Poland or Hungary, is accepted as a

member of the EU, it must first be - in effect - vetted by NATO. Indeed, this relationship is such as to cast doubt as to whether the EU is calling the tune within its own domain. The answer probably lies behind the closed doors of Corporate cabals, such as the Bilderberg - listed above.

NATO's involvement in the Yugoslavian crisis was a gradual process, from its avowed readiness in June '92 to support peace-keeping under the authority of the Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) - through to its use of air strikes over Bosnia from '94 until September '95, when the strikes were suspended pending the Dayton peace talks. The reason for this somewhat tentative initial approach to the crisis on the part of NATO was that they were playing for time: as a result of a strategic review undertaken in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO, in October '92, had inaugurated a plan to create an Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) of some 250,000 troops, a force that would be deployed whenever NATO deemed it necessary to intervene in order to 'keep the peace'. This was a force which would presumably augment its American twin: CENTCOM (of 'Stormin' Norman' fame) which had been similarly formed to protect (control) the Middle East oilfields. Now, the Yugoslav crisis had presented just such an opportunity - but, as originally foreseen, the ARRC would not be in operational readiness until 1995.

In September '95, with the ARRC now ready, NATO announced its readiness to deploy a large force to implement any Bosnian peace settlement. They would now be in overt control of the situation, and they pressurised the warring factions to 'sit around the table'. On the 5th October '95 they announced a 60-day cease-fire, which came into effect a week later. With the ARRC ready, ultimatums were now the order of the day - accompanied by the carrot of an embargo- lift. Simultaneously with the cease-fire announcement, the UN announced its intention to reduce its troops in the region. In the light of NATO's intention to intervene with a large force and America's subsequent cease-fire call, this UN announcement reflected its - the UN's - comparative weakness and subordination to America. The Dayton peace talks took place in the rather intimidating atmosphere of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio; the embargo against Yugoslavia was lifted in November - and the Peace Accord signed in Paris on the 14th December '95. In early December '95, as a result of a Peace Implementation Conference convened in London to discuss the implementation of the Dayton Accord, a Peace Implementation Council was set up in Brussels. Significantly, there were no UN representatives on this Council. The resulting Implementation Force (IFOR), a force of 60,000 American, British and French troops- under the command of ARRC - was then deployed throughout Bosnia into three zones of operation. In December '96

IFOR was augmented by the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) of 30,000 troops. The cease-fire could now be ensured by this display of military might.

America's tactics in the crisis from early on had raised doubts as to its impartiality and avowed compliance with the tenets of reconciliation inherent in a peace-making process. David Owen had voiced such doubts. Certain subsequent actions were to validate such doubts. As a result of a signed agreement on military cooperation between the US and Croatia (the latter had signed a similar agreement with Turkey), the Croatian Ministry of Defence had signed a contract with Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) in '94, under which the latter would act as military advisors to the Croat army at the Petar Zrinski military school in Zagreb. The MPRI officer in charge was a retired General Richard Griffiths who, from '89 - '91, had been assistant to the US commander in Europe for Intelligence (in Frankfurt). That the MPRI operates under the aegis of the US Department of Defence is attested to by: (1) the agreement referred to above; (2) the fact that it is staffed by many of the highest-ranking retired military officers in the US (such as its Chief of Operations, Lt. Gen. Harry Soyster - who had been Head of the Defense Intelligence Agency); (3) James Pardew, the Pentagon's representative at the Dayton talks, had subsequently flown to Sarajevo to 'persuade' the Bosnians to use MPRI's services. This was a company set up in Alexandria, Virginia, with the specific aim of promoting America's anti-left strategy on the international scene - as it had, for example, in Angola, where, with the cooperation of the CIA, it built up Savimbi's anti-communist army, Unita.

In August '95, the training of the Croat army came to fruition: their attack on the Serbs of West Krajina was so well and effectively planned that, within a matter of days, 150,000 Serbs had fled the region where, four centuries ago, they had been settled to act as a buffer between catholic and muslim. Not long after the Krajina rout, it was revealed in a Croat newspaper and later on British TV that one of the contributory factors to the Croat's victory had been CIA-organised pilotless reconnaissance flights over Krajina from a base on the island of Brac, in the Adriatic. Obviously, this could not have been done without close coordination with MPRI.

The Americans had now openly adopted a blatantly anti-Serb stance which embraced both Cetnik Serbian Bosnia and the predominantly Serbian Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, conveniently disregarding the open split between the two which had been reactivated when the Bosnian Serb leadership (avowed Cetniks) had rejected outright the Vance/Owen Plan in '93 - in open defiance of the wishes of the FRY. In the context of the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent lapse of Yugoslavia's use as a tactical foil (as previously noted), the logical inference to be drawn from this latest American stance was

that the FRY - still tainted with 'communism' in the eyes of the Americans - was now the ultimate target. And if Milosevic is not aware of that, then he is certainly not the smart politician he has so far proven to be!

The build-up of the anti-Serb Bosnian army under the guise of creating an 'even playing field', while good news for American arms manufacturers, is most certainly not a helpful move towards a peaceful solution of the Balkan problem. But if - and it is a big 'if' - it is successful in its aim, it would undoubtedly lead to a further extension of the capitalist system within the boundaries of the former Yugoslavia. It has already done so in Slovenia and Croatia. The resulting entry of the big corporations on to the scene will be eased by the need for reconstruction of the war-damaged infrastructures with its accompanying lucrative contracts - as happened in the Gulf War, for instance, when, even before war's end, corporations such as Bechtel were awarded lucrative contracts to rebuild Kuwait. George Schultz, ex-Executive President of Bechtel, was US Secretary of State at that time. While on this matter of reconstruction, the fact that an ostensibly military organisation such as NATO (in the form of IFOR) has, in the meanwhile, been given the responsibility of undertaking the reconstruction of the civilian infrastructure of war-damaged Bosnia is surely a pointer both to its inbred political nature and its corporate alliance - as previously stressed above.

To place the above events within a broader spectrum: since World War Two, the extraordinary growth of capital has reached global dimensions, as exemplified by the rapid spread of multinationals throughout the world. This has led to an understandable weakening of national sovereignty, and national statesmen/politicians are fast becoming posturers on the world stage while bankers and corporate executives call the tune backstage. Result: national boundaries are no longer sacrosanct.

In conclusion, it is interesting to wonder what some historian in the more objective future would make of the long-past dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Faced by the fact that the two main protagonists in the dispute had both been federal states, would he not ponder on the irony of it, and wonder what would have been the reaction of the federal United States government if the roles in the situation had been reversed in the dispute - and two of its States had decided to quit the Federation? Of one thing the historian would be in no doubt: peace counts for nowt when caught in the corporate spider's web of Profit!

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The End of Work or the Renaissance of Slavery? A Critique of Rifkin and Negri

George Caffentzis

Introduction

The last few years in the U.S. have seen a return of a discussion of work that is reminiscent of the mid-1970s, but with a number of twists. In the earlier period, books like *Where Have All the Robots Gone?* (Sheppard 1972), *False Promises* (Aronowitz 1972) and *Work in America* (Special Task Force 1973), and phrases like "blue collar blues," "zerowork" and "the refusal of work" revealed a crisis of the assembly line worker which expressed itself most dramatically in wildcat strikes in U.S. auto- factories in 1973 and 1974 (Linebaugh and Ramirez 1992). These strikes were aimed at negating the correlation between wages and productivity that had been the basis of the "deal" auto-capital struck with the auto-unions in the 1940s. As Linebaugh and Ramirez wrote of the Dodge Truck plant wildcat involving 6000 workers in Warren, Michigan between June 10-14, 1974:

> Demands were not formulated until the third day of the strike. They asked for "everything." One worker said, "I just don't want to *work*." The separation between income and productivity, enforced by the struggle, could not have been clearer (Linebaugh and Ramirez 1992: 160).

This clarity met an even stronger clarity in the auto capitalists' decades-long campaign to reassert control over the work process in their plants and assembly lines. These capitalists did not hesitate to destroy these very plants and assembly lines in order to save themselves. "Rust belt" and "run away plant" became the phrases of the business press when describing auto and other kinds of factory production in the 1980s; these phrases flowed almost seamlessly into "globalization" and "robotization" in the 1990s. The unprecedented result of this campaign was that full time weekly

"real" wages in the U.S. manufacturing industry have fallen almost 20% while the work time has actually been increased.

But in the mid-1990s books like *The End of Work* (Rifkin 1995), *The Labor of Dionysius* (Hardt and Negri 1994) and *The Jobless Future* (Aronowitz and De Fazio 1994), and phrases like "downsizing" (New York Times 1996) and "worker displacement" (Moore 1996) have revived themes associated with the crisis of work at a time when the power relation between workers and capital is the inverse of the 1970s. Whereas in the 1970s workers were refusing work, in the 1990s capitalists presumably are refusing workers!

In this paper I will show that these books and phrases are misleading in claiming that "scientifically based technological change in the midst of sharpened internationalization of production means that there are too many workers for too few jobs, and even fewer of them are well paid" (Aronowitz and De Fazio 1994: xii), or that "technological innovations and market-directed forces...are moving us to the edge of a near workerless world" (Rifkin 1995: xvi), or, even more abstractly, that the "law of labor-value, which tried to make sense of our history in the name of the centrality of proletarian labor and its quantitative reduction in step with capitalist development, is completely bankrupt..." (Hardt and Negri 1994: 10).

Jobs and the Manifold of Work

A "jobless future" and a "workerless world" are the key phrases of this literature, but before we can examine the cogency of these phrases for the present and near future it is worthwhile to reflect for a minute on the notions of job and work that they imply.

"Job" is the easier of the two. It has a rather unsavory etymological past. In seventeenth and eighteenth century England (and even today), "job" as a verb suggested deceiving or cheating while as a noun it evoked the scent of the world of petty crime and confidence games. In this context, a "jobless future" would be a boon to humanity. But by the mid-twentieth century "job" had become the primary word used in American English to refer to a unit of formal waged employment with some fixed, contractually agreed upon length of tenure. To have a job on the docks differs significantly from working on the docks; for one can be working somewhere without having a job there. The job, therefore, rose from the nether world of political economy to become its holy grail.

The mystic power of the word "job" does not come from its association with work, however. Indeed, "to do a job" or "to job" were phrases describing a "crooked" way to refuse to work and gain an income. "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs," became the shibboleth of late-

twentieth century U.S. politicians because the "job" emphasized the wage and other contractual aspects of work in capitalist society which were crucial to the physical and mental survival of the electorate. Hence a "jobless future" would be hell for a capitalist humanity, since it implies a future without wages and contracts between workers and capitalists.

Although its salience is unmistakable, the job marks off, often quite conventionally and even with dissemblance, a part of the work process; but there is no one-to-one correlation between jobs and work. The same work process can be broken down into one, two or many jobs. Consequently, "work" and its apparent semantic cognate "labor" seem to have a greater claim to reality.

Therefore, the "end of work" denotes a more radical transformation than a "jobless future," because there were many periods in human history when societies were "jobless" - e.g. slave societies and subsistence-producing peasant communities - but there were none, Eden excepted, that were workless. Before one can speak of the end of work, however, one should recognize that here has been a conceptual revolution in the last political generation concerning the meaning of work. For a long period of time, perhaps coinciding with the formulation of the collective bargaining regimes in the 1930s and their collapse in the 1970s, "work" was synonymous with "the job," i.e., formal waged work. But since then a vast manifold of work was discovered (Caffentzis 1992; 1996/1998).

This manifold includes informal, "off the books" work which has a wage but can not be officially deemed contractual because it violates the legal or tax codes. This dimension of the manifold tapers into the great region of purely criminal activity which in many nations and neighborhoods rivals in quantity and value the total formal job-related activity. Even more important has been the feminist "discovery" of housework in all its modalities that are crucial for social reproduction (e.g., sexuality, biological reproduction, child care, enculturation, therapeutic energy, subsistence farming, hunting and gathering, and anti-entropic production). Housework is the great Other in capitalist societies, for it stubbornly remains unwaged and even largely unrecognized in national statistics, even though it is increasingly recognized as crucial for capitalist development. Finally, there is a level of capitalist hell which collects all the coerced labor of this so-called "post-slavery" era: prison labor, military labor, "sex slavery," indentured servitude, child labor.

By synthesizing all these forms of work, we are forced to recognize an intersecting and self-reflective manifold of energetic investments that dwarf the "formal world of work" in spatio-temporal and value terms. This vast emerging presence *as well as the inverse manifold of its refusal* has transformed the

understanding of work profoundly, even though many seem not to have noticed. It certainly puts the jejune distinctions between work and labor (Arendt), between bio-power and capitalism (Foucault), and between labor and communicative action (Habermas) into question while forcing a remarkable expansion of class analysis and an enrichment of revolutionary theory beyond the problematics of planning for factory systems of the future. Most importantly for our discussion, this Manifold of Work problematizes the discussion of work and its supposed end at the hands of technological change.

The End of Work

Unfortunately, the notion of work that is often used in the "end of work" literature is often antediluvian and forgetful of work's capitalistic meaning. This is most clearly seen in Rifkin's central argument in *The End of Work*. He is anxious to refute those who argue that the new technological revolution involving the application of genetic engineering to agriculture, of robotization to manufacturing and of computerization to service industries will lead to new employment opportunities if there is a well-trained workforce available to respond to the challenges of the "information age." His refutation is simple.

> In the past, when a technological revolution threatened the wholesale loss of jobs in an economic sector, a new sector emerged to absorb the surplus labor. Earlier in the century, the fledgling manufacturing sector was able to absorb many of the millions of farmhands and farm owners who were displaced by the rapid mechanization of agriculture. Between the mid-1950s and the early 1980s, the fast-growing service sector was able to re-employ many of the blue collar workers displaced by automation. Today, however, as all these sectors fall victim to rapid restructuring and automation, no "significant" new sector has developed to absorb the millions who are being displaced (Rifkin 1995: 35).

Consequently, there will be a huge unemployment problem when the last service worker is replaced by the latest ATM, virtual office machine or heretofore unconceived application of computer technology. Where will he/she find a job? There is no going back to

agriculture or manufacturing and no going forward to a new sector beyond services. Rifkin applies this scenario to a global context and foresees not millions of unemployed people on the planet in the near future, but billions.

The formal logic of the argument appears impeccable, but are its empirical premises and theoretical presuppositions correct? I argue that they are not, for Rifkin's technological determinism does not take into account the *dynamics* of employment and technological change in the capitalist era.

Let us begin with a categorical problem in Rifkin's stage theory of employment. He uncritically uses terms like "agriculture," "manufacturing" and, especially, "services" to differentiate the three developmental stages of a capitalist economy as indicated in the passage quoted above and in many other parts of *The End of Work*. One cannot fault Rifkin for making an idiosyncratic choice here, since major statistical agencies like the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also employ these categories to disaggregate employment, production and productivity in the last few decades. The core metaphors that helped shape this trichotomy are rooted in a distinction between material goods (produced on the farm or off) and immaterial services, and in the spatial distinction between farm, factory and everywhere else (office, school, store, warehouse, road, etc.). This trichotomy allows for a rough and ready economic typology, with "the service industry" generally functioning as something of a fuzzy default category.

But it is one thing to use a category *ex post facto* and another is to use a category in a projective way (either into the past or the future). Rifkin's somewhat Hegelian scheme sees technological change as the autonomous moving spirit that transforms one stage to another until it comes to a catastrophic halt in the present "service" stage of history. Yet when we look at capitalistic societies in the past, this neat series is hardly accurate. For example, was seventeenth and eighteenth century England agricultural? The "service industry" in the form of household servants in the larger agricultural estates at that time was quite substantial, but these servants often worked as artisans (manufacturing) and as farm hands (agriculture). Moreover, with the rise of cottage industry, agricultural workers or small farmers also doubled or tripled as manufacturing workers on the farm. Finally, throughout the history of capitalism we find a complex shifting of workers among these three categories. Instead of simply moving from agricultural to manufacturing, and from manufacturing to service, we find all six possible transitions among these three categories.

The vast literature on the "development of underdevelopment" and on the many periods of capitalist "deindustrialization" abundantly illustrates these transitions which were clearly caused not by some autonomous technological spirit, but by historically

concrete and ever varied class struggles and power relations. A machine introduced by capitalists to undermine industrial workers' power can lead to these workers losing their employment and becoming "service workers" or becoming "agricultural workers" according to a complex conjuncture of forces and possibilities. There is no evidence from the total history of capitalism that there is only a linear progression that ends with the last service worker.

Rifkin's schema is further undermined if we examine its future projection. After a look at the wide variety of applications of computer technology in the service industry (from voice recognition, to expert systems, to digital synthesizers), Rifkin ominously concludes: "In the future, advanced parallel computing machines, high-tech robotics, and integrated electronic networks spanning the globe are going to subsume more and more of the economic process, leaving less and less room for direct hands-on human participation in making, moving, selling, and servicing" (Rifkin 1995: 162). But here the very defaulting function of the category of service makes its future projection problematic for Rifkin, since it will not stay in a single place, in a logical space in order to be reduced to measure zero by technological change.

Let us consider one of the standard definitions of what constitutes service work: the modification of either a human being (giving a haircut or a massage) or an object (repairing an automobile or a computer). How can we possibly project such a category into the future? Since there are no limitations on the type of modification in question, there is no way one can say that "advanced parallel computing machines, high-tech robotics, and integrated electronic networks spanning the globe" will be able to simulate and replace its possible realizations. Indeed, the service work of the future might very well be perversely defined (at least with respect to the constructors of these machines) as modifications to humans and objects that are not simulateable and replaceable by machines! (1) Just as today there is a growth in the sale of "organic," non-genetically engineered agricultural produce, and "hand-made" garments made from non-synthetic fibers, so too in the future there might be an interest in having a human to play Bach (even if the synthesized version is technically more correct) or to dance (even though a digitalized hologram might give a better performance according to the critics). I would be surprised if such service industries do not arise. Could they "absorb" many workers displaced from agricultural or manufacturing work? That I do not know, but then again, neither does Rifkin.

Rifkin's inability to project his categorical schema either into the past or into the future reveals an even deeper problem: his inability to explain adequately why technological change takes place in the first place. At the beginning of *The End of Work* Rifkin rejects what he calls "the trickle-down-technology argument", i.e.

> greater control over the means of production by substituting capital equipment for workers wherever and whenever possible...Marx predicted that the increasing automation of production would eventually eliminate the worker altogether. The German philosopher looked ahead to what he euphemistically referred to as the "last...metamorphosis of labor," when "an automatic system of machinery" finally replaced human beings in the economic process...Marx believed that the ongoing effort by producers to continue to replace human labor with machines would prove self-defeating in the end....[as] there would be fewer and fewer consumers with sufficient purchasing power to buy their products (Rifkin 1995: 16-17).

This use of Marx is part of a new and widely noted trend among social policy analysts on the U.S. Left, broadly considered. But this revival of Marx's thought is often as selective as is the use of Smith and Ricardo on the Right.(2) In Rifkin's case, he definitely gets the broad sweep of Marx's views on technology right, but with some notable omissions.

The first omission is of workers' struggles for higher wages, for reduced work, for better conditions of work, and for a form of life that absolutely refuses forced labor. These struggles are the prime reasons why capitalists are so interested introducing machinery as weapons in the class war. If workers were docile "factors of production," the urgency for technological change would be much reduced.

The second omission is Marx's Ricardian recognition that every worker permanently replaced by a machine reduces the total surplus value (and hence the total profit) available to the capitalist class as a whole. Since the capitalist class depends upon profits, technological change can be as dangerous to it as to the workers. Hence the capitalist class faces a permanent contradiction it must finesse: (a) the desire to eliminate recalcitrant, demanding workers from production and (b) the desire to exploit the largest mass of workers possible. Marx comments on this eternal tension in *Theories of Surplus Value*:

> The one tendency throws the labourers on to the streets and makes a part of the population redundant, and the other absorbs them again and extends wage-slavery absolutely, so that the lot of the worker is always fluctuating but he never escapes from

> it. The worker, therefore, justifiably regards the development of the productive power of his own labour as hostile to himself; the capitalist, on the other hand, always treats him as an element to be eliminated from production (Marx 1977: 409)

Capital's problem with technological change is not the loss of consumers, but the loss of profits.

Marx's most developed discussion of this insight is to be found in *Part III* of *Capital III*: "The Law of the Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit." There he recognizes that a tendency towards the total replacement of humans by an "automatic system of machinery" must continually be met by "counteracting causes" or else the average rate of profit will actually fall. These counteracting causes either increase the mass of surplus value (e.g., raising the intensity and duration of the working day), or decrease the mass of variable capital (e.g, depressing wages below their value, expanding foreign trade), or decrease the mass of constant capital (e.g., increasing the productivity of labor in the capital goods industry, expand foreign trade) or some combination or these disjunctive possibilities (Marx 1909: 272-282). Contemporary US capitalism appears to be applying the maximal synthesis of these counteracting causes while the European capitals are being more selective. There is no inevitable capitalist strategy in the drive to overcome workers' struggles and prevent a dramatic decline in the rate of profit. These struggles can lead to many futures from the reintroduction of slavery, to a dramatic increase in the workday, to the negotiated reduction of the waged workday, to the end of capitalism depending on the class forces in the field.

But there is one outcome that definitely cannot be included in the menu of possible futures *as long as capitalism is viable*: Rifkin's vision of "the high-tech revolution lead[ing] to the realization of the age-old utopian dream of substituting machines for human labor, finally freeing humanity to journey into a post-market era" (Rifkin 1995: 56). For capitalism requires profit, interest and rent which can only be created by a huge mass of surplus labor, but the total replacement of human work by machines would mean the end of profit, interest and rent. Although Rifkin seems to agree with much of Marx's analysis of the dynamics of capitalism, Marx's fatal conclusion is carefully kept out of the sanguine scenario presented at the last part of his book. Rifkin lays out a future that would combine a drastic reduction in the workday along with a "new social contract" that would provide financial incentives (from "social" or "shadow" wages to tax benefits) for working in "the third sector" the independent, "non-profit" or volunteer sector between "the public and private" sectors. This sector can become the "service industry" of the 21st century, since it "offers the only viable means for constructively channelling the surplus labor

cast off by the global market" (Rifkin 1995: 292). That is, it absorbs workers who do not produce surplus value, and provides them with a wage for non-surplus-value creating work.

In other words, Rifkin's vision of the "safe haven" for humanity is a form of capitalism where most workers are not producing profits, interest or rent. He contrasts this vision with a future where "civilization...continue[s] to disintegrate into a state of increasing destitution and lawlessness from which there may be no easy return" (Rifkin 1995: 291). But how viable is Rifkin's social Chimera with its techno-capitalist head, its ample, woolly third-sector body, and its tiny surplus-value producing tail? There are proportions that must be respected even when dealing with futuristic Chimeras, and Rifkin's cannot exist simply because the head, however technologically sophisticated, cannot be nourished by such a tiny tail. The capitalism resulting from Rifkin's "new social contract" is impossible, for it is by definition a capitalism without profits, interest and rents. Why would capitalists agree to such a deal after they trumpeted throughout the Cold War that they would rather blow up half the planet than give up a tenth of their income?

This "impossibility proof" is so obvious that one can not help but ask why Rifkin invoked Marx so directly at the beginning of *The End of Work* only to completely exorcise him at the end? Is he avoiding reference to the unpleasantness of world war, revolution and nuclear annihilation that his earlier reflections stirred up? Is he trying to coax, with veiled Marxian threats, the techno-capitalist class into an act of suicide camouflaged as a new lease on life?

Answers to such questions would require a political analysis of the type of rhetoric Rifkin and his circle employ. I forgo this effort. But it is worth pointing out that Rifkin's chimerical strategy is not totally mistaken. After all, he is looking for a new sector for the expansion of capitalist relations. He is mistaken in choosing the "non-profit," volunteer sector, for if this sector is truly "non-profit" and voluntary, it cannot be a serious basis for a new sector of employment in a capitalist society. (And there is no way to get out of capitalism via a massive fraud, however tempting that might be).

