

# NST

## Nature, Society, and Thought

a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

Vol. 3, No. 4

1990

**NST**

University of Minnesota, Physics Building  
116 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112



Nature, Society, and Thought

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a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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VOL. 3, NO. 4: (OCTOBER 1990)

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Cover design by Prockat

VOLUME 3, NUMBER

JULY 1990

NST: NATURE, SOCIETY, AND THOUGHT (ISSN 0890-6130). Published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by MEP Publications, 1771 Selby Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104. Second-class postage paid at St. Paul, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *NST: Nature, Society, and Thought*, University of Minnesota, 116 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

*Subscriptions:* U.S.A./Great Britain, one year, individuals \$15/£, institutions \$28/£8.50; two years, individuals \$28/£18.50, institutions \$56/£37. Other countries, add \$4 for postage for each year. Single copies: individuals \$5/£3, institutions \$10/£6

Subscription and editorial address: *NST* University of Minnesota, 116 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455 (tel. 612/922-7993 or 612/647-9748).

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CALL FOR PAPERS

**Interdisciplinary Conference on Methods  
in the Social and Natural Sciences and the  
Humanities**

**Sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Social  
Sciences and the Marxist Educational Press**

□

**Beijing, 17–19 June 1991**

The conference will bring together Chinese and North American scholars to discuss the methodology of research and teaching in the various disciplines. Papers or proposals for papers by North American participants should be sent to each of the following addresses by 10 March 1991 (completed papers are due 20 April 1991):

Prof. Clark Everling  
School of Labor Studies  
Empire State College  
330 West 42 Street  
New York, NY 10036

Marxist Educational Press  
215 Ford Hall  
University of Minnesota  
224 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Papers submitted will be considered for publication in the MEP Journal *Nature, Society, and Thought*

## **Announcements**

### **Critique of Methods in the Social and Natural Sciences and the Humanities<sup>^</sup>**

**Sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and  
the Marxist Educational Press, Beijing, 17–19 June 1991**

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Marxist Educational are cosponsoring an interdisciplinary conference on critiques of methodological approaches in the social and natural sciences and the humanities to be held in Beijing, 17–19 June 1991. (See the call for papers on the facing page.) The three-day conference will take place within the framework of an MEP tour of educational, cultural, and economic institutions and sites in Beijing (including a visit to the Great Wall), Shanghai, and Xian (site of the 2200-year old tomb of the Emperor Qin Huang Di guarded by thousands of life-sized terra-cotta warriors). During the visit to Shanghai and Beijing the participants will have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the economic and ideological implications the joint ventures between Chinese and foreign firms and other aspects of what the Chinese refer to as a regulated market economy.

The cost per person for the conference/tour with departure from San Francisco on 15 June 1991 (return on 25 June 1991) is \$1995 double occupancy and \$2295 single occupancy at first-class hotels. If there are at least ten persons who prefer a shorter visit, limited to Beijing and a return to San Francisco on 20 June, the cost per person will be \$1750 double occupancy and \$1950 single occupancy. Visa fee, departure taxes, and trip-cancellation insurance are included. The costs indicated are based on current estimates. For persons wishing to depart from other cities, special add-on fares are available.

All participants in the tour are welcome to attend the conference.

For an application to participate in the tour or for more information, write to MEP, 215 Ford Hall, University of Minnesota, 224 Church Street, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455 (tel. 612/922-7993).

### **Other Conferences**

#### **The Future of Socialism: 3d Conference of North American and Cuban Philosophers, Havana, 24 May–4 June 1991**

The conference, sponsored by the Marxist Educational Press, the Radical Philosophy Association, the Society for the Philosophical Study of Marxism, and the Society for Women in Philosophy and History and hosted by the University of Havana's Faculty of Philosophy and History will bring together North American and Cuban philosophers as well as others in the humanities and the social sciences. See page 400 for more details.

#### **1991 Korean–U.S. Scholars Interdisciplinary Colloquium, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 11–13 October 1991**

The colloquium, sponsored by Korean Association of Social Scientists and the Marxist Educational Press, will provide an unusual opportunity for faculty and students in the United States to discuss problems of mutual interest with scholars from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The colloquium program will include sessions on U.S.- Korean relations, removal of obstacles to the reunification of Korea, as well as general problems of Marxist scholarship. Papers or proposals for paper should be sent to Professor Gerald M. Erickson, Department of Classics, 310 Folwell Hall, University of Minnesota, 9 Pleasant Street, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. Completed papers are due 1 June, 1991.



# **A Critique of the Segmentation Theory of Racial Discrimination**

**Rudy Fichtenbaum**

## ***Introduction***

Marxists have traditionally argued that racism and national chauvinism are tools of the capitalist class, used to divide the working class (Perlo 1975; Reich 1981). The main reason for dividing the working class is to ensure the maximum exploitation of the working class and to prevent them from organizing to overthrow the capitalist system. The implication is that racism and national chauvinism are opposed to the objective interests of all workers.

Recently this view has been challenged, this time by radical theorists using the labor-market segmentation theory. Bonacich (1976), Darity (1982), Glenn (1985), and Williams (1987) have all argued that white workers have a vested interest in crowding minority workers into certain occupations to keep their wages low and consequently raise the wages of white workers.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that this challenge to traditional Marxist thinking on racism and national chauvinism is fundamentally flawed. Specifically, this paper will argue that the segmentation hypothesis is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of classes and of the dialectical nature of contradictions between and within these classes in capitalist society. Section one will present a critique of the segmentation view from a class perspective. Section two will discuss the dialectical nature of classes in capitalist society; their relationship with ideology will be explored. In particular, the influence of racism on white workers, despite its opposition to their class interest, will be explained. Finally, the article will conclude with a discussion of the implications of the segmentation hypothesis for working-class strategy.[]

*Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol.3, no.41 (1990)

***Race and class struggle***

Although racist doctrines may be traced to antiquity, the use of racism to systematically oppress and exploit a group of people and its systematic development as an ideology originated with the development of capitalism during the colonial era. Specifically, racism emerged as a justification for the existence of the slave trade after the slave trade was attacked as being inhuman (Montagu 1945). The slave trade, along with European colonization of the world, were two of the main vehicles for the primitive accumulation of capital and were carried out by capitalist merchants (Marx 1967, vol. 1). One must therefore conclude that the ideology and practice of racism are products of the development of capitalism.

Segmentation theorists argue that racism is a product of capitalism but not a product of capitalists. They argue that capitalism is a system of wage labor and that workers are forced to compete with each other for scarce jobs. Consequently workers form groups along racial lines to insulate themselves from the vagaries of the market. Thus, Williams (1984) begins her analysis with a quote from Cox (1948) to illustrate that “racial exploitation and race prejudice” originate with capitalism. However, she goes on to note that

capitalists certainly benefit from racial divisions within the work force and introduce new colored workers for the same reason that entrenched white workers resist their advance. . . . White workers rational pursuit of their own self interest leads them to restrict the occupational opportunities of black workers. (Williams 1984, 45)

In other words, while capitalists benefit from racism, it is the pursuit of self-interest on the part of white workers that is seen as the causal factor. Alternately, one might argue that Williams’s argument implies that both white capitalist and white workers benefit from racism and therefore are both equally responsible. Expanding on this argument, Williams writes

Workers seeking protection from labor market competition thus have reason to develop shelters so as to limit the creation and deployment of low cost replacements. Effective shelter building whether through unions, licensing practices, credentialism, or naked coercion—contributes to the reproduction of divisions of the working class. (1987, 7)[

A similar analysis is offered by Darity when he writes:

The more established groups within the working class always will seek to protect themselves from being relegated to the reserve army. . . . The real basis for discrimination in the labor market stems from the efforts of groups already in the jobs to guarantee their positions. (1982, 133)[

These arguments are completely ahistorical, ignoring the origins of racism. Racism originated with the capitalist class and it alone, as a class, was the beneficiary of slavery and the slave trade. Slave labor was a form of cheap labor which could be used to under cut the wages of white workers. It was for this reason that Marx remarked that "labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded" (1967,1:301). However, just as the Luddites thought that their problems were caused by machines, many white workers saw slaves and, later, free African-American labor as a threat to their jobs and wages. These ideas were of course nourished and embellished by the ideologists of the bourgeoisie as a means of preventing white workers from understanding the true source of their problems.

The assertion that white workers are responsible for racism leaves out the fact that the essence of capitalism is the class struggle between workers and capitalists. Implicitly, proponents of the segmentation view accept the permanent existence of capitalism, giving up on the class struggle, and therefore concentrate on conflict within the working class. The notion that white workers as a group control the labor process under capitalism and can make decisions about hiring, firing, wages, and working conditions cannot be squared with the facts. In reality, the only control workers have over the work process comes through trade unions. However, Williams sees unions as part of the problem rather than part of the solution when she argues that unions, for example, are shelters which divide workers.

In developing her view of racial inequality, Williams goes beyond the mere statement that white workers benefit from racism. In fact she asserts that capitalists, in many cases, are opposed to racism. She writes:

Capitalists confronting either pressures from competing entrepreneurs, the victories of rising demands of entrenched workers, or accessible, less costly labor power will have reason to challenge extant racial . . . wage hierarchies if the expected benefits from so doing outweigh the costs associated with the disruption of work relations. (1987, 7)[

This leads to the conclusion that, rather than minorities and white workers struggling with capitalists over exploitation, white workers struggle over “the reproduction of racial domination...in labor markets” (7), and presumably African-American and other minority workers struggle with white workers against this “racial domination.” Ultimately, the real blame for racism lies with white workers who “deploy racist ideologies as a justification for protecting their gains from outsiders (10).” Thus, Williams concludes that “racism draws life from the fact that entrenched workers perceive new workers as a threat to be used against them.”

This “new theory of racial inequality” amounts to blaming one of the victims of racism. Profits come from exploiting all workers and the competitive nature of capitalist production forces the capitalists to seek maximum profits. The use of lower-paid African-American and other minority workers is merely a device to hold down the wages of all workers. Clearly, African-American and other minority workers bear the brunt of this strategy, but this does not change the fact that the wages of white workers are lower than they would be in the presence of a united militant working class. The fact that white workers in the South earn less than white workers in other parts of the country is clear evidence that white workers as a group do not gain from racism (Perlo 1975). The historically low wages in the South are directly tied to the existence of racism. Slaves constituted a large pool of cheap labor, undercutting the wages of white workers, and the use of racism prevented Southern workers from uniting and organizing unions to the same extent as workers in other regions.

Racism in the United States is not caused by the beliefs or the actions of individuals. Rather it is institutionalized in our society, promoted by government, laws, political parties, the media, the schools, popular culture, etc. Racist ideas are transmitted through individuals, but these ideas are a reflection of institutional processes which are racist. To argue that workers are the underlying force causing or even perpetuating racism is tantamount to saying that white workers control these institutions.

In reality, the institutions that workers do control have played an important part in fighting racism and working for unity. History has shown that unions play an important role in reducing competition among all workers, African-American, other minorities, and white, and uniting them in class struggle against the capitalist class. Of course, like all other developments, the position of unions on the question of racism has been contradictory.

There is no doubt that from 1790 to the mid-1930s unions, for

the most part, were built on a craft basis and excluded African- American and other minority workers. Nevertheless, there are still examples of unity during this period and more importantly, the most advanced working-class forces, African-American and white, have always recognized and fought for unity on the basis of equality. Thus, the great abolitionist leader, Frederick Douglass, wrote:

Their [the Black workers] cause is one with the labor class all over the world. The labor unions of the country should not throw away this colored element of strength. . . . It is a great mistake for any class of laborers to isolate itself and thus weaken the bonds of brotherhood between those on whom the burden and hardships of labor fall. The fortunate ones of the earth, who are abundant in land and money, . . . may be indifferent to the appeal for justice at this point, but the labor classes cannot be indifferent. (Foner 1976, 2)

In writing this, Douglass is clearly expressing an understanding of the class nature of capitalism, which objectively requires unions to fight for the unity of all workers. A similar sentiment was expressed by Robert Baker in a speech before the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn in 1902:

The more organized labor champions the cause of all labor, unorganized as well as organized, black as well as white, the greater will be the victories; the more lasting, the more permanent, the more beneficial and the more far-reaching will be its successes. . . . It must persistently and vigorously attack special privilege in every form; it must make the cause of humanity, regardless of race, color, or sex its cause. (Foner 1976, x)

After the organization of the CIO in the mid-1930s, the trade- union movement, organizing workers along industrial lines, took a stronger stand against racism and for unity (Foner 1976). Did this mean that the problem of racism disappeared from the trade-union movement? Clearly the answer is no. However, the positive steps taken by the CIO represented a new and higher level of class consciousness on the part of the working class and it is no coincidence that the founding of the CIO marked the beginning of a new period of intensified class struggle in the United States. Today, unions, and in particular, industrial unions, are a leading force in the fight against racism. They were a key part of the anti-Bork coalition; they have played a key role in the anti- Apartheid movement and, most recently, a significant number of

trade unionists joined in supporting the Rainbow Coalition and the Jesse Jackson candidacy. While it is undeniable that racism is still a powerful and pervasive force in the trade-union movement and in the working class, it is also true that the most advanced forces of the working class--African-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian, Native American, and white--have played a leading role in the struggle against racism and for unity.

### ***The dialectics of class struggle***

To understand why, on the one hand, white workers can act against their class interest, and, in doing so, act against their self-interest, and, on the other hand, why, ultimately, white workers can be won over to the struggle against racism, one must understand the dialectics of the class struggle and the nature of class consciousness.

Capitalism is a system based on private ownership of the means of production and the use of wage labor. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between social production and private appropriation (Marx 1967, 3:250). Social production refers to cooperation and a division of labor both within and among firms. The social nature of capitalist production brings workers together and forces them to cooperate in the process of production. Private appropriation, however, implies private ownership of the means of production, which is the basis for competition among capitalists. In fact, it is this competition among capitalists which necessitates the drive for maximum profits and for the maximum exploitation of the working class.

Every exploitative socioeconomic formation involves antagonistic contradictions between the ruling class and the exploited class. Yet under each socioeconomic formation the class struggle develops according to objective laws based on the fundamental contradiction of the particular socioeconomic formation. Under feudalism, although class struggle between the feudal aristocracy and the working masses (serfs) weakened feudal society, the major force which revolutionized feudal society was the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels, 6: 486–88).

Under capitalism, the conflict between the working class and the capitalist class is mediated by the contradiction between social production and private appropriation. The socialization of production creates a working class, dispossessed of any means of production, that is forced to work together. However, they are forced to cooperate under conditions that promote the maximum exploitation of the working class. In contrast, the capitalists, while clearly having an antagonistic relationship with the working class, are at the same

time forced to compete with each other. This implies the existence of antagonistic contradictions among the capitalists themselves as individual owners of the means of production as well as between the capitalist class and the working class.

The antagonistic contradictions among capitalists, rooted in a system of private appropriation, imply that any unity achieved by the capitalist class, as a class, is temporary at best. These contradictions give rise to shifting alliances within the capitalist class and have made war and national conflict inevitable under capitalism. Thus, it is incorrect to view the capitalist class as a homogeneous group, united at all times in their struggle against the working class. The dialectics of the class struggle results in unity that is relative and competitive struggle that is absolute. This aspect of class struggle is a reflection of the fundamental law of dialectics, the unity and struggle of opposites.

The working class is formed not on the basis of choice, but as part of the process of primitive accumulation in which serfs and petty producers are forced off of the land. They are thrown together, possessing only their labor power, and are therefore forced to sell their only possession in order to survive, that is, it becomes a class "in itself." However, the same process that gives rise to the working class as a class "in itself" also creates a class that is a revolutionary class, a class "for itself," not only because it is oppressed, but because it is the only class that can objectively be united against the capitalist class (Marx and Engels 1975, 6:494–95).

Does this mean that class consciousness and the recognition of the need for a united working class arise automatically, that is, does the working class automatically become a class "for itself"? Clearly the answer to this question is no. The development of class consciousness itself is a process, one which initially begins around purely economic issues and then develops later in the political, social, and ideological spheres. The laws of dialectics apply to the working class as well as to the capitalist class, and, in the process of becoming a class "for itself," contradictions emerge that result in conflict within the working class. However, there is a fundamental objective difference between the nature of contradictions between and within the two classes. Contradictions within the working class are nonantagonistic, which means that they can be resolved without one group eliminating the other.

The contradiction among the capitalist class and the working class is an antagonistic contradiction because it is based on one class exploiting the other class. The contradictions between capitalists, which express themselves through the law of competition, are also

antagonistic because the competition leads to one capitalist's gain being another capitalist's loss. Finally, the contradictions within the working class are nonantagonistic because the only way the working class can improve its condition is by struggling to end all exploitation, which means that unity is objectively the essential interest of the working class and conflict is nonessential. For these reasons Marx believed that the working class was objectively the only force for revolutionizing capitalist society and building socialism.

The process of social development involves both objective and subjective aspects. This is what Marx meant when he said that "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves" (Marx and Engels 1975 11: 103). The fact that humans are conscious beings, who engage in purposeful activity, means that subjective elements play an important role in the process of social development. In the sphere of the class struggle, subjective elements are reflected in the level of class consciousness. The development of class consciousness on the part of the working class is a process by which the working class gains a collective understanding of the fundamental objective processes driving the development of capitalism, and in doing so it recognizes its historic role in transforming society.

The development of productive relations, that is, objective class relationships, which takes place independently of people's will, forms the economic base of society. Upon this economic basis is erected a superstructure which consists of social ideas, social organizations and institutions, and ideological relations. While it is true that the superstructure is erected on the economic base, there is no simple one-way causal relationship between the two. Social ideas, social organizations and institutions, and ideological relations reflect the economic base, but at the same time are relatively independent, and at times appear to have a life of their own. At times, the superstructure lags behind the economic base and at other times ideas arise that are in advance of the economic base.

Social psychology, which is an aspect of social consciousness, consists of ideas transmitted from past generations; feelings, aspirations, and sentiments characteristic of a class or social group; and traditions, customs, and habits reflecting the thoughts and feelings of social classes and groups. Clearly racism is a part of the social consciousness or social psychology of white workers and as such it influences their actions, usually in a spontaneous way. A higher form of social consciousness can be seen in ideology, the political, ethical, and philosophical views that provide a justification of a



particular social system and reflect the direct interest of a particular class. As such, ideology influences social psychology. More importantly, however, ideology leads to organized action on the part of a particular group or class. Racist ideology, therefore leads to organized movements of racists such as the Ku Klux Klan. In contrast, socialist ideology leads to organized activity aimed at uniting the working class in struggle against the capitalist class.

The material forces of capitalism result in cooperative activity among workers and it is this objective process that creates the material conditions for the development of class consciousness and an understanding of the need for unity. However, the development of workers' consciousness is a complex and contradictory process influenced not only by their exploitation as a class, but by a variety of subjective processes in society.

Most white workers are not racist in the sense of being active and organized proponents of racist ideology. However, racist ideology has a definite influence on the social psychology of white workers, leading to certain beliefs, customs, and traditions as well as to spontaneous actions that are obstacles to class unity and the development of class consciousness.

The objective nature of capitalism leads to competition. Subjectively, this is reflected in the development of the ideology of individualism and the liberal notion that individuals pursue their own self-interest (MacPherson 1962). As Marx and Engels noted, the dominant ideas in society are always those of the ruling class (1975, 6:59). This implies that bourgeois ideology can lead to false consciousness among workers wherein they do not recognize their objective class interest in transforming society (Lukacs 1971, 52).

At the same time, it is important to recognize that ideas which promote the interests of the bourgeoisie do not originate in the working class and are not inherent in the thought patterns of the working class. In fact, individualism, the notion of self interest, nationalism, racism, male chauvinism, and all ideas which promote disunity within the working class are introduced into the working class from the outside by the exploiting class. As a result, it is possible, and, in fact, an absolute necessity, for the working class to overcome these alien ideas which are antithetical to its objective interests and prevent it from achieving, in Marx's words, "its historic mission."

### ***Implications***

The view that white workers have a vested interest in segmenting

the labor market and crowding minority workers into lower-paying jobs is a classless theory. It assumes that the capitalist class is passive and allows white workers to control the labor market, when, in reality, racism is a vehicle which capitalists use for controlling the labor process, extracting superprofits, and keeping the working class divided.

When white workers use a seniority system to prevent themselves from being laid off or when they oppose the achievement of racial balance through affirmative action, it may appear to them that they are gaining something, and in a few individual instances they may obtain some benefits. However, as a class, the vast majority of workers, both African-American and white, lose because their ability to unite and engage in class struggle is weakened. It is no mistake that during the periods when African-American workers have advanced, the working class as a whole has advanced.

In recent years, much of the progress African-Americans made towards equality in the 1960s and early 1970s has been wiped out. At the same time, the working class as a whole has experienced declining real wages, high levels of unemployment, declines in the level of unionization, and a general deterioration in its standard of living.

Ultimately, the crowding view absolves the capitalist class of its responsibility for promoting racism and ends up blaming white workers. From this view it follows that: 1) one cannot expect white workers to fight racism, 2) attempting to build a multiracial-multinational coalition of workers is a mistaken strategy doomed to failure, and 3) minorities should pursue a "go it alone" strategy in the fight against racism.

The recent experience of the Jesse Jackson campaign and the emergence of the National Rainbow Coalition as a major political force offer evidence to the contrary. When Jesse Jackson marched on picket lines in support of workers and put forward an electoral platform which was antimonopoly in character, he was able to win significant support among white workers because he took a class approach. This proves that white workers can be won over in the fight against racism if they understand the class nature of capitalist society.

I would like to thank Gordon Welty, Daniel Rosenberg, Tony Monterio, Victor Perlo, Paulette Olson, and Leo Fichtenbaum for a number of helpful comments and suggestions.

*Department of Economics  
Wright State University*

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**3RD CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICAN AND CUBAN  
PHILOSOPHERS In Havana, May 24–June 4, 1991**

**THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM: THE VIEWFROM CUBA**

CALL FOR PAPERS: Papers may be on any aspect of the conference themes that fits into one of the following commissions:

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*Conciencizatlón* and Socialist Pedagogy  
Democracy In Socialism and In Capitalism  
Anti-imperialist Thought in the Americas  
U.S.-Cuban Relations  
Philosophy, Science, and Technology  
Class, Race, and Gender  
Liberation Theology/Philosophy and Revolutionary Practice

Deadlines: Abstract of paper (1 to 2 pages): January 11, 1991  
Completed paper: March 1, 1991

CALL FOR COMMENTATORS: Commentators are needed to prepare provocative evaluations of papers on these topics.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE: You may participate either through the formal presentation of a paper, or as a commentator, or as an observer. Participants have the option to spend some additional days in Cuba for purposes of individual research..

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# **Materialist Monism as Philosophical Reflection of The Material Unity of the World**

**Sabine Grunwald and Gudrun Richter**

## I

Even on Goethe, materialism made a “gray” impression (Goethe 1981, 51). And although, since then, materialist philosophy has not only changed externally, but effected a fundamental internal development, its critics still concentrate on the rejection of its monistic character, which allegedly—so runs one of the most stubborn prejudices against materialism—goes along necessarily with a reduction of the manifold and lively character of reality to strictly determined, “preformed” (as it were), one-dimensional relations.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation of monism as reductionism and of the philosophical conception of the material unity of the world as its material uniformity also constitutes a focal point of the critique of dialectical materialism by non-Marxist philosophers. Aside from deliberate misrepresentations of Marxism, two misunderstandings, above all, underlie the identification of materialist monism (in the sense of the materialist answer to the basic question of philosophy) with the reductionistic leveling of all difference. In the first place, the philosophical concept of matter is frequently identified with the physical (Titze 1985, 151), which, for its part, then receives, in a wholly outmoded fashion, a narrowly “stuff-like” interpretation. Matter thereby becomes primary “stuff.” From this standpoint, materialism appears incapable of handling the complex dimension of social development. In the second place, the history of materialism and of its understanding of monism is largely disregarded, and dialectical materialism, according to this trend, is identified with mechanistic materialism, which thus advances, in a way, to the prototype of materialism.

The materialist answer to the basic question of philosophy — hence, materialist monism — constitutes indeed the continuum of all materialist conceptions, the “common denominator” of various historical forms in which materialism has made its appearance. Their respective

specificity is, however, given through the philosophical reflection of the character of that unity (therefore, at that point toward which the traditional critique of materialism is directed). The way by which the unity of the world is conceived materialistically provides the measure for the maturity of materialist philosophy. Thus, its development can be measured primarily by the qualitative change in the interpretation of monism (with all the significance that attaches to the extension of materialism to every domain of reality).

With Marxist philosophy, a qualitatively new level of materialist monism is attained, which, for its part, initiates the beginning of a new stage of development of materialism, that is, dialectical materialism. Its dialectical character becomes the essential, new potency of materialism to reflect developing reality in a flexible philosophical theory that is likewise necessarily developing. To be sure, this possibility must be actualized anew with respect to each problem, since otherwise the danger of a “relapse” into reductionistic interpretations is not out of the question. The thesis formulated by Engels, that the real unity of the world consists in its materiality (Engels 1987a, 41), establishes, in this sense, both a presupposition of dialectical materialism as well as a core of its further development, which continually has to be examined anew. It possesses the character of a fundamental assertion, as well as that of a program.

## II

The answer to the basic question of philosophy, regardless of whether it is forthcoming explicitly or only implicitly, determines the worldview orientation of each philosophy and is, in this sense, of overriding importance for all questions posed by it, as well as for its approach to their solution. Consequently, each philosophy has a monistic tendency that marks it as materialism or idealism, even if this basic tendency is not consistently developed and contrary points of view are scattered through it. In this way, the basic question of philosophy puts forward a position in regard to the status of the fundamental contradiction between matter and consciousness (Gebhardt 1989, 1101–10).

The development of philosophy took place in, and by means of, the movement of the contradiction between the basic philosophical orientations (although these did not always appear in pure form). This fact is precisely formulated by Sandkühler: “Neither idealism nor materialism has promoted the progress of philosophical knowledge. Conducive to this, rather, was their contradictory relationship”

(1984, 112). The conflict between materialism and idealism stimulated clarification of the connections, recognized as increasingly more complex and complicated, between the various spheres of reality taken as the unity of differences, or even of opposites. Social needs and scientific questions determined the framework within which this contradictory progress of knowledge took place in various cycles.

As an alternative to philosophical monism, there was also established an emphatic dualism regarding the relationship of matter and consciousness. Dualistic conceptions acquired significance primarily in times of philosophical upheaval. By means of emphasis upon the independence of both matter and consciousness, they came out against ostensible and actual tendencies toward leveling one side with the other and thus indicated the direction of movement in the contradiction between idealism and materialism, at the same time rendering monistic ideas of unity, in each case, problematic in their historically given quality. They functioned as a corrective to undialectical mediation and not infrequently created prerequisites for developments within a philosophy, by making movements and shifts of emphasis possible in the relationship of idealist and materialist components (while retaining the respective basic tendency).

The cost of any dualism, as different as its imprint may be, is isolation of matter and consciousness, in the final analysis, to separate modes of existence. Mediation between them becomes a problem. It does not exist organically; with the postulated dualism, it is, at bottom, even excluded and must be constructed. This task reproduces the question in accordance with a "favoring" of matter or consciousness and occasions, in the last resort, a basic monistic tendency of the philosophy concerned. Thus, the consequence of dualism lies, so to speak, in a "shamefaced" monism; and the necessary result of reductionistic monism is a renewed emphasis upon the independence of matter and consciousness, which easily turns into their separation. In both cases, the specific quality of mediation of the contradiction between matter and consciousness functions as a driving force of the development of philosophical reflection on the unity of the world.

The way of interpreting the essence of inner mediation between the unity of the world and its diversity fundamentally differentiated materialist and idealist monisms from each other. Whereas the materialist philosophy of the eighteenth century generalized the special case of mechanical connections into the general model of the material unity of the world and thus realized the materialist demand to take the world, as it is, on the historical level of scientific cognition

of natural correlations, idealism attempted, in a speculative manner, to break down the boundaries thereby established.<sup>2</sup> Hegel expressed, at that time, the last great idealist monism, a valuable heritage from which the refined dialectical culture to reflect the inner contradictoriness of the unity of the world is taken up in dialectical materialism.<sup>3</sup>

What is the essence of Marxist-Leninist philosophical monism, that is, its basic philosophical structure or, in other words, what is the character of its materialism, its way of explaining the unity of the world materialistically? The inner unity of materialism and dialectics, which distinguishes Marxist-Leninist philosophy, conditions the new quality of its monism: it is dialectical-materialist monism, it conceives the material unity of the world dialectically. This makes it possible to go beyond an abstract answer to the basic question of philosophy, to trace out in reality the concrete mediation of matter and consciousness in its manifold forms, and to reflect it as a real contradiction. Contrary to every former materialism, dialectical materialism thus conceives the unity of the world in a fundamentally new way: as a self-developing connection between contradictions in their motion.<sup>4</sup>

### III

The new, dialectical conception of the material unity of the world overcomes the abstract opposition of unity and diversity, which would come down to the dilemma, either unity or diversity, or else would reduce in the end to mere multiplicity, a multitude of uniform “elements.” Diversity is not obliterated in unity but is dialectically sublated. Unity is thus not an eternal, static “primary principle” but exists only in and through diversity, which constitutes unity and reproduces it in its movement and development.<sup>5</sup>

The dialectical quality of its monism also determines, however, the historically concrete way in which Marxist philosophy reflects materialistically the material unity of the world. The further development of monism, as the philosophical, conceptual foundation of dialectical materialism, and new findings about the material unity of the world from various scientific disciplines thereby mutually condition one another.

