

20 Points to Initiate a Discussion of Principles

1

In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities.

2

The commodity is not a thing, but a social relation among people, mediated by things. Relations between people come to exist in alienated form, as relations between things, so that human generative activity disappears from sight. Since capital is predicated on the separation of the producers from the means of producing, separation is the acme of capital. But separation of the doer from the means of doing does not simply rip the world in two, but generates a fragmented world, a mirror which has been shattered and is constantly being put back together by antagonistic social forces.

3

Capital's 'laws of motion' are nothing other than the formal expression (mode of appearance) of class struggle. Class struggle does not condition 'objective economic laws' because no 'objective laws' exist outside of the class struggle, outside of the antagonistic relation of capital and labor.

4

Alienated labor includes the total productive activity of society, unwaged as well as waged. Capital appropriated forms of oppression which existed prior to it and reorganized and reshaped them according to its own organization of social relations. Household labor, sexual labor and reproductive labor, predominantly done by women, has surfaced as a key area of struggle. In the same way, capital has not only gendered labor, but also racialized it. Therefore, labor is racialized, though in significantly differently ways, across the world. In the US, labor has been racialized and re-racialized through slavery, sharecropping, criminalization, and reduction to a permanent reserve army of labor, to name a few. In both cases, these forms of subordination were predicated upon the general denial of equal social rights and access to women and people of color. Labor, therefore, always exists with a multiplicity of hierarchies, in which one section of the class (and of society generally) benefits at the expense of other sections of the class.

5

The commodity comes to dominate the producer; things dominate people. Does anyone doubt that today a) we live in a society of mass commodity production, and that b) the production of 'things' dominates the

producers? Whether commodity production is organized through 500 corporations or one state capitalist trust does not change (or prove) the nature of the society at all. Contrary to the various opinions expressed by all parties, size does not matter, nor does it matter if you're exploited by 'your' national capitalist or 'foreign' capital.

6

The working class as revolutionary subject does not depend on a) the number of workers in 'huge' factories sharing a common experience, b) the obviousness of the owner of the factory. The capital-labor relation flows from the separation of the majority of people from the means of producing, and the workers' revolutionary potential flows from the fact that capital is nothing except the alienated labor of the worker.

7

Since labor produces capital, capital is not something 'outside' labor in an 'us versus them' relationship. Labor exists simultaneously 'in-and-against' capital, and threatens to destroy capital from the inside. Consciousness of this possibility and necessity of another world only comes from within the struggle, not imported from the outside by (alienated and fetishized) capitalist science or mass pedagogical organizations 'armed with scientific knowledge'. Workers are not the ones limited to trade union consciousness.

8

Clearly in the U.S. we do not live in a society dominated by manufacture or gigantic Fordist assembly line of mass production. The corporations may be larger, but the size of the workplace becomes smaller and the organization of labor changes. The Leninist confusion of the potency of the worker with the size of his workplace cannot be maintained.

9

The struggles of the workers, from wildcat strikes to slow downs to absenteeism to sabotage to sleeping on the job, all precipitated a crisis for capital in the 'Fordist' workplace. The worker's resistance to and insubordination against the previous organizations of alienated labor has forced struggles which resulted, in spite of revolts and revolutions, in the recomposition of the capital's domination of labor.

10

Labor's resistance to the endless imposition of work, to the production of commodities, drives capital's need to replace people with machines, living labor (and its insubordination) with dead labor.

11

Capital only survived by making the worker not simply an object of production, but also an object of mass consumption. The 'Fordist' assembly line, with its trade off of high wages for 'guaranteed' gains in productivity, created a crisis of the control of labor. Since capital faces all non-work time as time wasted, capital could not allow the worker's increased income to be translated into increased disposable time and nonproductive activity. Here for the first time enters the worker as mass consumer as well as mass producer.

12

Capital attempts to commodify every aspect of social life, creating a 'social factory' where all activity becomes subordinate to production. Leisure exists solely as the time spent preparing for more work. 'Free' time costs money and social space is increasingly 'Starbucks-ed.'