But Rifkin's intuition is correct. For the Manifold of Work extends far beyond the dimension of formal waged work and this non-waged work does produce surplus value in abundance. If it is more directly and efficiently exploited, this work can become the source of an new area of surplus-value creating employment through the expansion of forced labor, the extension of direct capitalist relations into the region of labor reproduction and finally the potentiation of micro- and criminal enterprises. That is why "neoliberalism," "neo-slavery," "Grameenism," and the "drug war" are the more appropriate shibboleths of the Third Industrial Revolution rather than the "non-profit" third sector touted by Rifkin, for they can activate the "counteracting causes" to the precipitous decline in the rate of profit

that computerization, robotization and genetic engineering provoke.

Negri and The End of the Law of Value

Rifkin can, perhaps, be indulged in his half-baked use of Marx's thought. After all, he did not come out of the Marxist tradition and his previous references to Marx's work were few and largely in passing. But the themes Rifkin so clearly presented in *The End of Work* can be found in a number of Marxist, Post-Marxist, and Post-modern Marxist writers, often in much more obscure and sibylline versions. One of the primary figures in this area is Antonio Negri who developed arguments supporting conclusions very similar to Rifkin's in the 1970s, but without the latter's "Marxist" naiveté. His *The Labors of Dionysius* (with Michael Hardt) which was published in 1994 continued a discourse definitively begun in *Marx Beyond Marx* (Negri 1991, originally published in 1979) and continued in *Communists Like Us* (Guattari and Negri 1990, originally published in 1985).(3)

In this section I will show how Negri's more sophisticated and Marxiste analysis of contemporary capitalism is as problematic as Rifkin's. It is hard to discern Negri's similarity to Rifkin, simply because Negri's work is rigorously anti-empirical - rarely does a fact or factoid float through his prose - while Rifkin's *The End of Work* is replete with statistics and journalistic set pieces on high-tech. Negri does not deign to write plainly of an era of "the end of work." He expresses an equivalent proposition, however, in his theoretical rejection of the classical Labor Theory or Law of Value with hypostasized verbs. In the late 20th century, according to Negri, the Law is "completely bankrupt" (Hardt and Negri 1994: 10) or it "no longer operates" (Guattari and Negri 1990: 21) or "the Law of Value dies" (Negri 1991: 172).

This is equivalent to Rifkin's more empirical claims, but the equivalence can only be established after a vertiginous theoretical reduction. Negri's version of the classic labor theory of value has as its "principal task...the investigation of the social and economic laws that govern the deployment of labor-power among the different sectors of social production and thus to bring to light the capitalist processes of valorization" (Hardt and Negri 1994: 8), or it is "an expression of the relation between concrete labor and amounts of money needed to secure an existence" (Guattari and Negri 1990: 21) or it is a measure of "the determinate proportionality between necessary labor and surplus labor" (Negri 1991: 172). The Law of Value was alive in the 19th century, but just like Nietzsche's God, it began to die then. It took a bit longer for the Law to be formally issued a death certificate, however.

The bankruptcy, inoperativeness, and death of the Law of Value simply mean that the fundamental variables of capitalist life - profits, interest, rents, wages, and prices - are no longer determined by labor-

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The bankruptcy, inoperativeness, and death of the Law of Value simply mean that the fundamental variables of capitalist life - profits, interest, rents, wages, and prices - are no longer determined by labor-time. Negri argues, as does Rifkin, that capitalism has entered into a period that Marx, in his most visionary mode, described the "Fragment on Machines" in the *Grundrisse* (Negri 1991: 140-141) (Rifkin 1995: 16-17). Let me chose just one of the many oft-quoted passages in this vision:

> The development of heavy industry means that the basis upon which it rests - the appropriation of the labour time of others - ceases to constitute or to create wealth; and at the same time direct labour as such ceases to be the basis of production, since it is transformed more and more into a supervisory and regulating activity; and also because the product ceases to be made by individual direct labour, and results more for the combination of social activity....On the one hand, once the productive forces of the means of labour have reached the level of an automatic process, the prerequisite is the subordination of the natural forces to the intelligence of society, while on the other hand individual labour in its direct form is transformed into social labour. In this way the other basis of this mode of production vanishes (Marx 1977: 382)

The development of "automatic processes" in genetic engineering, computer programming and robotization since the 1960s have

convinced both Negri and Rifkin that the dominant features of contemporary capitalism are matched point-for-point by Marx's vision in 1857-1858. The major difference between Negri's work and Rifkin's *The End of Work* is that while Rifkin emphasizes the consequences of these "automatic processes" for the unemployment of masses of workers, Negri emphasizes the new workers that are centrally involved in "the intelligence of society" and "social labor." Whereas Rifkin argues that these new "knowledge workers" (e.g., research scientists, design engineers, software analysts, financial and tax consultants, architects, marketing specialists, film producers and editors, lawyers, investment bankers) can never be a numerically large sector and hence are no solution to the problems created by this phase of capitalist development, Negri takes them as the key to the transformation to communism beyond "real socialism."

It is important to note a terminological difference between Negri and Rifkin. This is because Negri has over the years termed Rifkin's "knowledge workers" first in the 1970s to be "social workers," and later in the 1990s he baptized them as "cyborgs" *a la* Donna Haraway (Haraway 1991: 149-181). Although singularly infelicitous in its English translation, the term "social worker" directly comes out of the pages of the *Grundrisse*. When looking for a descriptive phrase that would contrast the new workers in the "information and knowledge sector" to the "mass workers" of assembly line era, many of Marx's sentences e.g., "In this transformation, what appears as the mainstay of production and wealth is neither the immediate labour performed by the worker, nor the time that he works-but the appropriation of man by his own general productive force, his understanding of nature and the mastery of it; in a word, the development of the social individual" (Marx 1977: 380) deeply influenced Negri. The social worker is the subject of "techno-scientific labor" and he/she steps out of the pages of the *Grundisse* as a late 20th century *cyborg*, i.e., "a hybrid of machine and organism that continually crosses the boundaries between material and immaterial labor" (Hardt and Negri 1994: 280,1). (4) The old mass worker's labor-time on the assembly line was roughly correlated to (exchange-value and use-value) productivity and he/she was alienated from the factory system; the social cyborg's labor-time is independent of its productivity but it is thoroughly integrated into the terrain of production.

Rifkin sees the "knowledge class" of "symbolic analysts" as fundamentally identified with capital and explains the new interest in intellectual property rights as a sign that the elite capitalists have recognized the importance of the knowledge class and are willing to share their wealth with it. Knowledge workers are "fast becoming the new aristocracy" (Rifkin 1995: 175). Negri has a rather different reading of this class's present and future. The

existence of social cyborgs not only is evidence that the dialectic of capitalist development has been "broken," according to Negri, but capital simply cannot "buy it out," because "the social worker has begun to produce a subjectivity that one can no longer grasp in the terms of capitalist development understood as an accomplished dialectical movement" (Hardt and Negri 1994: 282) In other words, techno-scientific labor cannot be controlled by capital via its system of wages and work discipline rounded out with the promise of entrance into the top levels of managerial, financial and political power for the "best." Not only is the social working cyborg beyond the bounds of capital's time honored techniques of control, it is also in the vanguard of the communist revolution. Why? Let us first hear and then interpret Negri's words:

> Cooperation, or the association of [cyborg] producers, is posed independently of the organization capacity of capital; the cooperation and subjectivity of labor have found a point of contact outside of the machinations of capital. Capital becomes merely an apparatus of capture, a phantasm, an idol. Around it move radically autonomous processes of self-valorization that not only constitute an alternative basis of potential development but also actually represent a new constituent foundation (Hardt and Negri 1994: 282)

Negri claims that the cyborg workers have escaped capital's gravitational field into a region where their work and life is actually producing the fundamental social and productive relations appropriate to a communism. These relations are characterized by "self-valorization" i.e., instead of determining the value of labor power and work on the basis of its exchange value for the capitalist, the workers value their labor power for its capacity to determine their autonomous development and self-valorization arises when techno-scientific labor becomes paradigmatic (Negri 1991: 162-163) (Caffentzis 1987). In effect, Negri's notion of "self-valorization" is similar to the "class for itself" or "class consciousness" of more traditional Marxism; but self-valorization distinguishes the cyborg from the politics of the mass worker and marks the arrival of the true communist revolution ironically percolating in the World Wide Net rather than in the (old and new) haunts of the mass workers, peasants and ghetto dwellers of the planet.

The clash between Negri's picture of the anti-capitalist cyborg

and Rifkin's image of the pro-capitalist knowledge worker can make for an inviting theme. But just as Rifkin's knowledge worker (as the last profit-making employee) is built upon a faulty conception of capitalist development, so too is Negri's cyborg. Consequently, it is more useful to consider and critique the common basis of both these views. Negri bases his version of "the social worker" on Marx's *Grundrisse* just as Rifkin does for his knowledge worker, but we should remember that the "Fragment on Machines" was not Marx's last word on machines in a capitalist society. Marx continued work for another decade and filled Volumes I, II, and III of *Capital* with new observations. This is not the place to review these developments in depth. It should be pointed out that in Volume I Marx recognized not only the great powers machinery threw into the production process; he also emphasized machines' lack of value creativity analogous to the thermodynamical limits on availability of work in a given energy field (Caffentzis 1997). Even more crucial for our project is the part of *Capital III* where Marx revisited the terrain of the "Fragment on Machines." In these passages he recognized that in any era where capitalism approaches the stage of "automatic processes," the system as a whole must face a dramatic acceleration of the tendency for rate of profit to fall. He asked, "How is it that this fall is not greater and more rapid?" His answer was that there are built-in processes in capitalist activity that resist this tendency and therefore the system's technological finale.

These are to be found directly in *Capital III*, Chapter XIV on "counteracting causes" and indirectly in Part II on the formation of the average rate of profit. I mentioned the critical consequences of "counteracting causes" in my discussion of Rifkin, and they apply to Negri as well. Negri imperiously denies "the social and economic laws that govern the deployment of labor-power among the different sectors of social production" and rejects the view that labor-time is crucial to "the capitalist processes of valorization." But capital and capitalists are still devoutly interested in both. That is why there is such a drive to send capital to low waged areas and why there is so much resistance to the reduction of the waged work day. For the computerization and robotization of factories and offices in Western Europe, North America and Japan has been accompanied by a process of "globalization" and "new enclosures".

Capitalists have been fighting as fiercely to have the right to put assembly zones and brothels in the least mechanized parts of the world as to have the right to patent life forms. Instead of a decline, there has been a great expansion of factory production throughout many regions of the planet. Indeed, much of the profit of global corporations and much of the interest received by international banks has been created out of this low-tech, factory and sexual work (Federici 1998). In order to get workers for these

factories and brothels, a vast new enclosure has been taking place throughout Africa, Asia and the Americas. The very capital that owns "the ethereal information machines which supplant industrial production" is also involved in the enclosure of lands throughout the planet, provoking famine, disease, low-intensity war and collective misery in the process (Caffentzis 1990 and 1995).

Why is capital worried about communal land tenure in Africa, for example, if the true source of productivity is to be found in the cyborgs of the planet? One answer is simply that these factories, lands, and brothels in the Third World are locales of "the counteracting causes" to the tendency of the falling rate of profit. They increase the total pool of surplus labor, help depress wages, cheapen the elements of constant capital, and tremendously expand the labor market and make possible the development of high-tech industries which directly employ only a few knowledge workers or cyborgs. But another complementary answer can be gleaned from Part II of *Capital II*: "Conversion of Profit into Average Profit," which shows the existence of a sort of capitalist self-valuation. In order for there to be an average rate of profit throughout the capitalist system, branches of industry that employ very little labor but a lot of machinery must be able to have the *right* to call on the pool of value that high-labor, low-tech branches create. If there were no such branches or no such right, then the average rate of profit would be so low in the high-tech, low-labor industries that all investment would stop and the system would terminate. Consequently, "new enclosures" in the countryside must accompany the rise of "automatic processes" in industry, the computer requires the sweat shop, and the cyborg's existence is premised on the slave.

Negri is correct in connecting the rise of the new workers in the high-tech fields with self-valuation, but it has more to do with capitalist self-valuation i.e., the right of "dead labor" to demand a proportionate share of "living labor" rather than workers' self-valuation. Indeed, capital's self-valuation is premised on the planetary proletariat's degradation.

One can easily dismiss Negri's analysis as being profoundly Eurocentric in its neglect of the value-creating labor of billions of people on the planet. Indeed he *is* Eurocentric in a rather archaic way. He would do well, at least, to look to the new global capitalist multiculturalism and the ideologies it has spawned (Federici 1995), instead of to the rather small circle of postmodern thinkers that constitute his immediate horizon, in order to begin to appreciate the class struggles of today, even from a capitalist perspective.

But the charge of Eurocentricism is a bit too general. What can better account for Negri's methodological oblivion of the planetary proletariat is his adherence to one of the axioms of Marxist-Leninism – that the revolutionary subject in any era is synthesized

from the most "productive" elements of the class. It is true that Negri has nothing but scorn for the metaphysics of dialectical materialism and for the history of "real socialism" but on the choice of the revolutionary subject he is Leninist to the core. Negri makes so much of computer programmers and their ilk because of their purported productivity. Since the General Intelligence is productive, then these intellectual workers are its' ideal (and hence revolutionary) representatives, even though they have not yet launched a concrete struggle against capitalist accumulation *qua* "social workers" or "cyborgs."

But this methodological identity between revolution and production has proven false time and again in history. Leninists and Leninist parties in the past have often paid for this mistake with their lives. Mao's political development clearly shows that it took the massacre of Communist workers in the cities and many near mortal experiences in the countryside before he recognized that the Taoist principle - the seemingly weakest and least productive can be the most powerful in a struggle - was more accurate than the Leninist. Negri's choice of revolutionary subject in this period, the masters of the ethereal machines, is as questionable as the industrial worker bias of Leninists in the past. Indeed, the failure of *The Labor of Dionysius*, which was published in the US in 1994 to address the revolutionary struggles of the indigenous peoples of the planet, especially the Zapatistas in Mexico, is a definite sign that Negri's revolutionary geography needs expansion.

Conclusion

Negri and Rifkin are major participants in the "end of work" discourse of the 1990s, although they occupy two ends of the rhetorical spectrum. Rifkin is empirical and pessimistic in his assessment of the "end of work" while Negri is aprioristic and optimistic. However, both seem to invoke technological determinism by claiming that there is only one way for capitalism to develop. They, and most others who operate this discourse, forget that capitalism is constrained (and protected) by proportionalities and contradictory tendencies. The system is not going to go out of business through the simple-minded addition of more high-tech machines, techniques, and workers come what may, for Marx's ironic dictum: "The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself" (Marx 1909: 293), is truer than ever. It might be an old and miserable truth, but still to this day profit, interest, wages and labor in certain proportions are particular, but necessary conditions for the existence of capitalism. Capital cannot will itself into oblivion, but neither can it be tricked or cursed out of

existence.

Rifkin tries to trick the system into believing that a viable way out of the unemployment crises he foresees is to abandon profit creating sectors of the economy. He reassuringly says that all will be well if the capitalists are in control of automated agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries and nearly everyone else is working in a non-profit third sector which makes no claim on hegemony. But this scenario could hardly pass the eagle eyes of the capitalist press much less those of the boardroom without ridicule. So it cannot succeed.

Negri tries philosophical cursing instead. He calls late 20th century capitalism "merely an apparatus of capture, a phantasm, an idol" ontologically (Hardt and Negri 1994: 282). I appreciate Negri's desire to put a curse on this system of decimation, humiliation and misery, but I question his "merely." As the highest organs of capitalist intelligence (like the Ford Foundation) have shown, capital is as impervious to these ontological curses as the conquistadors were to the theological curses of the Aztec priests. Indeed, capital revels in its phantom-like character. Its main concern is with the *duration* of the phantasm, not its ontological status.

The "end of work" literature of the 1990s, therefore, is not only theoretically and empirically disconfirmed. It also creates a failed politics because it ultimately tries to convince both friend and foe that, behind everyone's back, capitalism has ended. It motto is not the Third International's "Don't worry, capital will collapse by itself sooner or later;" rather it is, "Capitalism has always already ended at the high-tech end of the system, just wake up to it." But such an anti-capitalist version of Nietzsche's motto "God is dead" is hardly inspiring when millions are still being slaughtered in the many names of both God and Capital.

Notes

(1) This "perverse" definition is reminiscent of Cantor's diagonal method that has proven so fruitful in mathematical research in this century. The trick of this method is to assume that there is a list that exhausts all items of a particular class K and then to define a member of K that is not on the list by using special properties of the list itself.

(2) For example, in much of the current discussion of free trade, a low wage level is considered by many to be a Ricardian "comparative advantage." But such a reading is a distortion of Ricardo's views and an invitation to justify repressing workers' struggles. The sources of comparative advantage for Ricardo are quasi-permanent features of the physical and cultural environment of a country, not economic variables like wages, profits or rents.

(3) This is not the place to discuss Negri political and juridical life since the

1970s. For more of this see Yann Moulier's Introduction to *The Politics of Subversion* (Negri 1989). He voluntarily returned to from exile in France in July 1997 and is now in Rabbi Prison (Rome). There is an international campaign demanding his release.

(4) Negri often describes the work of the social worker cyborg as "immaterial." But an analysis of Turing machine theory shows that there is no fundamental difference between what is standardly called material labor (e.g., weaving or digging) and immaterial labor (e.g., constructing a software program). Consequently, one must look to other aspects of the labor situation to locate its value creating properties (Caffentzis 1997).

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On Fascism: A Note on Johannes Agnoli's Contribution[1]

Werner Bonefeld

Preface

Publications on Fascism are many. Agnoli's recent book 'Fascism without Revision' does not add just another publication. His theoretical focus and political perspective are specific. Although quite unknown in the English-speaking world, Agnoli has been and remains one of the most intriguing and respected Marxist scholars on the continent.[2] His book on Fascism confirms his status as an heretic Marxist thinker. For him, the purpose of social and political theory is not to advance abstract generalisations that subordinate the real existing world of class antagonism to doctrinaire catch-phrases such as totalitarianism. Rather theory's purpose is to supply enlightenment as to the real movement of a perverted world.

Fascism without Revision is a collection of articles previously published, with one exception, in either German or Italian between 1966 and 1979.[3] The date of their original publication is not without significance. This was the time of intense political conflict, starting with the wave of unrest that found its crest in 1968 and that continued well into the 1970s. It was also the time when experiments with corporatist solutions to class conflicts compounded.[4] These experiments aimed at institutionalising the class conflict by incorporating the trade unions into positions of responsibility both towards the well-ordered conduct of labour-relations in production and the bargaining over wages in terms of the so-called national interest. Governments were, however, not satisfied with making trade unions, and - it was hoped - through them the working class, responsible for the peaceful conduct and acceptance of capitalist relations of exploitation and their restructuring. Governments also embarked upon a heavy-handed confrontation with the extra-parliamentary left, culminating in the so-called Italian and German Autumns of 1977. Ideologically, the extra-institutional left-movements of that time, and since, have been denounced, time and time again, as a threat to the stability of liberal democracy. In the German context, the 'ghost of Weimar'

continues to be summoned to indicate this danger, legitimising a 'strong' defence of liberal-democratic value against the 'enemies within', including the banning of 'radicals' from working in the public service. The so-called lesson of Weimar, then, was that movements seeking social emancipation were principally responsible for the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi seizure of power. In sum, governments, not only in Germany, responded to the social conflict of that time through a politics of class collaboration and criminalisation.

Furthermore, neo-conservative commentators argued that 'welfare capitalism' and the state's so-called involvement in the economy had led to a situation of ungovernability. According to their view, the social conflict of that time, especially that outside conventional political channels, was seen to have subjected the state to undue pressure with governments responding through further welfare state measures and continued inflationary demand management ostensibly in support of a commitment to full-employment. The state, then, was seen to have overburdened itself with social and economic obligations, stifling economic development and incapacitating the state not only in terms of its financial resources but, also, its ability to govern[5]. Against the background of an unruly, that is politicised public, and in the light of conditions of so-called ungovernability and political overload, neo-conservatives prescribed a particular remedy: the state was to be rolled back and the economy was to be freed from political intervention. The new-right prescribed thus not only the emancipation of the state from social obligations but, also, the depoliticisation of socio-economic relations. In other words, the new-right argued in favour of the 'autonomy' of the political from socio-economic developments, stressing that the proper role of the social individual was not to look at 'the state' for welfare support but, rather, to help itself through work. This 'autonomy' of the state from society was demanded in order for 'the political' to regain its ability to make political decisions without 'social' interference from and responsibility to what is euphemistically refered to as special social interests, that is working class interests.

The notion of the 'autonomy' of the political was, of course, very much emphasised by Carl Schmitt, the philosopher of the primacy of 'the political', who supplied the Führerstaat with ideological legitimation. The argument suggested here is not that the new right of the 1970s was arguing in terms of Schmitt's contribution to the reassertion of 'the political' under Nazism. Schmitt's assessment of the crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s stands, as will be argued below, in the tradition of liberal-conservative views on the proper role of the state. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt, as indeed Agnoli argues forcefully, that the experience of fascist social organisation has become not only an irreversible element of

bourgeois society but, also, an irreversible experience of how to cope with working-class struggle.

Introduction

Agnoli's book argues against generalising conceptions of Fascism such as totalitarianism. Instead, his focus is on the conditions of Fascism's development, its historical practice, and its significance for the 'regulation' of class relations post-'45.[6] Agnoli's concern, then, is not historical Fascism as such but the institutional strategies adopted to retain capitalist command over labour through fascist means. Against this background, he assesses in particular Ernst Nolte's analysis of Fascism[7], including his notion of a left-Fascism that Nolte advanced to characterise in particular the student left of 1968.[8]

In what follows, I shall summarise what I take to be Agnoli's key concerns. A note of caution is, however, needed: his analysis rests on a wealth of historical research and theoretical insights. I am not able to deal with either of these in a competent manner. Yet, this should not be seen as a discouragement to study his work. On the contrary, not only is 'Fascism' a most enlightening topic on what a bourgeois world is capable of committing if compelled to reassert itself in extreme conditions. Agnoli is also a fine writer whose own intellectual curiosity infects those who read his work. Besides, and probably more importantly, history is a weapon. This was recognised forcefully in the 1980s by Michael Stürmer, a neo-conservative historian and former advisor to the then German Chancellor, Mr. Kohl. For him history is a political weapon because 'the future is controlled by those who determine the content of memory, who coin concepts and interpret the past' (Stürmer, 1993, p. 16).[9] In this sense, the importance of Agnoli's book can not be overestimated: Fascism without Revision provides a sober, no-nonsense and honest assessment of Fascism that is very much concerned with the political economy of Fascism and that is with the real movement of bourgois social relations. His book, then, is not just an antidote to bourgeois conceptions of Fascism. Understanding history as a weapon, Agnoli's assessment is the weapon of freedom against revisionist inventions of a new history that confers blame for the bourgeois resolutions to capitalist crisis on the working class[10], exorcising from its history mass murder and asserting that Marxism's theory and practice of social emancipation constitutes the method and murderous programme of Fascism.[11].

Against Generalisations

Agnoli rejects approaches that abstract from the social content of Fascism and that, instead, offer merely generalisations. His critique is directed both at the political right and political left. He charges that the political left, all too easily, equates manifestations of political coercion with their extreme consequence that Fascism presents. These 'equations', for Agnoli, indicate that an understanding of policing-practices during, for example, German Nazism is lacking.

Concerning the political right, he argues against its comparative analysis between so-called totalitarian regimes, on the one hand, and the liberal democratic character of 'the political' post-'45, on the other. For Agnoli, this anlysis does not seek an understanding of the political economy of Fascism and its social content. Instead, the analytical perspective is directed towards generating legitimacy for bourgeois social relations. In short, totalitarian accounts are charged with providing intellectual 'washing-powder' insofar as they deny any tie between capitalism and Fascism, so liberating - or cleansing - the post-war capitalism from any association with Fascism. If Fascism, he argues, is reduced to 'phenomena' such as barbarism, totalitarianism, extermination, and conquest, then any discussion on the potential integration of fascist socio-economic elements into the post-1945 settlement is rendered redundant. Furthermore, generalisations foreclose an understanding of the distinct differences between Italian Fascism and German Nazism and, as a consequence, fail to address the decisive socio-economic conditions that supported historical Fascism.