While the sciences, by means of their results concerning the actual process of development of nature and society, stimulate the further elaboration of philosophical instruments for reflection of the material character of the unity of the world, the developing conception of monism, for its part, makes available —by certain components of mediation—an ever better tool for interpreting materialistically the



contradictory character of real processes of development, that is, for understanding the material nature of the unity of the world, both as the unity of qualitatively different stages of development of objective reality as well as in the dialectically contradictory movement of material and ideal factors. Lenin's formulation of the task, namely, that "the universal principle of development must be combined, linked, made to correspond with the universal principle of the unity of the world, nature, motion, matter, etc." (Lenin 1981a, 254), is applicable, consequently, for at least two levels of consideration. On the one hand, this applies to the "world as a whole," that is, to the demonstration that, and how, such a unity of the world, as a connection of development of nature, society, and knowledge, is possible (something that cannot be accomplished solely by philosophy, of course) and that this unity consists, in fact, in materiality. On the other hand, it is necessary to differentiate and to qualify the theoretical and methodological instruments of philosophical analysis, in order to guarantee such a unitary dialectical view not only for reality as a whole, but also for the processes and developments taking place in it, as well as for its structures. These two aspects and levels cannot always be strictly separated, to be sure, since they reciprocally presuppose and condition each other.

The concept of the material unity of the world as developmental interconnection of various forms of motion or levels of structure of matter implies also that the material determinedness of the connections and processes of reality is understood in a qualitatively new manner. Dialectical determinism as a principle of dialectical materialism reflects the dialectically contradictory "inner order" of reality, and the material unity of the world manifests itself not least in the unity of its law-governedness. The unity of the principles of determinism and development thus reflects the inner unity of opposing elements of reality (of matter in motion). Materialist dialectics as a theory of development, as Lenin writes, also gives expression to universal connection, which "provides a uniform, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws" (Lenin 1980, 54). Determinism and the theory of development, therefore, are not "partial theories" of materialist dialectics but expressions of different aspects of it, that is, materialist dialectics is (in its specific respects) both determinism and theory of development.

In this way, the new quality of dialectical determinism is expressed adequately. For this determinism, the material determinedness of connections and processes is no longer marked by linear determination

but characterized by the unity and conflict of opposites in their possible (and alternative) tendencies of development. This determinedness must not be interpreted reductionistically (as homogeneous and uniform). Just as there is no matter “as such,” material determinedness also occurs only in a qualitatively specific manner. The best means here for being able to oppose successfully all misunderstandings and vulgarizations is an unfolding of the wealth of dialectical determinations.

This holds true especially for the “theoretical nucleus” of the conception of determinism—the philosophical category of law-governed connection. By means of what Lenin designated as the “universal law-governed character of eternally moving and developing nature” (Lenin 1981b, 182), the material unity of the world is constituted. Yet, the “law-governed connection of the whole (process) of the world” (Lenin 1981b, 103) is not something inflexible and unchangeable, not something “always pre-given” that would exist prior to or above things and thereby beyond them. Law-governed connection is inherent in material reality, in things and processes; it embodies their inner, dialectically contradictory determinedness and thus is living and active, developing with that domain of reality whose law-governed connection it constitutes. The “form of universality” (Engels 1987b, 514), which characterizes law-governed connection, is therefore always dialectically contradictory, concrete universality. It does not exist “as such,” unchangeable, in opposition to the active individual, but only in it, in its movement and development. Objective, law-governed connection gives inner measure to reality in movement, determining it and realizing itself in and through that movement.

The universality of law-governed connection also means, consequently, that it is nowhere “broken,” that is, there is nothing that would not be included in it. Nevertheless, it is realized for each domain of reality, for each form of motion of matter, in a manner specific to each. This does not result, however, in arbitrariness or lack of relationship. The unity of the law-governed character of reality exists, like the material unity of the world, as the overall connection and, accordingly, the developmental connection of nature, society, and knowledge. The relation of the forms of motion of matter thereby finds expression in a corresponding relation of their specific laws. The laws of the higher forms of motion do not invalidate those of the lower forms; they only limit their possibilities. At the same time, however, qualitatively new possibilities of law-governed connections come into being at the respective, higher stages of development.<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing reflections on the character of the unity of the

world and of its law-governedness as mediation of differing, or even opposing, elements originate, however, not only from internal philosophical considerations. Like all formulations of philosophical questions, they receive impulses from actual social developments, no less than through the progress of knowledge in the specialized sciences. Likewise by means of them, new dimensions are brought into the philosophical discussion of our subject matter, namely, investigation of the monistic character of dialectical materialism as presupposition for a complex and, at the same time, differentiated view of reality.<sup>7</sup>

Global problems, as raised by the possibility of the nuclear self-destruction of humanity, as well as problems of ecology and food supply, refer to the unity of society and nature and of humanity as a whole, which nevertheless develops within the framework of differing social systems and from which there arises the problem of the correlation, the identity, and the difference of human and class interests. The orientation of philosophical analysis on the totality, on the unity of the connections concerned, consequently requires, at the same time, a more intense consideration of its inner differentiation as a complex, developmental correlation of opposing elements. The scientific-technological revolution and its significance for social development give thematic content to the contradictory unity of material and ideal factors of social progress, that is, to the relationship of the material and the ideal in social development. The resulting investigations of the driving function as well as the inner dynamics of the movement of contradictions stimulate a deeper understanding of social development as a process of self-determination and self-development.

The dynamics and the internal differentiation of the contradictory structure of developmental processes demarcate a pre-eminent problematic, which, based upon the more recent findings of various natural sciences (that is, with reference to various levels of structure and forms of motion of matter), also calls for further development of general philosophical positions. Just as Engels, more than a hundred years ago, emphasized that materialism must change its form with each new discovery in the natural sciences (Engels 1975, 27), so this formulation of the problem has not lost its topicality. In connection with new results in the natural sciences, the concept of the historical, of historicity, advances beyond its "hereditary" domains into ever new spheres of the knowledge of nature. This victorious advance, which terms such as "self-organization," "self-reference"

and “self-reproduction” are supposed to represent, is most closely linked with developmental thinking.<sup>8</sup>

Results within the framework of investigations in the theory of development, above all on the internal structure and openness of processes of development, also make new demands on philosophical reflection of the material unity of the world as connectedness of development. The theory of dissipative structures, investigations of bifurcations in biotic processes, chaos research, the mathematics of fractals, among other things, called attention to the necessity of introducing the viewpoint of irregularity and disequilibrium into philosophical investigations of processes of development. They focussed their endeavors on a deeper penetration into the process of the selection of possibilities as a moment of objective indeterminateness in processes of development. The value for philosophical work of modern developmental thinking in the natural sciences lies in the fact, among other things, that it investigates development at the critical point at which the new is emerging, that is, it puts forward, as it were, the problem of the physiognomy of the dialectical leap.

For the biotic, as for the physical, form of motion of matter, the following is considered to have been proved: in a state of disequilibrium, slight deviations can intervene crucially in processes of development and lead to irreversible changes. In so doing, accident not only modifies those processes but also becomes a constituent element of their essence. The universality of nonlinearity and the associated possibility of the spontaneous formation of structure relate, in principle, to the limits of predictability of developmental processes (in the sense that their outcome is not unequivocally predetermined) and simultaneously orient upon the search for laws of that spontaneous formation, in order to be able to intervene consciously in such processes.

This demands further development of the philosophical conception of law. In order to reflect development philosophically as a complex phenomenon, it is necessary, for example, to reconsider the place of the criterion of repeatability among the determinants of law. In addition, the interpretation of law as invariance must be differentiated. It is generally customary to conceive law as what is stable, enduring, in contrast to the diversity of appearances. Yet, this invariance can represent nothing fixed, unchangeable, since law-governed connection, as pointed out already, exists in movement and is also reproduced by means of it. This problem acquires particular significance with regard to the historical nature of laws.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, investigations in recent years on the range of problems of “law and development”

(on the structure of laws of development, as on problems of the development of laws) as well as on problems of “law and contradiction” (on both the dialectically contradictory character of the law-governed connection itself and on the place of objective law in the dialectically contradictory movement of reality) must be advanced further.<sup>10</sup> From this we expect interesting results for a more differentiated examination of the character of developmental processes.

After the existence and significance of contradictions for all spheres of reality were stressed in discussions in the 1970s, questions of the internal dynamics of the movement and development of contradictions are, above all, on the agenda today. The investigation of the inner movement of the sides of a contradiction in relation to each other promises to yield important information about the relationship of basic developmental tendencies to the complex factors contributing to their formation, for example, the concrete realization and formation of various possibilities within the process of development.

In order to penetrate philosophically into this connection, the function of interaction as an internal factor, as an aspect of the realization of dialectical contradictions, would have to be investigated in more detailed fashion. Hitherto, the category of “interaction” was frequently identified with external mediation and mere multiplicity of causality in the tradition of the Hegelian critique of its mechanistic form. Investigations concerning the relation of systems theory and dialectics referred, by contrast, to the dialectical potential of interaction (Klaus 1974) and efforts to distinguish the various kinds of interaction were oriented toward interactive connections inside dialectical contradiction (Horstmann 1986, 51–99). The investigation of interaction as a form of movement of dialectical contradiction represents a further step. Dialectical contradictions possess a dominating tendency. To emphasize their development as a self-reproducing relation of their elements means to understand the dominance of one side not as a rigid given for each case and every element, but as a developing connection, which is realized in a varied manner and which includes a broad spectrum of possibilities and a pronounced internal differentiation.

Thereby addressed is a dialectical type of interaction, capable of reflecting both the dominant tendency within the connection between the sides of a contradiction and also the inner dynamics of its realization, and thus comprising the different forms of the movement of the contradiction —as a relatively symmetrical relation of the sides of the contradiction in phases of equilibrium, yet also as a conflict

of opposites that can lead during unstable phases of development to their abrupt change.

Alternatives of development, in detail and on the scale of entire systems, require for their philosophical elucidation a set of flexible categorial instruments, which are not merely general statements that abstract from internal differentiation, but can make manifest the concrete self-movement and self-development of reality. A dialectical version of interaction is appropriate for taking into account the nonlinear character of the complex movement and development of reality.

Stiehler has called attention to the methodological significance of pursuing and philosophically reflecting the movement of a contradiction up to the overturn of its opposites (Stiehler 1987, 134). Investigation of the internal dynamics of contradictions illuminates the character of connections of dominance and defines more precisely the fact of their “ultimate” determination by means of the dominant tendency. Dominance in a contradiction means neither temporal precedence nor predominance in each element or domain of a process of development; rather, it characterizes a relationship of elements that interact and, therefore, jointly accelerate a concrete process of development, thereby developing themselves. Dominance manifests itself here in the tendency of development. For concrete contradictions or correlations of development, this tendency is not given as an inevitability. A contradiction in movement is a mediation of different sides that are not only relatively independent but also changing one into the other; and this mediation has to be continually produced and reproduced anew. From this it follows that the general tendency of the process in certain cases or at a certain moment can be realized by means of its relative opposite.<sup>11</sup> Recognition of this fact has consequences for the assessment of concrete phases of developmental processes and for the working out of strategies for their planning and realization.

Exhausting the dialectical potentiality of the category of “interaction” represents only one form of the further differentiation of dialectical connections. In recent years, the investigation of correlative categories, such as chance and necessity, possibility and actuality, the general and the individual—together with growing emphasis on the importance of chance, possibility and the individual for the representation of developmental processes—was also oriented upon the internal dynamics of general connections and thus, for its part, put into question one-sided, simplifying interpretations of the dominance of one side of a contradiction.

## IV

The preceding arguments, as fragmentary as they may be in various respects, have nonetheless made clear, it is hoped, that further elaboration of the concept of the material unity of the world as a developmental connection of nature, society, and knowledge is an urgent task, being stimulated by the more recent development of society and science. The goal of further work, above all, is to be seen in thoroughly drawing upon the power of materialist dialectics, to make it fruitful for, in the best sense, a “modern” picture of the foundations of our philosophy, that is, to incorporate the stimuli and impulses resulting from the social and scientific development of our time into the systematic exposition of these foundations. (Of course, this includes utilizing the experience of the history of philosophy, as well as testing and clarifying one’s own positions in philosophical controversy.)

For this reason, the foregoing comments specify not only positions already established but tasks for future philosophical research. This corroborates the thesis previously outlined: the monism of dialectical materialism, the materialist and dialectical reflection of the material unity of the world, is an indispensable, fundamental position in our philosophy, which must be enriched by the latest results of basic philosophical research and thus be continually renewed.

*Zentralinstitut für Philosophie  
Academy of Sciences of the GDR*

*Translated by John Riser\**

\*Editor’s note: John Riser was also the translator of the article “The Contemporary Attack on Science,” by András Gedő (*Nature, Society, and Thought* 3, no. 2 [1990]: 179–95). We apologize for omitting this information at the time of publication.

## NOTES

1. L. H. Pepperle, for example, analyzes arguments against determinism and monism in Marxist philosophy (1986).
2. As Plekhanov pointed out, dialectical idealism regarded “the universe as an organic totality that develops out of its own concept. To discern this totality, to reveal the process of its development, was the...lofty, sublime, admirable task” which it posed for

itself—an endeavor that remained unfinished. “After German idealism had rendered invaluable services to the human spirit, it perished. . . . A decade after the death of Hegel, materialism appears again on the stage of philosophical development and, up to the present day, has not ceased to win victories over its old adversary” (1957, 144).

3. It is not surprising that Hegel appreciated the monistic tendency in materialism: “Still, one must acknowledge in materialism the enthusiastic striving to go beyond two kinds of worlds taken equally substantially and truly as a dualism, which takes two kinds of worlds as equally substantial and true, to supersede this rupture of the primordially One” (1970, 49).
4. Sandkühler characterizes materialist dialectics as follows: Founded on a materialist monism, it mediates all structures of nature, history, and consciousness in a totality of the elements of a complete connection. Its dialectical methodology permits it to comprehend the whole and the contradictions unitarily and not to eliminate contradiction cognitively, but to understand it as reason and form of development” (1984, 113).
5. Reference should be made here to one further element of his new quality: only as a dialectical monism is a consistently materialist monism possible at all. Material reality carries the source of its motion and development within itself; it can, therefore, be explained without an “extraneous addition,” out of itself, that is, monistically.
6. On this range of problems, see, for example, B. K. Fuchs 1972.
7. The need for fundamental discussions is therefore reinforced, as Yakovlev noted in a discussion of the social sciences: “It is necessary, on the basis of the entire body of modern knowledge, to understand reality as a system in a general philosophical manner. Above all, we are now in need of breakthroughs to fundamental generalizations, the development of an encompassing view of the world with all its actual contradictions and decisive tendencies” (1987).
8. In recent years, a multitude of works on different aspects of this theme has appeared. For newer contributions, see, for example, Mocek 1988, Erpenbeck 1989, and Gebauer 1989.
9. Zak has called attention to the fact that attributing the alteration of laws to that of their conditions only puts off the problem, since one must then ask about the underlying law of this alteration (1978, 11–12).



10. The following authors who work on these problems in the GDR may be mentioned here: Anneliese Griese, Herbert Hörz, and Gottfried Stiehler.
11. Thus, for example, in certain stages of the development of children, their abilities for adaptation and integration into a collective can be promoted not mainly by collective education, but, on the contrary, by expanded individual contacts with only a few, yet permanent (preferably grown-up) partners (Schmidt and Schneeweiss 1985).

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# **A Critique of the Segmentation Theory of Racial Discrimination**

**Rudy Fichtenbaum**

## ***Introduction***

Marxists have traditionally argued that racism and national chauvinism are tools of the capitalist class, used to divide the working class (Perlo 1975; Reich 1981). The main reason for dividing the working class is to ensure the maximum exploitation of the working class and to prevent them from organizing to overthrow the capitalist system. The implication is that racism and national chauvinism are opposed to the objective interests of all workers.

Recently this view has been challenged, this time by radical theorists using the labor-market segmentation theory. Bonacich (1976), Darity (1982), Glenn (1985), and Williams (1987) have all argued that white workers have a vested interest in crowding minority workers into certain occupations to keep their wages low and consequently raise the wages of white workers.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that this challenge to traditional Marxist thinking on racism and national chauvinism is fundamentally flawed. Specifically, this paper will argue that the segmentation hypothesis is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of classes and of the dialectical nature of contradictions between and within these classes in capitalist society. Section one will present a critique of the segmentation view from a class perspective. Section two will discuss the dialectical nature of classes in capitalist society; their relationship with ideology will be explored. In particular, the influence of racism on white workers, despite its opposition to their class interest, will be explained. Finally, the article will conclude with a discussion of the implications of the segmentation hypothesis for working-class strategy.[]

*Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol.3, no.41 (1990)

***Race and class struggle***

Although racist doctrines may be traced to antiquity, the use of racism to systematically oppress and exploit a group of people and its systematic development as an ideology originated with the development of capitalism during the colonial era. Specifically, racism emerged as a justification for the existence of the slave trade after the slave trade was attacked as being inhuman (Montagu 1945). The slave trade, along with European colonization of the world, were two of the main vehicles for the primitive accumulation of capital and were carried out by capitalist merchants (Marx 1967, vol. 1). One must therefore conclude that the ideology and practice of racism are products of the development of capitalism.

Segmentation theorists argue that racism is a product of capitalism but not a product of capitalists. They argue that capitalism is a system of wage labor and that workers are forced to compete with each other for scarce jobs. Consequently workers form groups along racial lines to insulate themselves from the vagaries of the market. Thus, Williams (1984) begins her analysis with a quote from Cox (1948) to illustrate that “racial exploitation and race prejudice” originate with capitalism. However, she goes on to note that

capitalists certainly benefit from racial divisions within the work force and introduce new colored workers for the same reason that entrenched white workers resist their advance. . . . White workers rational pursuit of their own self interest leads them to restrict the occupational opportunities of black workers. (Williams 1984, 45)

In other words, while capitalists benefit from racism, it is the pursuit of self-interest on the part of white workers that is seen as the causal factor. Alternately, one might argue that Williams’s argument implies that both white capitalist and white workers benefit from racism and therefore are both equally responsible. Expanding on this argument, Williams writes

Workers seeking protection from labor market competition thus have reason to develop shelters so as to limit the creation and deployment of low cost replacements. Effective shelter building whether through unions, licensing practices, credentialism, or naked coercion—contributes to the reproduction of divisions of the working class. (1987, 7)[

A similar analysis is offered by Darity when he writes:

The more established groups within the working class always will seek to protect themselves from being relegated to the reserve army. . . . The real basis for discrimination in the labor market stems from the efforts of groups already in the jobs to guarantee their positions. (1982, 133)[

These arguments are completely ahistorical, ignoring the origins of racism. Racism originated with the capitalist class and it alone, as a class, was the beneficiary of slavery and the slave trade. Slave labor was a form of cheap labor which could be used to under cut the wages of white workers. It was for this reason that Marx remarked that "labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded" (1967,1:301). However, just as the Luddites thought that their problems were caused by machines, many white workers saw slaves and, later, free African-American labor as a threat to their jobs and wages. These ideas were of course nourished and embellished by the ideologists of the bourgeoisie as a means of preventing white workers from understanding the true source of their problems.

The assertion that white workers are responsible for racism leaves out the fact that the essence of capitalism is the class struggle between workers and capitalists. Implicitly, proponents of the segmentation view accept the permanent existence of capitalism, giving up on the class struggle, and therefore concentrate on conflict within the working class. The notion that white workers as a group control the labor process under capitalism and can make decisions about hiring, firing, wages, and working conditions cannot be squared with the facts. In reality, the only control workers have over the work process comes through trade unions. However, Williams sees unions as part of the problem rather than part of the solution when she argues that unions, for example, are shelters which divide workers.

In developing her view of racial inequality, Williams goes beyond the mere statement that white workers benefit from racism. In fact she asserts that capitalists, in many cases, are opposed to racism. She writes:

Capitalists confronting either pressures from competing entrepreneurs, the victories of rising demands of entrenched workers, or accessible, less costly labor power will have reason to challenge extant racial . . . wage hierarchies if the expected benefits from so doing outweigh the costs associated with the disruption of work relations. (1987, 7)[

This leads to the conclusion that, rather than minorities and white workers struggling with capitalists over exploitation, white workers struggle over “the reproduction of racial domination...in labor markets” (7), and presumably African-American and other minority workers struggle with white workers against this “racial domination.” Ultimately, the real blame for racism lies with white workers who “deploy racist ideologies as a justification for protecting their gains from outsiders (10).” Thus, Williams concludes that “racism draws life from the fact that entrenched workers perceive new workers as a threat to be used against them.”

This “new theory of racial inequality” amounts to blaming one of the victims of racism. Profits come from exploiting all workers and the competitive nature of capitalist production forces the capitalists to seek maximum profits. The use of lower-paid African-American and other minority workers is merely a device to hold down the wages of all workers. Clearly, African-American and other minority workers bear the brunt of this strategy, but this does not change the fact that the wages of white workers are lower than they would be in the presence of a united militant working class. The fact that white workers in the South earn less than white workers in other parts of the country is clear evidence that white workers as a group do not gain from racism (Perlo 1975). The historically low wages in the South are directly tied to the existence of racism. Slaves constituted a large pool of cheap labor, undercutting the wages of white workers, and the use of racism prevented Southern workers from uniting and organizing unions to the same extent as workers in other regions.

Racism in the United States is not caused by the beliefs or the actions of individuals. Rather it is institutionalized in our society, promoted by government, laws, political parties, the media, the schools, popular culture, etc. Racist ideas are transmitted through individuals, but these ideas are a reflection of institutional processes which are racist. To argue that workers are the underlying force causing or even perpetuating racism is tantamount to saying that white workers control these institutions.

In reality, the institutions that workers do control have played an important part in fighting racism and working for unity. History has shown that unions play an important role in reducing competition among all workers, African-American, other minorities, and white, and uniting them in class struggle against the capitalist class. Of course, like all other developments, the position of unions on the question of racism has been contradictory.

There is no doubt that from 1790 to the mid-1930s unions, for

the most part, were built on a craft basis and excluded African- American and other minority workers. Nevertheless, there are still examples of unity during this period and more importantly, the most advanced working-class forces, African-American and white, have always recognized and fought for unity on the basis of equality. Thus, the great abolitionist leader, Frederick Douglass, wrote:

Their [the Black workers] cause is one with the labor class all over the world. The labor unions of the country should not throw away this colored element of strength. . . . It is a great mistake for any class of laborers to isolate itself and thus weaken the bonds of brotherhood between those on whom the burden and hardships of labor fall. The fortunate ones of the earth, who are abundant in land and money, . . . may be indifferent to the appeal for justice at this point, but the labor classes cannot be indifferent. (Foner 1976, 2)

In writing this, Douglass is clearly expressing an understanding of the class nature of capitalism, which objectively requires unions to fight for the unity of all workers. A similar sentiment was expressed by Robert Baker in a speech before the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn in 1902:

The more organized labor champions the cause of all labor, unorganized as well as organized, black as well as white, the greater will be the victories; the more lasting, the more permanent, the more beneficial and the more far-reaching will be its successes. . . . It must persistently and vigorously attack special privilege in every form; it must make the cause of humanity, regardless of race, color, or sex its cause. (Foner 1976, x)

After the organization of the CIO in the mid-1930s, the trade- union movement, organizing workers along industrial lines, took a stronger stand against racism and for unity (Foner 1976). Did this mean that the problem of racism disappeared from the trade-union movement? Clearly the answer is no. However, the positive steps taken by the CIO represented a new and higher level of class consciousness on the part of the working class and it is no coincidence that the founding of the CIO marked the beginning of a new period of intensified class struggle in the United States. Today, unions, and in particular, industrial unions, are a leading force in the fight against racism. They were a key part of the anti-Bork coalition; they have played a key role in the anti- Apartheid movement and, most recently, a significant number of

trade unionists joined in supporting the Rainbow Coalition and the Jesse Jackson candidacy. While it is undeniable that racism is still a powerful and pervasive force in the trade-union movement and in the working class, it is also true that the most advanced forces of the working class--African-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian, Native American, and white--have played a leading role in the struggle against racism and for unity.

### ***The dialectics of class struggle***

To understand why, on the one hand, white workers can act against their class interest, and, in doing so, act against their self-interest, and, on the other hand, why, ultimately, white workers can be won over to the struggle against racism, one must understand the dialectics of the class struggle and the nature of class consciousness.

Capitalism is a system based on private ownership of the means of production and the use of wage labor. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between social production and private appropriation (Marx 1967, 3:250). Social production refers to cooperation and a division of labor both within and among firms. The social nature of capitalist production brings workers together and forces them to cooperate in the process of production. Private appropriation, however, implies private ownership of the means of production, which is the basis for competition among capitalists. In fact, it is this competition among capitalists which necessitates the drive for maximum profits and for the maximum exploitation of the working class.

Every exploitative socioeconomic formation involves antagonistic contradictions between the ruling class and the exploited class. Yet under each socioeconomic formation the class struggle develops according to objective laws based on the fundamental contradiction of the particular socioeconomic formation. Under feudalism, although class struggle between the feudal aristocracy and the working masses (serfs) weakened feudal society, the major force which revolutionized feudal society was the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels, 6: 486–88).

Under capitalism, the conflict between the working class and the capitalist class is mediated by the contradiction between social production and private appropriation. The socialization of production creates a working class, dispossessed of any means of production, that is forced to work together. However, they are forced to cooperate under conditions that promote the maximum exploitation of the working class. In contrast, the capitalists, while clearly having an antagonistic relationship with the working class, are at the same



time forced to compete with each other. This implies the existence of antagonistic contradictions among the capitalists themselves as individual owners of the means of production as well as between the capitalist class and the working class.

The antagonistic contradictions among capitalists, rooted in a system of private appropriation, imply that any unity achieved by the capitalist class, as a class, is temporary at best. These contradictions give rise to shifting alliances within the capitalist class and have made war and national conflict inevitable under capitalism. Thus, it is incorrect to view the capitalist class as a homogeneous group, united at all times in their struggle against the working class. The dialectics of the class struggle results in unity that is relative and competitive struggle that is absolute. This aspect of class struggle is a reflection of the fundamental law of dialectics, the unity and struggle of opposites.

The working class is formed not on the basis of choice, but as part of the process of primitive accumulation in which serfs and petty producers are forced off of the land. They are thrown together, possessing only their labor power, and are therefore forced to sell their only possession in order to survive, that is, it becomes a class "in itself." However, the same process that gives rise to the working class as a class "in itself" also creates a class that is a revolutionary class, a class "for itself," not only because it is oppressed, but because it is the only class that can objectively be united against the capitalist class (Marx and Engels 1975, 6:494–95).

Does this mean that class consciousness and the recognition of the need for a united working class arise automatically, that is, does the working class automatically become a class "for itself"? Clearly the answer to this question is no. The development of class consciousness itself is a process, one which initially begins around purely economic issues and then develops later in the political, social, and ideological spheres. The laws of dialectics apply to the working class as well as to the capitalist class, and, in the process of becoming a class "for itself," contradictions emerge that result in conflict within the working class. However, there is a fundamental objective difference between the nature of contradictions between and within the two classes. Contradictions within the working class are nonantagonistic, which means that they can be resolved without one group eliminating the other.

The contradiction among the capitalist class and the working class is an antagonistic contradiction because it is based on one class exploiting the other class. The contradictions between capitalists, which express themselves through the law of competition, are also

antagonistic because the competition leads to one capitalist's gain being another capitalist's loss. Finally, the contradictions within the working class are nonantagonistic because the only way the working class can improve its condition is by struggling to end all exploitation, which means that unity is objectively the essential interest of the working class and conflict is nonessential. For these reasons Marx believed that the working class was objectively the only force for revolutionizing capitalist society and building socialism.

The process of social development involves both objective and subjective aspects. This is what Marx meant when he said that "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves" (Marx and Engels 1975 11: 103). The fact that humans are conscious beings, who engage in purposeful activity, means that subjective elements play an important role in the process of social development. In the sphere of the class struggle, subjective elements are reflected in the level of class consciousness. The development of class consciousness on the part of the working class is a process by which the working class gains a collective understanding of the fundamental objective processes driving the development of capitalism, and in doing so it recognizes its historic role in transforming society.

The development of productive relations, that is, objective class relationships, which takes place independently of people's will, forms the economic base of society. Upon this economic basis is erected a superstructure which consists of social ideas, social organizations and institutions, and ideological relations. While it is true that the superstructure is erected on the economic base, there is no simple one-way causal relationship between the two. Social ideas, social organizations and institutions, and ideological relations reflect the economic base, but at the same time are relatively independent, and at times appear to have a life of their own. At times, the superstructure lags behind the economic base and at other times ideas arise that are in advance of the economic base.