13

The suppression of the wage relation means that gender, sexuality, race, etc. become increasingly prominent and powerful points of struggle. People experience life as more than economic producers. This is not a weakness, but a part of the power of humanity, its multifaceted, multi-dimensional quality. Each of these relations presents a potential threat to capital's ability to maintain social control, which requires a hierarchically structured working class. The projection of multiple lines of struggle has not meant the end of the working class as a revolutionary subject, but the production of multiple lines of attack against alienated social relations, including those which create hierarchies within the class.

14

The 'Fordist' assembly line perfected the misery of work and its reduction to mindless, repetitive toil. Work became almost singular in its absence of creativity, except for the creativity of the avoidance of work. From these loins springs the current crisis of the 'Fordist' world and the 'traditional worker' (and therefore the crisis of the 'traditional revolutionary').

15

The crisis of the 'Fordist' world has meant the attempt to develop new means of control over labor, such as 'personal credit', and the flight from investment in production (the site of labor's insubordination) to speculation and international finance, as well as pushing the 'Fordist' assembly line across the world to places where it previously did not exist. It has also meant the deepening enclosure of communal spaces, of commons, in the Majority World. Since capital can no longer afford the wage-productivity deal, and since

we have been losing the fight against the decline in wages, the 'Fordist' lifestyle can only be bought on credit. And debt has been a powerful whip.

16

The attempt to reintegrate the struggles of unwaged labor and struggles against other forms of oppression has proceeded through the creation of each of these as positive 'identities', as well as their commodification. Just as with the working class, so with race, gender, sexuality, etc., their power comes from their negativity, from their power as negation of oppressive social relations. The proposal of a positive identity for workers, African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, etc. as we exist in the here and now is inevitably reactionary. We are powerful as the negation of what exists, not as the producers of what exists. Only through our negation, our struggle, do we create positive new relations, relations which can only solidify if we abolish the capital-labor relation and all other alienated relations with it.

17

In so far as some libertarian communists and anarchists conceive of class in terms of 'private property', 'the market', 'economics', worker as equivalent to 'wage laborer' or, worse, 'factory worker' they adopts the same framework as Leninism, with different conclusions. The capital-labor relation is not simply an economic relation, but a total social relation, a relation of separation and alienation, not simply the forms of appearance of the relation. The working class, the human embodiment of labor, lives 'in-and-against' capital, as both incorporation and transcendence. The 'against' exists, therefore, as the rejection of all forms of alienated human practice and of all the ways in which that alienated social practice manifests itself.

18

To reject 'working class' as 'too narrow' confuses the 'traditional revolutionary' notion of the working class as 'exploited object' with the worker as total social subject, as the (alienated) producer (and 'negater') of the totality of social life, in the multiplicity of distinct forms of appearance. Ours is most definitely a class struggle, but we are not restricted to struggling against it only as 'workers', but as all the subjects of struggle: women, people of color, immigrants, students, etc.

19

Principled struggle defends the autonomy of each 'subject of struggle' within the class as a whole, since the sections of the working class which derive benefits from specific forms of oppression/hierarchy cannot be relied on to consistently oppose those forms of

oppression/ hierarchy. The attempt to impose direct unity, as 'traditional revolutionaries' and trade unionism tend to do, under the banner of 'first we are workers', is usually authoritarian and inevitably doomed. Unity will most likely have to be indirect: a unified rejection of capital, with a multiplicity of struggles and autonomous subjects.

20

The organizations which started out as organizations of struggle, but which have survived in the absence of the struggles which created them, have become means of recuperating and controlling labor. As such, to speak of the 'betrayal of workers' by a union bureaucracy which has long since identified itself as part of management, as capital's lackey, means to sow confusion. To oppose either the existence of class struggle or the multiplicity of subjects means propping up capital in theory.

Conclusion

Globalization can either mean a) the globalization of the commodity relation, not simply in space, but also in time, so that capital's never ending enclosure of spaces and times outside its control are further and further reduced, with all the attendant consequences and suffering, or globalization can mean b) the struggle against the commodity relation itself, rather than its consequences and side effects, for the global victory of the free association of producers, engaging in free, conscious production, which is to say lives filled with free, conscious, creative self-activity, free from subordination, in which human beings have become their own self-purpose. This is a conclusion that Marx drew over 150 years ago, and one which certainly is no different today.