For Agnoli, the 'conditions' which encouraged and supported historical Fascism were the crisis-ridden development of capitalist accumulation after world war I or the Great War as the slaughter is referred to in Britain. This crisis brought to the fore the constitutive antagonism of capitalist society, that is the capital-labour class conflict whose containment through a politics of social reformism reinforced the crisis of capitalist accumulation. This politics entailed concessions to the working class, which he terms 'integration costs'. Against the background of the capitalist crisis of accumulation, these integration costs expressed the power of the working class to command socio-political means of support to improve the conditions of its exploitation. At the same time, these integration costs bit into the already reduced margin of capitalist profit. There was thus a situation where the social and political power of the working class rendered a democratically constituted attack on its political power difficult. Furthermore, this power of the working class, its entrenched position, made it most difficult for 'capital' to reassert its right to manage to re-establish profitability. Within the context of a democratically constituted state that was established by the German revolution of 1919, it was, then, most

difficult to confront the working class, undermining alternatives to Nazism's offer to discipline not only the revolutionary but also the reformist working class movements through terrorist means. Furthermore, Italian Fascism had been in place some 10 years before the Nazi 'seizure' of power in Germany. German Nazism, then, and the industrial backers of the Nazi Party could look at Italy as an example as to how to deal with the 'labour question'. While both German Nazism and Italian Fascism disciplined the labour movement through terrorist means at the beginning, their institutional strategy of containing the working class was quite different. German Nazism never developed corporatist forms of institutionalisation to the extent as Italian Fascism did; and Italian Fascism never developed a politics of extermination for the sake of extermination as it was the case with German Nazism.

Against particularly the Italian background of institutionalising the class antagonism through incorporation, does 1945 stand for a complete break in the historical development of capitalism? Are there no continuities such as, for example, the French system of 'planification' or the (West-)German system of social partnership, the observable fact of an ever tighter legalisation, and that implies 'statification', of social relations? If there are continuities, would an analysis of Fascism not have to specify the concrete social content of Fascism? Generalisations, he argues, render such concrete analysis obsolete. Instead they are premised on the notion of Fascism as a Fascism 'in itself', that is they confer on Fascism essential characteristics whose significance and consequence are internal and specific to Fascism alone. There is no doubt, as Agnoli argues (pp. 29-30), that historical Fascism was characterised by, for example, terrorism and nihilism. However, does it follow that every expression of nihilism and terrorism is, by definition, fascist and will Fascism always be terrorist and nihilist? In qualification to Agnoli, generalisation advance ideal-type constructions of Fascism regardless of historical circumstances and conditions. Generalisation, in short, dismiss as ephemeral what needs to be understood. By abstracting from the political economy of terrorism, the political economy of corporativism and, indeed, concerning German Nazism, the political economy of extermination for its own sake[12], generalisations fail to discover what ostensibly they wish to focus: the specific social content of Fascism.

For the Left, the relationship between capitalist crisis and its fascist resolution is vital. While he emphasises that the relationship between capitalist crisis and Fascism is vital, Agnoli rejects the championed notion that capitalism leads to Fascism. This notion, he argues, not only abstracts from historical developments it, also, dogmatises historical Fascism as the only form of Fascism. The conditions that led to Fascism at the beginning of this century are different today. Thus, as he argues, the potential for a renewed

fascist assertion of political domination can not be ascertained through the lenses of historical comparison or analogy. Rather, the potential of a new fascist transformation of socio-political organisation needs to be conceptualised in relation to the existing conditions of capitalist accumulation and that is through the lenses of the contemporary composition of class relations and that is class struggle. For him, the issue, then, is that of the dialectic of continuity and change in historical development.

Capitalism, he argues (p. 43), does not want Fascism. What it wants is the political guarantee of its profits and that is the political safeguarding of its incessant quest for making the worker work for the sake of work. Bourgeois society, as he argues in chapter I, is a class society. The concept, then, of bourgeois society is a dynamic concept: its constitutive relationship is that of the capital-labour class relationship whose dynamic entails the polarisation of society between two different 'sets' of property owners, one owning the means of production and the other owning no more than their labour power. The dynamic, then, of bourgeois society is one of class struggle over - in its reformist guise - the distribution of wealth or - in its revolutionary form - the transformation of the means of production into means of emancipation. From a capitalist perspective, the dialectic of class struggle has, of course, to be contained to maintain the society of burghers, that is the society of bourgeois property owners. He shows that conservative-idealist solutions to the 'labour question' focus not just on 'the state' which, ostensibly from the 'outside', polices the law abiding conduct between 'equals' on the labour market. The state, he argues, is also endorsed as an institution capable of discharging ethical and moral functions with a view to generating social consensus so that the 'dependent classes' agree to the 'tightening' of their belt to safeguard the wealth of those in possession of the means of production. In this light, Agnoli argues, the fascist state proclaimed itself to be an 'ethical' state which pledges to resolve the 'labour question' much more effectively than a state that merely espouses a politics based on the notion and safeguarding of 'natural rights'. His analysis of particularly Italian Fascism emphasises the dialectical relationship between consensus and coercion, examines its self-proclamation to have overcome liberalism and socialism, and assesses its ideological projection of a politics on behalf of the 'national interest'.

The self-proclamation of Italian Fascism to have embarked upon a 'third way' - a fascist way beyond capitalism and socialism - is not only assessed in terms of the class content of fascist politics. He also analyses the assessment of Italian Fascism by its academic commentators (pp. 157-167). According to their judgement, the corporatist organisation of industrial relations did not deny but rather confirmed 'the eternal truth of classic economic theory' (p.

161, quoting Stefani). According to Agnoli, their assessment of Italian Fascism introduced a characterisation of capitalism that has become common currently after 1945. The capital-relation is seen to be no longer based on the ownership of private property, and thus as a class relation, but, rather, it is viewed in terms of its 'functionality'. 'Capital' is seen as an economic function, and its' optimal functionality depends on the effective, efficient and economic organisation of its concerns. This technocratic endorsement of 'capital', and the view of capital as a useful functional thing, begs the question what the socialist component of fascism's third way might have amounted to. Here the commentators seem reluctant to come up with precise judgements, except, of course, that the 'dependent masses' were lovingly embraced. The rational of such an embrace is, as indeed it was the case, the firm supervision and policing of the working class just in case it should have not quite understood that 'exploitative capitalism' had been replaced by 'socialist capitalism'.

Agnoli, then, analyses Fascism as a form of bourgois social relations and argues that its social content was that of directly and pre-emptively protecting bourgeois wealth 'creation' from either reformist or revolutionary working class struggle. For him, then, Italian Fascism and German Nazism were variants of a common development: capitalist crisis and working class demands for emancipation coerced the bourgeoisie to commit a fascist protection against the dynamic of class struggle and, through it, to provide the social conditions for the resolution of the capitalist crisis of overaccumulation that beset capitalism in the inter-war period like a cancer.

He shows that, for Fascism, the requirements of capitalist reproduction were as constitutive as for any other historical form of bourgeois society. For him, it was the inability of the non-fascist bourgeoisie to supply an alternative to the resolution of capitalist crisis that rendered its parliamentary opposition to the rise of Fascism futile. He thus argues (p. 111) that the social content of Fascism amounted to a programme of an imperialist market-expansion with military means and that this project was based on two propositions that the fascist movement pledged to attend to, as indeed it did; first it offered to guarantee the economic reproduction of capital on the basis of optimal conditions insofar as Fascism turned back the clock on a Century of struggle to improve the economic and socio-political conditions of exploitation. Secondly, it set upon undermining the labour movement as a whole and therewith its potential for revolutionary struggle against the whole system of exploitation. Pre-emptively, such struggle was rendered impossible through terrorist means of pacification.

However, and importantly, Agnoli suggests that while the reign of terror directed against labour was effective in disciplining the

working class, it nevertheless lost its 'functionality' once the working class had been pacified through terror. The conservation and stabilisation of market relations and, through them, the organisation of the labour process, demanded the transformation of a politics of terror into a politics based on law. In other words, while terror domesticated the working class and while the terrorist use of force continued to lurk in the background, both German Nazism and in particular Italian Fascism constitutionalised themselves. This means that the 'movement' transformed itself from being such a 'movement' into a constitutional regime which replaced the arbitrary use of terrorist force by a tight regulation of punitive procedure and an institutionalisation of fascist social regulation, both based on law. Constitutionalising, then, means that the arbitrary use of force by the gang of thugs was replaced by its legalist, statist use. The gang of terrorising thugs transformed thus into a legalised, rationalised and procedurally correct enforced state-induced policy of law and order. Concerning Germany, he focuses on the liquidation of (mainly) the SA-leadership in 1934 and, concerning Italy, on Mussolini's second March on Rome in January 1925.

The chapter on Sohn-Rethel (1987) praises Sohn-Rethel's account as a most insightful analysis on the link between German capital and the Nazi regime. 'German capital' is said (pp. 103-4) to have expected from the nazi-regime first the terrorist disciplining of labour and, on the basis of this, the expansion of markets through military conquest. Sohn-Rethel's account is endorsed as a challenge to the conventional view that portrays Nazism in terms of a 'total' state which disempowered both the working class and capital. According to Agnoli, Sohn-Rethel shows that this view fails to see that capital rather than being subordinated to the Führerstaat was, in fact, not only expecting from the Nazi regime the realisation of its demands but impressed upon the Nazi regime the very issues it wanted the 'nazi-state' to address forthwith. In short, capital was not subordinated to a 'total state'. Whether the 'nazi-state', or indeed any other bourgeois form of the state is 'functional' to the requirements of capital accumulation, is of course a quite different issue.

His analysis of Italian Fascism - and here especially its corporatist form of social organisation and the cartellization of industry - supplies an equally compelling analysis. He shows that Italian Fascism did not deny the existence of the class antagonism but, rather, accepted it and sought to direct its dynamic away from open class conflict. The means adopted to further this aim consisted in the institutionalisation of the class antagonism through a politics of incorporation and, importantly, the legalisation of class relations. Italian Fascism, then, advocated a politics of class collaboration that was based on legally binding

rules. Thus, the terrorist gang of thugs were replaced by a well-ordered regulation of the labour question; instead of arbitrary, unpredictable and thus disruptive thuggery, the state 'policed' on the basis of law. The politics, then, of 'class collaboration' aimed at a political 'de-capacitation' of labour, reinforcing as Agnoli shows the capacity of employers to reassert their right to manage.

In sum, Agnoli takes on Horkheimer's dictum that whoever wants to talk about Fascism but not about capitalism should shut up. In qualification to Horkheimer, Agnoli is not satisfied with the dictum as such but seeks, through detailed analysis, an understanding of the different forms of historical Fascism, their specific historical conditions and forms of social organisation. In short, his analysis of Fascism provides a theory of the capitalist form of the state as a bourgeois state. For him, and this he argues most convincingly, Fascism whatever its specific historical forms, does not just stand in the tradition of bourgeois society. Fundamentally, Fascism is understood as a rescue-attempt of bourgeois relations with terrorist means in conditions of a deep crisis of capitalist accumulation and an entrenched working class whose social power although not of a revolutionary sort, was such that non-terrorist means of 'pacification', rather than providing a resolution, intensified the crisis. There was thus a situation of stalemate, of impasse, in the existing composition of the class relations. Paul Mattick (1934) analysed this constellation in terms of permanent crisis. The situation, then, was one of 'economic' crisis and an entrenched relationship of power between the classes.

On Nolte and Left-Fascism

Nolte characterises Fascism as a specific, never renewable, epoch in the development of modern society. This 'epoch', for Nolte, belongs to capitalism's past history and is of no consequence, has no meaning and significance for capitalism's developments once the epoch of historical Fascism has come to an end. For Nolte, as Agnoli shows, historical Fascism was just that: a historical phase of capitalism's past history. Nolte, then, sees Fascism as a thing in-itself and characterises it as an epoch. Yet, as Agnoli argues, since it is conceived as a thing in-itself, its treatment as an epoch amounts to nothing. The characterisation of an historical period as an epoch would imply, as Agnoli charges, that it casts its 'achievements' on to future developments. However, for Nolte this is not so: the notion of Fascism as a thing in-itself means that it amounts to a specific form of political organisation whose shadow is internal to itself, does not reach out to, influence or inform that

what comes afterwards. In short, Nolte's treatment of Fascism is conceptually empty and bereft of analytical significance.

However Nolte betrays his own notion of Fascism as a Fascism in itself by arguing that, whilst Fascism is limited to a certain period of historical development, it does indeed reach out and informs political movements post-1945. For Nolte, the political movements that are still of a fascist sort are those of the political left. Nolte argues that every social movement develops a radical wing that is ready to use political violence to further its aims. Fascism, for Nolte, entails a terrorist dimension and this dimension he sees as the left moment, or characteristic, of fascism. It is for this reason that such movements stand accused of 'left Fascism'.[13] Nolte thus argued both in terms of Fascism as a non-consequential past history of capitalism and as a permanent force. As Agnoli shows, Nolte's contradictory dictum had a 'rationale' core: it allowed him to introduce the theory of totalitarianism through the backdoor[14], that is to attack Marxism as an expression of Fascism, or better, Fascism as an expression of Marxism.[15]

According to Nolte, Fascism as a movement is best characterised as a 'left right-party' (linke Rechtspartei). For him, the 'left' attribute of this right-wing party is terror and violence. Fascism, for Nolte, was principally violent and terrorist and this character of Fascism he identifies as the left 'component' of Fascism. In this way, for reasons of clarification, attacks by the Left on 'neo-Nazis' are characterised as left-fascist; and neo-Nazi attacks on the Left are equally characterised as left-fascist. Agnoli does not just rebuff Nolte by showing the ideological intent of his work. More importantly, Agnoli shows that Nolte 'forgets' that, particularly in Italy, left-Fascism was in fact a political reality within the fascist movement: fascista di sinistra.

According to Agnoli, the proponents of Italian left-Fascism were, amongst others, Ugo Spiritos and Luigi Fontanelli. Left-fascist doctrine took on some socialist ideas insofar as it argued that social change involves fundamentally a change in the relations of production and property. However, as he shows (pp. 34-6; pp. 145-50), left-fascist doctrine did not question the bourgeois organisation of society. The issue of 'change' was not posed as a class question of social emancipation. Rather it was advanced in terms of an organised - technocratic - capitalism. Left-Fascism did not fight the bourgeoisie as a class but denounced it as a group devoted to a comfortable life. The issue of 'change', then, was that of improving the chances of the able and competent offsprings of the petit bourgeoisie to obtain positions of leadership in the organisation of capitalist concerns. Left-Fascism, then, did not propose any change in the relationship between capital and labour. Instead, it proposed to regulate and organise capitalist social relations more effectively. In this way, left-Fascism foretold,

concerning its conception of social organisation and, especially, its treatment of 'capital', what was later analysed in terms of the organised capitalism of the Keynesian era. Left-Fascism saw 'capital' not in terms of an antagonistic social relationship between capital and labour. Rather, capital was treated in terms that are quite common today: Capital is conceived as an economic mechanism that - if regulated well and competently - discharges useful economic functions. Thus, left-Fascism posed the question of 'property'. It did so, however, not in terms of the means of production as means of social emancipation. Left-Fascism focused on the corporatist institutionalisation of the class conflict and posed the question of 'property' in terms of an effective technocratic organisation and regulation of 'economic mechanisms'.

Fascism and the Lessons of History

Nolte, as argued, does not analyse the real historical existence of left-Fascism but equates it instead with Marxism. For Nolte, and for the proponents of the theory of totalitarianism in general, the lessons of history can be drawn in a straightforward manner: liberal democracy needs to defend itself against the enemies of liberal democracy[16] and liberal-democratic government has to be organised in such a way that movements of social emancipation do not find mass endorsement that might subject the 'state' to class specific compromises. In short, government needs to be insulated from social demands and that means, in fact, from those who are declared to be sovereign in a republic: the people. As one German academic put it in the 1950s, 'the democratisation of society poses the principle danger to democracy'.[17]

In a bizarre twist, as Agnoli reports, Fascism is thus construed as the consequence of mass democratic consciousness and demands.[18] The lesson, then, of Fascism is that democracy depends on the political apathy of the masses, a depoliticised public and, paraphrasing Engels, a people who not only obey the laws of the land but, also, comply with them lovingly. In other words, democratic government is at its best when the 'state' stands over and above society. The defence of liberal democratic government against 'the enemies within' implies thus that democracy is most secured and stable when government is able to make political decisions on its own and by itself, that is without having to consider the aspirations and demands of those who stand discarded as the so-called 'mob'.

This so-called lesson of history poses, as Agnoli argues forcefully, a reversed assessment to that supplied by fascist thinkers before and during especially German Nazism. Agnoli discusses these issues in his chapter on Germany in the inter-war period. In this

chapter, he looks at the way in which the crisis of Weimar was perceived. Regarding the labour movement, there were, of course, considerable differences between social-democratic and communist perceptions on Weimar. Neither however developed a precise understanding of the 'crisis of Weimar'. As Agnoli shows, it was the political right, the losers of world war I and the revolution of 1919, who developed a deep and concise crisis-consciousness. For them, he argues, 1919 and what followed was more than just a consequence of military defeat. For them, Weimar stood for the end of a dynasty, the abolition of a historical totality. He examines the work of the two authors who focused this issue poignantly: Spengler whose book "The Decline of the Western World" focused on the cultural pessimism of the right. More important, in Agnoli's assessment, however was Carl Schmitt who he argues offered a detailed solution for political renewal. Compared with Alfredo Rocco, the creator and coordinator of Italian Fascism, Schmitt, Agnoli argues, played a much less important role in national socialism. Schmitt's role was confined to supplying ideological legitimation for the Nazi regime.

Following Agnoli (pp. 122-27), Schmitt was not looking backwards with a view to restoring the dynasty of the Kaiser. Instead, Schmitt looked forward: the recomposition of the German state had to be adequate to the society of a new type; a mass society. Schmitt perceived the crisis of post-1919 in terms of a decomposition of social, political, as well as cultural structures. This decomposition was seen to be a consequence of the emerging mass society and caused by the influence it was able to exert on the structure of 'the political'. Institutionally, parliamentary democracy, for Schmitt, caused and focused the crisis: 'the political' was subjected, on the one hand, to pluralist demands and, on the other, to class specific interests of social equality and emancipation. In short, Schmitt emphasised that the parliamentary system undermined the ability of the state to make decisions because 'society' had transformed 'the political' to an expression of distinct social interests leading to the fragmentation of 'the political' and therewith to the decomposition of the central institution that, for Schmitt, is able to maintain social harmony. The state was thus seen to have become 'socialised' and the fragmented character and class-divided nature of society was seen to be reproduced within 'the political'. The 'socialisation of the state', then, undermined the central and principal institution capable of making decisions. Hence Schmitt's call for the restoration of the political, of the state, emphasised that the state had to liberate itself from society and that this liberation had to be based on the elimination of all forms of social conflict, conflict, that is, which is not authorised and conducted by 'the political'.

To recap, the political was seen by Schmitt to be in crisis because its ability to make political decisions 'autonomously' was undermined. Instead, it was the social conflict that forced decisions on the state, undermining its categorical monopoly as the sole decider. As such a decider, Schmitt conceives the political as the true sovereign. Schmitt proposes the creation of a generalised conflict as the method conducive to restoring the sovereignty of 'the political'. This conflict is construed in terms of a 'friend-foe relationship'. The unleashing of a politics of conflict that puts the friend against the foe entails 'the political' as the central entity of decision making. The friend and foe relationship is posed by 'the political' both internally (against the enemy within) and externally (against the enemy without). The decision on who should be regarded as the 'friend' or the 'foe' can only be made by those in possession of political power: the Führer. In short, Schmitt endorses populist elements in terms of a generalised conflict between friend and foe. However, this is a conflict that is 'announced' and 'decided upon' as well as 'conducted' from above. Thus, Schmitt views the populist element of the conflict between friend and foe through the lenses of a centralised decision making power. The only social conflict-situation conducive to the reconstruction and stability of the political is the conflict between friend and foe with the Führer, as the principle decision-maker of the political, deciding whom the friends have to confront and rebuff, or as Nazism had it, to fight and kill and, indeed, exterminate as the foe. The friend, then, is endorsed as the true 'national' beyond class divisions and with undoubting loyalty towards the 'ethical values' that the notion of the 'nation' claims to present. In Nazism, the friend is the Volksgenosse.

Following Agnoli, Schmitt's notion of the autonomy of 'the political' outlived, in its importance, Fascism. This is not because the 'economy' and the 'state' (the political) are two distinct entities of human organisation. Rather, the bourgeois state's historic role of protecting the laws of private property entails the state as a bourgeois form of the social organisation of exploitation. Yet, as such a form, it appears to stand outside social relations as an institution in its own right whose distinct purpose is to safeguard, through law, the proper conduct of equal and free exchange relations between property owners. Hence, the attempts of political theory to construe the state as a distinct form of political organisation that resides outside social relations and that merely intervenes, from the 'outside', into society to secure and guarantee the foundations upon which the society of burghers rest: the rights of property. Schmitt, in this sense, belongs firmly to the tradition of bourgeois political theory. What makes his contribution significant, Agnoli suggests, is his reconceptualisation of the autonomy of the political against the background of the emergence of mass society

at the beginning of the century. For Schmitt, Weimar stood for the decomposition of the political because mass society was seen to be able to subject the state to its demands. In short, Schmitt perceived the democratisation of society as a deadly threat to the ability of the political to secure the relations of property owners.

Similar questions on the relationship between society and 'the political' reappeared after 1945. Their resolution had, of course, to be distinctly different from the fascist reconstruction of the political in terms of the Führerstaat. As Agnoli explains, the lesson of history was that the democratisation of society in the Weimar Republic was the cause of Nazism and that the reconstruction of liberal democracy had to be a democracy of the political; in other words, a democracy without *demos*, understood in its Greek original: the mob. Hence the above notion, that democratic self-determination is a threat to democracy. Hence also, following Agnoli, the reversal of the Schmittian perspective post-'45. In this way, Nazism was not caused by the political right's attempt to reassert the primacy of the capitalist exploitation of labour through terrorist means. Rather, it was caused by the 'mob' that, because of its alleged political immaturity and supposed populist inclinations, is seen to be easily influenced and persuaded to follow demonic leaders, allowing totalitarian dictatorships to 'emerge'. Schmitt's analysis, in other words, continues to be endorsed: mass democracy unchecked by constitutional and institutional safeguards, and mass society whose democratic inclinations is left uncontrolled and unattended by the watchfull eyes of the state, is a fertile ground for the creation of (totalitarian) dictatorships. The safeguarding of democracy and democratic freedoms requires, then, that the influence of mass society on 'the political' has to be kept to a minimum and that the only political activity that mass society can reasonably be expected to discharge is that of participating in elections as voters. Other forms of socio-political mobilisation need to be treated at least with suspicion: the stability of democracy requires the democratic state to defend itself against the enemies of democracy. The 'enemy within' is specifically the political left whose political methods are identified as left-fascist. As noted earlier, for Nolte and other proponents of totalitarian theory, the enemy stands on the left; and right wing movements that use violence and terrorism as a political method are not really right wing. They are, as Nolte explains, a 'left right-party' or movement!

Conclusion

In conclusion, Agnoli sees Fascism as a counter-revolutionary force that seeks to disempower the 'dependent' (proletarian) masses and to repel their emancipatory aspirations through a preemptive

politics of terrorist 'pacification' and, once so domesticated, through a politics of depoliticisation effected through the institutionalisation and legalisation of the 'labour question'. Fascism, he argues (p. 111), attacked not only the revolutionary working class. Such an attack belongs to the 'normality' of the politics of the bourgeois state. Fascism also attacked the reformist working class movement and focused the integration of the working class into the bourgeois 'system' on issues such as Volk where the mutual 'friends' gain a material existence not only through state organised 'pleasure trips' but also, and most importantly, through the deadly persecution of the 'foe'. Italian Fascism, in contrast to the German völkisch conception of the 'national', focused on the incorporation of 'class', seeking to subsume the potentially subversive under the obligation of responsibility. Of course, only the fascist trade unions were invited - and were the only ones left to be invited - to participate in tripartite discussions. As Agnoli shows, the efforts by employers to reassert their right to manage was in no way diminished, rather it was strengthened, through the politics of incorporation. Within the corporatist framework, the employers were endorsed as the producers and labour's role was that of a dependent who knows its 'natural' position that is visited upon those without property since Roman-times: the natural position of the worker in Italian corporatism was that of the plebes. Agnoli sums this up with the metaphor of the one national boat: the majority rowing the minority navigating.