Social psychology, which is an aspect of social consciousness, consists of ideas transmitted from past generations; feelings, aspirations, and sentiments characteristic of a class or social group; and traditions, customs, and habits reflecting the thoughts and feelings of social classes and groups. Clearly racism is a part of the social consciousness or social psychology of white workers and as such it influences their actions, usually in a spontaneous way. A higher form of social consciousness can be seen in ideology, the political, ethical, and philosophical views that provide a justification of a

particular social system and reflect the direct interest of a particular class. As such, ideology influences social psychology. More importantly, however, ideology leads to organized action on the part of a particular group or class. Racist ideology, therefore leads to organized movements of racists such as the Ku Klux Klan. In contrast, socialist ideology leads to organized activity aimed at uniting the working class in struggle against the capitalist class.

The material forces of capitalism result in cooperative activity among workers and it is this objective process that creates the material conditions for the development of class consciousness and an understanding of the need for unity. However, the development of workers' consciousness is a complex and contradictory process influenced not only by their exploitation as a class, but by a variety of subjective processes in society.

Most white workers are not racist in the sense of being active and organized proponents of racist ideology. However, racist ideology has a definite influence on the social psychology of white workers, leading to certain beliefs, customs, and traditions as well as to spontaneous actions that are obstacles to class unity and the development of class consciousness.

The objective nature of capitalism leads to competition. Subjectively, this is reflected in the development of the ideology of individualism and the liberal notion that individuals pursue their own self-interest (MacPherson 1962). As Marx and Engels noted, the dominant ideas in society are always those of the ruling class (1975, 6:59). This implies that bourgeois ideology can lead to false consciousness among workers wherein they do not recognize their objective class interest in transforming society (Lukacs 1971, 52).

At the same time, it is important to recognize that ideas which promote the interests of the bourgeoisie do not originate in the working class and are not inherent in the thought patterns of the working class. In fact, individualism, the notion of self interest, nationalism, racism, male chauvinism, and all ideas which promote disunity within the working class are introduced into the working class from the outside by the exploiting class. As a result, it is possible, and, in fact, an absolute necessity, for the working class to overcome these alien ideas which are antithetical to its objective interests and prevent it from achieving, in Marx's words, "its historic mission."

### ***Implications***

The view that white workers have a vested interest in segmenting

the labor market and crowding minority workers into lower-paying jobs is a classless theory. It assumes that the capitalist class is passive and allows white workers to control the labor market, when, in reality, racism is a vehicle which capitalists use for controlling the labor process, extracting superprofits, and keeping the working class divided.

When white workers use a seniority system to prevent themselves from being laid off or when they oppose the achievement of racial balance through affirmative action, it may appear to them that they are gaining something, and in a few individual instances they may obtain some benefits. However, as a class, the vast majority of workers, both African-American and white, lose because their ability to unite and engage in class struggle is weakened. It is no mistake that during the periods when African-American workers have advanced, the working class as a whole has advanced.

In recent years, much of the progress African-Americans made towards equality in the 1960s and early 1970s has been wiped out. At the same time, the working class as a whole has experienced declining real wages, high levels of unemployment, declines in the level of unionization, and a general deterioration in its standard of living.

Ultimately, the crowding view absolves the capitalist class of its responsibility for promoting racism and ends up blaming white workers. From this view it follows that: 1) one cannot expect white workers to fight racism, 2) attempting to build a multiracial-multinational coalition of workers is a mistaken strategy doomed to failure, and 3) minorities should pursue a "go it alone" strategy in the fight against racism.

The recent experience of the Jesse Jackson campaign and the emergence of the National Rainbow Coalition as a major political force offer evidence to the contrary. When Jesse Jackson marched on picket lines in support of workers and put forward an electoral platform which was antimonopoly in character, he was able to win significant support among white workers because he took a class approach. This proves that white workers can be won over in the fight against racism if they understand the class nature of capitalist society.

I would like to thank Gordon Welty, Daniel Rosenberg, Tony Monterio, Victor Perlo, Paulette Olson, and Leo Fichtenbaum for a number of helpful comments and suggestions.

*Department of Economics  
Wright State University*

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# **Materialist Monism as Philosophical Reflection of The Material Unity of the World**

**Sabine Grunwald and Gudrun Richter**

## I

Even on Goethe, materialism made a “gray” impression (Goethe 1981, 51). And although, since then, materialist philosophy has not only changed externally, but effected a fundamental internal development, its critics still concentrate on the rejection of its monistic character, which allegedly—so runs one of the most stubborn prejudices against materialism—goes along necessarily with a reduction of the manifold and lively character of reality to strictly determined, “preformed” (as it were), one-dimensional relations.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation of monism as reductionism and of the philosophical conception of the material unity of the world as its material uniformity also constitutes a focal point of the critique of dialectical materialism by non-Marxist philosophers. Aside from deliberate misrepresentations of Marxism, two misunderstandings, above all, underlie the identification of materialist monism (in the sense of the materialist answer to the basic question of philosophy) with the reductionistic leveling of all difference. In the first place, the philosophical concept of matter is frequently identified with the physical (Titze 1985, 151), which, for its part, then receives, in a wholly outmoded fashion, a narrowly “stuff-like” interpretation. Matter thereby becomes primary “stuff.” From this standpoint, materialism appears incapable of handling the complex dimension of social development. In the second place, the history of materialism and of its understanding of monism is largely disregarded, and dialectical materialism, according to this trend, is identified with mechanistic materialism, which thus advances, in a way, to the prototype of materialism.

The materialist answer to the basic question of philosophy — hence, materialist monism — constitutes indeed the continuum of all materialist conceptions, the “common denominator” of various historical forms in which materialism has made its appearance. Their respective

specificity is, however, given through the philosophical reflection of the character of that unity (therefore, at that point toward which the traditional critique of materialism is directed). The way by which the unity of the world is conceived materialistically provides the measure for the maturity of materialist philosophy. Thus, its development can be measured primarily by the qualitative change in the interpretation of monism (with all the significance that attaches to the extension of materialism to every domain of reality).

With Marxist philosophy, a qualitatively new level of materialist monism is attained, which, for its part, initiates the beginning of a new stage of development of materialism, that is, dialectical materialism. Its dialectical character becomes the essential, new potency of materialism to reflect developing reality in a flexible philosophical theory that is likewise necessarily developing. To be sure, this possibility must be actualized anew with respect to each problem, since otherwise the danger of a “relapse” into reductionistic interpretations is not out of the question. The thesis formulated by Engels, that the real unity of the world consists in its materiality (Engels 1987a, 41), establishes, in this sense, both a presupposition of dialectical materialism as well as a core of its further development, which continually has to be examined anew. It possesses the character of a fundamental assertion, as well as that of a program.

## II

The answer to the basic question of philosophy, regardless of whether it is forthcoming explicitly or only implicitly, determines the worldview orientation of each philosophy and is, in this sense, of overriding importance for all questions posed by it, as well as for its approach to their solution. Consequently, each philosophy has a monistic tendency that marks it as materialism or idealism, even if this basic tendency is not consistently developed and contrary points of view are scattered through it. In this way, the basic question of philosophy puts forward a position in regard to the status of the fundamental contradiction between matter and consciousness (Gebhardt 1989, 1101–10).

The development of philosophy took place in, and by means of, the movement of the contradiction between the basic philosophical orientations (although these did not always appear in pure form). This fact is precisely formulated by Sandkühler: “Neither idealism nor materialism has promoted the progress of philosophical knowledge. Conducive to this, rather, was their contradictory relationship”



(1984, 112). The conflict between materialism and idealism stimulated clarification of the connections, recognized as increasingly more complex and complicated, between the various spheres of reality taken as the unity of differences, or even of opposites. Social needs and scientific questions determined the framework within which this contradictory progress of knowledge took place in various cycles.

As an alternative to philosophical monism, there was also established an emphatic dualism regarding the relationship of matter and consciousness. Dualistic conceptions acquired significance primarily in times of philosophical upheaval. By means of emphasis upon the independence of both matter and consciousness, they came out against ostensible and actual tendencies toward leveling one side with the other and thus indicated the direction of movement in the contradiction between idealism and materialism, at the same time rendering monistic ideas of unity, in each case, problematic in their historically given quality. They functioned as a corrective to undialectical mediation and not infrequently created prerequisites for developments within a philosophy, by making movements and shifts of emphasis possible in the relationship of idealist and materialist components (while retaining the respective basic tendency).

The cost of any dualism, as different as its imprint may be, is isolation of matter and consciousness, in the final analysis, to separate modes of existence. Mediation between them becomes a problem. It does not exist organically; with the postulated dualism, it is, at bottom, even excluded and must be constructed. This task reproduces the question in accordance with a "favoring" of matter or consciousness and occasions, in the last resort, a basic monistic tendency of the philosophy concerned. Thus, the consequence of dualism lies, so to speak, in a "shamefaced" monism; and the necessary result of reductionistic monism is a renewed emphasis upon the independence of matter and consciousness, which easily turns into their separation. In both cases, the specific quality of mediation of the contradiction between matter and consciousness functions as a driving force of the development of philosophical reflection on the unity of the world.

The way of interpreting the essence of inner mediation between the unity of the world and its diversity fundamentally differentiated materialist and idealist monisms from each other. Whereas the materialist philosophy of the eighteenth century generalized the special case of mechanical connections into the general model of the material unity of the world and thus realized the materialist demand to take the world, as it is, on the historical level of scientific cognition

of natural correlations, idealism attempted, in a speculative manner, to break down the boundaries thereby established.<sup>2</sup> Hegel expressed, at that time, the last great idealist monism, a valuable heritage from which the refined dialectical culture to reflect the inner contradictoriness of the unity of the world is taken up in dialectical materialism.<sup>3</sup>

What is the essence of Marxist-Leninist philosophical monism, that is, its basic philosophical structure or, in other words, what is the character of its materialism, its way of explaining the unity of the world materialistically? The inner unity of materialism and dialectics, which distinguishes Marxist-Leninist philosophy, conditions the new quality of its monism: it is dialectical-materialist monism, it conceives the material unity of the world dialectically. This makes it possible to go beyond an abstract answer to the basic question of philosophy, to trace out in reality the concrete mediation of matter and consciousness in its manifold forms, and to reflect it as a real contradiction. Contrary to every former materialism, dialectical materialism thus conceives the unity of the world in a fundamentally new way: as a self-developing connection between contradictions in their motion.<sup>4</sup>

### III

The new, dialectical conception of the material unity of the world overcomes the abstract opposition of unity and diversity, which would come down to the dilemma, either unity or diversity, or else would reduce in the end to mere multiplicity, a multitude of uniform “elements.” Diversity is not obliterated in unity but is dialectically sublated. Unity is thus not an eternal, static “primary principle” but exists only in and through diversity, which constitutes unity and reproduces it in its movement and development.<sup>5</sup>

The dialectical quality of its monism also determines, however, the historically concrete way in which Marxist philosophy reflects materialistically the material unity of the world. The further development of monism, as the philosophical, conceptual foundation of dialectical materialism, and new findings about the material unity of the world from various scientific disciplines thereby mutually condition one another.

While the sciences, by means of their results concerning the actual process of development of nature and society, stimulate the further elaboration of philosophical instruments for reflection of the material character of the unity of the world, the developing conception of monism, for its part, makes available —by certain components of mediation—an ever better tool for interpreting materialistically the

contradictory character of real processes of development, that is, for understanding the material nature of the unity of the world, both as the unity of qualitatively different stages of development of objective reality as well as in the dialectically contradictory movement of material and ideal factors. Lenin's formulation of the task, namely, that "the universal principle of development must be combined, linked, made to correspond with the universal principle of the unity of the world, nature, motion, matter, etc." (Lenin 1981a, 254), is applicable, consequently, for at least two levels of consideration. On the one hand, this applies to the "world as a whole," that is, to the demonstration that, and how, such a unity of the world, as a connection of development of nature, society, and knowledge, is possible (something that cannot be accomplished solely by philosophy, of course) and that this unity consists, in fact, in materiality. On the other hand, it is necessary to differentiate and to qualify the theoretical and methodological instruments of philosophical analysis, in order to guarantee such a unitary dialectical view not only for reality as a whole, but also for the processes and developments taking place in it, as well as for its structures. These two aspects and levels cannot always be strictly separated, to be sure, since they reciprocally presuppose and condition each other.

The concept of the material unity of the world as developmental interconnection of various forms of motion or levels of structure of matter implies also that the material determinedness of the connections and processes of reality is understood in a qualitatively new manner. Dialectical determinism as a principle of dialectical materialism reflects the dialectically contradictory "inner order" of reality, and the material unity of the world manifests itself not least in the unity of its law-governedness. The unity of the principles of determinism and development thus reflects the inner unity of opposing elements of reality (of matter in motion). Materialist dialectics as a theory of development, as Lenin writes, also gives expression to universal connection, which "provides a uniform, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws" (Lenin 1980, 54). Determinism and the theory of development, therefore, are not "partial theories" of materialist dialectics but expressions of different aspects of it, that is, materialist dialectics is (in its specific respects) both determinism and theory of development.

In this way, the new quality of dialectical determinism is expressed adequately. For this determinism, the material determinedness of connections and processes is no longer marked by linear determination

but characterized by the unity and conflict of opposites in their possible (and alternative) tendencies of development. This determinedness must not be interpreted reductionistically (as homogeneous and uniform). Just as there is no matter “as such,” material determinedness also occurs only in a qualitatively specific manner. The best means here for being able to oppose successfully all misunderstandings and vulgarizations is an unfolding of the wealth of dialectical determinations.

This holds true especially for the “theoretical nucleus” of the conception of determinism—the philosophical category of law-governed connection. By means of what Lenin designated as the “universal law-governed character of eternally moving and developing nature” (Lenin 1981b, 182), the material unity of the world is constituted. Yet, the “law-governed connection of the whole (process) of the world” (Lenin 1981b, 103) is not something inflexible and unchangeable, not something “always pre-given” that would exist prior to or above things and thereby beyond them. Law-governed connection is inherent in material reality, in things and processes; it embodies their inner, dialectically contradictory determinedness and thus is living and active, developing with that domain of reality whose law-governed connection it constitutes. The “form of universality” (Engels 1987b, 514), which characterizes law-governed connection, is therefore always dialectically contradictory, concrete universality. It does not exist “as such,” unchangeable, in opposition to the active individual, but only in it, in its movement and development. Objective, law-governed connection gives inner measure to reality in movement, determining it and realizing itself in and through that movement.

The universality of law-governed connection also means, consequently, that it is nowhere “broken,” that is, there is nothing that would not be included in it. Nevertheless, it is realized for each domain of reality, for each form of motion of matter, in a manner specific to each. This does not result, however, in arbitrariness or lack of relationship. The unity of the law-governed character of reality exists, like the material unity of the world, as the overall connection and, accordingly, the developmental connection of nature, society, and knowledge. The relation of the forms of motion of matter thereby finds expression in a corresponding relation of their specific laws. The laws of the higher forms of motion do not invalidate those of the lower forms; they only limit their possibilities. At the same time, however, qualitatively new possibilities of law-governed connections come into being at the respective, higher stages of development.<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing reflections on the character of the unity of the

world and of its law-governedness as mediation of differing, or even opposing, elements originate, however, not only from internal philosophical considerations. Like all formulations of philosophical questions, they receive impulses from actual social developments, no less than through the progress of knowledge in the specialized sciences. Likewise by means of them, new dimensions are brought into the philosophical discussion of our subject matter, namely, investigation of the monistic character of dialectical materialism as presupposition for a complex and, at the same time, differentiated view of reality.<sup>7</sup>

Global problems, as raised by the possibility of the nuclear self-destruction of humanity, as well as problems of ecology and food supply, refer to the unity of society and nature and of humanity as a whole, which nevertheless develops within the framework of differing social systems and from which there arises the problem of the correlation, the identity, and the difference of human and class interests. The orientation of philosophical analysis on the totality, on the unity of the connections concerned, consequently requires, at the same time, a more intense consideration of its inner differentiation as a complex, developmental correlation of opposing elements. The scientific-technological revolution and its significance for social development give thematic content to the contradictory unity of material and ideal factors of social progress, that is, to the relationship of the material and the ideal in social development. The resulting investigations of the driving function as well as the inner dynamics of the movement of contradictions stimulate a deeper understanding of social development as a process of self-determination and self-development.

The dynamics and the internal differentiation of the contradictory structure of developmental processes demarcate a pre-eminent problematic, which, based upon the more recent findings of various natural sciences (that is, with reference to various levels of structure and forms of motion of matter), also calls for further development of general philosophical positions. Just as Engels, more than a hundred years ago, emphasized that materialism must change its form with each new discovery in the natural sciences (Engels 1975, 27), so this formulation of the problem has not lost its topicality. In connection with new results in the natural sciences, the concept of the historical, of historicity, advances beyond its "hereditary" domains into ever new spheres of the knowledge of nature. This victorious advance, which terms such as "self-organization," "self-reference"

and “self-reproduction” are supposed to represent, is most closely linked with developmental thinking.<sup>8</sup>

Results within the framework of investigations in the theory of development, above all on the internal structure and openness of processes of development, also make new demands on philosophical reflection of the material unity of the world as connectedness of development. The theory of dissipative structures, investigations of bifurcations in biotic processes, chaos research, the mathematics of fractals, among other things, called attention to the necessity of introducing the viewpoint of irregularity and disequilibrium into philosophical investigations of processes of development. They focussed their endeavors on a deeper penetration into the process of the selection of possibilities as a moment of objective indeterminateness in processes of development. The value for philosophical work of modern developmental thinking in the natural sciences lies in the fact, among other things, that it investigates development at the critical point at which the new is emerging, that is, it puts forward, as it were, the problem of the physiognomy of the dialectical leap.

For the biotic, as for the physical, form of motion of matter, the following is considered to have been proved: in a state of disequilibrium, slight deviations can intervene crucially in processes of development and lead to irreversible changes. In so doing, accident not only modifies those processes but also becomes a constituent element of their essence. The universality of nonlinearity and the associated possibility of the spontaneous formation of structure relate, in principle, to the limits of predictability of developmental processes (in the sense that their outcome is not unequivocally predetermined) and simultaneously orient upon the search for laws of that spontaneous formation, in order to be able to intervene consciously in such processes.

This demands further development of the philosophical conception of law. In order to reflect development philosophically as a complex phenomenon, it is necessary, for example, to reconsider the place of the criterion of repeatability among the determinants of law. In addition, the interpretation of law as invariance must be differentiated. It is generally customary to conceive law as what is stable, enduring, in contrast to the diversity of appearances. Yet, this invariance can represent nothing fixed, unchangeable, since law-governed connection, as pointed out already, exists in movement and is also reproduced by means of it. This problem acquires particular significance with regard to the historical nature of laws.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, investigations in recent years on the range of problems of “law and development”

(on the structure of laws of development, as on problems of the development of laws) as well as on problems of “law and contradiction” (on both the dialectically contradictory character of the law-governed connection itself and on the place of objective law in the dialectically contradictory movement of reality) must be advanced further.<sup>10</sup> From this we expect interesting results for a more differentiated examination of the character of developmental processes.

After the existence and significance of contradictions for all spheres of reality were stressed in discussions in the 1970s, questions of the internal dynamics of the movement and development of contradictions are, above all, on the agenda today. The investigation of the inner movement of the sides of a contradiction in relation to each other promises to yield important information about the relationship of basic developmental tendencies to the complex factors contributing to their formation, for example, the concrete realization and formation of various possibilities within the process of development.

In order to penetrate philosophically into this connection, the function of interaction as an internal factor, as an aspect of the realization of dialectical contradictions, would have to be investigated in more detailed fashion. Hitherto, the category of “interaction” was frequently identified with external mediation and mere multiplicity of causality in the tradition of the Hegelian critique of its mechanistic form. Investigations concerning the relation of systems theory and dialectics referred, by contrast, to the dialectical potential of interaction (Klaus 1974) and efforts to distinguish the various kinds of interaction were oriented toward interactive connections inside dialectical contradiction (Horstmann 1986, 51–99). The investigation of interaction as a form of movement of dialectical contradiction represents a further step. Dialectical contradictions possess a dominating tendency. To emphasize their development as a self-reproducing relation of their elements means to understand the dominance of one side not as a rigid given for each case and every element, but as a developing connection, which is realized in a varied manner and which includes a broad spectrum of possibilities and a pronounced internal differentiation.

Thereby addressed is a dialectical type of interaction, capable of reflecting both the dominant tendency within the connection between the sides of a contradiction and also the inner dynamics of its realization, and thus comprising the different forms of the movement of the contradiction —as a relatively symmetrical relation of the sides of the contradiction in phases of equilibrium, yet also as a conflict

of opposites that can lead during unstable phases of development to their abrupt change.

Alternatives of development, in detail and on the scale of entire systems, require for their philosophical elucidation a set of flexible categorial instruments, which are not merely general statements that abstract from internal differentiation, but can make manifest the concrete self-movement and self-development of reality. A dialectical version of interaction is appropriate for taking into account the nonlinear character of the complex movement and development of reality.

Stiehler has called attention to the methodological significance of pursuing and philosophically reflecting the movement of a contradiction up to the overturn of its opposites (Stiehler 1987, 134). Investigation of the internal dynamics of contradictions illuminates the character of connections of dominance and defines more precisely the fact of their “ultimate” determination by means of the dominant tendency. Dominance in a contradiction means neither temporal precedence nor predominance in each element or domain of a process of development; rather, it characterizes a relationship of elements that interact and, therefore, jointly accelerate a concrete process of development, thereby developing themselves. Dominance manifests itself here in the tendency of development. For concrete contradictions or correlations of development, this tendency is not given as an inevitability. A contradiction in movement is a mediation of different sides that are not only relatively independent but also changing one into the other; and this mediation has to be continually produced and reproduced anew. From this it follows that the general tendency of the process in certain cases or at a certain moment can be realized by means of its relative opposite.<sup>11</sup> Recognition of this fact has consequences for the assessment of concrete phases of developmental processes and for the working out of strategies for their planning and realization.

Exhausting the dialectical potentiality of the category of “interaction” represents only one form of the further differentiation of dialectical connections. In recent years, the investigation of correlative categories, such as chance and necessity, possibility and actuality, the general and the individual—together with growing emphasis on the importance of chance, possibility and the individual for the representation of developmental processes—was also oriented upon the internal dynamics of general connections and thus, for its part, put into question one-sided, simplifying interpretations of the dominance of one side of a contradiction.



## IV

The preceding arguments, as fragmentary as they may be in various respects, have nonetheless made clear, it is hoped, that further elaboration of the concept of the material unity of the world as a developmental connection of nature, society, and knowledge is an urgent task, being stimulated by the more recent development of society and science. The goal of further work, above all, is to be seen in thoroughly drawing upon the power of materialist dialectics, to make it fruitful for, in the best sense, a “modern” picture of the foundations of our philosophy, that is, to incorporate the stimuli and impulses resulting from the social and scientific development of our time into the systematic exposition of these foundations. (Of course, this includes utilizing the experience of the history of philosophy, as well as testing and clarifying one’s own positions in philosophical controversy.)

For this reason, the foregoing comments specify not only positions already established but tasks for future philosophical research. This corroborates the thesis previously outlined: the monism of dialectical materialism, the materialist and dialectical reflection of the material unity of the world, is an indispensable, fundamental position in our philosophy, which must be enriched by the latest results of basic philosophical research and thus be continually renewed.

*Zentralinstitut für Philosophie  
Academy of Sciences of the GDR*

*Translated by John Riser\**

\*Editor’s note: John Riser was also the translator of the article “The Contemporary Attack on Science,” by András Gedő (*Nature, Society, and Thought* 3, no. 2 [1990]: 179–95). We apologize for omitting this information at the time of publication.

## NOTES

1. L. H. Pepperle, for example, analyzes arguments against determinism and monism in Marxist philosophy (1986).
2. As Plekhanov pointed out, dialectical idealism regarded “the universe as an organic totality that develops out of its own concept. To discern this totality, to reveal the process of its development, was the...lofty, sublime, admirable task” which it posed for

itself—an endeavor that remained unfinished. “After German idealism had rendered invaluable services to the human spirit, it perished. . . . A decade after the death of Hegel, materialism appears again on the stage of philosophical development and, up to the present day, has not ceased to win victories over its old adversary” (1957, 144).

3. It is not surprising that Hegel appreciated the monistic tendency in materialism: “Still, one must acknowledge in materialism the enthusiastic striving to go beyond two kinds of worlds taken equally substantially and truly as a dualism, which takes two kinds of worlds as equally substantial and true, to supersede this rupture of the primordially One” (1970, 49).
4. Sandkühler characterizes materialist dialectics as follows: Founded on a materialist monism, it mediates all structures of nature, history, and consciousness in a totality of the elements of a complete connection. Its dialectical methodology permits it to comprehend the whole and the contradictions unitarily and not to eliminate contradiction cognitively, but to understand it as reason and form of development” (1984, 113).
5. Reference should be made here to one further element of his new quality: only as a dialectical monism is a consistently materialist monism possible at all. Material reality carries the source of its motion and development within itself; it can, therefore, be explained without an “extraneous addition,” out of itself, that is, monistically.
6. On this range of problems, see, for example, B. K. Fuchs 1972.
7. The need for fundamental discussions is therefore reinforced, as Yakovlev noted in a discussion of the social sciences: “It is necessary, on the basis of the entire body of modern knowledge, to understand reality as a system in a general philosophical manner. Above all, we are now in need of breakthroughs to fundamental generalizations, the development of an encompassing view of the world with all its actual contradictions and decisive tendencies” (1987).
8. In recent years, a multitude of works on different aspects of this theme has appeared. For newer contributions, see, for example, Mocek 1988, Erpenbeck 1989, and Gebauer 1989.
9. Zak has called attention to the fact that attributing the alteration of laws to that of their conditions only puts off the problem, since one must then ask about the underlying law of this alteration (1978, 11–12).

10. The following authors who work on these problems in the GDR may be mentioned here: Anneliese Griese, Herbert Hörz, and Gottfried Stiehler.
11. Thus, for example, in certain stages of the development of children, their abilities for adaptation and integration into a collective can be promoted not mainly by collective education, but, on the contrary, by expanded individual contacts with only a few, yet permanent (preferably grown-up) partners (Schmidt and Schneeweiss 1985).

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# **Nat Ganley: A Communist in the Detroit Labor Movement**

**Michael D. Whitty**

This essay reassesses the role of the Communist Party in the Detroit labor movement by studying the life of one leading CP spokesperson. The contributions of individual CP labor radicals have not been reported fully by most state and local historians. Issues of local CP labor militancy and the policies of the national CP leadership have either been distorted or omitted by most official union histories. Historians of the CIO have failed to identify how Marxism influenced the conduct of individual CP labor radicals on issues facing the CIO unions during the Depression era. Further study of the practice of CP militants and other Marxist tendencies can balance the prevalent theoretical criticism of the CP which has tended to dismiss the positive role the CP played in building industrial unionism in Detroit.

In the Depression era, political radicals flocked to Detroit to organize basic production workers in the auto industry into unions to secure better wages, job security, and collective bargaining with an eye to social revolution. Marxism set these radicals apart from other labor militants on issues like workers' control of production. This issue is still important to Detroit workers. Individual Detroit CP labor militants deserve recognition for their roles in building the United Auto Workers (UAW) and for their commitment to the vision of a socialist United States, in the face of personal hardship, persecution, imprisonment, and social ostracism. It is a historic fact that the labor movement in Detroit made its greatest advances during the 1930s. The role of the dominant group among labor radicals, the CP, has not been examined from the bottom up. The city of Detroit was, for more than a decade, an industrial concentration point of the CPUSA. A biographic study of the lives of key local Detroit CP spokespeople may help clarify issues for the two dozen Marxist

*Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1990)

organizations which chose Detroit as their industrial concentration point for the 1970s.

The late Nat Ganley, born Nat Kaplan, was one of several important CP figures in auto-worker history. As a CP activist and founder of the UAW Local 155, Ganley played a significant role in UAW national politics between 1936 and 1947. Ganley, along with Bill McKie, Will Weinstone, Billy Allan, Wyndham Mortimer, and Phil Raymond, helped form and implement CP trade-union policies in the auto industry.

Ganley and other labor radicals were able to spark the organization of the UAW-CIO in Detroit because of the acceptance of the CP among the rank and file.

Local 155 leadership, associated with the Communist movement, was able to hold office in the atmosphere of the UAW's original organizing drive where Communists did play a very important role in organizing efforts. They were able to continue holding office throughout the period in which there were two contending coalitions within the UAW and the Communists are a very important political force in one of them, but they are not able to retain it when the cold war starts in 1946. Nat Ganley, for example, as business agent, to win an election has to fight the entire pressure coming from the Federal Government of the United States, the national CIO leadership, the Catholic Church, employers as a group, etc. All of this plays a very important role in developing a counterforce to us in Local 155 and that was my defeat in the election. I was defeated in the 1947 election; I still got a hefty vote. But there (were) all these forces being sent in to undermine the strength and power we had in the local union. (Skeels 1960, 67)[

Over the first decade of the existence of the "Red" Local 155, Ganley bargained with Ainsworth Manufacturing, Ferro Stamping, Detroit Aluminum & Grass, Midland Steel, and Parke Davis, among the Detroit firms.