Suprina Hawkins and Chris Wright



"I was made by an abused child in the Third World.
Please feed her first."

Contra *State and Revolution*

For many years Lenin's *State and Revolution* served as the prime account of a Marxist understanding of the state outside academic circles. This work has informed generations of Marxists with what appeared to be the basic analysis of the state and a definitive conception of communism. Other subsequent work falls into two categories. First we have sophisticated, but often academic and definitely not popularly accessible works, such as Pashukanis, Poulantzas, the German state derivation debate (with authors such as Offe, von Braunmueller, Hirsch, et al), Bob Jessop, John Holloway, Werner Bonefeld, Simon Clarke, and so on. Second, we have more popular works which do not really go beyond *State and Revolution*, or which fall short of it, such as work by Ralph Milliband and a host of near-Marxists such as William Domhoff.

Oddly, in very little of the more sophisticated work do we find a direct critique of Lenin's work and its relationship to Marx. Few people have advanced such critiques, and often the debate has remained between academic Marxists. For example, the debate between Poulantzas and Milliband generated a whole revival of the analysis of the state in Marxism, but the center of attention became Poulantzas and Milliband. Later, the German state derivation debate picked up on Evgeny Pashukanis' book *Marxism and Law* from 1924, but this seems to be as close to Lenin as most of these discussions got.

Some of this may have to do with the fact that many academic Marxists have viewed *State and Revolution* as crude or simplistic. However, this appreciation misses two important issues. First, Lenin is not as crude as many people think. His work represents some of the most sophisticated development of Marxism on the state from that period. Only Luxemburg's *Reform or Revolution* and some polemics by Anton Pannekoek against Kautsky and Bernstein represent nearly as sophisticated approaches to the state from that time period, but they have a much more limited scope. Second, only Lenin's work reflects on the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the *Critique of the Gotha Program* (from here on referred to as the *Gothacritik*) and the Paris Commune in such detail. Lenin's book also has the merit of setting forth the most libertarian approach to the state that Lenin would ever put forth. And since we want to consider a work that has been central to the formation of the views of tens of thousands of Marxists, where else can we go? It would be like talking about the Leninist

conception of the party without discussing *What Is To Be Done?* And yet it happens all the time.

Therefore, I am going to make an attempt at a critique of *State and Revolution* along several lines. First, I am going to take up Lenin's conception of the state, and the capitalist state in particular. In the process, I will have to discuss Engels' understanding of the state as well because Lenin's approach really comes from Engels, not Marx. Second, I am going to take up the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Lenin and Marx. Lenin makes a series of claims about both the constitution of 'socialism' (the first phase of communism) and the existence of the state. In both cases, Lenin refers heavily to Marx's *The Civil War in France* and the *Gothacritik*, but I think he fundamentally departs from these works. Third, I am going to address the relationship between Lenin's conception of the post-revolutionary society and the question of the party and consciousness. I will make a few brief comments on alternative conceptions of the relationship of revolutionary organizations to revolution and organs of workers' power. Finally, I will ask some questions to think about in terms of developing a conception of revolution (starting from Marx's notion of fetishism and the idea that communism is the real movement/struggle of the working class) for the 21st century.

Lenin's Conception of the State

Since Lenin begins *State and Revolution* with his understanding of the state, it seems logical to start there as well. However, Lenin follows Engels in this approach to the state, and so we must begin with the criticism of Engels.

Lenin begins with *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Engels argues in this book that the state begins when classes begin, that the division of society into classes gives rise to the state. However, this seemingly simple, obvious argument misses something essential: no state is ever a generic state. All states exist as states of a particular society. But Engels' approach does not start from there, he starts from a meta-category. Richard Gunn, in his article on "Marxism and Philosophy" (Capital and Class 37, 1989), characterizes this kind of abstraction as empiricist abstraction, abstraction that assumes a genus-species relationship with actual historical states. In other words, we have a metaphysical object called a state, and we can then line up all the actually existing states under it in a hierarchy. So under the title of a meta-category called "the state", we can line up slave

states, feudal states, capitalist states, etc. The state becomes a transhistorical abstraction, an *a priori* construction that defines whether such and such a "thing" is a state. Much the way meta-theory does not ask "Is it true that roses are red?", but asks, "What is Truth?", Engels asks, "What is 'The State'?", and he proceeds to give us an answer: the special armed body of men organized to defend the interests of the ruling class. This approach falls short of giving us the means to understand what is unique about the capitalist state, however.