In sum, historical Fascism is understood as an attempt at managing the reproduction of bourgois society. His analysis rejects any softening of this insight. Hence the title of the book: Fascism without revision. This, for him, does not mean that judgements on historical developments should not be revised against the background of new evidence and insights. In this sense of 'revision', Agnoli himself is a 'revisionist'. Dimitroff's thesis that 'Fascism is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist elements of finance capital' is not only revised but, rather, dismissed as a nonsense. The title Fascism without Revision is directed against those who do not only not attempt to revise their interpretation of Fascism in the light of historical evidence but, rather, and as a consequence, seek to correct the past with a view to creating an image of the past that is either rendered agreeable or usable as an excuse for the vilification and denunciation of Marxism's theory and practice of social emancipation.

Agnoli's insistence that the historical experience of Fascism is irreversible, summons an analysis of Fascism that is not fixed in the past. The book shows what dangers exist when the class struggle has reached an impasse where the bourgeoisie has run

out of liberal-democratic resolutions to the crisis of capitalist accumulation and where the working class while resisting attacks on its conditions, does not operate in a revolutionary way. Although Agnoli warns against the use of 'analogies', his analysis of Fascism is most instructive on the potentials that bourgeois rule is capable to unleash. In contrast to Agnoli's understanding of Fascism, approaches that see Fascism as a thing in-itself either do not have any concept of bourgeois society or seek to revise it intentionally to render bourgeois relations harmless and to endorse them as history's end. I noted early that history is a weapon in the politics of class. Agnoli's book is strongly recommended.

Notes

1. 'Faschismus ohne Revision' [Fascism without Revision] Ça ira, Freiburg, 1997, ISBN 3-924627-47-9, pp. 177, pbk, DM 30.

2. Only two of his publications have appeared in English: 'Political Parties and Parliament in West Germany', *International Socialist Journal*, vol. 3, no. 15, 1966; 'Destruction as the Determination of the Scholar in Miserable Times', *Common Sense*, no. 12, 1992.

3. The book consists of seven substantive chapters plus the introductory Preface of 1997. The chapters are: 'Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft und ihr Staat' [Bourgeois Society and its State], first published in German in 1966; 'Zur Faschismusdiskussion' '[On the Debate on Fascism], first published in German in 1968; 'Zur Faschismusdarstellung und Methode Ernst Noltes' [On Ernst Nolte's Methodology and Exposition of Fascism] first published in German in 1976; 'J.C. Papalekas - epigonialer Ideology des Faschismus' [J. C. Papalekas - an Epigonic Ideologue of Fascism] first published in German in 1974; 'Alfred Sohn-Rethels Ökonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus' (written jointly with B. Blanke and N. Kadritzke) [Alfred Sohn-Rethel's Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism] first published in German in 1973 as a joint introduction by the editors of the German edition of Sohn-Rethels book; 'Krise und Krisenbewußtsein im Deutschland der Zwischenkriegszeit' [Crisis and Crisis-Consciousness in the Germany of the inter-war Period] first published in Italian in 1979; 'Jenseits von Liberalismus und Sozialismus'. Korporatives System, Kapitalismus und Faschismus in Italien' [Beyond Liberalism and Socialism". Corporatist System, Capitalism and Fascism in Italy], previously unpublished manuscript.

4. See the Social Contract in Britain, Modell Deutschland in Germany, and versions, though never formalised, of a politics of an Historical Compromise in Italy and France. Corporatism, as Agnoli makes clear, was the single most important characteristic of the social experiment of coping,

through institutionalisation and legalisation, with the labour question that Italian fascism represented and 'gifted' to bourgeois society post-'45.

5. See the collection of articles edited by Crozier etal. (eds.) (1975).

6. This perspective is not developed systematically but raised as an important research question. On this see also Agnoli (1990 and 1995).

7. He assesses in particular Nolte's 'Der Faschismus in Seiner Epoche', 1963; Engl. ed. 'Three Faces of Fascism' (Weidenfeld, 1963) and his 'Studentenbewegung und Linksfaschismus', Hamburger Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik, vol. 16, 1971. See also Nolte (1982). Ernst Nolte is an internationally renown expert on fascism.

8. For a similar treatment of the extra-institutional left in Britain, see Brittan (1976).

9. Cf. Orwell's 1984 (p. 199; Penguin, various editions): 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'.

10. See also Bologna (1994) on the recent attempts by revisionist writers to blame the working class for fascism, including the fascist terror unleashed upon the working class.

11. As Nolte (1982, p. 196) sees it, 'Marxism is the fascism of socialism and to this extent the real leftist fascism'.

12. Agnoli does not analyse the political economy of the extermination of European Jewry. Although he acknowledges that such an analysis is required, he states that he can not explain it with either rational, Marxist or other concepts. For recent work on the political economy of Anti-Semitism see: Aly/Heym (1991); Postone (1986) and Bonefeld (1997).

13. For an assessment of the political economy of 'violence', its law making and law perpetuating, and law destroying that is emancipatory potential, see Benjamin (1965).

14. Nolte ostensibly argues against totalitarianism's orthodoxy of the 1950s by emphasising the differences between fascist regimes.

15. See also Nolte's contributions to the historians' debate of the 1980s (Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?, 1993).

16. For a commentary on the German Basic Law and its espousal of a militant democracy, that is a democracy that defends itself against the enemies of liberty and freedom, see Bonefeld (1992) on Agnoli (1990).

17. Hennis quoted in Agnoli, p. 136. See also Schumpeter's (1992) notion that democracy should amount to no more than a rationalised procedure for the selection of rival elites competing for governmental power.

18. The word 'mass' has a revolutionary ring and indicates 'collectiveness', 'unity in terms of conditions and aspirations', and 'solidarity'. Conservative commentators refer to 'mass' by using the term 'mob' or 'crowd' which signals 'unruliness', 'chaos', and a sort of 'social immaturity' that can easily be exploited by demonic and charismatic 'leaders'.

Agnoli uses the word 'mass' in similar terms as, for example, Rosa Luxemburg in The Mass Strike. See also Holloway's (1996) analysis of the New Deal, especially his assessment of Barauch's view that the New Deal amounted to the seizure of government by the 'mob'.

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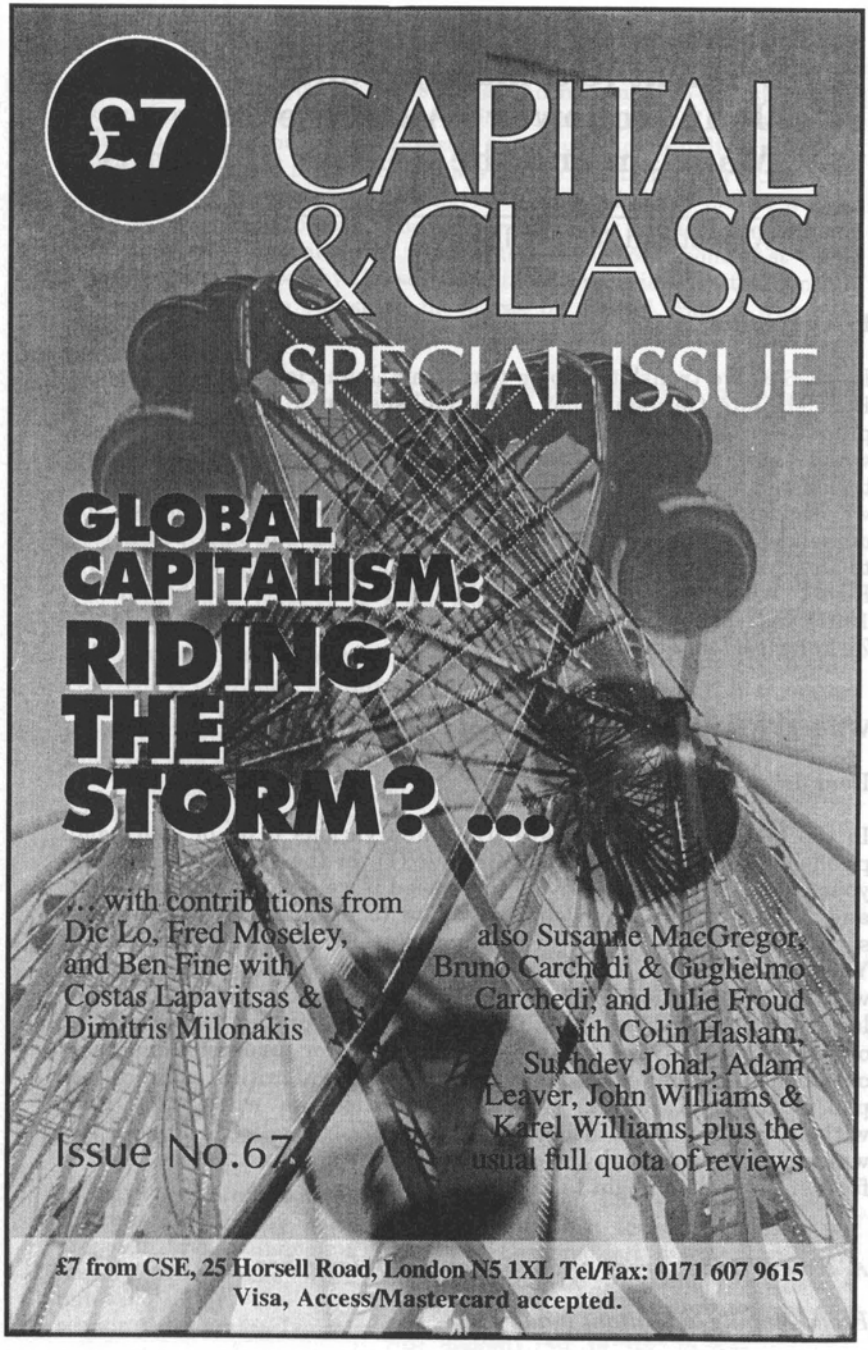
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Wildcat (Germany) reads John Holloway - A Debate on Marxism and the Politics of Dignity

Wildcat and John Holloway

Introduction

In 1996/97 we translated some texts from John Holloway and Werner Bonefeld into German. They were published in a circular, which we produce for our own discussion. We discussed the texts carefully and when John sent us his paper on "Dignity's Revolt", of which we translated a short version which was also published in *Common Sense*, we decided to begin an open discussion to clarify some points - for ourselves as well as maybe for others. What follows is our Open Letter to John explaining our doubts about his long paper on "Dignity's Revolt" which was published in Wildcat-Zirkular No. 39 (September 1997) and John's Open Answer (4/4) which was published in Wildcat-Zirkular No. 45 (June 1998).

Wildcat (Germany): A critique of Holloway

Dear John,

In the last two years we have translated various texts of yours and published them in the Wildcat-Zirkular (1). In the spring you sent us your paper on 'Dignity's Revolt' and asked if we wanted to translate it and publish it (2). We would now like to explain why we are not satisfied with this text, with the aim of starting an open discussion. Your inquiry about 'Dignity's Revolt' stimulated us to formulate in writing some critical reflections on your theoretical approach. The letter consists of three parts: first we shall explain the background of our group, in so far as this is important for understanding our objections (A). Then we want to focus on a central critical point of the paper 'Dignity's Revolt', without discussing the whole text, and without getting into a debate about the EZLN itself (B). Finally we want to explain through the concept of work what direction we think a further discussion might take (C).

A. How Wildcat arose and what our Problems are

From Jobbing to Militant Inquiry

In the beginning of the 1980s the cycle of factory worker struggles was over, but for many young people it was inconceivable to adjust to wage labour and to work away at a job until reaching pension age. Additionally, we ourselves refused to strive individually through a professional career for a better place in the capitalist hierarchy. Out of this grew the practice of jobbing: to do any old shitty job for a short time, in order then to have time for ourselves, for political struggle and for pleasure. In formal terms, we worked under conditions that would later be characterised by the sociologists as 'precarious' in the sense of being vulnerable to one-sided measures by capital. But it was even easier then to use the regulations of labour law and the welfare state for our own needs.

Out of the attempt to politicise these practices and to bring them into play intentionally as struggle against work and for a revolutionary perspective, there arose 'jobber groups'. They were a form of self-organisation aimed at mutual support, solidarity against the bosses and the spreading of experiences. A group in Karlsruhe picked up on Italian theoretical discussions in which this 'figure' of the jobber was seen as a rising proletarian subject: through the refusal of work and the gradual spread of these practices, this figure is seen as being at the centre of a process of class composition. Jobbers are seen as embodying the tendency to communism through their mobility on the labour market and their high level of qualification combined with their rejection of capitalist command. Because of their mobility, it is argued that they do not develop any sort of identification with capital and thus get involved to a high degree in such forms of struggle as sabotage and wildcat strikes.

That corresponded to the experiences that we had in factories, building sites and temporary work agencies. But we also observed that 'jobbers' remained a very heterogeneous and marginal group within the working class, and that many just practised an individualised rejection of work. While some jobber groups decided to institutionalise themselves and to become advice centres for welfare state benefits (and this was then referred to as the 'Unemployed Workers' Movement'), the group in Karlsruhe - from which the 'Wildcat' journal later arose - proposed a comprehensive discussion on the working class as a whole. For our theoretical understanding of capitalism and class struggle, the Italian 'operaismo' was particularly important (3). Especially the early texts of this current (by Romano Alquati and others) helped us to decipher the mystifications of capital in the immediate process of production.

The operaist critique offered not just the basis for a theoretically revolutionary understanding of the world, but also a practical set of instruments. Basing ourselves on the operaist ideas of inquiry, we proposed to the undogmatic and non-Leninist left a broad 'militant inquiry' within the working class. But the proposal remained a minority affair. The only people who were still interested in the working class were Leninist and Stalinist 'parties' with whom we did

not want to have anything to do.

Through the 'militant inquiry' project we wanted to develop a revolutionary critique of capitalism out of the critique of the production process as contradictory unity of labour process and valorisation process. In discussions, surveys and common struggles together with our co-workers we tried to demystify the fetishised power of capital, which confronts us hostilely in production, as technology, division of labour and alienated cooperation. We wanted to see where and how the workers break through these mystifications themselves in their struggles, and thus recognise their productive cooperation as power against capitalism and as possibility of communism.

Bound up with this approach was an understanding of 'class' and 'class struggle', which stood in complete contrast to the traditional understanding in Marxist theory and in the labour movement. We criticised the reduction of class struggle to an economic question of distribution and wages as the ideology of the labour movement, which we saw as an essential moment in the mediation and political weakening of class antagonism. In all this, it was important that since the 1970s a whole series of groups had turned to operaismo and had carried out their own inquiries (see, for example, the book by Karl Heinz Roth on *The 'Other' Labour Movement*, published in 1974).

Our experience in the early and mid-1980s in factories, temporary employment agencies and building sites made it clear to us that everyday class antagonism had in no way disappeared, as many on the left maintained. We came across many forms of underground conflict and saw what enormous problems capital had in introducing new technologies of production, or new models of work organisation - exactly as you observe at the end of your analysis of Keynesianism: 'The social forces that had imposed the recognition of the power of labour upon capital still existed, stronger than ever, and could not be abolished simply by the declarations of the politicians' (Bonefeld and Holloway (1995), 33).

From the middle of the 1980s there arose new class conflicts in Europe that escaped from the traditional grip of the trade unions. Workers rose as subjects of their own struggles and their radicality embodied a new offensive moment. These conflicts took place especially in 'new' sectors (public service, transport, hospitals, schools, banks, but also in some 'modernised' factories) and seemed to represent a new class composition. We thought that a revolutionary perspective could again become practical in these struggles. In contrast to the trade union struggles for peaceful accommodation with exploitation, a comprehensive hostility to capitalist society could be seen here. We were actively involved in the nurses' movement of 1989 and saw what sorts of initiatives were possible without the obstructive influence of the trade unions.

For this reason we paid little attention to the theoretical debates of the 1980s. We observed the change-over of most of the intellectual left to the side of capital, but thought that in the context of the new

class struggles the theoretical questions could be approached from within the struggles. In other words, we considered our theoretical basis quite adequate in order to develop a revolutionary project from the working class itself.

The Radical Change of '89 and its consequences

At the beginning of the '90s we proposed to a group of the revolutionary left in Europe the idea of undertaking a common research project on the situation of the working class. (This proposal was later taken up once again in your journal, Common Sense: see Ed Emery, 'No Politics without Inquiry: A Proposal for a Class Composition Inquiry Project 1996-97', Common Sense no. 18). Some comrades from other countries, however, thought that, in view of the world- historical change, it was more urgent to examine our theoretical concepts. At that time we ourselves still approached the collapse of really existing socialism very optimistically.

In 1988/89 there were the beginnings of an intensification of class conflict in West Germany. In the course of the change in the GDR it came to - now long forgotten - mass discussions in the factories there about a social perspective beyond capitalism and GDR-socialism, and with the economic ruin of the former GDR there developed there a broad movement of struggle against factory closures and the deterioration of social conditions. In spite of that, we were no longer able to read a communist perspective in these quantitatively increasing struggles. With the massacre of the Gulf War in 1991 and the economic crisis, which broke rather late in Germany (in 1993, after the unification boom) and which led to the acceptance of the intensification of labour and deteriorating social conditions on a broad scale, we were no longer convinced by our original optimism.

Previous revolutionary concepts and certainties were thoroughly shaken. Struggles in the factories had now only a defensive character, even stooping to begging for jobs. The left was concentrating on racism, fascism and nationalism, without either wanting to or being able to connect these with the class character of capitalism and the question of its revolutionary overcoming. That is why more and more influence in political discussion was gained by those theories which had already in the 1980s, departed from the radical critique of class society (as you (pl.) have shown in detail and criticised in relation to Hirsch's theories). We did not wish to become supporters of these theories and to forget the class character of this society. A large part of the work in the journal *Wildcat* consisted in presenting and analysing the class struggles in the world, which had by no means disappeared after 1989. But struggles and wars were breaking out (Gulf War, Yugoslavia, Chechenya, Somalia, Rwanda...) which seemed to indicate the tendency towards barbarism rather than towards liberation from capitalist domination.

The significance of your (pl.) theoretical efforts for our discussion (4)

In this situation, we felt it was necessary to examine (and, if necessary, to develop anew) our theoretical basis. A reckoning with the 'new' left theory, which had departed from its radical hostility to capitalism, was more necessary than we had thought. They offered plausible explanations for the new developments, and we had nothing to offer in their place. The operaist thesis that 'the workers produce the crisis' became meaningless, since the open crisis of capitalism bore no direct relation to offensive struggles by workers. Then how could we understand this crisis without seeking refuge in the 'objective laws of development' of the Marxist textbooks or the then fashionable regulation theory? How can we explain that the working class is forced to accept a serious deterioration in their conditions without any radical struggles developing? And why, in spite of this apparent weakness of the working class, does capital not come out of its crisis?

We therefore began with an intensive theoretical discussion of these questions and looked at all sorts of theories about the present crisis (from the regulationists to Wallerstein's world system theory). It was a special piece of good luck that in this process we came across your texts, which, unlike most other theories, start out from the same question as ourselves. You criticise radically the theories of the new left as a capitulation in the face of the tasks of revolutionary theory. Against the apparent all-powerfulness of capital, you stick to the point that it is not a question of autonomous 'things' or 'structures', but of a social relation, in which antagonism is inscribed. Starting from the social constitution of the social relations, you try to sketch a different explanation of current development.

Precisely because we agree with you on the way the question is posed, we consider that a more precise discussion of your theses would be important and productive. For us it is a question of coming to a revolutionary theory which has practical meaning. The theory must relate to the reality of the present-day working class. We can imagine such a project only as a collective one, as one of many people discussing and working together. For us it is not a question of getting immediate answers, but of starting up a process of asking and exploring. To anticipate: the main problem that we have with your texts is that in many points they do not follow through the revolutionary and de-mystifying approach radically enough. This may be because you often want to give general solutions too quickly, where today it would be more important to leave questions and problems open in order to lead into a collective theoretical process.

B. 'Dignity' and 'Humanism' - a flight into the unhistorical?

In the paper on 'Dignity's Revolt' you want to protect the EZLN and the uprising in Chiapas against criticism from the left. To do that, you develop a comprehensive concept of 'dignity', which keeps on cropping up in the texts of the Zapatistas. The uprising in Chiapas was for us

too, one of the most important movements after 1989 and the Gulf War. It put world revolution back on the agenda. Here, and everywhere in the world, it embodied a new feeling of revolt, courage and revolutionary hope. It set something up against the feeling that capitalism had finally triumphed and that revolution had become impossible. We hoped that with the uprising in Chiapas a new revolutionary debate could start up. All the more so since the Zapatistas themselves seemed to stimulate such a debate by their invitation to the international gatherings 'against neoliberalism'. However, we soon became aware of three things:

1. The movement of support for the Zapatistas remained limited to the classical form of solidarity work. In this context it was not possible to hold a comprehensive revolutionary discussion. The uprising in Chiapas was 'cool' and 'important', but it was a long way away and had nothing to do with conditions here.

2. Behind the slogan 'against neo-liberalism' there quickly gathered a broad spectrum of political currents, of which the majority was in no sense revolutionary. There is a strong bourgeois critique of neo- liberalism (for example under the slogan of turbo-capitalism, which was coined by the rightwing conservative military strategist Edward Luttwak in the United States), which is concerned not with overthrowing capitalist relations, but with saving them. 'Unbridled capitalism' must, in this view, be protected from destroying itself. The age of 'Keynesianism' is characterised as a 'golden age'. Precisely because of this argument, which is shared by many on the left, we found your criticism of Keynesianism important and helpful.

3. From the EZLN itself came no indications that they would criticise this development. Their position - both on questions of development in Mexico and in the world - was thus questioned not only by the orthodox- Marxist groups to which you refer in 'Dignity's Revolt'. It was criticised also by people who expressly consider themselves to be part of the anti-Leninist and undogmatic tendency. (5)

For us it is not enough to read a new model of revolution out of the declarations of the Zapatistas, and to use this to interpret away all problems. It is also not enough just to take the declarations of the Zapatistas and on that basis to say something about the character of the struggle and the uprising, rather we have to deal with the way in which the people there live, produce and struggle; how their struggle fits materially into the international class struggle. Precisely on this point there is hardly anything at all in the paper on 'Dignity's Revolt'. In its unhistorical generality, it might just as well be a defence of the liberation struggle of the Sandinistas or any other movement of liberation in any other time.

Our principal problem with your text on 'Dignity's Revolt' can be illustrated by the heading of the sixth section: 'Dignity is the revolutionary subject. Dignity is a class concept and not a humanistic one.' (This and all following quotations not specifically referring to

other texts are taken from 'Dignity's Revolt'.) We would agree with the assumption contained in the statement: there is an insuperable division between revolutionary and humanistic concepts. While humanistic approaches refer to an ideal, philosophical concept of being a person and an abstract, unhistorical 'humanity', revolutionary theory starts from the historically real person. It does not see 'the person' as the revolutionary subject, but real people, who in all previous societies have been split into antagonistic classes. The subject of revolutionary change is thus the class of producers, who are exploited, by the ruling class. The particular historical forms of domination and class struggle are the result of the 'specific ... form in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of the direct producers' (as, quoting Marx, you emphasise in your essay 'Crisis, Fetishism, Class Composition').

The Zapatistas speak not of class but of 'civil society'. You justify that by saying that the 'old words' are so 'worn out' that they bring more harm than clarity. The class concept, you say, has been used in orthodox Marxism as a 'definitional concept, in which it is just a question of defining class membership. Usually class is defined in terms of 'those who sell their labour power in order to survive', or 'those who produce surplus value and are directly exploited'. The working class has thus become a question of definition and indeed of a definition which starts from 'subjection to capital'. People's struggles are then judged, you say, according to the way that they are classified. This has led, for example to the argument that, in view of the shrinking of the urban factory proletariat, class struggle is not important for social change; or it has been impossible to relate to new forms of struggle like the student movement, feminism or ecologism. For this reason you want to oppose to this definitional, classificational concept of class another, which starts not from class membership (classification) but from antagonism.

We see the problem of a definitional class concept in just the same way. It is a problem of subject and object. To define the class in terms of membership on the basis of certain objective characteristics leads to political concepts that turn the class into the object of politics. It is then not a question of the self-liberation or self- change of the class; instead the class becomes the object of a political party (as is the case in Leninism). In the 'revolutionary process' it is then not the class that is the subject but a party which leads or represents it. Against this notion of party communism we too have objected that the liberation of the working class can only be the deed of the working class itself.