The makings of a modern Detroit labor pioneer were grounded in Ganley's lifelong socialist perspective. At thirteen he joined the New York section of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), the youth arm of the Socialist Party (SP), when he learned of their efforts to eliminate poverty and inequality.

Nat Ganley was born in New York City, November 26, 1903, He was raised in a run-down tenement house on Water Street,

lower Manhattan. He was a “dead end kid” in every detail, including the accent.

...[His] only formal schooling was through the 8th grade in the public schools of New York City. For some of his school years, Nat worked before and after school hours, delivering groceries, helping his father clean the tenement where he was janitor, etc. Ganley became class conscious on the elementary issue of housing. He observed the run-down dirty tenements of the poor (such as where he lived) and the boarded up mansions of the rich on New York’s Fifth Avenue when he “hitched” rides uptown on brewery wagons. He was told the rich enjoyed summer sports in Florida during New York’s winter and . . . winter sports in the Alps during New York’s hot summer months. Hence, their . . . mansions were boarded up, unused most of the year. (Ganley, autobiographical data, 1)

At the age of sixteen, Ganley joined his first labor union when, as an apprentice, he joined the scenery artists local of the AFL Painters Union. He also joined the Socialist Party in that same year 1919 and almost immediately oriented to its left wing, which was to form the CP.

At the age of eighteen, Ganley was assistant to the CP District Organizer in New York. In spite of being born in New York City, Ganley was arrested for deportation during the Palmer Raids in 1920. Since he was a native-born U.S. citizen, Ganley’s case had to be dropped (Dunn 1948). From 1923 to 1928, Ganley was a member of the National Committee of the Communist youth movement. He was the first director of their Young Pioneers. For a period during those years, he was the national secretary of the Communist Youth Organization. He participated in two different worldwide assemblages of Communist youth held in Moscow.

Ganley was one of the pallbearers at the funeral of the founder of the U.S. Communist Party, Charles E. Ruthenberg, in 1927 *Sunday Worker*, 6 Feb. 1949). He was city editor of the *Daily Worker* in 1930 (Ganley, autobiographical data, 3).

Before going to Michigan, Ganley worked with the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) in Providence, Rhode Island, and Paterson, New Jersey, organizing textile workers into unions and unemployed workers into “Right to Live” clubs. During this pre-Depression decade, Ganley worked with the successor of the TUEL, the Trade

Union Unity League (TUUL), which included among its affiliates the Auto Workers Union (AWU-TUUL) (Ganley, "Democracy, Security, Peace—On Trial," 1954, 5).

With Ganley when went to Detroit was his life's partner in his work and beliefs, the former Anna Block, whom he married in 1924. A prominent participant in the Scottsboro campaign and other struggles for Negro rights, as well as the campaign to secure unemployment insurance in the early '30s, she had led the New England contingent to the National Hunger March in Washington in 1932. Anna Ganley continued her activities in Michigan for civil rights, civil liberties, unionization, and unemployment insurance. For this participation she was the object of numerous arrests for picketing, culminating in an attempt by the Immigration Department to deport her in 1949. In the 1930s she was employed as a dishwasher in what was then the Book-Cadillac Hotel. For her attempts to organize the kitchen workers, she was fired for "Communist activities" (*Boston Chronicle*, 10 Feb. 1931; *Boston Post*, 29–30 June 1931; *Boston Record*, 22 Nov. 1932; *Detroit Times*, 4 June 1949).

The Ganleys had one child, a daughter Patty, who, in her school days, was active in the Detroit Roundtable of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and other student activities. She is currently the mother of two children and a founder of an alternative school.

When Nat went to Detroit in 1933, he changed his name from Kaplan to Ganley in order to avoid the already existing blacklists in seeking work (Kirchmer 1937, 3). This change was executed in the court of Judge Patrick H. O'Brien of the Probate Court (Ganley, autobiographical data, 2).

During the 1920s the employers' open shop drive had more or less successfully cut down the size of the AFL craft unions in the U.S. including many unions, such as the miners and others which suffered a drastic decline, while the basic industries—steel, auto, rubber, etc.—were unorganized domains.

During this period, which was the forerunner of the organization, I came to Detroit to work for the Trade Union Educational League which later became the Trade Union Unity League which was part of the most dramatic struggles of the 1920 decade. Such fights as the Paterson textile strike of 1926...the New Bedford, Massachusetts textile strike of 1928...the Gastonia, North Carolina, textile strike of 1928...During this decade we saw a Save-the-Union Committee in the coal mines, an effort to help



overcome the deep crisis of organization and power in the United Mine Workers of America, with such people as John Brophy, Powers Hapood, Pat Toohey and Tom Parry being leading figures . . . in this movement. The importance of these forerunners in the 1920s is seen by the fact that many of these mine forces found their way into both the steel and the automobile industry just prior to the 1930 period of organization. And many played an important role in the founding of the CIO Steel and Auto Workers Union.

The Trade Union Unity League . . . was founded in Cleveland in 1929. The only union in the automobile industry in Detroit at that time was the small left-led Auto and Vehicle Workers Union which had such people as Phil Raymond in its leadership. This small union joined the TUUL in 1929, then changed its name to the Auto Workers Union. It set itself the task, which of course it couldn't accomplish by itself, namely to organize the unorganized in this mass production industry. (Skeels 1960, 2-3)

Open-shop Detroit was hit during the National Hunger March of 1932 with a bloody clash at the approaches to the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn (Bonosky 1953, chap. 11). This violent event was followed by the first major Depression Era strike at the Briggs Manufacturing Plant in 1933. With the open-shop fortress, Detroit, under siege by the Auto Workers (AWU-TUUL), national attention focused on the role of labor radicals in all unorganized industries, especially the pattern industries like auto, steel, and rubber in the Midwest (Raymond 1953, 21).

Detroit is fast becoming a modern Mecca, a Mecca for devotees and practitioners of every kind of radicalism that exists.

Just as in the Far East, there is a mullah calling the fanatics to Detroit and Michigan. They are coming here in droves, especially from the East, and particularly from New York, chanting their doctrine of the destruction of the American Plan of Living.

. . . Detroit is the home of the auto industry and its allied and associated industries. It is a rich field for making trouble: there are strikes to be fomented, violence to be encouraged. Should the[y] succeed in getting enough people on strike at the same time, they envision their worked-for opportunity for a revolution.

They know that there is a larger communist ratio of population here in the United States than there was when they precipitated the Russian revolution. (Kirchmer 1937, 3)

Early efforts by Bill McKie at Ford and Phil Raymond at Briggs had put the CP in a position to take the lead in auto organizing from the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) (Skeels 1961, 180; Sweinhart 1933).

In Detroit, after I arrived in 1933...and between then and the spring of 1935 when we sent people that we had organized in the TUUL into the AFL, I, together with others, succeeded in organizing...packinghouse workers, poultry workers, riggers, chemical workers. We also played a very important role in winning some of the main tool and die locals of the Mechanics Educational Society of America over to affiliation with the AF of L. Now the organizing of these groups of workers for Detroit was an important event also for the automobile industry because at that time the concentration of auto production in the Detroit area was even greater than it is now and, hence, you could not scratch a single packinghouse worker, poultry worker, rigger, chemical or electrical worker without finding all kinds of automobile workers as relatives within the family, and this was an easier way to get at the organization of the automobile industry. It could not be the final decisive way, but as a prelude to what happened after 1935, it played an important role in developing the first auto organization in the Detroit area. (Skeels 1960, 6-7)

Nat Ganley's twelve-year career with the CIO-inspired successor to the AWU-TUUL would begin three years after his arrival. During the period 1933 to 1936 and the founding of the United Auto Workers, CP cadre shifted from resistance to the AFL-federated locals in auto to the incorporation of these small locals into the UAW-AFL.

By early 1935 the Trade Union Unity League considered that the condition had substantially changed in the United States so that the AFL would undertake certain organizing drives. There were signs that John L. Lewis, Murray, Hillman, Dubinsky and other forces within the American Federation of Labor would move toward an organizing drive. So the TUUL decided to disband their left-led unions and send them into the AFL, which they did that year. Some 400,000 militant workers who had obtained a good

deal of experience in the strike struggles of the early '30s and part of the '20s had thus entered into American Federation of Labor. (Skeels 1960, 5)

In 1936 a seed local was formed on Detroit's East Side to provide a base for organizers in certain key plants which soon would form their own local unions. The first local was organized by labor radicals Ganley, the elected business agent; "Big" John Anderson, the president; labor journalists Stanley Nowak, Wally Christie, and John Novak (Skeels 1960, 5-6). It was from this base that Anderson, Ganley and Nowak organized the Midland Sit-Down on the city's East Side (Whitty 1966).

The Midland Strike (1936) forced a shutdown of Plymouth, Chrysler, Dodge and Lincoln. The Strike won not only seniority rights and union recognition, but also a ten cent blanket wage increase and the right to abolish piecework. Simultaneously, the workers in the Aluminum Company of America sat down, and Stanley Nowak (later to be elected a State Senator) and Nat Ganley organized the strikers' ranks from outside of the plant. These pioneer sit-down strikers raised the slogan "Negro and White—Unite and Fight." (Bonosky 1953)

This Midland Steel Strike was the first sit-down strike in the city of Detroit—one full year before the better known Flint General Motors Sit-Down Strike (Ganley, autobiographical data, 3).

Just as Communists, fellow travelers and sympathizers with communism were to be conspicuously involved in the GM Strike, so the far left was at the center of things in the Midland Strike. John Anderson was the UAW organizer in charge of the Strike; Nat Ganley, who had served as an organizer for the Communist-dominated National Textile Workers Union and as a general organizer for the Communists' Trade Union Unity League and had been a Daily Worker correspondent, was an official of the UAW local involved and edited the "Midland Flash." (Fine 1969, 130)

During the period between 1934 and 1937, Ganley was arrested a number of times while participating in picket lines during strikes and union organization drives. No charges had been filed and he was immediately released. Local 155 provided the initial support to Emile Mazey, later to be elected UAW international Secretary-Treasurer, for the formation of Briggs Local 212 on the city's East Side

(Whitty 1968, 31). Stanley Nowak, at Local 155, who got Mazey a job as a part-time organizer at Briggs would further collaborate in several key East Side strikes with Ganley.

Early in the [Aluminum Company of America] Strike, Stanley [Nowak] requested help from the International UAW Office, and (Richard) Frankenstein assigned Nat Ganley to work with him. Ganley had recently injured a hand in the shop and was unable to work on machines, but he could do publicity work. The Strike Committee assigned him to collect material and edit daily bulletins which would be helpful to all strikers, both inside and outside the plant, and to their families. These bulletins were extremely valuable in squelching company rumors and traps. They also bolstered the strike morale. (Nowak, 161–62)

Local 155 played the same role as West Side Local 174, Walter Reuther's home local. Both of the early key UAW locals were heavily CP-influenced. Local 155, during Ganley's tenure as business agent, was distinguished as the first local to write significantly innovative clauses into its agreements. Among those was the accumulated seniority rights for union members serving in the armed forces.

The significance there was not only to guarantee the [returning serviceman] a job waiting for him based on his accumulated seniority, but he would also be the recipient of accumulated benefits during the war. For example, many of the vacation pay clauses were based upon the seniority rights you had. If he had full wartime seniority added to it, he would get more vacation pay. (Skeels 1960, 70–71).

A forerunner of the guaranteed annual wage was won in a small welding shop. Ganley helped establish the principle of the guaranteed annual wage long before UAW's Supplementary Employee Benefits was initiated. One company was convinced to release all employees when they had met the day's work quota. The result was four-hours' work for eight hours' pay.

Local 155 was the first local to propose to plating companies that they show bids on polishing jobs to their polishers before accepting orders. The polishers could then indicate to the managers, based on techniques in the shop, how many pieces per hour they could polish at that particular shop. And if the workers could not turn out what seemed to be the requirements of the bid, the company simply did not accept the bid. (Skeels 1960, 68–69)

By preventing speedup at the source, Ganley did not make outrageous demands. He seemed (at the point of production) to have the ability from his prior labor organizing to determine what was possible under the circumstances. Although he met stubborn opposition, Ganley did not hesitate to apply economic pressure when diplomacy and persuasion failed to move management. Once the known labor radicals like Ganley established their reputation, the strike weapon was seldom needed in the tool-and-die shops represented by Local 155. At the Garland Manufacturing Company, Harry Garland told Ganley: "Sit down and write the contract and I'll sign it" (Skeels 1960, 69). These were not the words of a man defeated by a long strike, but rather the opening statement in a new contract.

[When Garland told him that] "Oh no," I said, "you can't bargain that way. First of all, I have to train all these people on the Shop Committee to engage in bargaining. If I just write it and you sign it, we get nowhere along that line." So we made him sit down (and negotiate) despite the fact that he said "I'll sign with you because I know damn well you are going to look at the company's side of the deal as well as giving a good break to the labor side." (Skeels 1960, 70)

Prior to the expulsion of the CIO from the AFL, Ganley was Local 155's delegate to the Detroit and Wayne County Federation of Labor (AFL). Frank X. Martel, head of that body, later expelled Ganley—together with William Thorpe, Francis Comfort, Jackie Robinson, etc., for supporting Patrick H. O'Brien as mayoral candidate in 1937 against Richard Reading. (Reading was later jailed as a grafter; he was fingerprinted in the Wayne County Jail by a Local 155 member employed on Sheriff Baird's staff!)

In 1937, Ganley and Reuther were appointed in the Wayne County Federation of Labor to serve as UAW Representatives to the first united (AFL-CIO) Detroit Labor Day Parade (*Detroit Labor News*, 4 June 1937, 18 June 1937, 10 Sept. 1937).

A delegate from the local to the UAW Auto District Council (now discontinued), Ganley was invited to most of the state and Wayne County CIO conventions during this period. In his own local, Ganley edited *Common Sense*, the paper of Local 155 (Ganley, autobiographical data, 4).

Although Ganley and the Michigan CP contributed significantly to the ouster of the first UAW President, Homer Martin, the coalition necessary to defeat Martin also included the Walter Reuther-Socialist

Party Group (Howe and Widick 1949, 77). Ganley favored George Addes as successor to Martin, while Reuther and the top CIO leadership preferred R. J. Thomas as a compromise candidate. Addes afforded local CP radicals, like Ganley, their last best chance of blocking Reuther's drive for UAW hegemony. The national CP leadership, according to Leo Fenster, CP leader at the GM plant in Cleveland, compromised its UAW cadre by accepting the CIO-SP choice of Thomas at the 1939 UAW convention. The reason for this split was to be found in the relationship of the CP Popular Front strategy to the UAW's anti-Martin equivalent, the Unity Caucus. Even though the CP and SP had sharply split over the election of the Michigan CIO director in 1938, the national CP, under Earl Browder's leadership, compromised the CP auto section by supporting the policies of Sidney Hillman and his SP supporters in the UAW. To the extent that the concerns of Detroit CP auto workers were enmeshed with the international politics of the Soviet Union, Ganley and the CP in auto were often at a great disadvantage in their rapidly sharpening battle with Reuther (Kempton 1955). It was during World War II, when CP supported the no-strike pledge, that Reuther positioned himself to succeed R. J. Thomas as UAW President (Decaux 1970; Preis 1964). The CP record of supporting the prosecution of antiwar labor radicals also permitted Reuther to win the support of the bulk of the non-CP left at the UAW Convention in 1946 (Blackwood 1951, 221).

Long-time rank-and-file UAW Leo Fenster comments:

What if it were known at the right time that the Hillman-Murray team did not represent the thinking of John L. Lewis in respect to UAW leadership? What if the Browder-led Communist Party had not plugged so zealously for R. J. Thomas? That party had strong balance-of-power influence at that time. What if the delegates had rejected both outside influences? They were marching through the downtown Cleveland streets singing, "Addes is our leader, Thomas get our votes." What if? Well, Addes would have been elected and it would have been a different ball game. (Mortimer 1972, xiii)

During most of his first decade in Michigan, Ganley was on the State Committee of the CP. As a national strategist of the wartime auto politics of the CP, he made the report on wage policy at the 1944 convention of the Communist Political Association:

We proposed: (1) Changing Little Steel formula in accordance with increased living costs; (2) We favor strikes and economic

chaos in the fascist-dominated nations; strictest adherence to the wartime no-strike pledge of labor in the USA; (3) For wage adjustments upwards through upgrading regardless of race or sex, equalization of wage rates between male and female, Negro and White at the higher levels, etc; (4) For the wage demands of the steelworkers; (5) The prosperity of the nation as a whole requires a policy of constantly improving the living standards of the people, elimination of the North-South wage differentials, secure the expansion of social security programs and answer the problems of unemployment; (6) The guaranteed annual wage demand of the steelworkers should receive the support of all win-the-war Americans; (7) “Thus our wage policy has as its paramount consideration, national unity for victory in the war and the establishment of post-war security.” (Ganley autobiographical data, 4)

At this (1944) convention he was elected to the National Committee of the CPA (Ganley autobiographical data, 4). Ganley led an unsuccessful effort (at the UAW’s 1943 Convention in Buffalo) to reserve at least one seat on the UAW Executive Board for Black representation. As a member of the Convention, Ganley initiated the

proposal of the Constitution Committee to create an elected Director of Minorities as a voting member of the Executive Board. A minority on the Constitution Committee, backed by Reuther, proposed a substitute—calling for a Director of Minorities, appointed by the President, with no vote on the Executive Board. (*UAW Convention Proceedings*, 1943, 370–88)

Nat Ganley, a member of the Constitution Committee and a recognized Community Floor Leader, specifically stated that the resolution does not require that the Director be a Negro, but the Reuther brothers ignored his statement. Victor Reuther warned against “giving special privileges to special groups,” and Walter Reuther “told the Negroes that he considered any special position designed for a minority group as an inverse form of Jim Crow, which he could not support.” None of these arguments focused on the sole difference between the two reports: in one case, the new Director of Minorities would be an elected voting member of the Executive Board, and, in the other case, he would be appointed by the President. The proposal of the Committee was defeated. Why Reuther chose to obscure the issues by focusing on a point that was not part of

the resolution is a matter of speculation.

In any case, the argument of Howe and Widick that Reuther was “principled and courageous” while the Communists were demagogic is hard to accept. (Prickett 1968, 265–66)

The opponents of executive-board representation argued that ethnic and skill-level groups and women would also demand special board representation. Ganley rejoined: “Women, Italians and welders would not want special representation on the Board (if a Negro were placed on the Board). Women and welders are not lynched in America just because they are women or welders, but Negroes are lynched just because they are Negro” (Skeels 1960, 74; *UAW Convention Proceedings*, 1943, 372).

Twenty years later, the Reuther leadership reversed its position and consciously sought a Black and a woman board member (*UAW Convention Proceedings* 1962, 511; 1966, 307).

Indeed, just as most students of local history, as well as most labor historians of auto unionism, overlook how young Black workers led the Detroit-area labor upheavals of the late 1960s and 1970s, they also overlook the role of labor radicals like Nat Ganley in fighting for equal rights. Detroit Records Court Judge George W. Crockett, Jr., indicated that the working-class Black community of Detroit recognized the pioneering contribution of Ganley to affirmative action. At the memorial services for Ganley in October 1969, he stated:

Nat Ganley was my friend before I ever met him. I remember when I first heard of him; I was directing the Fair Employment Practices for the UAW CIO. They were rather difficult days, and I was told there were certain persons in the Union who were carrying on the fight for many years and one in particular . . . Nat Ganley. When I heard what he was saying, I knew that he was very much concerned in making democracy work and bringing about in this country a condition where we no longer merely proclaimed the equality of man but actually practiced it. (Crockett 1969)

Not only did Ganley intensely support Black rights in 1943, but he also played a prominent role in the efforts of the first constitutional convention of the Wayne County CIO held in July 1947 which succeeded in electing a Black to the top full-time spot on the council; Coleman Young became the director of organization, one of the three top full-time officers of the council (Ganley 1947).



Reuther, with the aid of the bitterly anti-CP Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), was able to suggest by 1946 that he was more militant than the CP forces in the UAW with respect to the wartime record of the CP. Reuther was moving toward the right with the first signs of the cold war. At the 1947 UAW convention, the left wing was smashed as an effective force in the UAW. The Anderson-Ganley Local 155 administration was defeated in local elections in 1947 by a Reuther-backed slate led by Russ Leach. It is difficult to imagine how well-known Detroit Communists such as Ganley could have survived in elective office, given the psychology of the cold war.

Wyndham Mortimer, the UAW vice president who signed the Flint GM UAW settlement of 1937, observed,

Red-baiting has done tremendous damage to the labor movement in America. It has destroyed some of the finest leaders the union ever had. . . . Since labor cut off its left wing in 1949 the old bird has been flying around in circles on those rare occasions when it has been able to get off the ground at all. At the 1949 CIO convention, Walter Reuther spearheaded the red-baiters. (Mortimer 1972, 197)

Friendly Reuther biographers Frank Cormier and William Eaton note:

Reuther called caucus after caucus of shop stewards and local officials in Detroit to explain how Communist Party tactics undercut UAW bargaining strength. He did not have to name those he considered responsible for sponsoring or tolerating such tactics. The message was spreading. (Cormier 1970, 244)

Thus, the grass-roots Local 155 leadership has been hand picked since 1947 by the UAW regional director. The remaining key opposition to the near one-party government of Local 155 is centered in the Democratic Caucus led by Chuck Dewey and Wally Christie.

On his departure from Local 155, Ganley worked as editor of the *Michigan Herald* and was later a columnist for the Michigan edition of the *Daily Worker* (Ganley autobiographical data, 4). He continued his long service on the state committee of the CP as organizer in auto. He taught economics and labor issues at the Michigan School of Social Science. This was a 1950s version of the free university concept of the 1960s, an urban equivalent of the Brookwood Labor College of the Depression era. As a frequent Detroit CP spokesman,

Ganley testified before the Detroit Common Council in favor of strong city ordinances for equal rights; before the Michigan State Senate on the Trucks Act to ban the CP; before the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC) defending (and winning) his right to unemployment compensation (*Daily Worker*, 4–5 Aug. 1949;

In September 1952, with the indictment of top Michigan CP leaders under the Smith Act, Ganley became a UAW cold war victim (U.S. District Court, no. 33, 295).

The United States government, with the assistance of Walter Reuther, virtually wiped out what remained of the CP cadre in the UAW. This was done with public hearings in Detroit by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). These hearings on CP activity in the UAW, especially in the anti-Reuther locals (Ford Local 600), were not challenged by Reuther (House Un-American Activities Committee 1952).

Although Ganley and the five other Michigan CP leaders had their convictions reversed upon their appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the net political effect was the near-complete elimination of labor radicalism in the UAW for over a decade.

Ganley continued to serve as a member of the State Committee of the CP while working as a layout man and stencil cutter on stone for several granite companies. At the Raubar Granite Company he was discharged for his affiliation with the CP. Ganley's claim for unemployment benefits was fought by the company on the basis that a Communist ought not to receive compensation. Ganley finally won full benefits with the MESC ruling that

the Michigan Employment Security Act sets no political or social standards as a condition for qualification for benefits. Distaste for an individual's political, economic or social concept per se offers no basis for sustaining a charge of misconduct connected with the individual's work. (Michigan Employment Security Commission 1952)

In later years, Ganley worked for a granite company which assigned him the cutting of a grave marker for one of the employers with whom he had bargained during the 1930s. This employer, in resisting Local 155 and Ganley in their contract demands, threatened to "bury" Ganley. Ironically, Ganley helped "bury" the employer twice: once in winning a good contract for the workers in that firm and again in preparing his tombstone.

After the Smith Act trial, Ganley began a decade-long study of the future of Detroit-area class consciousness in auto and the CP's relation to it, and he began renewing and enlarging his own study of Marxism in relation to the current picture in our country.

Shortly before his death, Ganley reflected that "Reuther moved to the right in the late 1940s, and in the 1950s they smashed the left wing as an effective force in the labor movement. . . . What resulted was not a new birth of a 'democratic non-Communist' left, as some expected, but years of entrapment of the middle-roaders in the mire of the rightist, complacent business unionism" (Ganley and Whitty 1969). What remained of the Michigan CP within the UAW after its decade-long victimization during the height of the cold war was the reality of its being organizationally unable to position itself to retain the earlier shop base built by cadre like Ganley.

The minority position of Ganley at the Sixteenth National Convention of the CP held in 1957, in the wake of the Khrushchev revelations, seems to boil down to a call for CP recognition of old-left errors that seemed to be dead ends for U.S. socialism. There is no evidence that at any time Ganley linked his criticism of CP domestic strategy to a criticism of the Soviet Union. He was dropped from the top CP leadership. On the other hand, he was ideologically capable of responding more perceptively to the new left forces of the 1960s. Ganley wanted his party to break up old lines and old laws and create a leftward-moving rank and file in the labor movement. He believed the CP should daily continue its concern not only for the workers' immediate needs but for basic radical change as well. But the 1950s left a long-lasting scar on the CP (*Daily Worker*, Jan.– Mar. 1957; Foster 1957; Foster & Stein 1957; Ganley 1957; *Proceedings of the 16th National Convention, Communist Party 1957; Sixteenth National Convention Discussion Bulletin*, 1956).

The gradual development of a labor orientation in the new left a decade later benefitted most from labor radicals in Detroit like Ganley.

Today the main concern of the radicals should be the rebuilding of the left wing in the ranks of the union membership. A left wing that combines all the virtues of the old and new left and that eliminates all the shortcomings of the old and new left can once again make history. It can create a new teamwork of leaders and members, controlled by the membership, and steadily move toward progressive change. Such progressive changes are needed in all areas of action and policy: economic struggle, organizing drives, peace, Black liberation, independent political

action, the youth and union democracy. (Ganley and Whitty 1969)

This was Ganley's final contribution to labor radicalism.

Detroit labor radicals in and near the CP were a key part of the state and local history of CIO auto organizing in the 1930s. Continued research in the minutes of the UAW and CIO conventions, the radical press, especially the *Daily Worker*, and the oral history transcripts at Wayne State University, can bring forth a series of similar biographies of other noted labor radicals. Such works could highlight the quality of Detroit-based Marxism from the standpoint of principled union practice as well as Marxist theory. A thorough study of the life and times of the many Detroiters like Ganley would help reduce the political confusion of local leftists in the shop and help revitalize the UAW in the 1990s and beyond.

The Detroit Labor History Project at the University of Detroit has completed an oral history and video-taped series dealing with Detroit's untold labor history. For transcripts or cassette tapes, write Labor Research Associates, c/o Dr. M. D. Whitty, Research Director, CF 2, University of Detroit, 4001 W. McNichols, Detroit, MI 48221. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Ms. Anna Ganley, Robert Bender, Saul Wellman, Steven Gosch, and the Wayne State University Labor Archive.

*Department of Management,  
University of Detroit*

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**Hegel and the Phenomenological Introduction<sup>^</sup>  
to Marxism: Toward a Pedagogy of<sup>^</sup>  
Dialectical Thought**

**James Lawler**

In his unpublished *Philosophical Notebooks*, commenting on the third section of Hegel's *Logic*, Lenin argued that the study of Hegel's thought is a necessary presupposition of Marxism:

Aphorism: It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!! (1961, 180)

Given the well-known difficulty involved in mastering Hegel's work, and above all his *Logic*, Lenin's remark might seem almost perverse. To avoid attributing to Lenin an unreasonably demanding standard of Marxism, one might point out that he did say that a knowledge of Hegel's *Logic* is only necessary to understand Marx's *Capital* "completely"—and then, it is necessary mainly for understanding only the first chapter. Perhaps most would-be Marxists and teachers of Marxism should therefore be content with an incomplete knowledge of *Capital*.

The difficulty of chapter one of *Capital* is mentioned by the French Marxist Louis Althusser (1971) who knew of Lenin's famous remark. Referring to this difficulty, Althusser acknowledges the influence of Hegel on this chapter. But rather than advise his audience to study Hegel's *Logic*, as Lenin did, Althusser recommends skipping chapter one—or at best reading it after having read the

other chapters. Althusser's advice is consistent with his attempt to separate Marx from Hegel. The opposition of Marx and Hegel is connected by Althusser with the opposition between science and ideology, between what Althusser regards as the radically new philosophical conception arising out of historical materialism and the labyrinth of past philosophy. Althusser acknowledged, however, that Marx did not himself think of his work as involving such a thoroughly radical break from Hegel. Consequently, he argued that Marx himself did not fully understand the novelty of his philosophical revolution, and so remained partly entangled in the intricate web of Hegel.