Any approach has to answer the question "What makes this state a capitalist state?" Engels' (and therefore Lenin's) approach treats the state as an instrument of the ruling class, as an object, a "thing" that exists and which is determined by its functions. The state is a capitalist state because the capitalists control the state. How do they control the state? The capitalists control the state through corruption, through personal ties to the state, and "alliances" between the state and capital (cf. Lenin, CW Vol. 25, pp. 397-8). Capital places its representatives into the vessel of the state, thereby taking it over. Those representatives in turn get positions in capitalist corporations after they serve their term, solidifying the linkage. This assumes that the state is an empty vessel until some class fills it with a new content.

An alternative approach to the state would have to recognize what is different about the capitalist state from other states. First, starting from Marx's notion of fetishism (that relations between people appear as relations between things mediated by people), we have to start with the state as a social relation, not as a thing. Engels and Lenin start from the reified state by treating it as a thing, a vessel, an instrument, rather than starting from the social relation underlying the state.

Second, having established the need to not reify the state, what makes the state a capitalist state? Capital, based on the separation of the producers from the means of production, and turning the labor power of the producers into a commodity, creates a separation between the market (the realm of free exchange) and production. This separation, however, also separates the means of dominating labor from the exploitation of labor power: the economic and the political become separate. Thus no direct identity exists between capital and the state; the relation appears indirect. In their effort to make that link explicit, Lenin and Engels act as if capitalists directly control the state in various ways, but this only serves to further fetishize the linkage because it assumes the identity of state and capital in

appearance. But appearance and essence do not coincide in a fetishized world, and it is exactly this that Marx takes up in his concept of fetishism and dialectics. Lenin and Engels go from a dialectical to a positivist approach to the state, in so far as they ask, “What makes this state a capitalist state?”

Thirdly, Lenin and Engels then proceed to adopt a functionalist attitude towards the state. The state becomes nothing more than its functions: the protection of the general interests of capital. Once the state becomes a “thing”, an instrument, then we have reified the state, therefore making the state more stable than it actually is. If we start from fetishism, however, the state exists as a form (a mode of existence) of the capital-labor relation, the state has to be a product of struggle, which means the state cannot be defined by a predetermined series of functions. The ‘functions’ become the product of class struggle. The constitution of the state becomes a constant process; a process of continuously *constituting* a state that is fought over and reflects class struggles. The capitalist state was not simply constituted with the bourgeois revolutions or with Absolutism (as Lenin discusses). Class struggle constantly constitutes and reconstitutes the state as a fetishized social relation.

Finally, we have to ask how we can talk about “the capitalist state”, in the face of so many specific capitalist states? Because capital is global, has always been global from its origins in piracy, slavery and conquest, the political, as a social relation, is also global. We can then see each state as simply the fragmenting of the political into localities. This fracturing revolves around two relations: the need to control the movement of labor and the need to attract capital. Capital moves (with varying degrees of mobility depending on whether capital moves as productive capital, commodity capital, or money capital) and only settles where the conditions appear attractive for the extraction of surplus value. A contradiction develops between the mobility of capital and the immobility of the state. In so far as capital exists as global capital (national capital is really a fiction), the identification of capital with a particular capitalist class or with a particular capitalist state makes no sense. I cannot go into it in depth here, but this approach would seriously undermine the concept of “state monopoly capitalism” which Lenin also depends upon and develops. Lenin’s state is ultimately a national state, as is his capital, and his world is a state system where some states exploit others. In a theory starting from fetishism, each state exists as a fragment,

a fractured moment, of the political as a global totality. As a result, exploitation is not between imperialist states and colonial or neocolonial states, but the exploitation of global labor by global capital.