You then explain the character of the antagonism between the classes in terms of the theory of fetishism. 'Although this antagonism appears as a vast multiplicity of conflicts, it can be argued (and was argued by Marx) that the key to understanding this antagonism and its development is the fact that present society is built upon an antagonism in the way that the distinctive character of humanity, namely creative activity (work in its broadest sense) is organised. In capitalist society, work is turned against itself, alienated from itself; we lose control over our creative activity.' This contradiction between

creativity and its own negation is, you say, the antagonism between labour and capital. So it is not a conflict between two external forces, 'but between work (human creativity) and work alienated'. In a moment we shall return to the concept of work that you use. Here we just want to observe that for us too it is important to see class conflict as a dialectical and not an external relation. People themselves produce the conditions in which they live, and yet are dominated by them. It is by no means easy to make this deranged relation clear.

The question immediately arises of why we produce our own world in this deranged manner. To say that this negation 'takes place through the subjection of human activity to the market' does not explain it, but merely indicates the form. And this form must be explained from the specific content, the specific historic character of labour. You avoid this problem by making subjectivity, which creates over and against itself an alienated objectivity, into an ever thinner, more abstract and unhistorical residue: 'humanity (dignity repressed and in struggle) against neoliberalism (the current, savagely destructive phase of capitalism)' (6). The subject of struggle becomes an anthropological category: 'the indestructible (or maybe just the not yet destroyed) NO that makes us human'. In other texts you have characterised this residue, referring to Hegel, as the 'sheer unrest of life'. Here there is no longer anything that is specific to the antagonistic struggle in capitalist society. We could apply such statements to all historical periods and use them as a general characterisation of all struggles against oppression that have ever existed. You arrive in this way too precisely to that humanism which you wanted to reject in your heading: 'humanity against neoliberalism'. This is not just a theoretical but a political problem. This slogan can be accepted by any representative of the Socialist International, or it could be used as an advertising slogan by the socialist government in France.

The problem you (and we) started from was a different one: you wanted to criticise the left currents that put the activity and seizure of power by a political party in place of the self-emancipation of the working class. But in attempting to oppose the objectivist, definitional and classificatory concept of class, you throw the baby out with the bathwater. If we reduce the concept of class to a general human contradiction present in every person between alienation and non-alienation, between creativity and its subordination to the market, between humanity and the negation of humanity, then the class concept loses all meaning. It then only has the value of a moral characterisation which we can apply to all possible movements, without saying anything at all about them, their character and their importance for the worldwide revolutionary process. The antagonism is accordingly timeless in your work: it exists all the time, sometimes weaker, sometimes stronger - there is no end in sight. 'Revolution is simply the constant, uncompromising struggle for that which cannot be achieved under capitalism: dignity, control over our own lives.'

Revolutionary theory must work out how a concrete perspective of

emancipation and liberation is contained in struggles in spite of their fragmentation, and bring this perspective into them. Showing that there is a general human content in all these single struggles does not create this bond, but runs away from the real political problems to a philosophical level. We have come to the conclusion in our discussions that we need a theoretical precision of the class concept, but to do that we must stick with the question, instead of avoiding it with philosophical answers.

In operaist theory 'class composition' was a category and an analytical instrument that was opposed both to the fetishised and objectivist class concept of party Marxism, and to the sociological concept of class. After the defeat of class struggles in Italy, there was a discussion about how and whether this concept could be maintained as an abstract framework in separation from the concrete historical conditions in which it arose. The generalisation of 'class composition' from the mass worker to the 'social worker', which Negri undertook, never convinced us, neither then nor now (7). Just like the 'sheer unrest of life' the 'social worker' is a sort of universal key, which fits everything and thus becomes meaningless for practice. Precisely because the question of the understanding and meaning of the concept of class is important for us, we must pose it correctly (8).

C. Work is central - but what does that mean?

The different conflicts within society are today generally juxtaposed without any relation being established between them. The result is an image of a multiplicity of conflicts, in which the 'totality' of capitalist society and hence a revolutionary goal no longer appear. In your essay, 'From Scream of Refusal to Scream of Power: the Centrality of Work', you therefore emphasise the role of 'totality' for a 'theory against society'. You criticise the mystifying separation off of the struggle against exploitation into an 'economic' sphere. This struggle, you say, stands in the centre of social reproduction and its change, because in it is contained the basic dialectic and instability of the social cohesion.

Capital depends on work; it is nothing other than the fetishised form of appearance of past work. 'No matter how absolute and terroristic the domination of capital is, there is no way it can free itself from its dependence on labour. The dependence of capital on labour exists within capital as contradiction' (Open Marxism III, p. 178). That means that the domination of capital is the domination of our own products over us. And thus it is a relation that is capable of being revolutionised, capable of being overcome, because it is constituted by us ourselves. It seems to us extremely important to insist on this basic dialectic of fetishisation and to make it the starting point of every investigation.

However, as we have said already, this raises the question of why we put ourselves in this historically specific relation to the products of our work. Marx criticises the classical political economists for never

having posed the question, for accepting the fetishised forms of our products - commodities, money, capital - as normal and historically unchangeable. They never asked the question why this content (human work) takes that form (commodity). Marx traces the commodity character of our products back to the specific historical shape of work: abstract labour. With that he does not mean an abstraction in thought, but the really abstract character that work has for us in capitalism: we do not work to produce a particular product; the product that we produce is not for us, but for others; we are not bound by particular personal qualities with this or that activity; an employer can employ these hundred workers today, those hundred tomorrow, and in both cases will have the same average quantity of work. This abstraction is tied to the capitalist mode of production and first develops historically with the establishment of a factory-type organisation of work, whether it now takes place in the hospital, the office, in a lorry, in agriculture or in the factory. The commodity character of our products rests on this 'specifically capitalist mode of production'. Work in this mode of production is daily alienation, which confronts us in the commodity and in private property as a thing.

In this sense we agree with you that work is central. Because the form of value constituted by work is 'the thread that binds the world together, that makes apparently quite separate processes of production mutually interdependent, that creates a link between the coal miners of Britain and working conditions of car workers in Mexico, and vice versa' (as you put it in 'Crisis, Fetishism, Class Composition', Open Marxism II, p.155). We could also put it in this way: in value our social connection in production confronts us as a thing because we do not constitute it self-consciously and freely. We do not choose the people for whom and with whom we produce, rather this seems pre-ordained by the command of capital. In capital the social connection which is reified in value becomes autonomous and commands us.

That does not mean, however, that all riches and all social appearances are the product of work, as you seem to say ('Work is all-constitutive,' or 'since work is the only creative force in society (any society)...' in 'From Scream...' Open Marxism III, p. 172). There are any amount of activities that nobody would describe as 'work': free artistic activities, games or struggles within society. And there are plenty of riches that are not the product of work, starting with air and sunshine. To lead everything back to work easily comes close to the glorification of work by the workers' parties (Marx criticised this as long ago as the first draft programme of the German Social Democratic Party). If wealth depends only on work - work as it is commonly understood today - then the biblical curse of 'you shall eat bread by the sweat of your brow' is our inescapable destiny. Marx said in Capital that the 'realm of freedom' could begin only beyond work (9).

We know that for you it is not a question of glorifying work, but of criticising the reified world. In all your texts you emphasise that it is a question of forms that are constituted by us ourselves, and not of

eternally valid 'structures' or 'laws'. But to use 'work, creation and practice' as 'interchangeable concepts' ('From Scream...', Open Marxism III, p. 172) deprives the demystifying critique of the commodity, money and capital forms of its explosive force. The demystification cannot consist just in relating these forms simply to human activity, but to a historically specific and changing way of producing. But to do this, there must be an investigation of the change in form and the transformations in the process of production. If 'work' is defined simply as human activity, statements about the centrality of work become tautological, because by definition all practice has already been declared to be work. The centrality of work, that is, of the process of production and exploitation, for a revolutionary perspective is thus asserted, but the demonstration is lacking. Besides, the perspective of real liberation is dismantled. Communism as the overcoming of socialisation through work is then no longer conceivable.

We think that a reason for the over-historical generality of the concept of work in your texts is that the 'immediate production process' rarely appears and, when it does, it is abridged. In the article on 'Crisis, Fetishism, Class Composition' you emphasise: 'The core of the matter is the form "in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers"'. The specifically capitalist character of this form is related to commodity exchange: 'What distinguishes capitalist exploitation from other forms of exploitation is that it is mediated through exchange' (Open Marxism II, p. 153). But then we are caught in a circle, for it is the exchange and commodity character that needs to be explained. We think that this can be done only through the analysis of the specifically capitalist production process. The essential characteristic of this mode of production consists in the fact that it is possible only as social production, as the working together of millions of people. But since this socialisation exists as cooperation, division of labour and machinery which are forced upon us and pre-given, it appears as an alien power. This material, real shape of the production process is the hard core of the capitalist command over our life.

The material shape of the production process, and therefore machinery and technology, are indissolubly linked with the social relation of domination, the command of capital. In your texts you stress that the antagonism exists not on the level of distribution and the wage question but in the immediate process of production, in the conflict over the 'pumping out of surplus value'. But what is missing is the analysis and determination of the specific forms of this pumping out. Only when we decipher the basis of capitalist command in the concrete structures of the production process can we understand why this deranged capital relation of alienation and reification continues to exist - and how the working class develops in it as an antagonistic subject.

That is why it is particularly important to discuss what you have to say about the production process in your texts. In the presentation of 'Fordist production' in your articles on 'The Red Rose of Nissan'

(Capital & Class no. 32, summer 1987) and in 'The Abyss Opens ...', it struck us that the specific character of labour is established there only in terms of its monotony, boredom, de-skilling etc. These are all characterisations that are assumed in the general left criticism of Taylorism (e.g. Bravermann) and that always start out from the individualised, atomised worker. They make that which is the result and form of appearance of the capitalist mode of production - namely the fragmentation and atomisation of the working class - into their theoretical point of departure. In that sense they stand in direct contradiction to your demystification approach. In left sociological criticism, the contradictory unity of atomisation and socialisation in the capitalist production process is suppressed. It is not only that capital is always dependent on living labour, but this labour develops an increasingly social character. The sociality of work, that is, the productive cooperation of the workers, is a historical process. Capital flees from the 'insubordinate power of labour', but it can only flee in the direction of its further socialisation, which it must build up against the workers as a new 'social power', just as Ford's River Rouge complex was a 'social power'. A principal problem of the revolutionary politics consists in our view today, in its inability to criticise, theoretically and practically, the worldwide production process in such a radical, demystifying fashion.

So far for the moment our remarks, as a start in the process of theoretical clarification, of which we hope that it will open the way to practice.

Notes

1) We have translated the following texts of John Holloway and published them in the Wildcat-Zirkular: 'Capital Moves' in no. 21 (originally in Capital & Class no. 57); 'The Abyss Opens: The Rise and Fall of Keynesianism' and 'Global Capital and the National State' in no. 28/29 (both originally in W. Bonefeld and J. Holloway (eds.), 'Global Capital, National State and the Politics of Money, Macmillan, London, 1995); 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion: Money and Class Struggle' (both with Werner Bonefeld) from the same book in no. 30/31; 'From Scream of Refusal to Scream of Power: The Centrality of Work' (from W. Bonefeld et al. (Des), Open Marxism III, Pluto, London, 1995) and 'Crisis, Fetishism, Class Composition' (from W. Bonefeld et al. (Eds.), Open Marxism III, Pluto, London, 1992) in no. 34/35.

2) The article is published in John Holloway and Eloina Pelaez (Eds.), Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico, Pluto, London, 1998.

3) Important texts were re-published by us or translated for the first time in Thekla 5, 6, 7, 9; on the origin of 'operaismo' see the article 'Renaissance of Operaismo' in Wildcat no. 64/65.

4) Translator's note: The 'you' in this section of the letter refers to texts by Werner Bonefeld, John Holloway, Richard Gunn and others connected with Common Sense and Open Marxism.

5) In Wildcat-Zirkular no. 22 we translated, for example, texts by Sylvie Deneuve/ Charles Reeve from France and by Katerina from Greece.

6) Did you not want to show in 'The Abyss Opens', that Keynesianism was no less destructive, but could only 'blossom' after the murder of millions of people by world war and fascism?

7) See 'Mass worker and social worker - some remarks' by Roberto Battaggia, Primo Maggio No. 14, 1980/81, translated in Wildcat- Zirkular no. 36/37.

8) As a complement to 'Dignity's Revolt' you recommended to us the article by Luis Lorenzano, 'Zapatismo: Recomposition of Labour, Radical Democracy and revolutionary Project'. It is an extreme example of this 'new' operaismo, which uses 'class composition' as a sort of universal key, without even devoting a sentence to the material conditions of production and the social relations in Chiapas. (The article is also published in Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico).

9) "In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases, thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production ... Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control... But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis" (Marx, Capital, III, p. 820, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1959). Thus Marx contradicts conventional wisdom of the Left which implies that "humanizing" of labour or a "liberation within labour" were at stake. As labour is in itself the active alienation, it follows that the aim cannot be liberated labour but only liberation by getting rid of labour. As a result it is also a mistake to confront "alienated" labour with "non alienated" labour as is hinted at in "Dignity's Revolt".

A Reply by John Holloway

Dearest Wildcat,

Many thanks for your letter. I'm very sorry for not replying sooner, but ... and then follow all the excuses. I don't know how many letters I've started in this way.

And yet your letter is very special. You say that it was a 'special piece of good luck' that you came across our texts, but of course the converse is also true. You cannot imagine what a pleasure it is, when one spends most of one's time in that peculiar form of class struggle (or peculiar vice, perhaps) which is Marxist theory, to discover that somebody not only reads it but actually discusses it and finds it helpful. Of course I was at first disappointed that you didn't publish the 'Dignity's Revolt' paper, but it's actually far more gratifying to know that you read the paper with care, discussed it and took the time to write a detailed criticism. Thank you very much.

I would like to take up the points you make in the way that you

suggest: not as an answer to your criticisms, but as moving a step forward in the process of asking and investigating. I want to focus on three points that seem to be central in your argument: the importance of the EZLN, the question of class and humanism, and the question of work.

1. The EZLN:

You say in your letter that the aim of my paper was to defend the EZLN against criticisms from the left. I think, on the contrary, that I was more concerned with defending the EZLN from their supporters than from their critics. As you point out, the movement that has grown up around the Zapatista uprising is very confused and includes a whole range of different political positions. I think it is very important to engage within this movement by advancing political-theoretical arguments about the nature of the movement. The way I chose to do this was by focussing on the category of 'dignity', which seems to me a potentially very powerful category.

Part of my argument is, of course, that I consider the Zapatista movement to be an extremely important and original revolutionary movement. I do not think that they are beyond criticism and the movement is, as I say, confused and ambivalent in many ways. But then I find it hard to imagine any revolutionary process that would not be confused, ambivalent and open to criticism. To refuse to engage with the movement in the name of theoretical purity or correctness would, I think, be a great mistake. I also think that any engagement with the Zapatistas must be based on an openness to learn from them, to listen, and not just to apply pre-cast ideas of what is correct. What they have done, and what they are doing, and the revolutionary way in which they are challenging revolutionary ideas, make them for me the most exciting revolutionary movement in a very long time. 'May 1968' too was a confused movement, full of mistakes and criticisable practices: then too, the many groups who felt that they had the 'correct line' stood on the sidelines. The position of the left-wing critics of the Zapatistas, such as Deneuve/ Reeve, seems to me no different.

2. Class and humanism:

You focus your discussion here on the section of the paper which begins: 'Dignity is the revolutionary subject. Dignity is a class concept, not a humanistic one', a section which was obviously intended to provoke discussion. You accuse me of falling into the humanism that I claim to criticise and quite rightly link this problem with the 'sheer unrest of life' which I quote in other texts. I have already revised this section considerably, partly in response to your criticisms, but I do not think that this revision affects the discussion.

Your criticism is that, in the attempt to avoid a definitional or

objectivist concept of class, I throw the baby out with the bath water, reducing the concept of class to the contradiction between alienation and non-alienation, a contradiction present in every person.

I think your characterisation is right. For me, the working class, the revolutionary subject, is humanity dehumanised, insubordination subordinated, freedom enchained, the sheer unrest of life entrapped, indefinition defined, creativity negated, etc. However, these contradictions do not just float in the air: they are the precondition of and consequence of, they exist in and through, the daily, hourly pumping of surplus value from the workers. If exploitation comes to an end, then there is no dehumanisation of humanity, etc. But similarly, if there is no dehumanisation of humanity (etc), then there is no exploitation. Exploitation is the core of dehumanisation, the core of class struggle. But I do not think that the exploitation of surplus value producing workers can be separated from the dehumanisation of humanity that it implies, and this dehumanisation is not just an external contradiction between us and capital, but a contradiction that runs through all of us. Thus when you say that 'the subject of revolutionary change is thus the class of producers who are exploited by the ruling class', it seems to me that there is a danger here of 'reducing' class conflict, of separating off one aspect of the class conflict, of impoverishing revolution.

When I say that exploitation is the core of dehumanisation, I do not mean by that there is a hierarchy between the direct producers of surplus value and the rest of us, simply that the negation of creativity (etc) is a material, palpable, historical process. I think that there might possibly be a case for establishing such a hierarchy if it could be shown that the direct producers of surplus value play a particular part in the attack against capital. This has often been the assumption, and was one of the points that came up in the discussion when we met in Hamburg: the idea that there are key sections of workers who are able to inflict particular damage on capital (such as workers in large factories or transport workers). These workers are able to impose with particular directness the dependence of capital upon labour. But I'm not sure that such groups of workers are necessarily direct producers of surplus value (think of bank workers, for example), and the impact of the Zapatistas on capital (through the devaluation and the world financial upheaval of 1994-95, for example) makes it clear that the capacity to disrupt capital accumulation does not (any longer?) depend necessarily on one's place in the process of production. Anyway, which does more 'damage to capital' - a prolonged strike by industrial workers or a rebellion in the jungles of Mexico which stirs up again the idea of revolution and the dream of a different type of society?

You argue in your letter that I fall into the humanism that I set out to criticise. You say: 'there is an insuperable division between humanistic and revolutionary concepts. While humanistic approaches refer to an ideal, philosophical human and an abstract, unhistorical humanity, revolutionary theory starts from the historically real person.' (37) My problem here is with the 'historically real person'. If

this is understood positivistically, as meaning people as they are now, then there is no revolution: there might be complaints, struggles, but that is all. It is only if it is understood negatively, to mean 'historically real people, as they exist in their negation, their alienation, their form of being denied' that the term 'historically real people' carries any revolutionary force. But what is it then that is being negated, alienated, denied? The possibility of living as humans, free and self-determining. The term 'historically real people' makes sense only if we understand that real historical existence as an existence-in-negation, an existence-in-tension, the tension being towards humanity, self-determining practice. The problem with humanism is not that it has a concept of humanity, but that it thinks of humanity positively, as something already existing, rather than starting from the understanding that humanity exists only in the form of being denied, as a dream, as a struggle. The Zapatista slogan 'humanity against neoliberalism' is ambiguous: humanity can be understood either positively (social democratically) or negatively. The argument of my article is that it should be understood negatively.

You object to the idea of 'humanity against neoliberalism' because the slogan could be just as easily used by supporters of the Socialist International. Yes, but I'm not sure that that's a problem. Any categories that we use are terrains of struggle: the PRI-politicians here in Mexico talk of the importance of the revolutionary tradition, the hacks of the ex-Soviet Union talked of class struggle, Clinton of freedom. So what? But, more fundamentally, any situation of revolutionary upheaval is a situation of confusion, of confused thought, of confused enthusiasms, of (less confused) opportunism, of ambiguous categories. That is not a reason for standing aside.

All this feels too negative, too defensive. The point, of course, is not to defend myself against your criticisms, even less to counter-attack. Your letter has been very helpful to me in trying to think things out more clearly. There are some points I agree with, others that I am still thinking about. One of the points that worries me is your argument that if one understands the concept of class as the contradiction between alienation and non-alienation, then it loses all meaning: 'it can be applied at will to anything at all'. But isn't that the point of Marxist theory? To understand all social phenomena as forms of class struggle, and thereby to understand the richness of class struggle and the fragility of all social phenomena? By focussing on money as a form of class struggle, for example, as in the articles you have published by Werner and myself, we can learn a lot about the current development and fragility of capitalism, which would be closed if one adopted a narrower view of class struggle and saw money as something external to class struggle. That the arguments are not sufficiently developed I agree, but one of the best ways to develop them is by seeing them in the context of particular movements of struggle such as the Zapatista uprising. I don't understand why a concept that fits everything is 'therefore without meaning for practice'.

3. Work is central:

I agree with many of your comments in this section of your letter: for example, that the question of the relation between creative practice and work should have been developed more in the article on 'The Centrality of Work'. I think, however, that the central issue is again the question of how we think of class. You insist again on seeing class struggle as centred in the immediate production process: 'This material, reified form of the production process is the hard core of capitalist command over our life'. And then you say just at the end: 'Capital flees from the 'insubordinate power of labour', but it can only flee in the direction of its further socialisation, which it must build up against the workers as a new 'social power', just as Ford's River Rouge complex was a 'social power'.' I think I agree with both of these statements, but I understand them in a different way from you. For me, for example, the Zapatista uprising is precisely an example of the way in which the flight of capital leads to new forms of socialisation (the fiercer subjection of the lives of Mexican peasants into the circuit of capital). I don't think we should limit the idea of socialisation to the old idea of the growth of the (industrial) proletarian army (chimney stack after chimney stack - as Brecht puts it somewhere, does he?), which I suspect underlies your argument. I think it would be dangerous to limit class struggle in this way, simply because I think class struggle is much richer and faster-moving than that suggests.

Capital depends on the exploitation of labour, but exploitation is impossible without subordination, the transformation of insubordinate humanity (the 'sheer unrest of life') into subordinate labour. Obviously, this is a struggle that takes place not only within the factory but in every aspect of human existence. Primitive accumulation, capital's violent struggle to subordinate, is not something in the past but is everyday existence. I see no reason why an emphasis on the centrality of exploitation should mean restricting class struggle to the immediate process of production.

But I want to finish on a more positive note. The long article which you decided not to publish (as well as the shorter version which you did publish) is a plea for Marxists (and beyond) to listen carefully to what the Zapatistas are saying and doing. They are saying very original and, on the whole, very good things. It is not just (although that is important) that they have reawakened the idea of revolution: it is also that they are re-inventing what revolution means. Central to this is the idea of changing the world without taking power, which, I think, has enormous consequences for the way we think about revolution and about political practice. Certainly part of the response in Europe has been a deaf romanticism, but far worse than the deafness of the romantics has been the deafness of the dogmatics, of those on the independent left who simply do not want to listen to what might challenge their established ideas. There are many indications

now that the next few months could see a tragic outcome in Mexico: if so, it would be a tragedy for the world as much as for Mexico. I do not think the world has so many chances left: when one arises it is important to fight for it - critically, of course, but to fight for it.

Again very, very many thanks for your letter. I hope we can continue to make our disagreements productive and that I shall hear from you soon. I know there are many points of your letter that I have not touched. You criticise me for always wanting to round things off, with over-smooth general answers, instead of leaving problems and questions open. On this point I think probably .... [here the manuscript breaks off]

The Politics of Change: Ideology and Critique

Werner Bonefeld

Introduction

'Globalisation' has been established as one of the organising terms of contemporary political economic inquiry. The term indicates that the idea of a cohesive and sequestrated national economy and domestic society no longer holds and that everyday life has become dependent on global forces. It is claimed that 'globalisation' represents a qualitative transformation of capitalism in that there has developed a new relationship of interdependence beyond the national states. Marx's view of the world market and his notion that the need for a constantly expanding market for its products, chases the bourgeosie over the whole surface of the globe, appears to be emphasised by the 'theory' of globalisation. Yet, it is not. For the globalisationists, there is no such thing as the bourgeoisie; instead 'capitalism' is viewed as some sort of economic mechanisms that imposes itself 'objectively' upon the social individual, rendering both the working class and the bourgeoisie helpless. Both are seen to be subjected to the risk that globalisation appears to present (Beck, 1992).