The question is therefore posed: In order to understand Marx "completely," is it necessary to study Hegel? The word "completely" needs commentary. It is obvious that if we want to have a historically accurate understanding, we must understand Marxism in its historical context. Since both Marx and Engels were first of all disciples of Hegel, knowledge of Hegel is essential to a historical knowledge of Marxism. But suppose we are content to leave such historical knowledge to the historians. Suppose we are content to know only the theoretically relevant elements of Marxism. For this, then, is it necessary to study Hegel? Should we not assume that Marx himself has done the work of extracting the "rational kernel" from the Hegelian system, while making the necessary criticisms of Hegelian idealism? Has not Marx himself, or Marx and Engels together, provided the essentials of this philosophical revolution, and hence spared the reader the labor of theoretical birth? Or, if Marx has not performed this job satisfactorily, as Althusser argues, is it not there to be read between the lines in Marx's own texts?

Consider the practical, pedagogical side of the matter. What about the "ordinary person," who does not have the leisure and training of a university professor? What about the working class? Is not Marxism a theory that is destined for a broader audience than most academic philosophies? Is it not a kind of intellectual elitism to recommend that workers must study Hegel's *Logic* in order to read *Capital*? Althusser's advice to skip chapter one of *Capital* is contained in an introductory essay to a French edition of *Capital*. Althusser recommends Marx's great work to workers, observing that this was also Marx's intention. The purpose of the recommendation to skip chapter one is to facilitate the reader's task. But this pedagogical concern is entwined with a critical one, as Althusser also argues that what he regards as the unnecessary complexity of chapter one



is a result of alien Hegelian influence on Marx.

In seeking to avoid the onerous chore demanded by Lenin, as well as the appearance of intellectual snobbery, we risk danger avoiding Marxism as well. For did we not just pose a thoroughly un-Marxist opposition between “historical understanding” and “theoretically relevant” understanding? But is there any truly Marxist understanding which is not historical? Our question can therefore be posed in this more comprehensive way: Can Marxist theory be comprehensible independently of its own history—a history in which Hegel’s philosophy holds a special place

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Lenin’s claim that fifty years after Marx’s death none of the Marxists really understood Marx appears in his notebook on Hegel’s *Logic*. This remark should be linked with remarks on the previous page. There, Lenin proposes two preliminary “aphorisms” “concerning the question of the criticism of modern Kantianism, Machism, etc.”:

Plekhanov criticises Kantianism and agnosticism in general more from a vulgar-materialistic standpoint than from a dialectical-materialistic standpoint, insofar as he merely rejects their views a limine [from the start], but does not correct them (as Hegel corrected Kant), deepening, generalising and extending them, showing the connection and transitions of each and every concept. 2. Marxists criticised (at the beginning of the twentieth century) the Kantians and Humists more in the manner of Feuerbach (and Büchner) than of Hegel. (1961, 179)

Lenin here criticizes the most influential Marxist philosophers of his time not merely for their failure to study Hegel but also for their failure to study Hume and Kant properly. Instead of deepening, generalizing, extending, and correcting the philosophers who preceded Marx, they reject those philosophers, treating them in a purely negative manner. In their negative relation to the history of philosophy, they proceed in the vulgar materialist manner, not as dialectical materialists. They proceed in the vulgar materialist manner, not—Lenin varies the same criticism—in the manner of Hegel.

Putting all of the above “aphorisms” together, it is clear that Lenin is not merely supposing that an academically complete “historical” knowledge of Marxism requires study of Marx’s philosophical ancestors. He is not leaving open the possibility of an

adequate theoretical knowledge, sufficient for practical purposes, which is free of such purely “historical” embellishments. In order to have a complete, in the sense of theoretically profound, understanding of Marxist dialectical materialism—and not merely of one chapter in *Capital*—it is necessary to understand Hegel’s *Logic*. But this too is not enough. For in his *Logic*, and elsewhere throughout his work, Hegel systematically, dialectically, confronts and corrects, deepens and develops, his historical predecessors. In order to understand Marxism, therefore, it is not enough to read Hegel; it is necessary to learn from Hegel. And what needs to be learned is both how to read, and the reason for reading, the history of philosophy as a whole.

If we return to the citation from which we began, we see that Lenin’s thought involves a much higher standard of authentic Marxism than we had originally supposed. In effect, he says the following: In order to have a theoretically deep understanding of Marxism as a whole, with its dialectical-materialist understanding of history, it is necessary to develop theoretical knowledge in the dialectical manner of Hegel. This dialectical manner consists in deepening, generalizing and correcting the entire history of philosophy. In the hundred years or so since Marx’s death it is probably safe to say that few Marxists have even attempted to develop such knowledge. If Lenin was right, it follows that few Marxists have had a theoretically deep understanding of Marxism.

In his article, “On the Significance of Militant Materialism,” written in 1922, Lenin (1965) takes a constructive approach to the problem of developing an authentic understanding of Marxism in the spirit of the ideas expressed in his *Notebooks*. He criticizes Communists who now have the instruments of state power at their disposal, for having paid no attention to promulgating eighteenth-century materialist writers. As an excuse, they sometimes cite “‘lofty’ grounds” (229). Such works, they say, are “antiquated, unscientific, naive, etc.” This kind of approach betrays—Lenin here says openly what he earlier noted only to himself—“a complete misunderstanding of Marxism.” (229)

These remarks are developed in connection with a consideration of the power of religious ideas over the Russian masses. Lenin replies to the “lofty” supposition that the Russian people ought to be spared the errors, limitations, distortions, inadequacies, bourgeois ideological biases, etc., of the eighteenth-century philosophers and receive a purely scientific, purely Marxist education.

It would be the biggest and most grievous mistake a Marxist could make to think that the millions of the people (especially the peasants and artisans), who have been condemned by all modern society to darkness, ignorance and superstition, can extricate themselves from this darkness only along the straight line of a purely Marxist education. (230)

He scathingly upbraids “our Communists who are supposedly Marxists but who in fact mutilate Marxism” for their inability “to awaken in the still undeveloped masses an intelligent attitude towards religious questions and an intelligent criticism of religions” (230).

What is wrong with “the straight line of a purely Marxist education”? Lenin seems at first to blame primarily stylistic inadequacies on the part of contemporaries:

The keen, vivacious and talented writings of the old eighteenth-century atheists wittily and openly attacked the prevailing clericalism and will very often prove a thousand times more suitable for arousing people from their religious torpor than the dull and dry paraphrases of Marxism, almost completely unillustrated by skillfully selected facts, which predominate in our literature and which (it is no use hiding the fact) frequently distort Marxism. (229)

But such a reply does not explain why failure to provide an education rooted in eighteenth-century materialist philosophy expresses “a complete misunderstanding of Marxism.” Perhaps it is not just a matter of the form of presentation, the style of the writers of this century, but a question of the content itself that is more appropriate to awakening the critical intellectual capacities of the Russian masses. It may be that the specific mode of thought of the eighteenth-century writers is best suited for providing an education which enables people to develop a critical understanding.

Lenin does not, of course, rule out the importance of “purely” Marxist teachings. But these must be introduced in their proper place. He evokes the idea which he expressed in his unpublished commentary on Hegel’s *Logic* when he writes that the availability of the works of Marx and Engels assures that the old atheism and the old materialism will not “remain unsupplemented by the corrections introduced by Marx and Engels” (229). This suggests that the proper place of Marxist

writings is not at the beginning, but at the end of a process of genuinely critical education. The task of Marxism, to repeat, is not to reject the writers of the past but to “correct them (as Hegel corrected Kant), deepening, generalising and extending them, showing the connection and transition of each and every concept.” But one can only correct and deepen ideas that are already consciously affirmed. The temptation of the Russian Communists is to skip the steps that lead from the more accessible, if ultimately shallower positions of earlier writers, and begin with the “deep,” already “corrected” truth. Such a simplification of intellectual requirements may reflect “top-down” administrative approaches, as Lenin blames “the general conditions of our truly Russian (even though Soviet) bureaucratic ways” (229). However seemingly efficient such an approach may be, the consequence is that Marxism itself is presented in a shallow, simplified manner; its nature, which is inherently connected with the correction and deepening of prior ideas, is inevitably distorted.

After recommending the publication of eighteenth-century materialists, Lenin turns to the importance of Hegelian dialectics as a kind of school for the development of “modern materialism,” that is, of Marxist dialectical materialism. Lenin urges the editors of *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* [Under the Banner of Marxism] to promote in that journal the publication of Hegel’s writings—supplemented and corrected, but not rejected, by materialist interpretations and applications. He proposes that the journal be “a kind of ‘Society of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics’” (234).

Here again we see Lenin’s recommendation of at least certain crucial moments of the history of philosophy as essential presuppositions of Marxism. In this case it is obviously not for reasons simply of style and accessibility that the promulgation of Hegel’s work is being proposed. In contrast to the wit and ready appeal of the eighteenth-century materialists, he now recommends what Marx (1975, 18) himself, as a young university student writing in a letter to his father, called the “grotesque craggy melody” of the Hegelian philosophy. Lenin does not pretend that such an enterprise will not be difficult. “Of course, this study, this interpretation, this propaganda of Hegelian dialectics is extremely difficult, and the first experiments in this direction will undoubtedly be accompanied by errors. But only he who never does anything never makes mistakes” (233). Juicious selections of texts, commentaries, pertinent applications etc. are necessary in this mass pedagogical task. Of course, some people must seriously read the original texts in their entirety, and first of all those who want to consider themselves theoretically accomplished Marxists. But the fact remains that Lenin was supposing

that Hegel's texts also be read by a wider audience, that Hegel's writings enter at some stage in the intellectual education of the masses. Contrary to the recommendations of Althusser, a *Capital* without the first chapter, a *Capital* without Hegel, is not suggested.

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As with much else in his writing, Lenin was not attempting to create novelty. He always sought to grasp both the text and the spirit of the writings of Marx and Engels. The idea that Marxism requires a critical study of the entire history of philosophy was clearly stated by Engels, who wrote that:

the art of working with concepts is not inborn and also is not given with ordinary everyday consciousness, but requires real thought, and this thought similarly has a long empirical history.

... Only by learning to assimilate the results of the development of philosophy during the past two and a half thousand years will it [natural science] rid itself on the one hand of any natural philosophy standing apart from it, outside it and above it, and on the other hand also of its own limited method of thought, which is its inheritance from English empiricism. (1987a, 14–15)

In expressing this idea, Engels was only summarizing the thought of Hegel himself. It is in Hegel's work that the ideas presented above in connection with Lenin's various remarks are systematically presented and defended. In the opening chapter of his *Science of Logic*, Hegel warns against the notion that philosophical truth can be directly attained, as though "shot from a pistol" (1969, 67). In rejecting an education based on "the straight line of a purely Marxist education," Lenin implicitly evokes this idea of Hegel's *Logic*. The study of logic, which Hegel understands as the science of the basic categories of thought, supposes a student who has already reached a certain level of theoretical maturity. Hence the study of logical science presupposes a prior educational development. It presupposes progress from the nonphilosophical certainties of ordinary practical consciousness to the threshold of authentically scientific thought. The true beginning of philosophical education is therefore outside of scientific philosophy itself, in the more or less primitive ideas of unscientific consciousness. The theory of the laws or "logic" of this development from nonscience to science is elaborated by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

A critical scientific understanding of any subject matter requires

the capacity to comprehend reflectively the interrelations of both general and specific concepts or categories of thought. Ordinary consciousness, on the contrary, is preoccupied with the evidences of immediate observation, and is generally unconscious of the determining influence of abstract, seemingly remote ideas in shaping the intellectual relation which the individual has to these apparent evidences. It is necessary to educate this ordinary consciousness in order to ascend to the standpoint of science proper—the standpoint presupposed to Hegel's *Science of Logic* and the natural and social sciences that are informed by a scientific methodology. Such education cannot consist in directly confronting the unscientific individual with "ultimate truths." Education must be "internal," arising out of the standpoint of the student, out of the development of the student's own position. The student must be confronted with the limitations of his or her own standpoint, and consequently be self-motivated to rise to a more adequate, if still also limited, standpoint.

The role of the educator is to facilitate this process by providing the educational means appropriate to the student at every step of the way. Where are these educational means to be found? The process of conscious education should be guided in the first place by the unconscious, spontaneous self-education of humanity. If a scientific standpoint is available today, it did not descend as a kind of divine revelation to previously benighted people. It arose historically out of the inner experiences and struggles of humanity, moving in stages step by step, and not always by the shortest path, from an original quasinatural consciousness to scientific understanding. This is the answer to the question, "Who educates the educator?" The educator is the product of this historical process, and of the dialectics of the theoretical concepts that encapsulate it. It is this historical experience of humanity that also provides the means for educating the contemporary individual, the contemporary people.

Although the results of previous historical development are implicit in the present activities and notions of contemporary society, such results must be comprehended explicitly to be fully appreciated. Each new age has its own immediacy, in which its own standpoint is regarded as natural, inevitable, and eternal. The modern world, however, requires for the first time that its citizens transcend this illusion, and consciously recognize their own historical, developmental nature. It is neither desirable nor possible for each individual to relive the history of humankind as it was originally experienced. Hegel supposes that it is, however, possible mentally to assimilate its essential features. Certain crucial scenarios and artifacts of the

past contain the crux of the matter. But even these must be reduced or refined, to make clear their main features. It is critical, however, that such recapitulations proceed from the “inner” standpoint being represented. These essential historical “notions” are not to be presented objectively, from the point of view of historical science, but subjectively, from the point of view of the age itself—not as this idea is “in itself,” but as it is “for itself,” to use Hegel’s terminology. The student should appreciate the positive significance of the standpoint in question and “identify” with it. Ontogeny repeats phylogeny—if not in details, at least in some very general way. The students should see the main lines of the history of humankind as their own history. Hence the educator must do everything to make the outlooks and ideas of the past appear plausible persuasive, appealing, apparently true. Such an approach to the ideas of the past is far from the outlook of those Marxist theoreticians criticized by Lenin who merely reject the ideas of the past, who look down on humankind’s intellectual history with scorn, or who take a purely antiquarian interest in it.

The process of building on a given standpoint, correcting its limitations, and deepening the insights contained in it, is not directly attempted by the educator. This process is the result of the historical implications and developments of that standpoint itself, as is evident in the subsequent standpoint. By summarizing or recapitulating the experiences and “self-criticism” of humanity through the practical scenarios and intellectual—the artistic, religious, and philosophical—products of successive ages, the educator ultimately leads the student to an inner appreciation of the necessity of the final scientific or “logical” standpoint. The history of philosophy, Hegel thought provides the final stage in this education. On the distinctively philosophical level, the “phenomenological” introduction to Marxism should therefore consist in the repetition of essential moments of the history of philosophy. Since this is an introduction to Marxism it cannot be supposed that the student already has a Marxist point of view. It is the point of view of pre-Marxist philosophy that must be inculcated, and the process of deepening and correcting such a viewpoint must arise out of the inner development of the history of philosophy, concluding with Marxism. Such a conclusion is only relative, and does not suppose that there is no further development. It is only in this “phenomenological” way, moreover, that the necessity of the Marxist standpoint can be theoretically demonstrated. Such demonstration consists in showing how the previous positions sympathetically presented so as to command the respect of the student



contain difficulties that can only be surmounted by a transition to Marxism.

It is only after the standpoint of Marxism has been reached, and elaborated in terms of its own inherent systematic logic, that the material covered in the phenomenological introduction can be examined objectively, scientifically, from the explicit point of view of Marxism. Of course, in the phenomenological stage, the standpoint of Marxism is implicit, since the educator is always selecting, emphasizing, refining the historical material with a certain goal in mind.

In recommending, instead of the "straight line" of modern Marxist materialism, the promulgation of eighteenth-century Enlightenment literature as a means of awakening the undeveloped intellectual faculties of the Russian people, Lenin reiterated in an abbreviated form the "phenomenological," logico-historical approach to Marxist education inspired by the dialectical methodology of Hegel. For Hegel himself, the eighteenth century supplied a kind of privileged starting point. In his historical introduction to the *Encyclopedia*, the standpoint of seventeenth-century empiricism defines the intellectual beginning of the modern period.

In his "Preface" to the *Phenomenology*, he criticizes his contemporary and one-time friend, Schelling, for taking a purely negative attitude toward the eighteenth-century materialists and empiricists, for failing to appreciate the achievements of early modern materialism and empiricism. Schelling's quasimystical conception of the unity of truth, Hegel argues, takes for granted a widespread belief in the existence of a plurality of particular scientific truths. The fact that this belief had become a matter of common sense, at least for the educated public of the time, is the accomplishment of modern scientific empiricism. Hegel grants that Schelling's own mystically oriented or intuitionist perspective also constitutes a crucial "moment" of humankind's intellectual development. So did, at their own time medieval otherworldly religion and scholastic speculation; from the point of view of the education of human consciousness, medieval otherworldliness promotes a habit of thinking in abstractions which is presupposed to scientific thought. However, the seventeenth-century English materialists and the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment bring consciousness out of the clouds of medieval otherworldliness, and for the first time in human history, train the mind on the significance of this world.<sup>1</sup> Approaching the task of social education in the particular conditions of semifeudal Russia, Lenin suggested the appropriateness of Enlightenment thought to



those conditions. But Enlightenment criticism, too, is one-sided, because it fails to appreciate the accomplishments of the earlier religious thought, and is therefore vulnerable to the neoreligious mysticism of Schelling and other modern religious thinkers who attempt to “go beyond” empiricist science, rather than reproduce its antecedents. So it also needs to be corrected.

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The task of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* must be revised in contemporary conditions, in the spirit of Marxism, which attempts develop the critical intelligence of the working people. Such critical intelligence is an essential prerequisite of a free and truly democratic society in which the people as a whole are capable of ruling themselves. In this Hegelian, dialectical spirit, Marxists should reconsider the pedagogical conception of taking the “straight line” or purely “logical” approach to teaching Marxism. Such an approach tends to the representation of Marxism as a set of more or less directly perceptible truths. This method of teaching Marxism is sometimes thought to be pedagogically necessary for any introductory teaching of a complex subject. The teacher may feel justified in sparing the student unnecessary entanglement with the “antiquated, unscientific naive” ideas of a mystified social upbringing. The political authority of the instructor, or of the Marxist movement to which he or she belongs, together with the practical experience of the student with exploitation, may lend to such a presentation a strong sense of conviction. By contrast, a historical, “phenomenological” approach to the teaching of Marxist philosophy via the history of philosophy may seem to be an unnecessary detour, inspired by an impractical academic elitism. To understand Marxism, a critic of this essay might respond, must the university student, or even the worker who is interested in Marxism from practical acquaintance with capitalist inhumanity, first read the dialogues of Plato?

The mass educational conceptions of Lenin are invoked in this essay to encourage a reconsideration of the pedagogical scheme that became dominant in the post-Lenin period of the Marxist movement. The attitude criticized by Lenin in his 1922 essay became standardized in introductory textbooks on Marxism. In the USSR, the “Hegelian” trends of Marxist philosophy that Lenin wanted to foster were stifled.<sup>2</sup> The “straight line,” essentially dogmatic approach to Marxism fostered the “misunderstandings” and “distortions” of Marxism of which Lenin warned.

The epistemological roots of such distortions were clearly outlined by Hegel. Beginnings are inevitably abstract or one-sided. Historically, first theoretical systems are characterized by this abstractness or one-sidedness. In the history of thought, the limitations of earlier theories tend to be overcome in more complex, many-sided theories. But each student approaches the realm of abstract thought as a philosophical novice. Ontogeny must repeat phylogeny. It is not possible to leap over stages of intellectual development, although it is possible, thanks to the intellectual achievements of the past, to guide and accelerate the formation of critical thought. In this process, the philosophical systems of earlier times are naturally more compatible with the initial states of the intellectual development of the student.

The texts of ancient, medieval, and early modern philosophy—both Eastern and Western variants—provide material for the “phenomenological” introduction to Marxism. Depending on the time and circumstances of the pedagogical situation, such intellectual material may be selected, abbreviated, translated into a contemporary idiom, etc. But the main thing is that these texts be presented plausibly, persuasively, so that the student is gripped by them. The criticism of their limitations must not be “external”—from the standpoint of some authoritatively given set of truths. For such a “scientific” or “logical” standpoint is not yet comprehended by the student. The unfolding history of thought ought to stimulate the advance from and provide the criticism of, the earlier standpoint.

So to follow Hegel in the teaching of Marxism turns out to be the opposite of “elitism.” It is not a matter, initially, of imposing the most complex Hegelian texts on the student as a prerequisite to understanding Marxism, but of teaching Marxism in the spirit of Hegel. And this means to begin with simpler philosophical notions corresponding to the level of intellectual development of the student. Such notions are found in pre-Hegelian philosophy. To facilitate the assimilation of two and a half thousand years of philosophy, as Engels required, it is necessary to engage the student in the intellectual drama of the history of philosophy as it proceeds from the more accessible, if more abstract and primitive, moments of ancient or early modern philosophy, to the more complex, more reflective conceptions of Hegel and Marx.

But if a student is introduced to Marxist philosophy by reading the intrinsically more complex theory first, this theory tends to be reduced to the level of comprehension which is natural to the student. Normally, the result would be confusion on the part of the student

who cannot comprehend the original texts of Marxism with their rich historical presuppositions and developed intellectual methodology. It is common among teachers of Marxism who wish to use original texts to complain about the difficulty of classical texts, which to the student seem to be historically dated. *The German Ideology* of Marx and Engels plunges the reader into the intellectual world of the left-Hegelians. In the more systematic and approachable work of Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, it is necessary to reconstruct the viewpoint of *Dühring*. In his main philosophical work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin leads us through the intricate and manifold world of Machism. Each work assumes a complex intellectual milieu and its presuppositions in Hegel, Kant, Hume, and others. In *Capital*, Marx insists on the subtle embryology of the commodity, while compiling three volumes of theoretical, “phenomenological” background to his own standpoint (published as *Theories of Surplus Value*).

To avoid burdening the student with this historical background, so as to facilitate the “straight line” path to truth, the educators may rewrite the original texts in a way that seems more directly accessible. The ideas of Marxism are enumerated in logical order, beginning with the most general conceptions of philosophy—the concepts of materialism, idealism, etc.—and proceeding from there, step by step to the more concrete notions of historical materialism and contemporary social-economic life. Here there is no phenomenological introduction to the standpoint of Marxism itself. A history of prior ideas may be schematically presented, but the student is not engaged by them. And even as a purely logical exposition of the main ideas of Marxism, something essential to dialectical logic is missing. In the course of this presentation, a heterogeneous mixture of “false” ideas is evoked in order to provide a necessary foil to demonstrate the truth of Marxism. But generally there is no even apparent truth in these opposing ideas. What is missing from such an approach to the teaching of Marxism? Let us go back to Hegel.

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In his “Preface” to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977, 6) Hegel criticizes in detail nonhistorically oriented forms of philosophy, and in particular a form of philosophical method which he calls “argumentative” philosophy (*das Rasonieren*). Hegel begins the Preface in a characteristically reflective way with the problem of beginnings in philosophy—with the problem of the nature of prefaces. Is it valid straightaway to set forth our goals or conclusions, our

main concepts? Undialectical, “argumentative” theories present their main “theses” in this way. The contrasting “antitheses,” those that are to be rejected, are also presented side by side with the ones one wants to defend. All of these notions are represented as more or less directly intelligible or self-evident to intellectual inspection. The author says which ideas are to be defended and which criticized. The middle body of the work consists in the arguments pro and con. The conclusion finally reaffirms what was said in the beginning, with the addition that in the conclusion something that was at first only asserted is supposed to have been proven. In the conclusion, however, unlike the preface which outlines the various possible positions, the concept one has defended stands triumphantly alone on the field of philosophical battle. The opposing views do not even have the solidity of corpses. Having been shown to be false, they have vanished into philosophical air. This final result, the theses which are those favored by the author’s position, are proclaimed to be the truth.

Suppose that after reading the initial presentation of the main concepts one decides to skip the intermediate, polemical chapters so as to get to the final result. After all why should one spend much time on positions which, in the end, turn out to be false? The false is nonexistent, a ghost—it really isn’t there. Would it not be simpler to set forth the truth directly, without the encumbrances and complications of the false or illusory positions? One who does not want to waste time on shadows therefore should really only read prefaces. We know in the beginning what the end will hold. Naturally, the problem with reading the final chapter in isolation, no less than with reading only prefaces, is that the heart of the philosophical activity comes in the middle, in the arguments, in the refutations, in the battle against the opposing ideas. This is the real philosophical substance of the work. And yet, from a strictly formal point of view, in the “argumentative” manner of philosophizing, all of this philosophical activity has disappeared from sight when the result has been proclaimed. As far as our comprehension of the main ideas is concerned we might as well have simply avoided the polemical fireworks.

We might say that argumentative philosophy has the un-Hegelian form of thesis-antithesis-thesis. The contradiction implicit in this form of philosophical method consists in the fact that although everything depends on the existence of the antithesis, this dependence is not expressed on a conceptual level. The sentiment of truth, won in combat with error, remains just that—a purely internal sentiment.

It does not take conceptual form. Implicitly, the intervening activity and opposition that constitute the philosophical argument are resumed in the final result, in the feeling we have of its truth. And yet this is not explicitly, conceptually present. And here we have the deficiency of this form of philosophy: its incapacity to represent formally, in terms of concepts, the development which brought it from the beginning to the end. This development is not presented as a conceptual development, as the formation of the concepts themselves out of prior concepts.

Hegel therefore maintains that the main thing in a philosophical work is not the conclusion, but “the result together with the process through which it came about” (1977, 2). The philosophical “ladder” should not be thrown away—as Wittgenstein recommends at the end of his *Tractatus*. The inner development of a philosophical argument implicitly contains movement, change, development of thought. Hence, in a broad sense of the term, it is intrinsically “historical.” This implicit character of philosophical thought requires a more adequate form of philosophical reasoning, one that makes the historical-developmental character of philosophy conceptually explicit. That means that in the course of the argument, the concepts with which we begin should be seen as changing, as developing, as a result of the opposition which motivates the philosophical argument. Hegel therefore gives arguments based on the inner structure of philosophical thought, its intrinsically antithetical or negative character, for introducing historical method into the core of logical argumentation.

The final result, the developed philosophical system, emerges only through the struggle of ideas. This struggle of ideas is not a battle of Good against Evil, Light against Darkness, Truth against Falsehood, but the genetic process of the development of truth itself. A truly comprehensive philosophical theory must overcome a purely negative conception of earlier or alternative philosophical theories and acknowledge its debt to them. Such a comprehensive theory should in fact systematically retrace its own genesis in the history of philosophy as an integral part of its own system. This means that the earlier ideas must be presented as having their own truth, and as plausible and convincing in their initial representation to the student. Their appeal should be underscored by the teacher and the student should be gripped by them. Criticism must be “internal” rather than “external.” The inner limitations and resulting contradictions of the first positions should be “self-contradictions” in the

strong sense in which the self of the student, initially caught up in the starting point, has been challenged.

Even in the development of the “scientific” system, such as Hegel intended his *Encyclopedia*, ideas should not be presented as fixed results. The movement of the system is propelled by the problematicity, the contradictoriness of its categories. The starting point the initial concepts, must be shown to be inadequate in their initial form. The further development of the system of thought is an attempt to overcome these difficulties by deepening and enriching the first concepts. The nature of the commodity, in Marx’s *Capital*, is not defined in the first few paragraphs of the work, which provides both a starting point and a set of problems which require deepening enriching, and correcting. The same should be true, in a philosophical work, with such general categories as matter and spirit, materialism and idealism. However, it is awareness of the rich history of such concepts which underlies this “logical” approach.

But to present the final result straightaway, as though “shot from a pistol”—as Hegel puts it—or “to take the straight line of a purely Marxist education”—in the words of Lenin—is to evacuate the living substance of the complex theory itself, leaving only its embalmed corpse. The distortion or misunderstanding is all the greater in the case of a theory that purports to involve a reflective comprehension of the dialectical nature of the thinking process itself. To present a conception of dialectical thinking as a set of inert “theses” which can be enumerated one after the other, independently of the actual development of thought, is to present the letter of dialectics without the spirit. One learns everything about dialectical thinking except how to think dialectically.<sup>3</sup>

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In his essay “On Militant Materialism,” Lenin stressed the practical revolutionary significance of the dialectical, Hegelian mode of criticism.

One of the biggest and most dangerous mistakes made by communists (as generally by revolutionaries who have successfully accomplished the beginning of a great revolution) is the idea that a revolution can be made by revolutionaries alone. On the contrary, to be successful, all serious revolutionary work requires that the idea that revolutionaries are capable of playing

the part only of the vanguard of the truly virile and advanced class must be understood and translated into action. A vanguard performs its task as vanguard only when it is able to avoid being isolated from the mass of the people it leads and is able really to lead the whole mass forward. Without an alliance with non-Communists in the most diverse spheres of activity there can be no question of any successful communist construction. (227)

Revolutionaries must understand the need to unite with people of different classes, social groupings, nationalities—people whose states of consciousness and levels of activity, whose philosophical outlooks, are different. Education in Marxist theory should likewise embody a spirit of acknowledgment of the contributions to human progress made by non-Marxist ideas. Such an approach is not eclecticism or opportunistic pragmatism. Truth itself, limited as it always must be, arises only out of and through such differences. It is in this spirit that Marxists need to rediscover the fundamental educational and theoretical significance of the history of philosophy—and, in the first place, the philosophy of Hegel.

*Philosophy Department*  
*State University of New York at Buffalo*

## NOTES

1. Detailed discussion of Hegel's ideas presented here are repeated from Lawler (1988).
2. For a brief discussion of Stalin's encounter with Hegel, see Roy Medvedev (1973, 224–25). A revival of the Hegelian dialectical trend occurred soon after Stalin's death, and is evident in such a pioneering work as E. V. Ilyenkov's *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx's Capital* (1982), originally published in 1960. Ilyenkov's book *Dialectical Logic* employs the historical/phenomenological method of discussing logic. In introductory courses to Marxism, however, the "logical" or "straight line" approach continues to prevail in Soviet education, despite a widespread feeling of the inadequacy of such an approach.
3. The *locus classicus* for the idea of the "three laws of dialectics"—transformation of quantity into quality, interpenetration of

opposites, and negation of negation—is Engels’ unpublished work on the dialectics of nature (1987b, 356). There Engels writes that the essential meaning of these laws is to be found in Hegel’s *Logic* the first, in the first part of his *Logik* in “Die Lehre vom Seyn” [the doctrine of being]; the second fills the whole of the second and by far the most important part of his *Logik*, “Die Lehre vom Wesen” [the doctrine of essence]; finally the third figures as the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system.” Engels states that his own presentation is not to be considered an adequate account of the nature of dialectical laws, but has a more limited purpose: “We are not concerned here with writing a handbook of dialectics, but only with showing that the dialectical laws are real laws of development of nature, and therefore are valid also for theoretical natural science. Hence we cannot go into the inner interconnection of these laws with one another” (357).

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### On Monteiro's "A Dialectical-Materialist Critique of Analytical Marxism"

I read Anthony Monteiro's article on analytical Marxism (*Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol. 3, 1990. 2 [1990]: 197–223) with great pleasure. It motivated me to raise three points.

The first concerns the roots of Austro-Marxism. Monteiro shows its positivistic roots, especially the philosophical work of Mach and, later, the Vienna Circle. But there exists still another root and it is necessary to speak about it because it indicates an early convergence of the two main streams of late-bourgeois thinking: the philosophy of life and the positivistic strategy. The roots of Otto Bauer's theory of nations (not Bruno Bauer, as erroneously stated) are in the German philosophy of life, especially in its so-called *Kulturphilosophie*. This is outlined in Ditte Gerns's analysis of Bolshevik theory on the national question (see *Nationalitätenpolitik der Bolschewiki*, Düsseldorf: Edition Marxistische Blätter, 1988).

The second point concerns the question of the long-term impact of analytical Marxism. At present, in West Germany and, if I am informed correctly, in continental Europe, this kind of "Marxism" does not play a role. But it is possible that this will now change. Monteiro discusses the theses of analytical Marxism that capitalism and socialism both are exploitative systems. He shows, especially in Roemer's and Elster's work that it had a pessimistic view of socialism and that Cohen saw in Marx's own work the sources for the problems of socialism. Is it not possible that some scholars, in looking for the reasons for the present deep-reaching crisis of socialism, will come to the view that analytical Marxism has the right answer on this? And if this occurs, this tendency will grow significantly.

My last point is somewhat critical of one aspect of Monteiro's contribution. It seems that he views the Enlightenment as being primarily characterized by a Newtonian-type mechanistic thinking. But Hegel, for example, was a leading figure of the Enlightenment, as were also others

like Spinoza and Lessing. Perhaps Monteiro is influenced here by a specific type of modern late-bourgeois critical attitude toward the Enlightenment. I think we should defend and develop this rationalism to its present necessary level and not accept the conservative or reactionary misinterpretation of one of the most important steps forward in human understanding.

Nevertheless, I stress once more that I read Monteiro's article with great pleasure and profit.

Robert Steigerwald  
*Eschborn, Federal Republic of Germany*

# The South African Working Class and the National-Democratic Revolution

Joe Slovo<sup>^</sup>

*This new discussion article by the general secretary of the South African Communist Party is available for \$3 as a pamphlet from Inkululeko Publications, P.O. Box 2424, 2000 Johannesburg, South Africa (after 1 Dec. 1990). We present the full text with the permission of the publisher.*

### **1. Introduction**

The increased tempo of struggle in our country in the last few years has stimulated a great deal of theoretical debate and political discussion among those in the very front line of the upsurge. Workers in the factories, youth in the townships, mass and underground activists, radical intellectuals, cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe, militants at all levels are seeking answers to the pressing strategic, tactical and organisational questions of the day. Increasing numbers of our people understand the essence of Lenin's political maxim: *Without revolutionary theory, there can be no real revolutionary movement.*

These discussions and debates keep coming back, in one way or another, to certain fundamentals: class struggle and national struggle, the question of stages of struggle, inter-class alliances, and the role of our working class in the liberation front. Many of these debates are between people who share common starting points; a belief that national domination is linked to capitalism and an acceptance of the goal of a socialist South Africa. But there is not always clarity on

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the most effective tactical road towards this goal.

A tendency, loosely described as 'workerism', denies that the main content of the immediate conflict is national liberation which it regards as a diversion from the class struggle. Even if it admits the relevance of national domination in the exploitative processes, *'workerism' insists on a perspective of an immediate struggle for socialism*. A tendency, loosely described as 'workerism', denies that the main content of the immediate conflict is national liberation which it regards as a diversion from the class struggle. Even if it admits the relevance of national domination in the exploitative processes, *'workerism' insists on a perspective of an immediate struggle for socialism*.

A transitional stage of struggle, involving inter-class alliances, is alleged to lead to an abandonment of socialist perspectives and to a surrender of working class leadership. The economic struggles between workers and bosses at the point of production (which inevitably spill over into the broader political arena) is claimed to be *the* 'class struggle'. This is sometimes coupled with a view that the trade union movement is the main political representative of the working class.

A more sophisticated version of the left-workerist position has recently surfaced among union-linked academics. This version concedes the need for inter-class alliances but puts forward a view of working class political organisation more appropriate to a trade union than a revolutionary political vanguard.

At the other end of this debate there are views which tend to erect a chinese wall between the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation. *Our struggle is seen as 'bourgeois-democratic' in character so that the immediate agenda should not go beyond the objective of a kind of "de-raced" capitalism*. According to this view there will be time enough after apartheid is destroyed to then turn our attention to the struggle for socialism. Hence there should be little talk of our ultimate socialist objectives. The working class should not insist on the inclusion of *radical* social measures as part of the immediate agenda because that would risk frightening away potential allies against apartheid.

Topical interest in the political shape and content of post-apartheid society has also brought into focus the question of group rights as opposed, or additional, to individual rights. The racists, of course, exploit "group rights" and 'multi-nationalism' as a lifeline to their continued domination. But this does not dispose of the question as to whether there is a legitimate basis for a multinational framework in a future people's South Africa.

The existence of cultural and ethnic diversity *side by side* with unifying processes, has aroused friendly queries on our approach to the national question. *Do we believe that our peoples already constitute*

*one nation? If not, are they (or should they be) moving towards single or separate nationhood? What is the future of the cultural and linguistic diversity and how do we cater for this diversity within the framework of a unitary state?*

From some of our left-wing critics comes the charge that our thesis of *colonialism of a special type* necessarily implies that there are two nations in South Africa - the oppressor (white) and the oppressed (black). A variant of this critique is that the Freedom Charter hints at the existence of four nations when it talks of 'equal status' for 'all national groups and races'.

For South African communists the questions and debates we have mentioned above have not arisen for the first time. For over 66 years we have attempted to find the answers and to apply them in the actual arena of struggle. We do not claim that we have a monopoly of wisdom. But, equipped with the theoretical tool of Marxism-Leninism and the inheritance of an unmatched wealth of revolutionary experience, it is not immodest for us to assert that our Party is uniquely qualified to help illuminate the correct analytical path. This is a process which calls for both creativity and intellectual openness. It also requires a continuing exchange of ideas not only within the ranks of the Party but also between us and all non-Party serious revolutionary activists.

Genuine worries about some of our approaches and formulations (whether from a 'right' or 'left' position) must be debated and not merely dismissed. In this spirit, then, we proceed to consider the following:

- Class struggle and national struggle
- The stages of struggle
- Working class leadership
- The building of the South African nation

We hope that this pamphlet will help expand the discussion of the theoretical basis of our revolutionary practice in the present phase of the struggle.

## **2. Class struggle and national struggle**

The South African Communist Party, in its 1984 constitution, declares that its aim is to lead the working class towards the *strategic* goal of establishing a *socialist republic* 'and the more immediate aim of winning the objectives of the *national democratic revolution which is inseparably linked to it*'. The constitution describes the main

content of the national democratic revolution as

the national liberation of the African people in particular, and the black people in general, the destruction of the economic and political power of the racist ruling class, and the establishment of one united state of people's power in which the working class will be the dominant force and which will move *uninterruptedly towards social emancipation and the total abolition of exploitation of man by man*'.

The national democratic revolution—the present stage of struggle in our country is a revolution of the *whole oppressed people*. This does not mean that the oppressed 'people' can be regarded as a single or homogeneous entity. The main revolutionary camp in the immediate struggle is made up of different classes and strata (overwhelmingly black) which suffer varying forms and degrees of national oppression and economic exploitation. The camp of those who benefit from, and support, national domination is also divided into classes.

Some 'learned theorists' are continuously warning workers against talk of a 'revolution of the whole oppressed people', accusing those who use such formulations of being 'populists' rather than revolutionaries. Let us hear Lenin on this question since he was also in the habit of using the same words to describe the upsurge in Russia:

'Yes, the *people's revolution*. Social Democracy... demands that this word shall not be used to cover up failure to understand class antagonisms within the people....*However, it does not divide the "people" into "classes" so that the advanced class becomes locked up within itself...the advanced class...should fight with all the greater energy and enthusiasm for the cause of the whole people, at the head of the whole people*' (1962, 9, 111–12).

Of course, the long-term interests of the diverse classes and strata of the revolutionary camp do not necessarily coincide. They do not have the same consistency and commitment even to the *immediate* objectives of the democratic revolution. It is obviously from within the ranks of the black middle and upper strata that the enemy will look for sources of collaboration. We will return to this question.

*But, in general, it remains true that our National Democratic Revolution expresses the broad objective interests not only of the*



*working class but also of most of the other classes within the nationally-dominated majority, including the black petit- bourgeoisie and significant strata of the emergent black bourgeoisie.* This reality provides the foundation for a struggle which aims to mobilise to its side all the oppressed classes and strata as participants in the national liberation alliance.

We believe that the working class is both an indispensable part and the leading force of such a liberation alliance. But its relations with other classes and strata cannot be conditional on the acceptance by them of socialist aims. The historic programme which has evolved to express the common immediate aspirations of all the classes of the oppressed people is the Freedom Charter. This document is not, in itself, a programme for socialism, even though (as we argue later) it can provide a basis for uninterrupted advance to a socialist future.

The recent surge in workers' organisation and socialist thinking has highlighted some important questions.

- Does the immediate emphasis on the national democratic revolution imply that the working class should abandon *class struggle in favour of national struggle*?
- Are socialist objectives being shelved in favour of a struggle for so-called bourgeois democracy?
- Which class must play the vanguard role in our democratic revolution?
- Above all, how can the *independent class role of the working class* be safeguarded in a period demanding inter-class alliances?

The answer to these questions and the key to a correct determination of strategy and tactics in our present situation requires a correct grasp of the *relationship* between *class* and *national* struggle.

If we pose the question by asking only whether our struggle is a national struggle or a class struggle, we will inevitably get a wrong answer. The right question is: what is the *relationship* between these two categories. A failure to understand the *class content of the national struggle and the national content of the class struggle* in existing conditions can hold back the advance of both the democratic and socialist transformations which we seek.

The immediate primacy of the struggle against race tyranny flows from the concrete realities of our existing situation. The concept of national domination is not a mystification to divert us from class approaches; *it infects every level of class exploitation.* Indeed, it divides our working class into colour compartments. Therefore,

unusual categories such as 'white working class' and 'black working class' are not 'unscientific' but simply describe the facts.

National domination is maintained by a ruling class whose state apparatus protects the economic interests and social privileges of all classes among the white minority. It denies the aspiration of the African people towards a single nationhood and, in its place, attempts to perpetuate tribalism and ethnicity. These, and a host of related practices, are the visible daily manifestations of national domination. These practices affect the status and life of every black in every class. *It is, however, the black working class which, in practice, suffers the most intense form of national domination.* And those who dismiss the fight against national domination as the key immediate mobilising factor of our working class are living in an unreal world of their own.

It is encouraging to observe the recent spread of an understanding of the link between *national domination* and *class exploitation* among organised sectors of the working class. This spread is due primarily to the heightened experiences of the struggle *against race domination* in the recent period.

Socialist ideas take root not just through book knowledge but through struggle around day-to-day issues. And, for those who have to live the hourly realities and humiliations of race tyranny (at the point of production, in the townships, in the street, etc.) *there is no issue more immediate and relevant than the experience of national oppression.* This is certainly the starting point of political consciousness for every black worker.

It is mainly in the actual struggle against national oppression that its class roots can be grasped most effectively. It is that struggle which illuminates most brightly the underlying relationship in our country between capitalism and national domination.

Those who would like to restrict the meaning of class struggle to a trade union struggle against the bosses, and who see political struggle only through narrow economic spectacles, would do well to heed Lenin's words on these questions:

Is it true that, in general, the economic struggle is "the most widely applicable means" of drawing the masses in to political struggle? It is entirely untrue. *Any and every* manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one whit less "widely applicable" as a means of drawing in the masses...Of

the sum total of cases in which the workers suffer (either on their own account or on account of those closely connected with them) from tyranny, violence and lack of rights, undoubtedly only a small minority represent cases of police tyranny in the trade union struggle as such, (1961, 504–23)

Class struggle in a period of capitalist hegemony is, in the long run, a *political* struggle for the ultimate winning of power by the working people. *But the content of this class struggle does not remain fixed for all time; it is dictated by the concrete situation at a given historical moment. We cannot confine the meaning of class struggle to those rare moments when the immediate winning of socialist power is on the agenda.* When workers engage in the national struggle to destroy race domination they are surely, at the same time, engaging in class struggle.

Class struggle does not fade into the background when workers forge alliances with other class forces on commonly agreed minimum programmes. The history of all struggles consists mainly of such interim phases. What is the essence of conflict during such phases if not class struggle? There is no such thing as ‘pure’ class struggle and those who seek it can only do so from the isolating comfort of a library arm-chair. The idea that social revolutions involve two neatly-labelled armies was dealt with by Lenin with bitter irony:

‘So one army lines up in one place and says “we are for socialism” and another, somewhere else and says, “we are for imperialism”, and that will be a social revolution! ... Whoever expects a “pure” social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is’. (Collected Works, Volume 22, pp.355-56).

The workers in Vietnam were not abandoning the class struggle when they concentrated their main energies, in alliance with other class forces, on defeating Japanese militarist occupation, French colonialism, and finally US imperialism and its puppet forces. When Hitler unleashed world war, the main content of the workers’ *class* struggle correctly became the defeat of fascism. This task necessitated the most ‘popular’ of Fronts which brought together both pro- and anti-socialist forces. It is a matter of historical record that the anti-fascist victory made possible, among other things, the greatest extension of the socialist world since the October Revolution and opened the road to successful anti-imperialist, anti-colonial revolutions.

When we exhort our working class to devote its main energies (in alliance with the other nationally oppressed classes) to the immediate task of winning national liberation, we are certainly not diluting the class struggle or retreating from it. *On the contrary, we are advancing and reinforcing it in the only manner which is practicable at the present time.*

Nor are we putting off the socialist revolution by an emphasis on the National Democratic objectives of the immediate phase of struggle. In the words of Lenin, answering critics of Bolshevik policy on the primacy of the democratic revolution, 'we are not putting [the socialist revolution] off but are taking the first steps towards it in the only possible way, along with the correct path, namely the path of a democratic republic' (1962, 9:203). Our immediate emphasis on the struggle for democracy and 'People's Power' is an essential prerequisite for the *longer-term* advance towards a socialist transformation.

*But national liberation is, at the same time, a short-term class imperative for the working people.* Because the tyranny of national oppression weighs more heavily on South Africa's doubly-exploited working class than on any other working class, its destruction by the shortest route possible is, in itself, in the deepest class interests of our proletariat. Both immediately and in the long-term, our working class stands to gain more from the ending of national domination than any other class among the oppressed.

These realities help define the main form and content of the workers' class struggle at the present historical moment and the kind of alliances necessary to advance working class objectives. A 'class struggle' which ignores these truths can only be fought out in the lecture-room and not in the actual arena of struggle.

But the need to concentrate on the *present* does not imply an abandonment or disregard for the *future*. We shall argue more fully in a later section that participation by the working class in the democratic revolution (involving alliances, minimum programmes, etc.) does not imply a dilution of its independent class positions.

There is, moreover, no need for the spread of socialist awareness among the working people to be postponed during the phase emphasising the democratic transformation a belief falsely attributed to our Party by some of its left-wing critics. *During this period it is vital to maintain and deepen working class understanding of the interdependence between national liberation and social emancipation. This task cannot be postponed until the ANC flag flies over Pretoria.*

It follows from the above that the participation of our working class

and its political vanguard in the liberation alliance is *both a long-term and short-term class necessity*. The SACP's involvement in such an alliance is not, as our left-wing critics allege, a form of 'tailism' or 'populism'. Nor, as our right-wing detractors would have it, is it an opportunistic ploy to camouflage our so-called 'hidden agenda' and to use the ANC merely as a stepping stone to socialism.

We have never made a secret of our belief that the shortest route to socialism is via a democratic state. But, as already mentioned, the SACP takes part in the alliance for yet another extremely cogent reason; our belief that the elimination of national domination (which is the prime objective of the Alliance) is, at the same time, the most immediate class concern of our proletariat.

But it is also the concern of the other main classes within the dominated majority. Bearing in mind their class positions, is there an *objective basis* for a programme which can attract these classes to the side of the liberation front and do so without compromising the fundamental interests of the working class?

### ***The black middle strata and the emerging black bourgeoisie***

We have said that the national democratic revolution expresses the broad objective interests of the working class and *most* of the other classes which make up the nationally-dominated minority. We will return to the special position of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in the bantustans and in the townships, whose very existence depends upon collaboration with race domination.

Our approach to the multi-class content of the present phase of our struggle has received a great deal of attention from some of our 'left' critics. But because they have distorted our approach by knocking down skittles which they themselves have put up, we need to devote a few words to the obvious.

*It is obvious* that the black capitalist class favours capitalism and that it will do its best to influence the post-apartheid society in this direction.

*It is obvious* that the black middle and upper classes who take part in a broad liberation alliance will jostle for hegemony and attempt to represent their interests as the interests of all Africans.

*It is obvious* that (like their counterparts in every part of the world) the black middle and upper strata, who find themselves on the side of the people's struggle, are often inconsistent and vacillating. They are usually the enemy's softest targets for achieving a reformist,

rather than a revolutionary, outcome.

All this is pretty obvious. But it is equally obvious that if the working class and its vanguard and mass organisations were to get locked up with themselves, the greatest harm would be done to the cause of both national liberation and social emancipation. *By rejecting class alliances and going it alone, the working class would in fact be surrendering the leadership of the national struggle to the upper and middle strata.* This would become the shortest route towards a sell-out reformist solution and a purely capitalist post-apartheid South Africa under the hegemony of a bourgeois-dominated black national movement. Along this path, 'class purity' will surely lead to class suicide and 'socialist'-sounding slogans will actually hold back the achievement of socialism.

The black middle and upper strata constitute a relatively significant political force, particularly in community struggles. Whether we like it or not they will participate and, often, take a leading part in such struggles. They are usually among the most vocal articulators of demands and (as we have experienced with black consciousness) they are sometimes the pioneers of new variants of purely nationalist ideology.

The question, therefore, is not whether they are participants in the struggle. The real question is whether the working class, by refusing to establish a common trench, helps push them right into the enemy's lap. On the other hand, by engaging with them on common minimum platforms, the working class is able to forge a stronger opposition and also to neutralise some of the negative potential of the middle class.

It is, in any case, a basic maxim of working class revolutionary strategy that, at every stage, it is necessary to *maximise the forces which can be mobilised against the ruling class around a principled common immediate programme.* But this does not depend just on an appeal to the individual conscience which occasionally (as we have recently witnessed among a small minority of the white community) rebels against its class roots and group interests.

When, however, it comes to the behaviour pattern of class entities, experience has shown that, in general, they are motivated primarily by a desire to protect their economic interests. It follows that to determine which social force can, at a specific moment, be won over to the side of the revolution (without compromising its main objectives) requires, in the first place, an analysis of basic economic factors which will influence their participation. In other words, a shared opposition to race domination at the social level may not, on

its own, be sufficient to cement an inter-class alliance.

Is there an objective basis (having its roots in economic class interests) for drawing the black middle and upper classes into an inter-class alliance in the immediate struggle to destroy national domination? We believe that the answer is clearly yes. Let us take note of more recent ruling class activities in this area.

In the last decade the size of the black upper and middle classes has increased. The state has relaxed a few obstacles to class mobility. Some sectors of white business have selectively encouraged black entry into previously forbidden territory. Neither the state nor business have hidden their motivation for these measures. They are designed to create a more significant black social force with a vested interest in the status quo and capitalism; a force which, they hope, will distance itself from the liberation struggle or, perhaps, even take it over.

Despite the 'reforms' and peripheral concessions of the last decade, the *immediate fate of the black middle and upper classes remains linked much more with that of the black working people than with their equivalents across the colour line*. For reasons of colour their class mobility cannot proceed beyond a certain point. They are still hemmed in by national disabilities economic, cultural, social and political which separate them from their white class counterparts.

At the economic level, reforms notwithstanding, national oppression continues to affect black capitalists in the accumulation process. With some exceptions, they cannot own land or property in the central business districts. They are disadvantaged when it comes to access to credit and loan capital, etc. And, at the social and cultural levels, a black capitalist continues to share with a black worker most of the humiliations of inferior colour status.

A few black capitalists may now be able to rub shoulders with tycoons like Oppenheimer at some board-room meetings as a symbol of 'black advancement', but they cannot leave their ghettos to live next door to their fellow directors, sit in a common parliament, assert a right for their immediate family from rural areas to resettle in their home towns, and so on. It is only the most vulgar and deterministic forms of economism which can underplay the impact of these, and so many other, ravages of national domination which do not exempt a single class or group within the black community.

But, as we have already argued, *ultimately* it is the economic factor which plays the primary role in determining class alignments.



Conflicting class approaches to the nature of the immediate post-apartheid society may well, in practice, overshadow existing economic discrimination and the common black aversion to white rule. A Motsuenyane is more likely to opt for remaining a capitalist in a race-dominated society if the alternative is that he will become a worker in a people's South Africa. In addition, therefore, to the social impact of race practices which variously affect all black classes and strata, is there an objective *economic foundation* for an inter-class black alliance?

There is such an objective foundation. It is grounded in a perspective of an interim phase in the post-apartheid period which neither threatens the immediate economic aspirations of the *other nationally-dominated classes nor militates against the fundamental interests of the workers*. This perspective is not (as our 'left' detractors allege) tailored merely to suck broad elements into the liberation front.<sup>1</sup> Nor does it, in any way, constitute a retreat from a commitment to end all forms of exploitation of man by man.

We have never hidden our conviction, which we continue to proclaim, that true national liberation is ultimately impossible without social liberation. The Freedom Charter and our Party Programme do not, however, project socialism as the immediate consequence of a people's victory. During this phase a vital role, under specified conditions, will undoubtedly be required of a private sector.<sup>2</sup>

**[See p. 493 for paragraph that was inadvertently omitted here in the original of this issue of *Nature, Society, and Thought*]**

We will come back to the need for immediate steps to be taken in the post-apartheid period to break the economic stranglehold of the monopolies and to transform a major portion of wealth from private into social property. Suffice it to say that such measures *will, of necessity, result in an immediate sizeable contraction of the private sector*. Ninety-nine per cent of this sector is presently owned and controlled by white capitalists; a race monopoly which constitutes the key instrument of national domination.

At the same time it would be harmful demagoguery and a recipe for chaos to proclaim that the post-apartheid state will be able, at a stroke, to do away completely with the market economy, to eliminate the whole private sector and to dispense with the accumulated business experiences and management skills of this sector. With the lifting of the race barriers, those black businessmen who have been the victims of race-stunted growth, will certainly find more immediate room for expansion than they were ever permitted under apartheid rule. The anti-monopoly provisions of the Freedom Charter will also open up avenues for the relative growth of black business in the



post-apartheid phase.

*In other words, under a people's government the black middle and upper classes will be better off economically (and in every other aspect of their lives) than they are now. In this sense the national democratic revolution represents their immediate interests as a class; it provides a legitimate and principled basis for the kind of inter-class alliance which is projected by our liberation front.*<sup>3</sup>

Those who fear that all this amounts to the expansion of capitalism in the post-colonial state would do well to remember that we are talking about a minute group (the black middle and upper strata) which just about produces two per cent of the gross national product, mainly in the tertiary sector. In any case, the expansion of its growth as a result of the lifting of racial barriers in trade and manufacture will, in terms of the Freedom Charter, be controlled 'to assist the well-being of the people'.

In the context of a severe clipping of the wings of the overwhelming mass of existing private capital, it is sheer ultra-leftist demagoguery to describe this approach as a commitment to a capitalist road in the state.<sup>4</sup> It cannot be denied that a private sector of whatever size will inevitably help to generate negative social and ideological tendencies. But social control over the main means of production and distribution by a political power in which the working class is dominant should more than counter-balance such tendencies.

What we have said about the black middle and upper classes does not apply to all its segments. We have always been careful to treat the emergent black *bureaucratic bourgeoisie* as a special category even though there is a degree of interchangeability between it and other strata.

The *bureaucratic bourgeoisie* is a stratum that depends for its capital accumulation more or less entirely on its position within the collaborative structures of apartheid bantustan 'governments', community councils, management committees, etc. It enriches itself often through fraud and corruption, and uses access to the collaborative structures to allocate to itself land, trading premises and other resources. Its genesis and demise depend solely on the survival of race domination and (individual defections aside) it will share a trench with the enemy.

The allegiance of the other middle and upper black strata to the immediate objectives of the liberation struggle cannot be taken for granted; it has to be fought for on the ground. The ruling class can be expected to contend with the liberation alliance for the political soul of

these strata, exploiting their class potential for vacillation and their preference for reformist, rather than revolutionary, transformation.

The alliance of the working class with forces which reject its long-term socialist aspirations is never unproblematic and without tension. It requires constant vigilance and, above all, the safeguarding of the independence of the vanguard and mass class organs of the workers. The question of the inter-class alliance brings us to a related issue—the so-called two-stage theory of the South African revolution.

### 3. *Stages of Struggle*

The concept of stages in struggle is not an unusual one for any political activist. Those engaged in revolutionary practice, whether in a trade union or in a political party, do not require a seminar to be convinced that struggle goes through stages. Even the most localised struggles, for example the struggle for an annual wage increase in a particular industry or factory, or a struggle against high rents in a particular township, go through stages. The same applies to the overall struggle.

Our belief that the immediate content of our struggle is the national liberation of our whole people and that this process cannot ultimately be completed without social emancipation at once poses a perspective of stages in our revolution. This perspective has generated a great deal of criticism from 'leftist' circles.

We do indeed see the current stage of struggle the national democratic phase as the most direct route of advance, in our particular conditions, to a second stage, socialist development. Looking even further ahead, it is valid to describe socialism itself as a major transitional stage on the road to communism.

There is, however, both a *distinction and a continuity* between the national democratic and socialist revolutions; *they can neither be completely telescoped nor completely compartmentalised*. The vulgar Marxists are unable to understand this. They claim that our immediate emphasis on the objectives of the national democratic revolution implies that we are unnecessarily postponing or even abandoning the socialist revolution, as if the two revolutions have no connection with one another. They have a mechanical approach to the stages of our revolution, treating them simply as water-tight compartments.<sup>5</sup>

It should, however, be conceded that our own formulations have sometimes been imprecise, and have invited the charge that we treat stages as compartments, as 'things-in-themselves'.

It is necessary at once to state a rather obvious proposition, namely, that it is implied in the very concept of stages that they can never be considered in isolation; they are steps in development.

A stage which has no relation to a destination in itself not final and constituting a stage for yet another destination is a linguistic and logical absurdity. The concept 'stage' implies that it is at one and the same time a point of arrival and a point of departure.

The real question is how to reach a stage without blocking the route onwards to the next destination. This depends (mainly) on revolutionary practice. On balance we can justly claim that our own revolutionary practice has not departed from the 'continuity' concept of stages.

We reiterate that when we talk of stages we are talking simultaneously about *distinct phases* and a *continuous journey*. *At the same time revolutionary practice demands that within each distinct stage there should be a selective concentration on those objectives which are most pertinent to its completion.* This in no way detracts from the need to plant, within its womb, the seeds which will ensure a continuity towards the next stage.