The defining elements of 'globalisation' can be briefly summarised as follows:

1) The increasing importance and significance of the financial structure and the global creation of credit, leading to the dominance of finance over production: Harvey (1989) has argued that finance capital has become an independent force in the world and Strange (1988; 1991) has emphasised the increased structural power exercised by the financial superstructure;

2) The growing importance of the 'knowledge structure' (Strange 1988; Giddens 1990): Knowledge is said to have become an important factor of production;

3) The increase in the rapidity of redundancy of given technologies and the increase in the transnationalisation of technology: Here the emphasise is on knowledge-based industries, increasing reliance on technological innovation, and increased risk of technological backwardness (Giddens, 1991);

4) The rise of global oligopolies in the form of multinational corporations: Corporations are said to have no choice but to go global and multinational corporations, together with, and importantly,

transnational banks have become the most influential powers beyond the national states and their national economies (Strange, 1991);

5) The globalisation of production, knowledge, and finance is said to have led, on the one hand, to the retreat of the national state as a regulative power (Strange, 1996), and the globalisation of political power in the form of a plural authority structure associated with the UN, G7 (now G8), on the other (Held, 1995). The erosion of the national state is seen to lead to (a) greater global institutional and regulatory uncertainty and (b) to the hollowing out of national liberal-democratic systems of government. The national state is seen to have transformed into a 'competition state' (Cerny, 1990, 1997).

The so-called new freedom of capital from national regulative control and democratic accountability is said to lead to increased ecological destruction, social fragmentation, and poverty. For Hirsch (1995), globalisation is based on a class society without classes. Globalisation is thus seen to render workers powerless to withstand economic dictates (Anderson, 1992, p. 366). In short, globalisation is viewed as the realisation of capital's impossible dream: to accumulate uncontested.

The above has summarised the main planks of globalisation orthodoxy. The next two sections supply a critical commentary on 'globalisation': Where does the global begin, where does it end?

What is Globalisation?

Over the last decade there has been an increase in the trafficking of women and children, prostitution and slavery. New markets have emerged in human organs and babies, reducing the proprietors of labour power not only to an exploitable resource but, also, to a resource to be operated on and sold, with babies being produced for export (see Federici, 1997). Some have suggested that we witness the re-emergence of conditions of primitive accumulation. Regardless of whether the concept 'primitive accumulation' is appropriate, these works nevertheless show clearly that Marx's insight according to which 'a great deal of capital, which appears today in the United States without any certificate of birth, was yesterday, in England, the capitalised blood of children' (Marx, 1983, p. 707), still remains a powerful judgement of contemporary conditions.

Looking at the above summary of globalisation orthodoxy, this human suffering is neither acknowledged nor of any concern for the theory of 'globalisation'. For its proponents globalisation has somewhat 'solved' the crisis of capitalist accumulation, has left behind 'social relations between people' and thereby undermined resistance to capitalist exploitation. All that can be done is to recoup the loss of liberal-democratic values by transnationalising democratic government. Only in this way, it is suggested, will the rights of the citizens of the world be secured.

What is to be understood by the notion of the liberal democracy and

its state? Liberals, since Adam Smith, have argued that the state is indispensable for the provision of the exact administration of justice to resolve clashes of interest, the protection of property; the military defence of its territory; for the povision of public goods that are essential for, but cannot be provided by, the market; and for facilitating relations of equality and freedom, including the 'encouragment' of competition and therewith of conditions of so-called market self-regulation. Have these liberal 'notions' of the proper role of the state been undermined by globalisation? This does not seem to be the case and, indeed, the globalisationists argue that globalisation emphasises the bourgeois state as a liberal state. What, then, do we make of the notion that the state is in 'retreat'? Commentators offer the notion of the competition state as an adequate definition of the state under conditions of globalisation. What are the states competing about? Are they competing to extend, safeguard and exploit their comparative advantages? Is the competition state something like this: The state should not and cannot try to protect jobs by interfering with investments because, 'if a capital is not allowed to get the greatest net revenue that the use of machinery will afford here, it will be carried abroad' leading to 'serious discouragement to the demand for labour (Ricardo, [1821] 1995, p. 39). Does the competition state vindicate Ricardo's insight? For the globalisationists, liberal democracy has been undermined at the same time as which the 'national state' has been transformed into a liberal competition state. The so-called retreat of the state, then, stands for its reasseration as a liberal state!

With Marx, we might wish to argue that 'theoretical mysteries ... find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice' (Marx, 1975, p. 5). For globalisation orthodoxy, however, such a view is deeply problematic, if not 'anachronistic' (Hirsch, 1995). For them, it is not human social practice but the developmental logic of the economy that is decisive - social practice is merely conceived as derivative, that is something that can be derived from the 'objective' logic of economic mechanisms. The notion of the globalisation of capital not only assumes that 'capital' has suddenly left its domestic skin by globalising its existence but also that 'capital' has globalised 'itself', has suddenly become more based on scientific expertise, has discovered monetary accumulation beyond and dissociated from productive accumulation, has expanded into a borderless world. In short, for the globalisationists, capital appears to have suddenly, since the late 1980s, discovered the world market! Where was 'capital' before? What does it mean to say that 'capital' has 'de-nationalised' itself? Was capital constituted nationally, was it a national capital, in the past?

Globalisation orthodoxy posits the capital relation as a relation of capital to itself rather than as a social relation of production. In other words, the conceptualisation of capitalist development is based on the competitive relationship between capital and capital - a self-relation. The social constitution of this relation cannot be determined: The answer to the question what is 'capital' is already presupposed: capital

is capital and vice versa. As shown by Gunn (1991), this refinement amounts to an infinite regress of meta-theories, seeking to discover the practical meaning of invisible principles. The eternal quest of political economy (and of those seeking to supply a blue-print of a new faced capitalism) to discover the practical meaning of invisible (as well as inevitable) principles ends up as an irrational exercise because what needs to be understood is presupposed as something beyond reason.

The attempt to find 'truth' in the 'invisible' has always been the character of traditional theory, that is, of a theory which resists an understanding of our social world as a world made by humans and dependent upon human social practice - however perverted or enlightened this practice might be.

In short, analytical approaches to 'globalisation' fail to conceptualise the fundamental relationship between labour and capital. This relationship remains untheorised and is replaced by a tautological understanding of capital as a self-relation. In this view, labour is merely seen in terms of the wage relation, that is as a labouring commodity (on this: Bonefeld, 1995a). As a consequence, labour as the substance of value is excluded theoretically and class struggle obtains merely in terms of a domestic working class which is controlled by capital through the threat of moving production to areas more favourable to exploitation. The notion that capital is a thing, and not a social relation, belongs, of course, very much to the tradition of political economy. However, it is disturbing that globalisation orthodoxy appears to have forgotten its own theoretical heritage. Adam Smith at least sought to provide a scientific understanding of the constitution of the bourgeois world - however flawed his theory of value. For the globalisationists the world is accepted as a given, as a thing in-itself. In this way, globalisation orthodoxy represents a vulgarised version of classical political economy: it does not raise the question of the social constitution of value and accepts, as a consequence, that the world of capital is regulated by the invisible principle of an effective, efficient, and fair power of an almighty hand.

The proposal, then, to re-democratise the political regulation of capitalist accumulation is based on the acceptance of the invisible. How might it be possible to regulate the invisible and how might it be made accountable to democratic principles? For the proponents of transnational democracy, neo-liberal market freedom is structurally unable to generate social acquiescence and they recommend 'democratisation' on a transnational level as a means of facilitating relations of freedom and equality. The debate, then, on transnational democracy goes beyond the vulgar liberalism associated with Hayek in that it seeks an arrangement whereby the global relations of liberty would be institutionally embedded. It seeks, in other words, to safeguard market freedom through institutional safeguards and guarantees. Might there not be a good case to argue that the proposals for a transnational democracy seek to guarantee the rights of citizenship at the global level so that the liberating potential of hard labour can be cherished on the basis of equality, freedom and

Bentham? In sum, the proponents of globalisation, on the whole, do not 'like' what 'capital' is doing when left unattended by regulative institutions of a liberal-democratic sort. Yet, while they might not 'like' the invisible's hard hitting 'hand', they are forced to accept it because the acceptance of the 'market' entails that the cunning of reason amounts to no more than the invisible's own project.

State and Society

The concepts 'state' and 'society' are usually understood in a 'domestic' sense. The 'state' is perceived in terms of national sovereignty - a sovereignty which is exercised over a definite territory and in relation to a people or peoples. The relationship between 'state and society' is perceived as one of the administration of political space, including especially the people living in this space. This understanding of the relationship between state and society is 'domestic' insofar as the inquiry into the constitution of the 'state' is based on an understanding of the relationship between a given society and its state. As a consequence, the study of the inter-relation between states is conceived in terms of diplomacy, trade, as well as inter-national cooperation, conflict and competition.

In this view, the politics of national states are conceived in terms of Ricardo's notion of comparative advantage. The 'globalisationists' emphasise this by arguing that the national state has transformed into a competition state and dismiss it by stressing that the national state is in retreat. Does globalisation merely mean that capital has left its national society behind, that capital has de-nationalised itself, and that, as a consequence, has 'hollowed out' the national state? Is the state in retreat because its has lost its 'basis' that is its national economy and therewith its national society? What is a national society?

The notion that 'society' connotes a national entity seems, at first sight, uncontroversial. We are used to speak about British society and so on. Though, what is society? In classic political economy, society was understood in terms of its economic constitution. On this, the classic statement is provided by William Robertson (1890, p. 104) who argued that 'in every inquiry concerning the operation of men when united together in society, the first object of attention should be their mode of subsistence'.

The relationships of subsistence, of social production and reproduction, are one of capital. Would this mean that society amounts to capital? Is capital society? We know about the attempts of political economy to define 'capital'. Usually it is seen as a 'thing' with invisible but hard-hitting qualities, which supplies structure and dynamic to 'society'. Here, society and capital are seen as interrelated but nevertheless as different things and the relationship between them remains obscure in so far as something 'invisible' determines the constitution and dynamic of social relations. Marx's critique of political

economy supplied a - negative - solution. His conception of social relations overcame the dichotomy between society and capital by arguing that 'capital' is not a thing but rather a definite and contradictory social relationship of production. There is no need here to review his critique of fetishism and theory of exploitation. For our purposes, the understanding of society as a capitalist society, as a society of class antagonism subsisting through exploitation and constituted by class struggle is sufficient because it raises two interconnected issues:

1) The critique of the domestic character of capital and therewith the domestically defined antagonism of labour to capital;
2) The critique of the state as a national sovereign and impartial administrator of political space.

The capital relation is, by its very form, a global relation. Indeed, Marx argued that the world market constitutes the presupposition of capitalist social reproduction 'as well as its substratum' (Marx, 1973, p. 228). This would imply that the relationship between the state and society is not a relationship between the national state and its national society. Rather, the state subsists as the political form of the social relations of production only in relation to the world market. Thus, as von Braunmuhl (1976, p. 276; my translation) puts it, 'each national economy can only be conceptualised adequately as a specific international and, at the same tame, integral part of the world market. The nation state can only be seen in this dimension'. The national state relation to 'society' is fundamentally a relationship between the national state and the global existence of the social relations of production, that is, of the class antagonism between capital and labour. It is this global dimension 'in which production is posited as a totality together with all its moments, but within which, at the same time, all contradictions come into play' (Marx, 1973, p. 227).

The New World Order

The term New World Order has become a catch-phrase employed to describe developments post-1989. It refers to a new, as yet undefined, rearranging of political space since the end of the Cold War. Within the framework of this paper, new world order has a slightly different and distinct meaning. Sudden movements of vast amounts of money have, over the past years, triggered three big crises of political stability. The first was the European currency crises in 1992 and 1993, the second the plunge of the Mexican peso in December 1994 which rocked financial markets around the world, and the third the so-called Asian crisis since 1997. Currency instability and speculative runs on currencies have been described as a new form of foreign policy crisis (see Cockburn and Silverstein, 1995; also: Benson, 1995). This does not mean that old-style foreign policy crises with aggression between

states, movements of troops, the threat of nuclear war, and bombing of populations, have been replaced by potential national bankruptcy and the threat of global financial collapse. The former continuous to exist in deadly form; and the potential of global financial collapse has been part of the history of capitalism since its inception. Nevertheless, there have been significant changes in the relationship between the national state and the global economy. These changes have been working themselves through the capitalist world since the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in the early 1970s.

The consequences of the breakdown of the system of Bretton Woods can be summarised as follows:

1) The crisis of the post-war attempt of integrating labour politically, economically, and socially through commitments to full employment, politics of inclusion and prospects of higher living standards - or, as Agnoli (1967/1990) saw it, a politics of pacification effected through institutionalisation;

2) The construction of regional systems of co-operation (NAFTA; EU; APEC) around the most powerful capitalist states: the USA, Germany, Japan.

3) The emergence of new currencies as international standards of 'quality', i.e. financial security, certainty and measure of other currencies (DM/Euro, Yen and Dollar), replacing the dollar as the sole quality currency. The emergence of these currencies hints at a new territorialisation around blocs of regional co-operation and a new inter-bloc imperialist rivalry.

The breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates occurred shortly after the tremendous wave of struggle associated with 1968 . The revolt of those years, as in the early part of the century following on from the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, was contained in part through violent suppression, but to a much greater extent through the expansion of credit. The consequences of '1968' (the accumulated wave of struggle that showed its crest in 1968) were less dramatic but nevertheless equally profound as the upheavals of the earlier part of the century. The precarious relation between the monetary system and the rate of productivity was ruptured fundamentally, as reflected in the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in 1971 (on this: Marazzi, 1995).

The struggles of the late 1960s manifested a new intensity of discontent that had been unknown since the late 1920s. Furthermore, the exploitation of labour's productive power was confronted with depressed rates of profits.

The exploitation of labour's productive power had become much too expensive. In other words, the post-war attempt at integrating labour's productive and disruptive power through institutionalisation was failing. Capital responded by financialising profits and by moving labour-intensive production to so-called developing countries where cheap labour costs were seen to provide competitive advantages. Yet, despite this expansion of productive capital to new centres of cheap labour, the dissociation between monetary accumulation and

productive accumulation continued unabated and on an increasing scale. From the late 1960s, especially since the oil hike in 1974, the dramatic increase in global money capital has not been matched by the reduction of necessary labour, the constitutive side of surplus labour. Wealth started to be accumulated in the money form without a corresponding increase in the exploitation of labour power in the factory. Capitals attempt to 'liberate' itself from the contested terrain of production and to go beyond itself by asserting itself in its most 'rational' form of money capital (M...M') indicates the fictitious character of capitalist reproduction. Since the early 1970s, the rate of monetary accumulation has by far outstripped that of productive accumulation. In fact, the creation of a credit-superstructure amounts to an accumulation of 'unemployed' capital (cf. Marx, 1966), of capital which is suspended from the direct exploitation of labour. At the same time, however, the creation of a global 'credit-superstructure' represents an accumulation of claims on the future exploitation of labour. In short, the guarantee of M...M' depends on M...P...M', that is the exploitation of labour.

Growing investment into the fantastic world of monetary self-expansion recomposed the global relations of exploitation and struggle. The world market became a market in money (on this: Walter, 1993). The attempt to make money out of money created a much more fragile capitalism on a world scale. Without the global search for profit in money it would have been unthinkable for the Mexican crisis of 1982 to have had such an immediate knock-on effect on 'western' banks and through them on the global circuit of capital. Mexico 1982 indicated that the formidable attempt at containing social relations through a policy of tight money associated with monetarism had reached an impasse. The 'crisis of 1982' indicated a tremendous recomposition of the class relation. Seemingly marginal pockets of resistance to the politics of austerity, a politics that was introduced from the mid 1970s, threatened to transform the attempt to make money out of poverty into a severe global financial crisis. The dissociation of monetary accumulation from productive accumulation - the so-called dominance of the financial structure - rather than heralding a new phase of - globalised - capitalism, is intensely crisis-ridden. Besides, it amplifies and transmits labour unrest across the globe through its impact on the global relations of money.

In the wake of Mexico 1982, monetarist policies of austerity were hastily abandoned, leading to a politics variously described as 'delinquent Keynesianism' or 'military Keynesianism' and permitting the USA to emerge, during the 1980s, as the biggest debtor country. On a global scale, the rapid shift from a policy of tight credit to a policy of credit expansion acted like a neutralising 'agent' as it helped to co-opt parts of the working class to the project of prosperity. The credit-sustained boom of the 1980s acknowledged that sustained accumulation is the best guarantee for the containment of class conflict. Poverty, unemployment and marginalisation of superfluous labour power coincided with prosperity. The decomposition of

resistance to austerity was based on poverty, a poverty which was the mirror image of a credit-driven prosperity.

The significance of credit expansion as a central principle of capitalist rule reasserted itself. The policy of deregulation, flexibilisation, privatisation and the fragmentation of social relations went hand-in-hand. In the face of poverty, prosperity fragmented and undermined opposition to austerity. Thus, credit-expansion not only sustained the boom of the 1980s in an increasingly fictitious dimension. It also helped to promote the notion of the market, unleashing a pre-emptive counter-revolution through the imposition of abstract equality, i.e., the equality of money. The policy of market freedom associated with neo-liberalism equated citizenship with the power of money. Everybody is equal before money. Money knows no special privileges. It treats poor and rich as equals. The imposition of the abstract equality of money involved the imposition of inequality because 'the power which each individual exercises over the activity of others or over social wealth exists in him as the owner of exchange values, of money. The individual carries his social power, as well as his bond with society, in his pocket' (Marx, 1973, p. 157).

Neo-Liberalism's policy of market freedom rested on a systematic exercise of state power that defined social activity on the basis of the market - 'poverty is not unfreedom' (Joseph/Sumption, 1979, p. 47). Resistance to a control through debt was thus decomposed on the basis of what Hirsch (1991) refers to as the 'southafricanisation' of social relations. This view is shared by Negri (1989, p. 97) who argues that the 'ideal of modern-day capitalism is apartheid'. However, and as Negri insists, apartheid is the ideal but not the reality. The reality is capitalist crisis and its containment through a policy of credit expansion within a framework of 'deregulation' whose purpose was the reduction of deficits through the intensification of exploitation in exchange for deteriorating conditions and wage restraint.

Neo-liberalism's aim of adjusting working class consumption to productivity growth was never successful however painful the results of its attempt. In spite of all the hardship, all the misery, all the cost-cutting, all the poverty, all the intensification of work and the restructuring of the labour-process, the fact that 'investment is not lifting off ... is perhaps testimony to the radicality of the challenge to capitalist power, and of the fear that followed from it that every upturn in the economy would reactivate conflict. A testimony, in short, that the dismantling and restructuring of all parts of the capitalist valorisation process is still in full motion' (Bellofiore, 1997, p. 49). Although, as Dalla Costa (1995a, p. 7) puts it, 'social "misery" or "unhappiness" which Marx considered to be the "goal of the political economy" has largely been realised everywhere', capital has failed to redeem the promise of future exploitation by subordinating labour in the present. In other words, the inflation of money capital in relation to productive activity confirms negatively the difficulty in securing the subordination of social relations to the abstract equality of exchange relations and, through them, exploitation. Far from stimulating

investment, employment and output, the result of credit expansion in a tight monetary framework was the deterioration of conditions and mass unemployment. There was no breakthrough in productive investment relative to the accumulated claims on surplus value still to be pumped out of labour.

The reconstitution of the circuit of social capital does not just require, as during the 1980s, a divisive and fragmenting decomposition of class relations. Rather, it involves the imposition of valorisation upon social labour power. Such an imposition implies not just the intensification of work and the repressive exclusion from production of those disregarded as being inessential. It entails the transformation of money into truly productive capital, i.e. capital employed to create value through the exploitation of labour (M...P...M'). Without this transformation, capital faces its ultimate contradiction: The most rational form of capital (M...M') becomes meaningless (begriffslos) because it loses its grip on labour, the substance of value. In other words, money, rather than betting on future exploitation, has to be transformed into an effective command over labour in the present. This means that the exploitation of labour has to deliver rates of profit adequate to redeem debt and to allow for expanded capitalist accumulation. This exploitation of labour presupposes the recomposition of the relation between necessary and surplus labour. There is no surer indication than the ballooning of bad debt that capital has not succeeded in imposing a recomposition of the relations of exploitation adequate to the accumulated claims upon surplus value.

The experience of the last twenty-five years suggests that the transformation of money into truly productive capital is both essential and impossible. When a repeat performance of the crash of 1929 threatened in October 1987, even the most fierce monetarists advocated expansion - anything to avoid the catastrophe, and confrontation, that a slump would bring. As Samuel Brittan of the Financial Times put it in 1987, 'when a slump is threatening, we need helicopters dropping currency notes from the sky' (quoted in Harman, 1993, p. 15). This response to the 1987 crash, specific though it was, has always been at the forefront of bad debt management. As Susane George (1992, p. 106) has argued, 'during the 1980s, the only thing that was socialised rather than privatised was debt itself'. The current attempt at preventing a world-wide collapse of bad debt, and through it at guaranteeing the capitalist property rights on the future exploitation of labour, shows the same politics of socialisation: banks are refinanced and kept afloat by the state in its role as lender of last resort and that is, by taking money out of the hands of workers. While the social wage of the working class has been attacked and labour intensified, and while conditions have deteriorated and while the working class is told that it is free to look after herself, banks, it appears, can not be asked to be regulated on the basis of market freedom: swim or drown. Their losses are socialised while their profits are protected by the law of private property. The structural adjustment politics advocated by the IMF entails the imposition of

poverty upon those whose labour secures the validity of credit as a claim on surplus value still to be pumped out of the worker. The IMF response to the crisis in Asia represents, as during the so-called debt crisis of the 1980s, an imposition of poverty: work harder for less reward to secure the banking system and with it the capitalist property rights of exploitation.

Yet, the recession of the 1990s, the Mexican crisis of 1994, the European currency crises of 1992 and 1993, and the Asian crisis of 1997, indicate that there seems to be no way forward, for capital or for labour. Yet this is not the first time. Writing in 1934, that is after the first global imperialist war and in the face of fascist/fordist attempts of discipling labour, Paul Mattick suggested that capitalism had entered an age of permanent crisis: The periodicity of crisis is in practice nothing other than the recurrent reorganisation of the process of accumulation on a new level of value and price which again secures the accumulation of capital. If that is not possible, then neither is it possible to confirm accumulation; the same crisis that up to now had presented itself chaotically and could be overcome becomes permanent crisis. In contrast to previous crises of capitalism, which had always led to a restructuring of capital and to a renewed period of accumulation, the crisis of the 1930s appeared to be so profound and prolonged as to be incapable of solution. Crisis, Mattick suggested, had ceased to be a periodically recurring phenomenon and had become an endemic feature of capitalism.

Mattick's suggestion, pessimistic though it was, turned out to be far too optimistic. The crisis was resolved, in blood. Capital was restructured and the basis for a new period of accumulation created. The 'golden age' of post-war capitalism is now a memory, as is the blood-letting through war and gas. Once again it would seem that we are in a situation of permanent crisis. It is possible that the crisis will be permanent, with a progressive 'south-africanisation' of the world. It is possible too that the crisis will not be permanent, that it will in fact be resolved: what the resolution of 'permanent crisis' can mean stands behind us as a warning of a possibly nightmarish future.

The prospect of a world constituted by human dignity and sincerity has to go forward through a critique of political economy, including, of course, revamped versions of Keynesianism. The summoning of a new world order should be taken seriously. The old 'new world order', the world order post-1945, was brought about by a nightmare. While I share Lipietz's (1985) nightmare about a capitalism walking on the thin air of credit, I do not share his call to keep capitalism away from the abyss. This is, despite its good intentions, a dangerous view to take. It is dangerous because it accepts suffering without dignity and thus endorses the rescue of capital through the continued treatment of humanity as a resource for the accumulation of abstract wealth. This treatment resolved the crisis of the 1920s and 1930s.