There is thus no Chinese wall between stages. Lenin emphasised this point when he said:

We all categorise bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution, we all insist on the absolute necessity of strictly distinguishing between them. However, can it be denied that in the course of history individual particular elements of the two revolutions become interwoven? (1962. 9:85)

We, for our part, insist on the need to understand the distinct characteristics of the present stage of our revolution, and also the ideological and organisational bridge between this stage and the socialist aspirations of our working class.

It is not inevitable that final destinations follow from particular preceding stages. We have, for example, always believed that under South African conditions the national democratic revolution has great prospects of proceeding at once to socialist solutions. This is because no significant national demand can be completely fulfilled without the eventual destruction of the existing capitalist structure. But this outcome is inevitable only in the abstract sense. Its translation into a reality must be dependent on a number of vital subjective factors. Among the most important of these is the extent to which the most revolutionary class the proletariat is politicised and participates as a leading force in the coming struggles and in the state forms which are constructed in place of the old.

We will come back to the question of the way our working class

must assert its role both for itself and as a leading force in the broader revolutionary line-up. For the moment, let us look a little more closely at the terminology we use to define the main features of the immediate phase of our revolution.

***Bourgeois-democratic or national-democratic?***

The terminology we use to describe the stages of a revolution can either illuminate or obscure its main objectives. The use of a wrong (albeit analogous) descriptive label to characterise a stage can, and often does, lead to wrong thinking about its content. We can easily be misled by images which are conjured up by descriptive labels which have their origin in a different historical period and which refer to a different moment in a different struggle.

In this connection let us examine the descriptive label - 'bourgeois democratic' - which has, now and then, been used to describe the present phase of our revolution. We believe this is a misleading description which obscures the true content of the present stage of our struggle. For a start it invokes quite a wrong analogy with the Russian 1905 and February 1917 revolutions.

It could, of course, be said that we are struggling at this stage for some of those political rights which were articulated by the ideologists of the rising bourgeoisie at the dawn of capitalism (the franchise for all, civil equality, national unity, self-determination, etc.). These have become traditionally labelled 'bourgeois-democratic rights'. The banner of 'democracy' helped the emerging bourgeoisie to mobilise the working people in the towns and the serfs in the countryside against the old feudal order and to establish its own hegemony.

Today, in general, it has become an anachronism to link democratic aspirations with the bourgeoisie. A struggle for democracy in the modern era has little, if anything, to do with the 'bourgeois-democratic revolution'. Wherever democracy threatens the basis of capitalist economic exploitation the bourgeoisie are the first to abandon it. The Fascist experience exemplifies this point.<sup>6</sup> But, in any case, in regard to our own situation, there are even more compelling reasons for rejecting the label bourgeois-democratic to describe the content of our liberation struggle.

In South Africa, in contrast to 1905 and 1917, it is our bourgeoisie (and not a feudally-based autocracy) which wields economic and political power. Our bourgeoisie *is* the ruling class in every sense of the term. *It has achieved and maintained its hegemony precisely through the mechanism of denying 'bourgeois-democratic*

rights' to the majority of the population. The specific route which capitalism took in South Africa has led to the creation of a virtually inseparable bond between capitalist exploitation and race domination.

With the exception of a very tiny and economically weak black bourgeoisie, our capitalist ruling class in general continues to be opposed to the universal extension of democracy (as normally understood) to the majority. *On the main issues our capitalist class as a whole is, and can be expected to remain, on the side of the retention of race hegemony, albeit by mechanisms which involve some forms of power-sharing.*

This conclusion is not negated by the speeches that we hear from some of our tycoons like the Rellys and the Oppenheimers. A few are undoubtedly stirred by a liberal conscience reinforced, perhaps, by the fact that certain aspects of race domination are no longer as profitable as they used to be. There are undoubtedly significant differences at the top on the choice of strategies for coping with the present political and economic crisis. This fact calls for the use of all means, including dialogue, to weaken the unity of the ruling class and to isolate its most reactionary sector; it does not imply that they can become part of the revolutionary camp.

This reality makes a special imprint on the content of the immediate phase of our revolution. For example, it cannot be said of our revolution, as Lenin was able to say of pre-October Russia, that 'the revolution expresses the interests of the entire bourgeoisie as well'. It certainly does not do so in our case. We therefore believe that it is misleading to use the words 'bourgeois-democratic' to describe the present stage. The words *national democratic* are closer to our reality. We will return to this question when we touch on the specific social content of our national democratic revolution.

The analytical path along which we have journeyed has been the target of attacks by critics from different positions. Our enemies on the right (including Botha) allege that we control the ANC and that our hidden agenda is the immediate capture of fully-fledged socialist power. Our detractors on the ultra-left accuse us of the very opposite sins; that we are being dragged in the tail of nationalism and that we have abandoned our socialist goals.

But even among some of our close friends and supporters there is a need to share a better understanding of the real content of the immediate social transformation that we seek. For example, in a recent interview Dr V. Goncharov<sup>7</sup> is reported to have said

that he detected an attempt by some ANC members 'to put before the national liberation movement now the tasks of the socialist revolution' and that this approach poses the danger that they will lose allies in the population'.

Neither the SACP nor the ANC nor any of their authoritative spokespersons have advanced socialism as the immediate objective. Perhaps Dr Goncharov's fears are fertilised by the fact that our National Democratic Revolution has a special content, necessitating immediate *social measures (especially in the economic sphere) which appear to have a socialist flavour*. The Freedom Charter (which is not a socialist document) contains such elements. If, analytically speaking, we look at the first stage of our revolution through bourgeois-democratic spectacles, *we risk confusing (as, I fear, Goncharov does) some of the essential radical changes with socialist transformation*.

In other words, there is a distinction between the social content of our National Democratic Revolution and socialist transformation. For reasons which are special to our own situation, the present phase of our revolution contains elements of both national and social emancipation; it is not the classic bourgeois-democratic revolution nor is it yet the socialist revolution. This is so because of the unique relationship between capitalist exploitation and national domination in South Africa.

In the world as a whole, capitalist exploitation does not necessarily involve race domination. But the historically-evolved connection between capitalist exploitation and race domination in South Africa creates a link between national liberation and social emancipation. In our conditions you don't have to be a doctrinaire Marxist to conclude that a liberation which deals only with a rearrangement of the voting system and leaves undisturbed the race monopoly of 99% of our wealth, is no liberation at all. *Any honest black nationalist understands that white political privilege has been the device to create and protect white economic privilege*.

It is therefore impossible to imagine any real form of *national liberation* which does not, at the same time, involve a fundamental *rearrangement of the ownership and distribution of wealth*. Even Gavin Relly, the current boss of Anglo-American, was forced to declare:

In the economic field, whilst I as a businessman would want the freest environment for the private sector to pursue its interests, I accept that some form of mixed economy is likely. . . . This is so because there is quite justifiable emphasis on the part of black South Africans on a more equitable distribution of wealth,

to compensate for the errors of omission and commission of apartheid'(sic). (*Sunday Times* June 1, 1986)

It is precisely our Party's emphasis on the *economic content of our National Democratic Revolution* which has contributed so much towards the spread of revolutionary nationalism. And it is for the same reason that the Party has won such an important place in the liberation alliance and gained so much popularity among the workers and youth as an independent vanguard.

It is, of course, imperative (as we have already stressed) that we mobilise the widest democratic unity around a programme of immediate assault on the racist tyranny. *However, the economic content of our National Democratic Revolution has to be guarded even at the risk of losing some 'potential allies'*. If we retreat too far on this aspect we may entice more 'allies' but, in the process, we would also risk losing our mass revolutionary following. Compared to analogous phases (the Russian 1905 and February 1917 revolutions) certain of the key elements of our democratic revolution are, therefore, much more closely 'interwoven' with the longer-term socialist transformation.

The shortest route to socialism in our country is via a democratic state. But it will be a democratic state which will at once be required to implement economic measures which go far beyond bourgeois-democracy. These economic measures, dictated by the most elementary objectives of our national liberation struggle, will erect a favourable framework for a socialist transformation but will not, in themselves, create, or necessarily lead to, socialism.

*A speedy advance towards socialism will depend, primarily, on the place which the working class has won for itself as a leader of society.*

#### **4. Working class leadership**

If the working class emerges as the dominant social force in a truly democratic post-apartheid state, the possibility is clearly opened up of *a peaceful progression* towards socialism. Those 'revolutionaries' who may throw up their hands in horror at the suggestion that conditions might open up the possibility of a peaceful transition towards socialism should take note of Lenin's words:

To become a power the class-conscious workers must win the majority to their side. As long as no violence is used against the people there is no other road to power. We are not Blanquists,

we do not stand for the seizure of power by a minority (1964, 24:40).

To eventually win the majority of our people for a socialist South Africa, we must spread socialist awareness and socialist consciousness now, mainly among the workers but also among the rural poor and the middle strata. We must also ensure that the working class emerges as the politically-dominant social class in the post-apartheid state. This can only be achieved if the working class wins a place now as the leading social force in the inter-class liberation alliance.

But, it is not only to ensure a post-apartheid advance towards socialism that the role of the working class is crucial. The immediate objectives of real national liberation as envisaged by the ANC and SACP and whose goals are embodied in the Freedom Charter cannot be effectively fulfilled without the organised strength and leadership of the working class. We emphasise again that if the working class isolates itself from the alliance the result would be to dilute the content of the national democratic revolution, to hand over its direction to the other class forces and, in the long term, to hold back socialist advance.<sup>8</sup>

The working class cannot play the key role by merely leading itself and sloganising about its historic mission. It must *win popular acceptance on the ground as the most effective champion of the democratic aspirations of all the racially-oppressed groupings*. It must work with, and provide leadership to, our youth, women, intellectuals, small traders, peasants, the rural poor and - yes - even the racially-dominated black bourgeoisie, all of whom are a necessary part of the broad front of our liberation struggle.

It is, however, sometimes alleged that an alliance will tie the hands of the working class and erode its independence. Such an outcome is certainly not inevitable.

The Vietnamese leader, Le Duan, described an alliance as a 'unity of opposites'. The classes and strata which come together in a front of struggle usually have different long-term interests and, often, even contradictory expectations from the immediate phase. The search for agreement usually leads to a *minimum platform* which excludes some of the positions of the participating classes or strata. It follows that an alliance can only be created if these diverse forces are prepared to enter into a compromise. And it can only survive and flourish if it is governed by a democratic relationship between the groupings which have come together.

*But when a front is created the working class does not just melt into it. It does not abandon its independent class objectives or*



*independent class organisation.* On the contrary, the strengthening of workers' independent mass and vanguard structures is even more imperative in periods demanding organised relations with other class forces. This brings us directly to the organisational instruments of working class leadership.

### ***The instruments of working class leadership***

In general, workers must be active wherever people come together in struggle, whether at national, regional or local levels. The whole mass democratic movement the UDF, youth organisations, women's organisations, civics, street committees, students, church-goers, etc., must feel the influence of workers' militancy and dedication. The majority of most of these categories are, in any case, workers who should ensure, through democratic participation, that their interests are not swamped by the other social groupings.

The independent role of the working class and the way it relates to other classes of our society, at once raises important questions connected with the character and role of three key worker-related sectors of our struggle—the *national movement, the trade union movement and the political party of the working class.* It also raises questions about the way in which these sectors relate to one another. Let us say a few words about each of these sectors.

### ***Trade unions and the working class***

A trade union is the prime *mass organisation* of the working class. To fulfil its purpose, it must be as broad as possible and fight to maintain its legal status. It must attempt, in the first place, to unite, on an industrial basis, all workers (at whatever level of political consciousness) who understand the elementary need to come together and defend and advance their economic conditions. It cannot demand *more* as a condition of membership. But because the state and its political and repressive apparatus is an instrument of the dominant economic classes, it is impossible for trade unions in any part of the world to keep out of the broader political conflict.

Especially in our country, where racist domination and capitalist exploitation are two sides of the same coin, it is even more clear that a trade union cannot stand aside from the liberation struggle. Indeed, *the trade union movement is the most important mass contingent of the working class.* Its organised involvement in struggle, both as an independent force and as part of the broad liberation

alliance, undoubtedly reinforces the dominant role of the workers as a class. In addition, trade unions' and workers' experience of struggle in unions provide the most fertile field in which to school masses of workers in socialist understanding and political consciousness.

The very fact that the workers' economic struggle cannot be separated from the struggle against national domination has helped to blur the border-line between trade unionism and the political leadership of the working class as a whole. *It is, however, vital to maintain the distinction between trade union politics and overall revolutionary leadership.* A trade union cannot carry out this dual role; if it attempted to do so it would have to change its basic character and risk committing suicide as a mass legal force. In addition, the very nature and purpose of trade unionism disqualifies it from carrying out the tasks of a revolutionary vanguard.<sup>9</sup>

The syndicalist notion that trade unions should act as political parties is so discredited that it has few, if any, open adherents. But, from time to time, the notion is introduced through the back door in the shape of policies which would, in practice, allocate such a role to the trade union movement.

An example of one such tendency is the premature attempt to formally incorporate the objective of socialism into trade unions and the federation to which they belong. Such a move would narrow the mass character of the trade union movement by demanding an unreal level of political consciousness from its members or affiliates as a condition for joining. It would also, incidentally, give the enemy the very excuse it needs to deal with one of its most formidable foes.

Another example, at the level of the mass democratic movement, is a recent suggestion that new grassroots United Front structures should be set up at national, regional and local community levels.<sup>10</sup> These structures would be restricted to sectors which are predominantly of working class origin—unemployed, organised workers, rural poor, youth and students, working women, etc. The effect of this approach would be to downgrade the UDF as the umbrella of the broad legal liberation front and to replace it with a narrower front run by the trade union movement.<sup>11</sup>

The tendency to mechanically apply the principles of trade union politics and organisation to the broader political struggle is also evident in some of the debates around questions of the democratic content of popular and working class political structures. Using the trade union movement as a model, critics of the UDF allege an absence of democratic control from below. They also express concern that the mass of the workers have very little democratic control over

their revolutionary parties which claim a vanguard role. All this is contrasted with the trade union movement which, by virtue of its democratic traditions and practices, is claimed to be better equipped to represent the working class.

These positions (advanced mainly by some union-linked academics, contain a mixture of legitimate concerns relating to the defence of some fundamental principles of *trade union* organisation and erroneous notions about *political* organisation. Trade unionism in our country has been guided by appropriate organisational forms and democratic processes. Without open public elections, complete participation of the mass of the membership in all decision-making, day-to-day accountability of officials, etc., trade unionism would lose its effectiveness.

*But these very organisational forms and practices (which must be defended and deepened in the trade union movement) would become a paralysing extravagance if transplanted to a working class political party or if applied mechanically to political structures of the mass democratic movement, operating under emergency rule.*

Unlike a trade union, a worker's vanguard does not, and should not, have the character of a mass movement. It cannot hope to survive in illegal conditions without clandestine methods which often, unavoidably, conflict with democratic practices. A worker's political vanguard is guided by the Leninist principles of democracy and centralism a combination whose precise mixture is dictated by the actual conditions of revolutionary struggle. An attempt to apply trade union organisational practices to such a vanguard would spell the end of revolutionary political leadership in our conditions. Equally, the trade union movement would be doomed if it attempted to act like a Communist Party.

Even a mass political movement like the UDF would be disabled politically if, before each mass action, it were obliged to go through the same kind of democratic procedures which are so vital and appropriate for workers in economic struggle against the bosses. A strike ballot in a labour dispute is a necessity; its rationale cannot be extended to a political struggle situation. The guiding core of a political mass front would paralyse itself by the continuous need for mandates and referenda from its rank and file.

Intensified repression in the recent period has, for example, imposed methods of semi-clandestinity on the UDF, unavoidably affecting some of its consultative and collective practices; a fact unjustly exploited by some of the detractors of the UDF.

*We do not claim that the necessary democratic practices have always been implemented within the mass democratic movement, or that Communist Parties have never abused democracy on the excuse of centralism. But such illegitimate departures from the norms must be dealt with as a separate problem; they should not become the excuse for insisting on syndicalist practices which, in the case of the political leadership of the struggle, would lead to organisational constipation.*

### ***The ANC and the working class***

The main core of the whole democratic struggle illegal and legal is the ANC which stands at the head of the liberation alliance. As head of this alliance and prime representative of all the oppressed, it welcomes within its ranks all from whatever class they come who support and are ready to fight for the aims of the Freedom Charter. It is a revolutionary nationalist organisation with popular roots. It is not, however, 'populist'. The ANC's Strategy and Tactics recognises that there are different classes among the people with different long-term aspirations.

The overwhelming majority of the people are working class. This explains why the ANC's composition and policies show a strong bias towards the working class. It also considers it proper and necessary for socialist ideology to be discussed and understood in its ranks. But, despite the fact that the ANC has an understandable bias towards the working class it does not, and clearly should not, adopt a socialist platform which the so-called Marxist Workers' Tendency (expelled from the ANC) would like it to do. If it adopted such a platform it would destroy its character as the prime representative of all the classes among the oppressed black majority.

At the same time, for reasons already outlined, its revolutionary nationalism does, of necessity, contain a social content which reflects our specific national liberation aspirations a content which will ultimately facilitate the socialist transformation but is not premised on it. Worker participation in the ANC is one of the important ways in which our working class plays its role in the democratic revolution. *But, above all, the tripartite alliance, moulded in the revolutionary underground, between the ANC, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and our SACP, represents a framework which expresses the political interests of our working class in the broad front of struggle.*

### ***The SACP and the working class***

Workers' political leadership must represent the working class not just in economic struggles against the bosses but, more so, in its relation to all classes of society and to the state as an organised force. We stress again that a trade union cannot carry out this role. Only a political vanguard of the working class can do so.

A vanguard party, representing the historic aspirations of the working class, cannot (like a trade union) have a mass character. It must attract the most advanced representatives of the working class; mainly professional revolutionaries with an understanding of Marxist theory and practice, an unconditional dedication to the worker's cause, and a readiness, if need be, to sacrifice their very lives in the cause of freedom and socialism. Our SACP is such a Party.

We have made a unique contribution to the ideological and organisational strengthening of the national movement. Today our Party is described as one of the two main pillars of the liberation alliance led by the ANC. As an independent Party, we have devoted our main energies to strengthen workers' organisations, to spread socialist awareness and to provide working class political leadership.

*There is no organised force in our country's history which has matched our Party's contribution to the spread of genuine workers' organisation at the point of production. We can truly claim to be the parent of black trade unionism.*

A strong trade union movement and a workers' political vanguard such as ours are essential conditions for the kind of victory in the democratic revolution which will find a working class equipped organisationally and ideologically to assert its historic role. But we emphasise again that there is both a distinction and a harmony in the character and roles of these two vital sectors. Each has a specific role to play in advancing the interests of our working class as an independent social force and as the leading class in the immediate struggle to build a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

This brings us directly to the next related section which touches on the theoretical basis of our approach to the building of the South African nation.

### ***5. The building of the nation***

At its founding conference in 1912, the ANC issued a clarion call for African unity under the slogan, We Are One People. As head of

the liberation alliance, it is committed to working for the creation of one South Africa which, in the words of the Freedom Charter, 'belongs to all its inhabitants, black and white'.

Are we already 'one people' or are we, as yet, only a nation in the making? In the light of the undoubted existence of ethnic differences, is the cementing of our diverse communities into a single South African nation both desirable and realisable? Does the colonial status of the dominated blacks lead us to the conclusion that there are already two nations in our country - the oppressed and the oppressor? What is the role of the working class in the struggle to constitute our nation? These are issues which go to the very root of our struggle against the racist autocracy. The national question (including the question of what constitutes a nation) perhaps more than any other, illustrates the profound truth of Lenin's remarks to the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East that 'you will not find the (complete) answer in any communist book'. (1986, 269).

Indeed, the Marxist theory of the National Question is perhaps the least developed in our revolutionary science. It offers few propositions which can be used as starting points for an analysis of concrete situations. This is especially so for the developing world where, as we shall show, attempts to invoke European models and analogies completely fail to meet the needs of the real situation.

### ***Stalin's contribution***

The basic Marxist-Leninist approach to the question of what constitutes a nation was, for many years, guided generally by Stalin's well-known definition. Stalin defined the nation as a community of language, culture, territory and economy. Unfortunately, there have been tendencies to treat these categories (language, culture, etc.) as a mechanical set of criteria.

As a result, in defining 'nations', questions of mother-tongue or of long-established traditional cultures have sometimes come to dominate and even displace the more significant class political and economic issues. This post-Leninist tendency gave pride of place to cultural-linguistic (or ethnic) factors at the expense of a class approach. It infected some of our own earlier debates on the national question and came dangerously close to providing (albeit unintentionally) a rationale for ethnic separatism.

For example the Comintern, in 1932, called on the Communist Party of South Africa, *inter alia* to advance the slogans: 'Complete and immediate national independence for the people of South Africa.

For the right of the Zulu, Basuto, etc., *nations to form their own independent republics*. For the voluntary uniting of the African nations in a *Federation of Independent Native Republics*. The establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. Full guarantee of the rights of all national minorities, for the coloured, Indian and white toiling masses'.

In the early 50's Lionel Forman, with a bias in favour of Stalin's thesis, opened up an interesting debate on the national question which, after his untimely death, was never really followed up in the ranks of the Party.

In a symposium in Cape Town in 1954, he spoke in favour of the long-term aim of 'one single, united South African nation'. But he insisted that 'the only correct path towards (it) is through the creation of conditions by which the different national cultures in South Africa may first flower and then merge ...' And he posed the possibility of self-determination for the different ethnic communities.

I think the majority of communities which have common language and psychology In South Africa are not full nations, but national groups. That is, *I think they are aspirant nations, lacking their own territory and economic cohesion, but aspiring to achieve these* (my emphasis).

Before returning to our own country let us touch on the general question of the genesis of Nations and the problem as viewed from the African perspective.

### ***The nation and the colonial situation***

Stalin's thesis on the National Question may have had validity in the concrete reality of a Europe in the aftermath of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the national realignments which followed. It was obviously also of great relevance to the post-October advance in the solution of the National Question in the Soviet Union. *But its application to our conditions or, even, to most parts of the continent of Africa is, at best, questionable.*

Using Stalin's formula as a starting point, we would have great difficulty to find in our continent many state entities that could be described as 'nations'. Applying the formula mechanically we might even be tended to lend theoretical respectability to neo-colonial inspired secessionary tendencies and (as in the case of South Africa) play about with ethnic constitutional 'solutions' which would, in effect, perpetuate minority domination.

The coming into being of an entity which can be described as a nation has a variety of historic roots. Its genesis is not necessarily connected with a single class. The modern Nation-State is not always the creation of the bourgeoisie. Nor can it be claimed, as a *universal proposition* that 'a nation is a historical category belonging (only) to the epoch of rising capitalism' (Stalin). In the post-October period some national entities (e.g. Mongolia which skipped the capitalist stage altogether) have only come into being under socialist power. *Most of the world's nation-states emerged in the post-war period and it cannot be argued that they all had their origins in a new wave of rising capitalism.*

In the colonial world generally, nation-formation was deliberately stilted, retarded and under-developed by imperial policy. But, despite this policy, the very spread of the capitalist mode of production made for objective tendencies towards the breaking down of ethnic, cultural and tribal divisions. This process was also subjectively advanced by the need for the dominated people to create a common front in the struggle against a common colonial oppression.

FRELIMO's approach to the question of nation-formation is illustrated by Marcelino dos Santos in an interview in 1973. We must bear in mind that Mozambique is a vast country with a multitude of diverse tribal and cultural groupings. Even today it could be said that the Makonde in Cabo Delgado have more in common with the Makonde of Southern Tanzania than with the Shangaans of Gaza Province who, in turn, have a close affinity to the Shangaan people of the Eastern Transvaal. Dos Santos said:

The main conditions for (the) successful rejection (of tribalism) are present. On the general point of whether we have already moulded a nation in the true sense of the word, I want to say that a nation is based on concrete realities. And the most important reality in the present stage in Mozambique is the fight against Portuguese colonialism. *It is our common fight against our common oppressor which plays an outstanding role in creating a national bond between all the diverse groups and cultures....* Of course a nation is a product of history and its formation goes through different phases. *In this sense the work for the final achievement of nationhood will continue even after independence although the fundamental elements of nationhood are already in existence and in the process of being further developed in Mozambique.* (*African Communist*, 4th Quarter 1973).



There is no absolute moral test about nation formation. The consolidation or fragmentation of disparate ethnic groups into one or into several sovereign entities cannot be judged by any universal formulas as to what constitutes a nation. The answer for a revolutionary is influenced by far more complex political considerations than can be contained in an enumeration of catalogues of common 'national' qualities.

In Africa (more especially below the Sahara) the concrete realities were dominated by a specific form of colonialism. Administrative entities were created which had little, if anything, to do with a common culture, language, economy and so on. The colonial units which imperialism created were, in most cases, determined solely by inter-imperialist power relationships and were made up of an arbitrary mixture of completely distinct socio-economic formations. The 1885 Berlin Conference was one of the high points of this process.

These administrative entities gradually acquired distinct economies. Meanwhile, however, the imperialist powers employed various mechanisms to deliberately perpetuate regional and ethnic differences in the interests of more effective control. Tribalism, indirect rule, playing off one region against the other, and preventing the emergence of a national consciousness or cohesion; these were the prime weapons in the armoury of imperialist domination.

In other words, whereas the economic functions of the nation-state created at the dawn of the capitalist era were served by the breaking down of ethnic, regional, language and cultural divisions, in most of Africa the colonial masters were served by a very opposite process. Colonial control for purposes of economic exploitation *demanding ethnic fragmentation and inter-ethnic hostility*.

The encouragement of a national awareness and cohesion became the major response from the colonised peoples. Beginning with the ANC in 1912, the creation of a national, rather than an ethnic or tribal consciousness, became a key rallying cry of virtually every liberation movement in Africa. Where a sizeable working class emerged, its work and living conditions helped undermine rural ethnic exclusiveness.

In summary, it could be said that the historic process of *spreading a national (as opposed to ethnic or tribal) consciousness and the national consolidation of existing state entities is, in the modern African era, generally a weapon of liberation and social advance*. Conversely, the emphasis on regional and cultural exceptionalism (including claims to secession of ethnic regions from existing state entities) is generally designed to serve both internal and international

reaction and is, in most cases, an instrument of colonial, neo-colonial or minority domination.

The struggle for national cohesion in multi-ethnic communities does not imply the imposition of cultural uniformity. *Cultural diversity does not stand in contradiction to a national unity*. Such a unity can be made up of a totality of both distinct and intermingling cultures which 'in their totality constitute the culture of the... people as a whole'. (Interview with Lucio Lara, African Communist, Third Quarter, 1978).

*National self-determination correctly remains part of the Holy Grail of Marxist learning*. But, for most parts of Africa, the invocation of this right for regional or ethnic entities (either for secessionary purposes or for creating ethnically-defined political groupings) usually serves to undermine rather than to advance the right to national self-determination. And nowhere is this more so than in the context of the South African struggle.

### ***The South African case***

In the South African case it is certainly the emerging proletariat which has become the key class force for nation-building. As the most politically conscious and advanced social force in our revolution, our black working class is, at the same time, the most internationalist and the most committed to national cohesion.

*Despite the existence of cultural and racial diversity, South Africa is not a multi-national country. It is a nation in the making; a process which is increasingly being advanced in struggle and one which can only be finally completed after the racist tyranny is defeated. The concept of one united nation, embracing all our ethnic communities, remains the virtually undisputed liberation objective.*

Conversely, colonial domination in our country has, throughout its history, employed political and administrative devices to facilitate its policy of 'divide and rule' by impeding the process of nation formation. Apartheid is only the most recent and ideologically developed variant of a policy which has been practised from the very beginning of conquest. It was preceded by the British colonial strategies of Reserves and Segregation.

The pre-apartheid strategies failed to stem the tendencies towards the emergence and continued growth of an African national consciousness. Economic imperatives (including the very important factor of permanent urbanisation), and revolutionary nationalist activity combined to undermine these strategies.

The threat posed to race domination by the growing unity within

the liberation camp was becoming more evident in the late 40s. To ensure its survival the ruling class sought a way of turning the clock back. Against the background of a heightened level of terror against the people and their organisations, they declared themselves to be the new champions of 'national self-determination' and launched their bantustan programme.

Twelve 'homelands' were proclaimed and offered 'independent' statehood. South Africa, so it was claimed, was now following Europe and proceeding apace with its own 'decolonisation' process. But (as the regime itself has been forced to concede) this Verwoerdian plunge into the 'final solution' has demonstrably failed. Irreversible economic processes and mass struggle and resistance once again dashed the hopes of those who plotted to reverse the nation-building momentum of the Liberation Alliance.

Despite the substantial failure of its bantustan strategy, our ruling class continues to cling to the rationale which underpinned it. The growing demand for democracy and majority rule in a united South African continues to be met by the diabolically simple answer that 'South Africa is a multi-racial country'. There is no majority. There are only minorities, all of whom must retain their economic, geographic and cultural 'heritage'. RSA radio made all this very plain in a BBC-monitored broadcast on the 28th of January, 1987:

The government's preparation for power-sharing is a clear indication of post-apartheid South Africa. *Majority rule is nonsense in South Africa as there is no majority.* The key issue is the protection of minority rights. *There are ten African nations plus whites, coloureds and Indians, and all insist on their right to self-determination.* Negotiations for such power-sharing are under way.

We know what this kind of 'multi-nationalism' implies. It is the prime device for continued national domination. Presented in its crude form, this 'multi-national' approach has little chance of misleading our people. But we must be on our guard against some of its more sophisticated variants.

Among these variants are the Buthelezi-backed Kwa-Natal proposals, the Tri-cameral parliament (with a possible extension of a fourth Chamber to represent Africans), and federal arrangements which give constitutional recognition to ethnic entities and 'traditional' ethnic leaders. We can expect a host of other devices designed to provide group (as opposed to individual) rights and to give veto right to ethnic

communities in multi-racial legislative organs claiming to represent 'national' entities. *These are all nuances of the same recipe; power-sharing without giving up control.*

The more recent models of 'multi-nationalism' are based on four broad 'racial' or 'national' categories: African, White, Coloured and Indian. It can hardly be disputed that, at present, the members of each category (to whatever class they belong) share a definable position as a colour group on the political and economic ladder, with the Africans occupying its lowest rung.

The three black groups suffer varying degrees of discrimination; a reality which, ironically enough, is continually exploited by the very perpetrators of the crime of discrimination. Endless attempts are made to persuade the Coloured and Indian communities to cling to their more 'privileged' position in the league table of oppression and discrimination. Fear is spread among them of majority African 'domination', in the hope that they will opt for 'the devil they know'.

But, on the whole, these minority black communities have not been taken in. The word 'black' is increasingly adopted by them to describe their political and national affinity with Africans. The massive rejection of the Tri-cameral parliament and joint participation in the major struggles against racism are among the signs of togetherness. Thus, although the process is by no means complete, the national bond among the three black groups is growing closer and closer.

### ***The white community***

A combination of economic factors, common responses to domination and ideological activity, have taken the process of nation formation some distance among the dominated. However, the national bonds which are being cemented in our country have not yet greatly affected the whites. The overwhelming majority regard themselves as a national entity not only completely separate from the blacks but also superior to them. And the Afrikaner stands out as the most hard-line partisan of this approach.

This is not the place to trace the complex factors (cultural, ideological, religious, etc.) which have served to entrench white chauvinism and Herrenvolkism deeply into the psyche of this community. But, essentially, the process had its main roots in the economic privileges built on the foundation of the intense exploitation of black (especially African) labour. These privileges accrue, in different degrees, to all

members of the white community, to whatever class they belong.

The basic objectives of liberation cannot be achieved without undermining the accumulated political, social, cultural and economic white privileges. The moulding of our nation will be advanced in direct proportion to the elimination of these accumulated privileges. The winning over of an increasing number of whites to the side of democracy is an essential part of our policy. *We cannot, however, accept constitutional schemes which are designed or calculated to perpetuate a 'multi-national' framework in order to retain the separate national identity and, therefore, the power of white racism.*

Our approach is clear and we must spread it ever more widely. The cultures and languages of the white group (like the cultures and languages of all the other groups) will have a safe haven in South Africa which, in the words of the Freedom Charter, 'belongs to all its people, black and white'; a South Africa which will ultimately realise the idea of common nationhood in its full meaning.

### ***Colonialism of a special type and 'two-nations' thesis***

Neville Alexander believes that our Party's thesis of 'colonialism of a special type' (CST) obstructs the drive towards single nationhood. He maintains that it necessarily implies a two-nations thesis (white and black) which 'holds within it the twin dangers of anti-white black chauvinism and ethnic separatism'.<sup>12</sup> The thesis has also been criticised on the related ground that it allegedly encourages an approach which underplays or ignores class divisions within the black and white communities and tends to place 'populist' rather than class objectives before the working class.

CST does not imply a two-nations thesis, nor does it ignore the class divisions within the communities. The CST thesis correctly describes the reality that, in the post- 1910 period, *the substance of the colonial status of the blacks has remained intact, even though its form may have altered.* It is this reality which provides a correct starting point for grappling with the complex problem of the relationship between national and class struggle. It is obvious that until the colonial status of blacks is ended the process of building one nation cannot be completed.

The CST thesis neither ignores class divisions within the dominant and dominated communities, nor does it postulate the existence of two fully-formed 'nations' - white and black. It does not define the ruling class as consisting of the whole white population.

It is not the CST thesis which fuels the danger of anti-white black

chauvinism; it is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the white community (irrespective of class) benefits from and, therefore, supports race rule. Alexander speculates that the liberation struggle can become 'ideologically insulated' against the dangers of black anti-white chauvinism and ethnic separatism if 'the revolutionary classes accept that they are part and parcel of a single nation'. But even 'revolutionary classes' would surely find it difficult (and the masses on whom they rely even more so) to accept that this is already so.

Anti-white chauvinism cannot be mitigated by spreading an idea based on a myth. The 'revolutionary classes' can best advance the struggle for the achievement of single nationhood if they recognise (and act on) the reality that we are not yet one nation. The strategy and tactics of the struggle to create one united South African nation can neither ignore the significance of the present white-black divide nor the different levels of oppression to which the dominated majority are subjected.

Organisational structures of the constituents of the ANC-led liberation camp and the shape of its alliances at specific historical moments, have always been guided by such factors. For example, the Congress Alliance of the late 40s and 50s consisted of the separate historically-evolved organisations representing the African, Coloured and Indian people and, later, white democrats.

This approach laid the foundation for inter-black unity in action which, more than any other factor, helped to erode ethnic political separatism. It also prepared the conditions which made it possible for the ANC to open its ranks to the other groups. In sharp contrast, the former Unity Movement acted with ostrich-like disregard of ethnic factors. In the process, it may have insulated its own small band against the dangers to which Alexander refers, but it also succeeded in insulating them from advancing the process of unity in the real world.

### ***Group Rights***

The very strength of racist state power, the deeply-ingrained nature of white national exclusiveness, and the occasional outbreaks of inter-ethnic strife, have influenced some external academic circles, sympathetic to our cause, to raise the possibility of the liberation movement's agreeing to constitutional provisions for group rights in the post-apartheid phase. This thinking is also partly influenced by the belief that there is, in any case, no great prospect of welding

South Africa's diverse ethnic groups into one nation.

For example, Dr Gleb Starushenko, a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, told the 1986 Soviet-African conference that, in his personal opinion, a parliament which accommodated group rights should be considered for the post-apartheid period. This parliament would consist of two chambers; one on the basis of proportional representation and the other 'possessing the right of minority veto, which could operate on the basis of 'equal representation of the four communities'. Dr Starushenko (whose pro-liberation intentions are not in dispute) would also like to see the ANC work out 'comprehensive guarantees for the white population' and 'programmes' which give our 'bourgeoisie the . . . guarantee' that there will be no broad nationalisation of capitalist property.<sup>13</sup>

If this package is motivated by a search for the kind of compromise which would tempt the racists to come to the negotiating table, it is certainly not an acceptable starting point for a negotiating agenda for our liberation movement. Apart from other considerations, the racists' own insistence on 'group rights' is undoubtedly linked to the preservation of control over the means of production. If this control is maintained, through the granting of minority veto powers, the most fundamental features of race domination would be perpetuated, a result which Dr Starushenko would clearly find unacceptable.

The idea of ethnic parliaments may have an additional rationale - a belief that South Africa is, and is likely to remain, a multi-national country, and that future constitutional arrangements must make provision for this reality. In this connection, the Soviet experience of the solution of the national question in the post-Czarist period, understandably informs the thinking of Soviet scholars. But to be guided by this experience in our conditions is in fact to risk bringing about the very opposite results to those which were achieved in the Soviet Union.

*In the Soviet Union a recognition of multi-nationalism was the very foundation of national liberation and self-determination; it led to the creation of autonomous and self-governing national republics originally linked to each other in a federation and later in a union.*

*In our case multi-nationalism, whether in the form of independent ethnic 'homelands' or parliaments based on colour-group rights constitutes the main racist recipe for the continuation of national domination by other means.*

This is not to say that all traces of ethnic exclusiveness have

already been effectively erased from the political arena and that we have already become one nation. The battle is still joined to prevent ethnic separatism from making advances from positions it continues to hold under government patronage.

In particular we must not allow the regime to get away with its claims to be the main champion of ethnic languages and cultures under the guise of its 'homelands' policies and its dishonest brand of 'multi-nationalism'. It is our duty not only to proclaim, but also to ensure that in a unitary democratic South Africa the language and other positive cultural heritages of the diverse groups will really flower and find effective expression.

We stand for one united, democratic South Africa based on universal adult suffrage. This strategic approach is inviolable. We cannot, at this stage, allow ourselves to be diverted by speculation about future justifiable compromises in the interests of revolutionary advance. It is clearly in struggle that we will succeed in forging our one South African nation which is already in the making.

Forging one sovereign South African nation is an integral part of the objectives of the national democratic revolution. Our national liberation movement, welding together millions of South Africans in every corner of our country, is already a major dynamising factor in the struggle to build a unified South Africa.

*The winning of the objectives of the national democratic revolution will, in turn, lay the basis for a steady advance in the direction of deepening our national unity on all fronts— economic, political and cultural - and towards a socialist transformation. For our working class nation-building means, among other things, unifying themselves nationally as the leading class whose developing culture, aspirations and economic interests become increasingly those of the overwhelming majority of our people.*

## NOTES

1. A rather snide example of this is an article in *Africa Perspectives* (1987), 'The Ideology and Politics of African Capitalists' by Mike Sarakinsky. Sarakinsky relies on journalistic reports of NAFCO's accounts of its meeting with the ANC to suggest that its claim that there was 'total agreement' with the ANC on many issues implied that the vision of 'total liberation' which was



presented by the ANC was tailored for the occasion. The main body of his article was written before the ANC-NAFCOC meeting and draws on NAFCOC pronouncements over a decade old. In an attempt to explain away NAFCOC's more radical postures in the recent period, which tend to contradict Sarakinsky's rather mechanical characterisations, he makes these unscholastic additions in a postscript.

2. Even where the socialist transformation is directly on the agenda, the role of the private sector cannot be dismissed. Leaving aside the lunatic excesses of Pol Pot's Kampuchea, many hard lessons in this area have been learnt by some of the established socialist states and, more recently, by African parties dedicated to a socialist advance. The transition period to socialism may well demand a maintenance of selective parts of the private sector. A mechanical and generalised elimination of this sector for the sake of satisfying sloganised orthodoxy, has often served to undermine the faith of the working people in the capacity of socialism to 'deliver the goods'.
3. In general, the class interests of the white capitalist class are not served by the objectives of the national democratic revolution. The survival of non-monopoly white business in the post-apartheid state does not provide a basis for regarding it as a potential part of the revolutionary liberation camp. White business is generally helped and not impeded by race practices. In the post-apartheid state those who merit being allowed to continue business activities will have to conduct their operations under the more restrictive conditions specified in the Freedom Charter. However, sectors of white business can be (and have been) drawn into pressing for the abandonment of the worst excesses of apartheid; a process which helps to fragment the unity of the ruling class.
4. See eg. P. Hudson, 'The Freedom Charter and the Theory of the National Democratic Revolution', *Transformation* (1) 1986.
5. It should, however, be conceded that our own formulations have sometimes been imprecise, and have invited the charge that we treat stages as compartments, as 'things-in-themselves'.
6. Not to speak of imperialism's unending pattern (in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East) of imposing and helping to sustain brutal tyrannies in the name of 'democracy' and 'human rights'.
7. Deputy Director of the Institute of African Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, interviewed in *Work in Progress* no. 48 by Howard Barrell.

8. Even when the construction of socialism is directly on the agenda, class alliances remain in place, more immediately to maintain socialism in the face of imperialist-supported counter-revolution and, in the long term, to move to a higher stage.
9. In addition, the most basic purpose of a trade union to force genuine reforms in the work situation within the existing economic framework tends generally to nurture reformist rather than revolutionary political tendencies. This perhaps explains why working class parties that have been fathered by a trade union movement and continue to be dominated by it (as in Great Britain) usually pursue social-democratic rather than revolutionary objectives.
10. This proposal is a distorted follow-up of the perfectly correct NUM-sponsored COSATU congress resolution that called for close alliances between the trade union movement and militant sectors of the community; an approach which was adopted by the Congress as a counter to the NUMSA-sponsored resolution which explicitly stressed a front dominated by 'socialist' elements.
11. The relationship between a trade union federation and organisations such as the UDF still needs to be worked out more precisely. A case can be made out for the view that direct affiliation of a trade union federation (as opposed to individual unions) is not the immediate answer. But it is vital that institutionalised links be mutually agreed upon between two such key actors in the democratic struggle. This approach appears from the February 1988 UDF circular which defines the United Front as '... a close working relationship between UDF, COSATU, NECC and the Churches ... There is a need for COSATU and the UDF to create permanent structures at national and regional levels'.
12. 'Approaches to the National Question in South Africa', in *Transformation* 1(1986) p.83. Alexander also suggests that the wording of the Freedom Charter suggests a four nation thesis.

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**Paragraph missing from page 466 in the original of this issue of *Nature, Society, and Thought***

Even where the socialist transformation is directly on the agenda, the role of the private sector cannot be dismissed. Leaving aside the lunatic excesses of Pol Pot’s Kampuchea, many hard lessons in this area have been learnt by some of the established socialist states and, more recently, by African parties dedicated to a socialist advance. The transition period to socialism may well demand a maintenance of selective parts of the private sector. A mechanical and generalised elimination of this sector for the sake of satisfying sloganised orthodoxy, has often served to undermine the faith of the working people in the capacity of socialism to ‘deliver the goods’.

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*The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists.* By Raymond Williams, edited with an introduction by Tony Pinkney. London and New York: Verso, 1989, 208 pages, cloth \$49.95, paper \$16.95.

In editing *The Politics of Modernism*, Tony Pinkney has assembled the book that Raymond Williams did not live to complete. Making use of lecture notes (some of them Williams's own, some by Fred Inglis), unpublished materials as well as essays and lectures originally published elsewhere, and Williams's varying draft outlines for the project, Pinkney has succeeded in rescuing for posterity what will prove to be one of Williams's most influential arguments. Williams endeavors in these pages to remove the impasse that modernism as a literary mode and the "non-historical fixity of *post-modernism*" in critical theory have represented, an impasse blocking movement toward "a modern *future* in which community may be imagined again." (35). Williams is here clearing the way for "an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century" (35) and for a return to an applied and genuinely Marxist critical practice like that which he perfected in his brilliant *The Country and the City* (1973).

*The Politics of Modernism* may, in fact, be seen as taking up the argument of *The Country and the City* where that classic volume left it. In the process of demonstrating that "the contrast of country and city is one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and of the crises of our society" (Williams 1973, 289)—an experience which has been deforming to all humanity because of "the specific character of the capitalist mode of production, which is not the use of machines or techniques of improvement, but their minority ownership" (1973, 294)—Williams defines the beginnings of the modern consciousness in the experience of the modern city: "Struggle, indifference, loss of purpose, loss of meaning . . . have found, in the City, a habitation and a name. For the city is not only, in this vision, a form of modern life; it is the

physical embodiment of a decisive modern consciousness" (Williams 1973, 239). As Williams picks up this explanation in *The Politics of Modernism*, he shows us that the authors now enshrined as the voices of modernism, having left behind "relationships in depressed, declining and narrowing communities"(131), entered the city as exiles and in their work recorded the outcome of that experience as the loss of belief in the possibility of any meaning or hope for the future. Innovative in form, the modern writers "destabilized the fixed forms of an earlier period of bourgeois society," but these new techniques and the attitudes which they embody "in their turn stabilized as the most reductive versions of human existence in the whole of cultural history" (130). The outlook of modernism became the new orthodoxy, and its originally antibourgeois stance in politics weakened. Modernism became, in fact, in one sense conservative as a result of a "cultural pessimism" which arose from "conviction that there is nothing but the past to be won. This is because, for other reasons, there is a determined refusal of any genuinely alternative social and cultural order" (124). Modernism became an obstacle to political change, to the recognition of the neighborliness and community that did develop among the working class in the city, and ultimately it produced the critical theory that has claimed the attention of the academy for as much as two decades:

a version, now increasingly false and misleading, of Saussure in linguistics; a version of individualist human sources and intentions from Freud and psychoanalysis; a rationalized abstraction of autonomous systems, which had been the theoretical defense of those bourgeois dissidents who had primarily constituted the avant-garde, against not only bourgeois society but the claims of any active, self-making (including revolutionary) society. (171)

"For what was being excluded," Williams explains, "was the socially and historically specifiable agency of [the] making" of a text (172). Academic literary theorists were, like Weimar intellectuals, "unified only by [their] negations" (175). These theorists adopted "easy labels of radicalism which even the dominant institutions" were happy to "incorporate or impose"(175). Drawing upon "less orthodox Marxist theory," many of these academics even called themselves neo-Marxists, producing work which "in one of those awful loops in time may . . . be properly seen as explicitly anti-popular and anti-radical (but then with the necessary disguise, as earlier, of an avant-garde rhetoric)"

(170). The remarkable outcome has been a faculty in literary studies with the language of radicals and the social instincts of conservatives who have no outlet in practice except in their efforts to preserve the past—and to preserve their own privileges.

Outside the academy the modernist orthodoxy has produced even more remarkable results: “the very conditions which had provoked a genuine modernist art became the conditions which steadily homogenized even its startling images, and diluted its deep forms, until they could be made available as a universally distributed ‘popular culture’” (131). The great cities which produced the modernist consciousness became the centers for the creation and transmission of television programming; what had been the practice and content of the art of the few major figures of modernism has, with the endorsement of the educational system, become the norm for the media industry: “corporate production and official minority art now embrace, in the form of old displaced pieties and the resigned and accommodating versions of war, cold war, exploitation and arrogant wealth” (132). What had been avant-garde practice in the cinema has returned in the highly effective manipulative techniques of advertising. What is billed as the “global village” of television is nothing of the kind; it is the domination of a few centers which transmit the modernist outlook for large profits. Even the sort of programming that in America we associate with nonprofit broadcasting only confirms Williams’s sense

that a relatively overt and adaptive nostalgia is now saturating the minority arts: in contemporary reproductions of the more graceful and elegant ways of selected periods of the past; in country houses and an old “pastoral” order; in “classical” literature and music; in biographies of the once dazzling and powerful; in the taste for playful or suggestive myth. This is flanked by an overt exoticism of the imperial and colonial pasts; of the peripheral, often poverty-ridden picturesque; of versions of primitivism (129).

Programming of this sort reflects the modernist intellectual’s allegiance to the past and hopelessness about the future; its origin is ultimately in the same consciousness that produces overtly commercial television.

For Williams the “mix of incompatible critical theories” generated by modernism had been “confronted”(171) even before they could propagate themselves in the academic world of the ‘70s and ‘80s: work bearing the signatures of M. M. Bakhtin, P. N. Medvedev, and V. N. Voloshinov offered the necessary argument against “cutting loose readers and critics from any obligation to social connection or historical fact”(172), and also admitted to “a systematic and dynamic *social*

language, as distinct from the ‘language paradigm.’” (174). Two key texts in this confrontation were Voloshinov’s *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* and Bakhtin and Medvedev’s *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. Readers of Williams’s *Marxism and Literature* (1977) will recall the contribution made by such work to Williams’s own theoretical foundations.

There are not only theoretical resources to be called upon in resistance to the critical theory spun from the outlook of modernism, but there is also the example of a return to a critical practice that acknowledges social and historical context in the formation of the field that came to be called cultural studies, and to which Williams contributed so much: “social consequences of the underlying theoretical position came to be in sharp conflict with the deeply formative social and political beliefs and affiliations of a new generation of students from working-class families and of other socialists” (169). Working outside the traditional academic environment, often in adult education, people like Richard Hoggart, E. P. Thompson, and Williams himself were pioneers who helped create cultural studies and who, becoming self-conscious in their methodology, produced the theory that rejects “the rationalizations which sustain the negations” (175) of postmodernist criticism.

At its best, the work of these innovators in Marxist cultural studies does more than contribute to the body of theory which counters modernist gloom and postmodernist formalism. The challenge is to write an *applied* Marxist criticism: “to see how, in the very detail of composition, a certain social structure, a certain history, discloses itself” (185). Williams’s *The Country and the City* presents a fine model of such work; an excellent recent example from an American critic is Edward J. Ahearn’s *Marx and Modern Fiction* (reviewed in *Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol. 3, no. 1 [1990]: 118–21). We are now seeing more good work of this kind than we have seen since the generation of A. L. Morton, Jack Lindsay, Alick West, and Christopher Caudwell.

Marxists recognized early what the inadequacies of modernism were. Christopher Caudwell saw that the “moving principle which is the source of its tragedy [is] to late bourgeois society, the tragedy of the will [as seen in] Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Proust’s *I* living in a world wholly of personal phantasy” (Caudwell 1973, 328). Caudwell saw

the chaotic and intoxicated confusion of all *sincere* modern bourgeois art, decomposing and whirling about in a flux of perpetual agony... expressed by the cries of the Lawrences



and their followers, demanding a release from the torments of modern intellectual consciousness; and the schizophrenic vision of Joyce, condemning the whole Witches' Sabbath of bourgeois experience. (Caudwell 1973, 310)

The seeming "revolt" of the moderns, Caudwell saw, was "against those forms whereby freedom has been realised in the past" (126), but their defining sense of isolation kept them from moving toward a freedom "generated in an active struggle with the concrete problems of living" (317). They could not take "the difficult creative road—that of refashioning the categories and technique of art so that it expresses the new world coming into being and is part of its realization" (319). But what Caudwell could not know was that modernism would give birth to a body of critical theory that would stop progress toward new art—and thereby impede progress toward "the new world"—both by being canonized as the new orthodoxy in the universities and by generating a socially blind or even consciously reactionary body of critical theory. Williams in *The Politics of Modernism* has delivered a powerful critique of these academic practices and against these "New Conformists," as he calls them.

I mention Caudwell above because there is evident in this book a tendency, characteristic of Williams, to underrate the first great practitioner of Marxist criticism in England. Although Williams does not mention Caudwell by name in this book, one does recognize who is intended in his complaints about "economist" and "idealist" Marxist theories and "the proposition of what was called 'capitalist poetry'" (165-66). I have expressed elsewhere (Paananen 1989, 91) my sense of regret that Williams did not have time to write his intended reevaluation of Caudwell: I believe that he would have recognized a debt that Marxist critics writing after Caudwell should acknowledge. But, if this is a flaw in the book, it is a relatively minor one, and Williams does a better job of placing himself within British Marxist tradition when he says that "most of the people who thought at all like I did were in the Communist Party" (190), and, despite his deep disagreements with them on some issues, he expresses his admiration of the work of the Communist Historians Group. Williams must be seen to occupy an illustrious place within a tradition of Marxist analysis in which he has had important predecessors and worthy allies.

+Thanks to what Williams has accomplished in *The Politics of Modernism*, the modernist impasse need not delay any longer the

continuing development of genuinely Marxist criticism. The detailed applied criticism to which Williams exhorts us is indeed being written by scholars like Ahearn. Williams's book may well come to be seen, historically, as having brought to an end the lost years of "postmodernist" theoretical debate and as having provided the argument that liberates other Marxist critics so that they may themselves contribute to literary scholarship that, like the best of artistic practice, "expresses the new world coming into being and is part of its realization." We must all feel the deepest regret that Williams's untimely death has removed him from his place in the vanguard of Marxist critics; but in this final work he has shown us the way forward with absolute clarity.

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*Department of English*  
*Michigan State University*

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*Playing Them False: A Study of Children's Toys, Games and Puzzles*. By Bob Dixon. Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: Trentham Books, 1990, 292 pages, paper \$11.95.

There's more to playing than having fun, demonstrates author Bob Dixon as he gives example after example of how toys reinforce racist stereotypes, gender roles, and class ideology. In paragraph

after paragraph he lists well-known toys (e.g., Barbie dolls, toy pistols, Monopoly) mainly from U.S. and British manufacturers, showing how they draw children into a set of carefully predetermined activities that lead to a specific mind-set.

The book divides toys into categories. For little girls there are miniature household articles enabling them to become small housewives and mothers, and for somewhat older girls those sexy but inactive models (usually blond) with their literally dozens of wardrobes and nothing to do except look glamorous. For younger boys there are miniature tools designed for small handymen, elaborate Lego pieces for fancy construction, even a simple chemistry set, and for older boys not only elaborate electric trains, but also, on a more personal level, toy representations of Luke Skywalker, H-man, and Rambo. Dixon backs these descriptions of present-day toys with a brief look at the history of dolls and of time soldiers.

The second part of the book deals largely with games and demonstrates the competitive spirit which they encourage. Dixon relates this to games having to do with money, like Monopoly and its many offshoots, and most emphatically to war games. These he discusses at some length, whether they are, on the surface, concerned with a fantasy war like *The Return of the Jedi* or the reality of the Malvinas war. Computer games are given a brief treatment as part of the general picture rather than as a separate category. Dixon does find a few positive games and puzzles—a few, for instance, based on environmental questions—but they are definitely the exception. He barely mentions word games, although Scrabble would seem to be of enough commercial and intellectual importance to merit a word or two.

After a final recapitulation, Dixon presents his own opinions about human aggression, based largely on Konrad Lorenz and Robert Ardrey. While he lists a collection of essays edited by Ashley Montagu in his bibliography, he does not appear to be familiar with (or perhaps to put much store by) Montagu's work on cooperation. He does quote Margaret Mead on the question of whether sex-linked behavior is biologically or socially conditioned. He ends the book with some startling figures on the increase worldwide in the sales of war toys and with an impassioned plea for some kind of toy control for the sake of the children.

While anyone who goes into a toy store cannot help but be aware of the general situation Dixon describes, the book's special contribution

is the detailed listing and description of the toys in each category with a careful reference to the manufacturer in each case. Unfortunately, this does not make for good reading. Repeated detail tries the patience of the reader, who longs for more general discussion and analysis, based on this mass of detail, which could have been presented in compact list form. The same can be said with even more emphasis about the manufacturers. It would have been very useful for the reader to have a chapter showing who these manufacturers are, their nationality, their changing connections with each other, and their relation to the larger world of international finance. As it is, details are tossed out here and there, but never put together into a complete picture.[]

Dixon used a similar technique in his two-volume work on children's literature (including comics), *Catching Them Young* which is not widely read but which has provided material for other critics challenged by his sociopolitical method. Now in *Playing Them False*, he once more sees the manipulation of children's minds through an activity which is supposed to be "just innocent entertainment" (to quote from Chilean critic Ariel Dorfman's wry commentary on *The Story of Babar*). Because of its stylistic and analytical faults, *Playing Them False* may not be widely read for itself, but it will, I believe, be heavily used for the material it has assembled.

Betty Bacon  
*Emeryville, California*

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**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)**

1. Title of publication: *NST, Nature, Society, and Thought*, 003-657
2. Date of filing: September 19, 1990.
3. Frequency of issue: quarterly, in Jan., Apr., July, Oct.
4. Number of issues published annually: 4.
5. Annual subscription price: \$28 institutions, \$15 individuals.
6. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 1771 Selby Ave, St. Paul, MN 55104.[]
7. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: Marxist Educational Press, Inc., 215 Ford Hall, University of Minnesota, 224 Church Street, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.
8. Editor: Erwin Marquit; Editorial Board: Leo Auerbach, Herbert Aptheker, Andrew M. Blasko, Jan Carew, Gerald M. Erickson, Angela Gilliam, Viktoria Hertling, Gerald A. Horne, April Ane Knutson, Jack Kurzweil, James Lawler, Sarah Fletcher Luther, Rinda Lundstrom, Philip Moran, Michael Parenti, Howard Parsons, William E. Rowe, Epifanio San Juan, Jr., Jose@p/q A. Soler, Ethel Tobach, Daniel Todes: NST, Univ. of Minnesota, 116 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455; Managing Editor: None.
9. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities; None.
10. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.
11. Extent and nature of circulation:
  - Average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 mos.: A. Total no. of copies (net press run): 967. B. Paid and/or requested circulation: i. sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 218; ii. mail subscription (paid and/or requested: 408. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (sum of B.i. and B.ii): 626. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, sample, complimentary, and other free copies: 10. E. Total distribution (sum of C. and. D.): 636. F. Copies not distributed: i. office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 181; ii. return from news agents 150. G. Total (sum of E, F.i. and F.ii—should equal net press run shown in A) 967.
  - Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: A. Total no. of copies (net press run): 939. B. Paid and/or requested circulation: i. sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 204; ii. mail subscription (paid and/or requested: 377. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (sum of B.i. and B.ii): 581. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, sample, complimentary, and other free copies: 5. E. Total distribution (sum of C. and. D.): 586. F. Copies not distributed: i. office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 282; ii. return from news agents 71. G. Total (sum of E, F.i. and F.ii=should equal net press run shown in A): 939.