Conclusion

Globalisation orthodoxy fails to see 'globalisation' as a major 'capitalist offensive' and, from within this view, fails to address the very contradiction that lies at its heart. This paper has argued that this contradiction is constituted by the presence of labour's productive and disruptive power, a power in and through which capital 'exists'. Globalisation orthodoxy fails to see the misery of our time and projects, instead, capitalist global reorganisation as an inevitable development. This view ignores that the globalisation of capital is at the same time the globalisation of labour's presence in and against capital, and is ill-equipped to comprehend the vast implications of current developments. These I summarised in terms of Mattick's notion of a permanent crisis. Lastly, methodologically, globalisation orthodoxy is founded on an analytical theoretical persepctive. At best, this perspective confers on capitalist development an objectivity that merely serves to generalise empirical data in abstract theoretical terms. In this way, the ideological projections of 'capital' are confused with reality. This perspective fails to supply enlightenment as to the crisis-ridden nature of globalisation. Instead, it offers abstract generalisations which already presuppose that the market reigns supreme. As was mentioned earlier, the uncritical acceptance of the market entails that the cunning of reason amounts to no more than the invisible's own project. Globalisation is thus rendered practical as the project of the invisible itself. Against this view the paper argued that 'in the misery of our time, we find the "positive" only in negation' (Agnoli, 1992, p. 50). And the national state? Surely, the globalisationists are quite right to argue that globalisation has rendered obvious the myth of the national state as a framework for the achievement of conditions where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. According to the advocates of bourgeois society, the spectre of communism has been replaced by the spectre of democracy at the same time as spectre of globalisation has undermined the conditions of democratic government. History when it was declared to be dead, appears full of surprises: is this the irony of history or the making of history?

Notes

1. For alternative views on globalisation see, for example, Hirst/Thompson (1996); and Ruigrok/van Tulder (1995). These authors provide rich empirical evidence that questions the 'abstract generalisations' of the globalisation orthodoxy. Their argument is, however, firmly fixed within the globalisation agenda.
2. See, amongst others, the contributions to Dalla Costa and Dalla Costa (1995, 1997); Dalla Costa (1995a, 1995b); and Midnight Notes (1992).
3. This list of 'state functions' draws on Skinner's introduction to Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
4. For a critique of this view see, for example, Burnham (1994, 1995); Holloway

(1995); and Picciotto (1991).

5. Parts of the following section draw on a paper written jointly with J. Holloway, 'Money and Class Struggle', published in Bonefeld and Holloway (eds.) (1995).

6. See Armonstrong etal. (1984) and Mandel (1975) for documentation.

7. For an interpretation of Marx's work on money and credit see: Bologna (1993); Bonefeld (1995b); and Ricciardi (1987).

8. On this Marx (1966) and, for commentary, Bonefeld (1995b).

9. On this see Gambino (1996)

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From the Revolution Against Philosophy to the Revolution Against Capital

Mike Rooke

"The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism - that of Feuerbach included - is that the thing (Gegenstand), reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object (Object) or of contemplation (Anschauung), but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively."

The conclusion to Marx's critique of bourgeois philosophy, was summed up with characteristic simplicity in his first thesis on Feuerbach, written in 1845. The materialism Marx refers to represented the most advanced form of bourgeois philosophy at that time, conducive to the rising bourgeois class in its struggle against feudal power. Science was its inspiration and its guide, and for Marx it had assumed its most radical form in the work of Feuerbach. The importance of Marx's recognition of this 'chief defect' is that he had grasped the limitations of, and therefore transcended the epistemological dualism at the heart of, this materialism. This was a breakthrough of immense importance for Marx's thought.

The theory of knowledge which ran as a continuous thread through the work of the British empiricists and the French materialists of the 17th and 18th centuries rested on a view of the human subject as the passive receptor of stimuli from the external world. Its progressive aspect lay in the implication that human subjects were the product of the environment and nature, not divine providence. This materialist epistemology depended on a dualist conception of the world - one divided into subject and object. According to Marx it was in turn, contemplative and mechanistic.

Contemplative in the sense that the subject relates to the external world through a process of passive cognition, thus determining the primary question for this materialism: the truth or otherwise of our knowledge of the external world. But the question of the objectivity of knowledge was according to Marx, a scholastic one insofar as 'practical, human-sensuous activity' is left out of account. And this is what materialism had ignored, leaving it to idealism to mark out the active contribution which the subject makes in the process of knowledge, albeit in an abstract fashion (as 'sensuous contemplation').

Mechanistic in the sense that cognition is conceived as a one-way causal process, connecting two discrete and independently existing abstractions - subject and object. For Marx, to the extent that we can talk about a knowable world, it must be understood as the relational

result of human sensuous activity. Conceiving the external world as it exists independently of human knowledge of it has no importance for Marx - it is a non-question. For him there is no pre-human, objective world, or even Kantian 'things-in-themselves'. The knowable world is at once the product of human selection, classification and transformation. This is what Marx means when he talks of world objectification, a concept derived from Hegel which denotes the creation of the world through the social labour of human beings. The world, nature, is man's creation - hence Marx's phrase: nature is man's inorganic body.

So whereas for materialism the starting and end point of inquiry is how the external world, nature, can be known, and known objectively, for Marx the starting point is an inquiry into the social labour of human beings, for it is by virtue of this practical activity that the world is produced. It follows that this inquiry implies the construction of a natural science of man. Furthermore, insofar as man's productive activity has evolved over time such a science must be historical. While in a philosophical sense Marx may be seen to have shifted the theoretical focus from the plane of epistemology (theory of knowledge) to that of ontology (theory of being), there has in fact been a supersession of philosophy as such (1). Marx had arrived at the point of constructing a materialist natural science that was both historical and dialectical. Historical in that its raw material was the productive activity of human beings (labour) conducted under definite and changing social relations, and dialectical in that Marx has dissolved the separation of subject and object into the notion of labour as world objectification. For Marx as for Hegel dialectic concerned the relation of subject and object (2).

By the mid 19th century the consolidation of bourgeois economic and social power was reflected in the emergence of positivism as a dominant ideology. Expressed most clearly in the social sciences, it developed to a further degree (under the impact of the natural sciences) the dualism systematised first by Cartesian rationalism. In its reliance on the empirically given, raw sense data of the external world (the 'facts), positivist modes of thought dispensed with any constituting subject (Kant), or totality (Hegel). The separation of the individual subject from the external world was expressed at the level of knowledge, which is why the dominant interpretative framework for bourgeois social theory was that of epistemology (3). This fundamental dualism gave rise to a host of familiar antinomies: between thought and action; theory and practice, judgements of fact and value ('is' and 'ought'), ends and means, etc.

Having transcended this epistemological dualism, Marx proceeded to fashion an intellectual framework which would bring into unity his working categories. The starting point and the pivotal category was labour. But it was labour apprehended in a unique way. Marx was alone in asking the all important question: what kind of labour is it that produces value? His answer lay in the concept of abstract labour, that is labour rendered abstract by virtue of its exchangeability in the market as a commodity (ie., labour power bought and sold in advance of its consumption). Thus, value, abstract labour, and therefore alienated labour, are aspects of the same social relation. Arising from this wage

labour-capital relation are the economic categories of capitalism, systematised in bourgeois political economy and expressing the phenomenon of commodity fetishism. Lukacs extended and generalised the effect of commodity fetishism in his notion of reification - the reflection in thought of the perceived autonomy of a fragmented and objectified world beyond human control. At root this is only the human contemplation of labour's alienated activity. Thus the category of labour, which for Marx is the necessary mediation between subject and object (and the means to dissolve this separation), is developed to the point of uncovering the secret of capitalism: the extraction of surplus value from the direct producers. But for Marx the exploitation of labour and the alienation of labour cannot be separated. Paying labour its full reward would not end alienated labour, for these both reside in a mode of production where labour is rendered abstract for the purpose of producing value - labour becomes a commodity. The negativity of labour, which drives the class struggle, derives not only from the mechanism of exploitation but from the character of capitalist work. In this sense class struggle at the point of production is a revolt not just against inadequate payment but against the inhuman character of work under capitalism, and therefore prefigures the abolition of the wage-capital relation and the reification of consciousness that goes with it. This is the real and full import of the overcoming of the subject-object dualism which Lukacs attempted in his 1923 book 'History and Class Consciousness': in it he talks of the proleteriat (subject) as inseparable from the capitalist system(object) which constitutes it, and the impossibility of changing the former without changing the latter. The proleteriat becomes the identical subject-object of history in its struggle against wage labour. Whereas Classical German philosophy (principally in the persons of Fichte and Hegel) had only conceived of overcoming the dualism of subject and object on the plane of philosophy, Marx's great achievement was to ground it in the proleterian revolution against capital (4).

The first movement for proleterian emancipation after Marx was the 2nd International, its principal institutional force German Social Democracy. The major theoreticians of this movement were Engels, Kautsky, Plekhanov and Labriola. In its fundamental philosophy the Marxism of the 2nd International has been described as 'naturalist', signifying a conception of dialectics as the science of the same general laws governing both nature and humanity. History was conceived as a succession of modes of production, emerging and declining with a necessary inevitability, and it was the task of Marxists to identify these objective laws in order to work with the grain of historical progress. It followed that given the immutability and inevitability of the working of such laws, intervention to create history was seen to be less important than gaining knowledge of it: given the inevitability of the decline of capitalism, it was also inevitable that the working class would eventually win power. Its methodological leaning was epistemology: correct knowledge was the mark of scientificity, a view reflecting the enormous prestige held by natural science by the end of the 19th century. 2nd International Marxism thus reproduced the fundamentals of the

contemplative and mechanical materialism which Marx had earlier rejected, and an approach to history which was rigidly deterministic.

This was in fact an enormous retreat from the theoretical vantage point reached by Marx. Most of Marx's insights into alienated labour and commodity fetishism, and the implications of these for the nature of the socialist revolution were never absorbed by the theoreticians of the 2nd International (partly, it has to be said, because the 1844 Manuscripts were not available to that generation of Marxists). But this was really just one aspect of the failure to appreciate the importance of Marx's philosophical revolution against contemplative materialism. Ignoring labour as the mediating category between subject and object, 2nd International Marxism reintroduced dualism into the heart of the Marxist project. Moreover ignoring the importance of the category of labour in Hegel meant that Hegel could be cast in the role of a hopeless idealist, and once inverted, Marx could be treated as an epistemological materialist (ie., a more radical version of Feuerbach!).

The 2nd International's determinist and evolutionist approach to history presupposed a proleteriat which was subordinate to the party. If the course of history was inevitably determined, the patient and gradual marshalling of electoral forces was a sufficient strategy for arriving at a socialist commonwealth. Substitutionism lay at the heart of this conception of theory and practice: the party acted on behalf of the class, and the very conception of socialism was a re-configuration of the categories existing under capitalism. The socialist commonwealth would be planned for, not by, the producers. The negativity of labour, the autonomous struggle of workers against wage slavery, and the resolution of this in the abolition of labour as a commodity, of the abolition of the working class as a class, had no place in the Social Democratic programme. In fact socialism was relegated to the distant future through the division of the programme into minimum and maximum parts. The effect of the failure to transcend materialist epistemology was to set in place a political practice which, in privileging scientific knowledge of the world, in turn privileged the status of theory and party (as bearer of theory) above that of the experience of the class. This amounted to the return and triumph of the objective at the heart of post-Marx Marxism. Party, class, theory and practice were reified in their separation and objectivity.

This state of affairs was in some ways a reflection of the stage of development reached by the class struggle at the end of the 19th century. Workers in their newly formed mass trade unions and political parties were searching for ways to express their political independence. The contradiction at the heart of working class socialism was that the task of overthrowing still remaining feudal social and political structures (in essence republicanism) overshadowed the anti-capitalist revolution proper (abolition of wage labour). This was true of states like Germany and Britain, but even more so for the backward Czarist state in Russia.

But the bureaucratic and substitutionist political practice of the leaders of Social Democracy was quickly overtaken by new forms of the class struggle, first intimated in the Paris Commune of 1871, and further

reinforced by the 1905 Russian revolution. In the Commune workers had taken power directly and proceeded to construct the rudiments of a proleterian state. In the St Petersburg workers and soldiers soviet a similar embryonic form of state power emerged. In these two revolutionary outbreaks the soviet or workers council had made its first appearance in history. These upsurges of autonomous working class activity found their expression within the ranks of Social Democracy in the debate over the role of the mass strike tactic. Against the Kautskyite centre and the Bernsteinian right were ranged a group of 'lefts' - most prominently in the persons of Rosa Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, Otto Ruhle - all initially members of the 2nd International, who were attempting to give theoretical and political expression to these new forms of the class struggle.

The importance of these 'lefts' was that they brilliantly anticipated the opening of a new era of the proleterian struggle, and their political evolution took them in the course of twenty years (1900 to 1920) from being left-Social Democrats to 'left' or council communists. Although Luxemburg never identified as a council communist, she trenchantly criticised the gradualist reformism of the German Social Democracy for stifling the spontaneous revolutionary initiative of the masses, and went on to identify the mass strikes breaking out in Germany before the war as an expression of direct democracy and proleterian power. But Dutch Marxist Anton Pannekoek took the debate much further with his 1912 work 'Marxist Theory and Revolutionary Tactics' (5). He developed the view that a new era of international capitalism was leading to forms of working class struggle which went way beyond the bounds set by Social-Democratic reforms through parliamentary institutions. These anticipated new forms received brilliant confirmation in the revolutionary events in Russia in 1917, Germany, Austria and Hungary in 1918, and Italy in 1920. In each case soviets or workers councils were thrown up by workers in struggle, assuming administrative and military functions in situations of dual power (6).

The essence of what came to be the council communist position was that workers councils were not only entirely new forms of struggle thrown up by the workers themselves, independently of party and trade union leaderships, but were also the embryonic forms of the future proleterian state, forms which would combine, and thus overcome the division, between legislative and administrative power (as foreshadowed in the Paris Commune of 1871). And in their primary location at the point of production they overcame the division of the economic and the political which underpins bourgeois hegemony. This form of proleterian struggle which expressed the revolution against the commodity form of labour was at the same time a revolution against the whole edifice of bourgeois political power.

The Bolsheviks, although they incorporated the experience of the soviets into their revolutionary programme, never allowed this expression of autonomous class power to fundamentally challenge, let alone displace, that of the Bolshevik party. Although Lenin's 'State and Revolution' was a recognition of soviet power as the basis for a new

proleterian order, by the time of the Lenin of 'Left-Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder' the Council Communists were under attack for their anti-parliamentarism, and the substituting of the party for the class at all levels of the workers state was underway(7). Antonio Gramsci after engaging in a pathbreaking theorisation of the Italian workers council movement of 1920 gradually relaxed this orientation as he moved closer to rapprochement with the Communist International (taking up the leadership of the PCI in 1924), which by that time was actively suppressing the agitation of the Council communists in its ranks.

The connecting thread linking the 2nd International of Classical Social Democracy and the 3rd Communist International was their objectivist conception of history and their substitutionist political practise. The Bolsheviks differed from Kautskyism in the strategy and tactics of seizing power, but this difference has, in the hands of later Marxists, been mistakenly elevated into one of fundamental philosophical and methodological significance. It really has more to do with the peculiar set of circumstances prevailing in Russia prior to and during the revolution. Notwithstanding Lenin's brilliant strategic sense and voluntarist caste of mind, he shared, and ultimately never rejected, the philosophical interpretation of Marxism he had absorbed from the likes of Plekhanov (8). The Bolshevik view of Marxism did not differ in fundamentals from that constructed by the major theoreticians of the 2nd International in the decades before the 1st World war.

In keeping with this theoretical and political affinity, from the earliest days of the Russian revolution the Bolsheviks demonstrated their substitutionist impulses vis-a-vis the factory committees and then the soviets. This is not something that can be blamed exclusively on the isolation and poverty of the young workers state, as has been the tendency of those in the 3rd and 4th International traditions. By substituting the party for the class and thereby elevating the state over and above the producers, labour as the sovereign element in the revolutionary process was suppressed. Nationalised property and planning become 'objective' 'means' to construct socialism for the producers, not the activity of the producers themselves. What would be revolutionary activity, the practical expression of new social relations, remains the effect of 'things' on the producers. This reification prevents revolutionary transformation; it denies the reality of communism in the first stages of the revolution. The view of history which emanates from this substitutionism is one in which 'forces'of history act on human beings, an approach which Stalinism codified into an idealist metaphysics ('Histomat').

2nd International socialism was distinguished not only by its reformist, parliamentary strategy for winning power, but by its conception of socialism as state ownership and direction of the means of production, a model we may call state monopoly socialism. It would rest on the mass organisations of the labour movement as the working class response to the newly monopolised stage which capitalism was entering at the turn of the century. This strategy of socialist industrialisation was also a national one - internationalism, as the response of the 2nd

International to the 1st world war showed, was for rhetorical purposes only. Although the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky was by contrast firmly internationalist, it continued the emphasis on state ownership and planning. The socialist industrialisation debate of the twenties conducted principally between Preobrazhensky and Bukharin, was never informed by the question of abolishing wage labour or the direct democracy of the producers at the point of production (Kollontai's 1921 pamphlet 'The Workers Opposition' dealt with the latter question and her position was denounced by both Lenin and Trotsky as a danger to the revolution!). In view of the importance Trotsky was to have in the struggle against Stalinism, it is important to remember that he was the architect of the militarisation of labour in the early twenties, and an advocate of industrialisation and collectivisation that differed from the Stalinist version of the late 20s only in the insistence on more democracy and greater consistency. For Trotsky socialism was in the last analysis about the progressiveness of nationalised property relations and the superior rationality of planning. The absence of democratically functioning soviets under Stalin did not negate the proleterian class character of the workers state(9).

Trotsky's Marxism in essence shared the objectivism and substitutionism of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals. It therefore represented the most developed expression possible of the tradition of state monopoly socialism, a tradition which included the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Internationals. While Stalinism respresented the 'bad' side of this tradition, so to speak, Trotsky represented the 'best' side. The 'best' because while it never transcended the limitations of Bolshevism, it heroically defended what it saw as the democratic side of the October revolution against the Stalinist counterrevolution. Bolshevism, and in turn Trotskyism, inherited the 2nd Internationals positivist cast of Marxist theory.

Thus the revolution as the liberation of labour by-passed the bureaucratic official party organisations and programme. While the redundancy of the 2nd International was exposed in one fell swoop with the experience of world war, the Bolsheviks went some way towards harnessing the revolution of labour. They did, as we have said, fairly quickly truncate that revolution, and failed to appreciate the actuality of communism: communism not confined to a future goal or possibility, but in process in the form of the proleteriat as negation of value, as universal negativity within capitalism. The notion of the abolition of wage labour present in the immediate class struggle, and by virtue of this, the immediate task of the revolution, was ultimately beyond the thinking of the Bolsheviks. Only Council communism strove to give full expression to this new stage of the anti-capitalist revolution.

The historic significance of council communism lay in the attempt by Marxists to express at the level of theory and programme the new forms of proleterian struggle emerging in the early years of the twentieth century(10). The eventual decline of the council movement (following the revolutionary wave of the 1917-20 period) and the marginalisation of the council communists within the 3rd International, in no way negates this

significance. The workers council form was to spring up again in Spain during the Civil War and in Eastern Europe in the post-2nd WW period (Hungary and Poland), Chile in 1972, Portugal in 1974. It was therefore not an historically limited phenomenon. On the contrary, it represents the highest form taken by the struggle of the working class for its independence from capitalism.

By contrast the tradition and era of state monopoly socialism is at an end. The Stalinist version is now totally discredited, while Social Democracy, in its rapprochement everywhere with neo-liberal economics, has signalled its political exhaustion. Both versions, in their philosophy and programme ultimately served to prevent the independence of the proleteriat from capital. The recurring tendency of the Trotskyist movement to adapt to Stalinism or Keynesianism over the last 50 years only confirms its generic affinity with the state monopoly tradition. Trotskyists wishing to engage in the reconstruction of Marxism will have to look outside their tradition. They will have to look again at the importance attached by the council communists to the workers council form, and appreciate that it represents in practical revolutionary activity precisely what Marx announced in the Theses on Feuerbach, and echoed a few years later in The Class Struggles in France 1848-50:

"A class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated, so soon as it has risen up, finds directly in its own situation the content and the material of its revolutionary activity: foes to be laid low, measures (dictated by the needs of the struggle) to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds to drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task.".

Notes

(1) There is an important literature arguing that Marx's thought has an ontological rather than an epistemological methodological basis, without, it has to be said, concluding that what was involved was an 'end' to philosophy. See for example: Carol Gould, Marx's Social Ontology, London 1978; Scott Meikle, Essentialism in the Thought of Karl Marx, Duckworth 1985; Michel Henry, Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality, Indiana 1985.

(2) For a brilliant exposition of this view, see David MacGregor, The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx, Allen and Unwin 1984.

(3) The dominant form of modern philosophy since Descartes has been epistemology. The reason for this lies in the character of bourgeois society. The capitalist mode of production, supported by the rise of natural science, fosters, and in turn depends on a division of the world into subject and object. This dualism expresses the separation of the direct producers from those 'forces' which control, order and dominate their destiny. Such separation means powerlessness, and a conception of relating to and knowing the world which is reified, one which although created by the producers, appears alien to them, not in fact their creation at all. This is why epistemology elevates into a transhistorical and mystical problem the question of the knowability of the world. Once the producers relate

directly to the world which they in fact create (which is the aim of communism), the special problem of epistemology disappears. Knowledge is then no longer a specialist and esoteric pursuit, but the practical result of the activity of the associated producers.

(4) The ideas here concerning the importance of Marx's overcoming of the subject-object dualism of materialist epistemology were initially developed in my article Commodity Fetishism and Reification, Common Sense No.23, July 1998.

(5) Contained in 'Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism', Edited by D.A.Smart, Pluto Press 1978.

(6) For the development of the ideas of the council communists and the experience of the workers councils, see The Origins of the Movement for Workers Councils in Germany 1918-29, Workers Voice 1968 (first published in Dutch in 'Radencommunismus' No.3, 1938, the journal of the Council-Communist Group of Holland; Mark Shipway, Council Communism, in Non-Market Socialism in the 19th and 20th centuries, Ed Rubel and Crump, MacMillan 1987; many documents and articles relating to the workers council movement are reproduced in Self-Governing Socialism: A Reader, Volume One, Ed Horvat, Markovic, Supek and Kramer, New York 1975.

(7) For three accounts of this, see Maurice Brinton, The Bolsheviks and Workers Control, Solidarity 1970; Alexandra Kollontai, The Workers Opposition (1921), Solidarity 1968; The Experience of the Factory Committees in the Russian Revolution, Council Communist Pamphlet No.2, 1984.

(8) Anton Pannekoek in his 1938 book 'Lenin as philosopher' argues that Lenin had adopted the 'middle class materialism' of Plekhanov. By this he meant a version of materialism which represented no qualitative advance on the mechanical and contemplative materialism of the 18th century, which Marx criticised in his Theses on Feurbach.

(9) Sean Matgamna in his introduction to 'The Fate of the Russian Revolution', Phoenix 1998, criticises Trotsky for constructing a 'metaphysics of the nationalised economy', based on the idea that the statified property of the USSR was sufficient to define it as a workers state. Matgamna argues that there is in Trotsky's thinking, a logic to the forward march of the productive forces under state property which leads to socialism even if the working class does not hold power, a logic which was bequeathed to the post-Trotsky Fourth International. The significance of Matgamna's introduction is that he takes the critique of Trotsky and mainstream Trotskyism as far as it is possible to go while remaining part of that tradition.

(10) see for example, Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory, Ed., Douglas Kellner, University of Texas Press 1977.

Book Reviews

Jon Stewart (ed)
The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader, Critical and Interpretive Essays,
State University of New York Press, 1998. ISBN 0-7914-3536-9

Reviewed by Dr John Glasford

The publication of this anthology of readings on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* probably represents a zenith of the so-called 'Hegel Renaissance' in academic scholarship. In his previous volume, *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, Jon Stewart brought together several decades of papers on Hegel which attempted to put the record straight on issues such as Hegel's alleged Prussianism, his faulty logic and the 'End of History'. In this volume Stewart collects over two decades of papers on the subject of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Given that Patricia Jagentowicz Mills has also edited her own anthology called *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel* [1996], its difficult to see what material anthologies on Hegel might turn to next.

In my view, this volume is less important than Patricia Mill's anthology of Feminist writings on Hegel because it is to that tradition that one must turn if one wants a really critical reading of the 'immanence' tradition. The feminist scholars take Hegel to task in a way in which many of the essays in the *Phenomemology Reader* do not. For example, did Hegel describe a system worth defending or is the dialectical reading more in keeping with the spirit of Hegel, in other words, do the implications of his method go well beyond his own findings. Interestingly it is the essay by Patricia Mills called "Hegel's Antigone", p243, which is most critical of the master. Rather, most of the essays in this volume tend to adopt a strong explanatory thesis rather than take a firm critical position.

The editor of this volume has a number of ambitious objectives, some of which are fulfilled more successfully than others. The primary goal, he says, is to make the *Phenomenology* more accessible to students and general readers by making some of these classic essays more readily available. However, accessibility might be more elusive than the editor might have wished. Despite another stated objective being an attempt to "enter into conversation" with Hegel, Karlheinz Nusser's principal engagement with Habermas's reading of Hegel on the French Revolution, for example, only demonstrates the difficulty of engaging with interlocutors who are not present, since the new student to Hegel is

unlikely to have much detailed knowledge of either Habermas's chapter from his book *Theory and Practice* or of Hegel's political theory. In other words, Karlheinz Nusser's subtle manoeuvring might appear somewhat strange to the noviciate. Thus my suspicion is that new students may have more trouble with some of these essays than the editor would either want or anticipate.

On the other hand, this anthology definitely makes such recent scholarship more available to students. As someone who has reluctantly expended a great deal of energy and many exasperating hours in our under-stocked libraries trying to locate and photocopy many of these essays, it can hardly come as much comfort to me that they are now all helpfully garnered into one collection. However, this anthology will no doubt come as a relief to students everywhere when confronted by University course options on Hegel's *Phenomenology* today.

Another stated objective of the collection is to present the "very best" of Hegel interpretation which has accumulated during this 'Hegel Renaissance', and here of course, the success of the editor is far more difficult to judge. There is no doubt that all of the essays in this collection are of the highest standard, and many, such as Alasdair MacIntyre's seminal essay "Hegel on Faces and Skulls" [which was originally published in 1976] helped to elevate, if not rescue, Hegel's languid epistemological reflections before a sceptical analytic world. On the other hand, satisfying the academic world, analytic or otherwise, is one thing and writing which might prove to be influential is yet another.

Despite the fact that this collection presents essays written as far back as 1967 beginning with George Armstrong Kelly's "Notes on Hegel's 'Lordship and Bondage', there is no inclusion of any of Kojéve's material from the same period. Kojéve wrote a number of interesting essays on Hegel which had a kind of Marxist-Heideggerean slant for Bataille's journal *Critique* in the late sixties and early seventies. Neither is there anything by Koyre, Hyppolite, the Frankfurt School or Habermas, all of whom wrote interesting and highly influential pieces on Hegel and the *Phenomenology* during the same period. And only slightly less influential are the anti-Hegelian reactions to this group which developed into the anti-psychiatry movement, Laing, Lacan, Foucault. Neither is there anything from the deconstructionist pens of Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida. Or for that matter, neither is there anything from a number of influential Hegelian Marxist's such as Lukàcs or Gramsci. Indeed, while many of the academic essays in Stewarts volume do serve to curb the worst excesses of the Hegelian 'fringes' they have hardly proved decisive in any other regard and especially within the more general world of European culture, which is something one could not say of Kojéve or the Frankfurt School. While it is true that we can hardly expect that everyone make as much of Hegel's *Phenomenology* as Kojéve did, we can surely expect that in teaching Hegel we owe it to students to demonstrate the cultural pull of such creative thinking whether one approves of the exegetical methods employed or not. Many of the most influential interpreters of Hegel that I have mentioned have probably

been excluded because they do not fulfil the necessary requirements of academic 'objectivity'.

Of course one objection here might well be that this volume attempts to present a systematic and unified approach to Hegel interpretation which the more influential writers I mentioned cannot meet. As Stewart himself says in his well written introduction, "The main objective of this collection is,... to understand Hegel's *Phenomenology* as he intended it to be understood, namely, as a systematic enterprise", p18. Leaving aside the fact that few did more to systematise the *Phenomenology* than Hyppolite, for example, or that Hyppolite's treatment of the *Unhappy Consciousness* is both scholarly and sensitive, the fact is that the collection of essays in this anthology are not organised around any common methodological approach and do not present any definitive understanding of Hegel's masterpiece. For example, David W. Price's *literary* reading attempts to demonstrate that Hegel's incorporation of quotes from Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* into his own text, also demonstrates an allegorical refinement in Hegel which allows him to avoid ..."the false unity of the symbol", through his ..."interplay of texts that invert, pervert, and illuminate one another while at the same time preserving their separateness", p280. Whilst interesting, this approach has little in common with the straightforward historical contextualisation of Moltke S. Gram in the piece "Moral and Literary Ideals in Hegel's Critique of "The Moral World-View", where it is announced that to understand the section of *Spirit* after the French Revolution up to "Religion", one must read it against the backdrop of ..."themes and ideas to be found in the literature of the German *Sturm und Drang*" period, p307. Here Gram presents a 'history of literature' reading, since Hegel is primarily viewed through his particular rejection of Jacobi's novels *Woldemar* (1777) and *Allwills Briefsammlung* (1775). Again, interesting in its own right but hardly an approach which follows naturally from Price's more deconstructive reading.

Despite these failings this *Phenomenology* reader does offer the new student of Hegel a representative sample of scholarly activity in the field and all in one convenient collection It is organised in chapters which closely follow the structure of the *Phenomenology*, so there is at least one offering on every chapter of the *Phenomenology*. It also offers three new essays in translation, two from German and one from French - KarlHeinz Nusser's essay "The French Revolution and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*", Jean-Louis Viellard Baron's "Natural Religion: An investigation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*", and finally, Harald Schöndorf's "The Othering (Becoming Other) and reconciliation of God in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*". Despite its limitations this reader will be a welcome addition to reading lists of secondary literature on Hegel.

Ute Bublitz
Beyond Philosophy: Reconciliation and Rejection

Three Essays on Aristotle and Hegel
London, Universal Texts, 1998

Reviewed by Adrian Wilding

Despite its title, this book is first and foremost a work of philosophy. Its primary inspiration is Aristotle and the idea found in Aristotle of an *ethics* - the exploration of a 'good life', of the possibilities of human action and the means to achieve them. It is also indebted to the tradition of critical philosophy forged by Kant and extended by Hegel. Here the emphasis is on contradiction, on the conflictual nature of the world and our equally contradictory understanding of it. The author aims at nothing less than an exploration of human potential and the ways in which the contemporary world fails to measure up to that potential. In so doing, some radical alternatives will be offered to the social and political structure of the modern world. The result is a treatise in which ethics and critique combine in a fascinating, if problematic, manner.

The book's title - the apparent opposition of 'reconciliation and rejection' - provides the key to Bublitz's project since both are ways of reacting to a world in which suffering and devastation have become everyday. Both are temptations to which thought succumbs but each is in its own way flawed. 'Reconciliation to the world as it is today is no longer possible' whilst 'rejection can never carry out what it implicitly requests: a thorough transformation of life' (p. vii) The task is to steer a path between these two tempting alternatives.

The book is divided into three essays, each guided by a contradiction which the author seeks to criticaly engage. The first is entitled 'Definition and Friendship' and takes its cue from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, in particular from Book VIII on the subject of 'Friendship'. Bublitz has in mind Aristotle's view of friendship as a highly political phenomenon: 'Friendship is...that which holds states together and which is closer to the lawgiver's heart than justice' (*Ethics*, VIII, 1); 'when men are friends they have no need of justice'; 'friends hold everything in common' (*Politics*, II, 5). Bublitz illustrates the kind of complex identities involved in the relation of friendship in order to develop a contrast with the act of 'definition' in which the identities of those involved in a relationship remain fixed. 'Definition' here seems close to what Hegel terms 'one-sided and unequal recognition' whilst the fluidity and reciprocity of friendship recalls Hegelian 'mutual recognition'. Bublitz shows how relations based on definition have come to dominate our mode of interaction.

Part Two is entitled 'War and Abstraction' and here again the intent is to illustrate a mode of relation to which we have become accustomed, but this time Bublitz's sources are drawn from modern rather than classical texts. Bublitz quotes Hegel's ironic rehearsal of Hobbes: 'civil society is the battlefield of individual private interest, of all against all' (*Philosophy of Right* para. 289) Hobbesian 'warre'

becomes the condition of that very society which had supposedly left its state of nature. She shows, following Hegel, how bourgeois society thrives upon the natural enmity of property owners who each recognise not an individual but a mere definition. 'War' and 'abstraction' are two sides of the same alienated coin and the coming together of states in destructive battles is merely a consistent extreme: 'under abstraction's rule, the world can only show a foreign face because it has been forcefully moulded into that shape' (p.107)

The third essay is headed 'Art and Life' and here the author attempts to show the ever-widening gap between the classical ideals set out in Part One and our own modern times. Bublitz's reflections on the creative act are the most eloquent passages of the book, offering artistic work as a paradigm of free and unalienated activity, a move which recalls Schiller's 'aesthetic education of man', the utopian vision of life lived as art. Bublitz shows what happens to creativity under conditions of property ownership and the division of labour and the ways in which philosophy has tried to understand and reverse this trend. In this Bublitz's sympathies lie with the romantic strand of modern philosophy, its classical inspiration and its sense of loss – of community, of friendship, of Aristotelian *phronesis* or 'practical wisdom'.

It is in its treatment of modern philosophy that one begins to sense the weakness of Bublitz's argument, because in stressing its nostalgia for the classical, the radicality of modern (particularly idealist) philosophy is left out. Distinguishing not only between ancient and modern philosophy (Aristotle and Hegel are today too-often elided as thinkers of 'community') but also between figures within the modern tradition, would have produced a very different work. In this sense one can place a question mark next to the very project of an 'ethics', particularly when it enlists Hegel to its cause. Hegel's idea of phenomenology invokes not morals (*Sitte*) but 'ethical life' (*Sittlichkeit*), the world within which moral decisions are made. The idea is to contextualise what we might be tempted to see as absolutes of right and wrong, irrespective of history, time or place. Thus Hegel criticises Kant for expressing an 'ought', a moral prescription, something which can only deflect thinking from the more pertinent task of examining what *is*. When Bublitz writes that 'there is an irreconcilable contradiction between what ought to be and a reality which denies what ought to be' (p. 160-1), Kant's infinite task of morality has been restated in Hegel's name, and Hegel's radicality has been overlooked.

The ethical content of the book is reflected in its form and style and this too raises misgivings. Here one could usefully contrast it with a work which in other respects shares its sense of historical devastation and disillusionment: Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, (written 1944-7). Unlike Bublitz, Adorno consciously thematised the difficulty of writing an ethical treatise in the wake of war, where the sheer momentum of history had forced philosophy to the sidelines. Adorno's

title plays upon Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*, or 'grand ethics'; the book itself redefines the project of moral philosophy in both form and content, giving it more modest yet no less potent aims, and never losing faith with the resources philosophy offers.

With Bublitz the sense of historical devastation threatens to tip the scales away from critique back towards 'grand ethics', undermining its own Hegelian pretensions. This is most evident in the pages devoted to war and modernity. At certain points, war comes to resemble that perverse 'course of the world' (*Weltlauf*) against which Hegel saw the individual vainly protesting (*Phenomenology of Spirit* chapter 5: 'Virtue and the Course of the World'), whilst the concept of 'friendship' becomes a 'law of the heart' (ibid.), ill-equipped to alter that course.

Recognising these flaws should not deter the reader from exploring what is a thought-provoking and important work. The sheer scope of this book has something admirable about it. Despite itself, it has proved that there is something very much alive in the philosophical traditions to which it refers. The move 'beyond philosophy' seems to bring us back to philosophy - perhaps rightly so, since it is in negotiating this tradition that critical thinking finds its greatest resources.

Fred Moseley & Martha Campbell (eds)
New Investigations of Marx's Method
Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1997, pp. 205.

Reviewed by Derek Kerr.

This book is a successor to an earlier book by the same group of authors which was entitled *Marx's Method in Capital: A Reexamination* (Humanities Press, 1993). *New Investigations,* like the previous book, is concerned with the methodological principles that underlie Marx's theory in Capital and is based on the premise that 'a proper evaluation of Marx's theory, and especially its logical coherence, requires first and foremost a clear and thorough understanding of Marx's theory in terms of its own logical structure' (p.1). In introducing the book, Fred Moseley suggests that there are three prevailing interpretations of Marx's logical method in Capital: (1) the logical-historical interpretation suggested first by Friedrich Engels and later developed by R.L. Meek; (2) the 'successive approximations' interpretation introduced by Henryk Grossman and adopted by Paul Sweezy; and (3) the neo-Ricardian or Sraffian interpretation based on linear production theory and represented by M. Morishima and I. Steedman, and which has been widely adopted in recent years. The authors of *New Investigations*, however, reject all three of these prevailing interpretations of Marx's method. Their alternative

interpretations are revealed in seven substantive chapters which deals with various issues such as the meaning of dialectical logic, the relation between Marx and Hegel, Marx's emphasis on social form, the commodity as starting point in Marx's theory, Marx's theory of money, Marx's distinction between capital in general and competition, and Marx's critique of bourgeois economics. As Moseley suggests, this book represents continued progress on these important topics and leads toward a different understanding of Marx's 'logical method' in Capital. Each chapter offers the reader some interesting insight, but for this reviewer the most stimulating chapters are the ones written by Christopher J. Arthur ('Against the Logical-Historical Method: Dialectical Derivation versus Linear Logic'), Paul Mattick Jr. (Theory as Critique: On the Argument in *Capital*), and by Martha Campbell ('Marx's Theory of Money: A Defence').

Christopher Arthur's chapter starts with a critique of Engels' views on the structure of Marx's *Capital*. This argues that Engels perceived the structure of *Capital* as being a corrected reflection of the historical development of the capitalist system in which each moment is exhibited at the stage when it attains its 'classical form'. This view, which became known as the 'logical-historical method' was dominant until recently and influenced the understanding of *Capital*. It even influenced those who did not rely on the historical claims made by Engles, but instead replaced the historical story with what Meek described as 'mythodology' or with what Sweezy designated the 'method of successive approximations'. Such a reading suggests that *Capital* expresses a *linear* logic, starting from a real (Engels), or imaginary (Meek), or modelled (Sweezy) stage of 'simple commodity production' and then moving to a more complex stage of capitalist production. Arthur demonstrates that Marx did not adhere to such a method but instead utilised *dialectical* logic. Consequently, Marx's starting point is not some precapitalist stage of 'simple commodity production'. Rather the commodity with which Marx's analysis begins must be considered as the simplest immediate *universal* element presented by capital in its process of production. That is, this posited starting point is itself a result of the historical development of a concrete whole to maturity, capitalism. From this starting point, the way is open to systematically *derive* capitalism. The chapter is therefore devoted to laying bare this understanding of Marx's method through the notion of totality and the dialectical derivation of categories based on immanent necessity.

The Chapter by Paul Mattick Jr reveals a different understanding of Marx's method. Mattick observes that although *Capital* is recognised to be a critique of political economy, this is generally not taken to have important implications for the structure of Marx's argument. As a consequence, this leads to the idea of 'Marxist economics' as a school of economic theory contending with others. Discussion then focuses on the structure of Marx's *Capital* in terms of various logics of theory construction. This indeed appears to be the

approach taken by some of the other authors in this book. Mattick takes a different line and suggests that Marx placed critique at the centre of his approach: 'the architectonic of Marx's work cannot be adequately understood without direct reference to its character as critique not just of rival theories but of what I will call economic discourse' (p. 66). Mattick suggests that Marx starts with the commodity rather than with value because to begin with value as such would have been to begin inside the discourse of economics. To begin with the commodity, however, is implicitly to set the society in which that (economic) discourse has its place against other forms of society in which it does not. That is, transhistorical content must exist always in one form or another, but there is no reason why it must eternally exist in *this* (ie. commodity) form. As Mattick puts it, 'The commodity is discussed before money not because it is a condition of the latter's existence but because, as a unity of use-value and exchange-value, it represents the double character of capitalism, as a particular form of the general imperative of production, whose historically specific aspect is exhibited in money' (p 75). This understanding leads Mattick to suggest that it is the relation of reality (eg. surplus value) to appearance (eg. profit), the relation of social-theoretical explanation to ideological form, that is represented by the structure of Marx's argument in Capital. Mattick follows this suggestion by providing a particular illustrated reading of Capital in which each illustration becomes 'another variation on the basis/superstructure theme' (p. 80).

The chapter by Martha Campbell provides a thought provoking defence of Marx's theory of money. This defence is a response to those who argue that Marx's theory of money is no longer relevant as commodity money has been replaced by credit and symbolic money. Campbell claims that this is not a reason for rejecting Marx's theory because the latter does not depend on money being a commodity. Further, those who focus on the issue of commodity money in Marx's theory miss what is essential. That is, for Campbell the main point of Marx's theory is that social labour must be represented as money in an economy of private and independent producers. Marx only made the assumption that money is a commodity in order to emphasise that, in such a private economy, it is beyond social control. Money need not be a commodity, however, as long as the form it takes remains beyond social control. Campbell develops her argument by suggesting that, for Marx, commodity money was simply a 'heuristic assumption' (p. 106). Commodity money was simply a 'device' that helped Marx establish what money is in the earliest stages of his presentation because it presupposes fewer other characteristics of capitalism than any other form of money. According to Campbell, Marx's claim that money must be a commodity applies at most to its function as a measure of value and even here Marx indicates the path by which a non-commodity could replace commodity money even in its measure of value function. 'This implies that commodity money is meant to be a temporary assumption rather than an essential feature of money' (p 91).

Campbell continues by claiming that while credit money presupposes fully developed capitalism, commodity money, by contrast, does not even presuppose capital. The transition from one form to the other is evidently another instance of the movement from simple to complex (p. 113). This understanding of Marx's method, however, appears to clash with that put forward in the chapter by Chris Arthur noted above.

Turning to the other chapters in the book, Patrick Murray argues that Marx's method can be characterised as 'redoubled empiricism'. 'Redoubled empiricism' is concerned not only with the empirical validity of theories, but also with the connection between theoretical concepts and the social forms of a historically specific type of society. This makes Marx's thought diametrically opposed to the mind-set spanning modern rationalism, British empiricism, and Kantianism, to the 'purist splits' that remain the backbone of our modern philosophical and scientific culture. According to Murray, both objectivism and subjectivism are rooted in 'purist splits' between the empirical and the conceptual and between the objective and the subjective that block redoubled empiricism and any philosophically or scientifically adequate account of social form. But Marx, following Aristotle and Hegel, rejects such an approach and thereby discloses the space for social forms, formal causality, and redoubled empiricism. This, according to Murray, is not only philosophically more attractive and puts Marx in the company of the most astute 'post-dogmatic' empiricists, but it also pays off scientifically (p. 39). That is, in appealing to specific social forms (eg. value) and their power (formal causality), Marx is able to identify, explain and predict social phenomena that theories like classical and neoclassical economics fail to recognise, providing superior accounts of aspects of phenomena recognised by all parties. 'By highlighting its attention to social form and formal causality, we found reasons to judge Marxian theory vastly superior to those two scientific competitors in its explanatory power, and we saw how Marxian critique of purism uncovers where they go wrong to begin with. All of these considerations point up the philosophical and scientific vitality of Marxian theory' (p 57). For this reviewer, however, this approach to establishing 'scientific vitality of Marxian theory' appears to ignore its political project; can neo-classical economics really be classed as a 'scientific competitor' to Marxism?

Tony Smith, in his chapter, tends to take a similar line of argument by considering Marx's method from the perspective of Lakatos's methodology of scientific research programmes and through a confrontation with neo-classical economics. The importance of Lakatos's work for Smith is that it can be understood as a response to the dead-end of naive falsificationism, according to which theories are tested by deducting predictions and then investigating whether the events predicted occur. Smith starts by providing a reading of Marx's Capital that emphasises the systematic dialectic of 'economic categories unifying the work'. This reading is said to make explicit much of the 'hard core' (a Lakatosian concept) of the Marxian study of

capitalism. That is, it generates a set of general questions to orient concrete theoretical and empirical inquiries and it provides guidance regarding which sorts of intellectual techniques are generally suited to the study of events, process and structures in capitalism. Smith then asks whether we can arrive at a better understanding of Marx's systematic dialectic through considering how it contributes to a scientific research programme in Lakatos's sense of the term. This allows Smith to uncover certain shortcomings in Lakatos's framework and compare the Marxian research programme to neoclassical economics. Smith concludes, like Murray above, that the Marxian programme is superior in the study of capitalism on all three relevant grounds: the prediction of novel facts; the account of explanatory mechanisms employed in retroductions; and the scope of the phenomena explained. 'To establish these claims in detail, however, would require more than a single paper' (p. 193) Again this conclusion raises questions. Does, for example, it require more than a single paper to establish political incompatibility?

Fred Moseley returns to more familiar territory in his chapter, which is devoted to a single methodological premise. According to Moseley, 'Marx's theory of the production and distribution of surplus-value is based on a fundamental methodological premise...: that *the total amount of surplus-value is determined prior to and independent of the division of this total amount into individual parts.* The individual parts of surplus-value are then determined at a subsequent stage of the analysis, with the predetermined total amount of surplus-value taken as a given magnitude' (p. 121, emphasis in original). This fundamental premise in Marx's theory marks the distinction between the stages of analysis of 'capital in general' and 'competition' (or 'many capitals'). According to Moseley this fundamental premise has been almost totally overlooked in the vast literature on Marx's theory, at least in English. In particular it has not been recognised in the debate over the so-called 'transformation problem' in Marx's theory. A recognition of this premise reduces the 'transformation' debate to no more than hot air. Moseley therefore sets out in this chapter to provide substantial textual evidence of this important methodological premise in Marx's theory of the production and distribution of surplus-value.

Another important issue is addressed in the chapter by Geert Reuten. Reuten examines the concept of tendency in economic theory in general and specifically in Marx's theory of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. According to Reuten, the least one can say is that tendencies are about 'forces' and (their) 'expressions', or about 'powers' and (their) 'outcomes'. The main divergent notions are either to see powers as tendentially in operation (thus to link tendency to some power entity) or to see the outcome as a tendential occurrence. Reuten first reviews related notions of tendency in the works of Roy Bhaskar and J.S. Mill and then progresses to an analysis of all the editions of *Capital Vol. 3*, including a recently published German edition of

Marx's 1864-65 manuscript without Engels' editing. The latter reveals that there appears to be room for more than one notion of tendency in Marx. The chapter ends with a few tentative remarks on how we can do empirical research on the basis of tendency laws.

To be sure, despite this reviewer's doubts over the direction taken by some of the authors, *New Investigations of Marx's Method* is both an interesting and stimulating book and deserves to be widely read and debated.

Farewell

This is our last issue. Common Sense is no more. We, the editors, are exhausted.

The demise of Common Sense had been on the cards since late 1998. The journal was left hanging in thin air when all but three members of the editorial board threw in their towels. Their decision was motivated by a number of reasons. Some disliked the political direction in which the journal had developed; others simply could no longer cope with the pressures of work. They felt burned out. Since its inception, Common Sense was a shoe-string operation. Financial trouble was a continuing nuisance and this is still the case. We are grateful to our authors: they kept submissions coming in on a regular basis. We are grateful to our subscribers. Thanks to you we were able to continue as long as we did. Yet, this is the end: Over the last few years, the editorial collective declined in numbers and this despite the fact that more people joined the editorial board. The committed core got smaller and smaller and burnt itself out. There was, then, a political problem: political work without enthusiasm, motivation, and endeavour transforms the question of politics into a question of administration that is discharged with an air of indifference. The core group was not indifferent but exhausted itself in its constant quest to maintain sanity in the face of the administrative indifference of the many. Indifference stopped Common Sense in its tracks.

We have decided to publish this final issue to say farewell properly. We did not wish to disappear as if we had not existed over the last 12 years. We wanted to leave with a proper issue to celebrate what we have been, with our heads up and with pride. We no longer will write to you requesting that you renew your subscription. We ask those with standing orders to cancel them. We ask those who are due future issues to let us keep their money as a donation to pay off our debts. Of course, if you wish to get your money back, write to us and we will see what can be done. We ask all our readers to order back-issues to help us to make ends meet. We ask all our friends to send donations, small or big, in support.

Good-bye

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