In the end, even though Lenin says that the state needs to be smashed and he takes a revolutionary political position relative to the capitalist state, his *theory* reflects that of the Second International. In turn, we could just as correctly say that Lenin’s mechanics of capitalist control of the state only differ terminologically from G. William Domhoff or other perceptive liberal critics of the state as an elite institution.

But what does that mean for our understanding of revolution? In the next section, I will lay out the differences between Marx and Lenin on their understanding of the term “dictatorship of the proletariat” and communism.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Communism in Lenin and Marx

Several problems interest us here. How do Lenin and Marx understand the term “dictatorship of the proletariat”? What is the relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism? How did Lenin interpret Marx’s discussion of the two phases of communism in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*? Does Lenin have a concept of communism as the self-emancipation of the working class, as the free association of producers?

All of Lenin’s earlier work, and most of what comes later, understands the dictatorship of the proletariat to mean a particularly *dictatorial* type of state, whose task is the repression of the capitalist class after the revolution. We should be clear: Lenin, unlike in other places, does not consistently deploy this usage. He sometimes deploys the term as Marx used it.

So how did Marx understand the phrase? In an extensive discussion of the term *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Marx to Lenin*, Hal Draper makes a powerful argument that Marx does not understand the term as indicating a particular kind of state, but as the *social* dictatorship of the working class. In the same way Marx would refer to all capitalist states, and even capitalist society, as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, so he referred to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, if you read the handful of places where Marx uses the phrase, that meaning is quite apparent.

Second, Marx did not use the phrase often. The handful of times he uses it, Draper clearly points out its

polemical edge in reference to the Blanquists and anarchists. The term actually originates with Auguste Blanqui and his followers. Marx used their term in the discussion, but he argued against a putschist notion of the social revolution, a notion Lenin comes dangerously close to. At best, we can say that Lenin sometimes takes the phrase in Marx's sense, but even in *State and Revolution*, he is inconsistent. In almost all of his other works, Lenin consistently gets it wrong.

This difference reflects another problem. While both Marx and Lenin see the working class as revolutionary, they do so for *entirely different reasons*. For example, Lenin quotes this passage from Engels as gospel:

“As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon the present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection — nothing necessitating a special coercive force, a state.”

(*Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science* [*Anti-Duhring*],

pp.301-03, third German edition, quoted in Lenin, CW, Vol. 25, p. 400)

Note how Engels associates capitalist oppression with the anarchy of production, without ever discussing Marx's central critique of capital: the separation of the producer from the means of production. Compare this to Lenin:

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organize the proletariat. *Only the proletariat — by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production — is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an independent struggle for their emancipation.* (CW, Vol. 25, p. 408, italics mine)

Lenin takes the position that the proletariat is the emancipatory class because of its role in large-scale production. This confuses a particular historical organization of labor power for the key relation between labor and capital. Lenin *never* grasps Marx's discussion of alienated labor and fetishism. The emancipatory power of the proletariat comes from the

fact that the working class exists as the negation of property, of exploitation. The total separation of producer from means of production under capital means that the working class has no possible existence as a propertyed, i.e. as an exploiting, class. The particular organization of alienated labor is secondary to the specific mode of existence of labor under capitalism.

This matters simply because the two different perspectives lead to two different views of revolution. For Lenin (and partially for Engels), the first phase of communism is the taking over of the current production process by the working class, the management of the existing production relations by the (workers') state. For Marx, the first phase of communism means the free association of labor, the abolition of the separation of the producers from the means of producing, i.e. the abolition of relations of property. What Marx considers the most basic preliminaries to communism, precursors fulfilled in the course of the revolution, of the expropriation of the expropriators, Lenin considers to be the first phase of communism.

Lenin completely misunderstands Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* and the discussion of two stages of communism. For Marx, there is no stage of communism with a state or commodity production or wage labor. Lenin completely confuses the problem of the period of revolutionary overthrow of with the first stage of communism. Lenin phrases it this way:

The proletariat needs state power, a centralized organization of force, an organization of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population — the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians — in the work of organizing a socialist economy. (CW, Vol. 25, p. 409)

In doing so, Lenin breaks with Marx in the second half of the sentence. Up until that point, Lenin could argue that he represented Marx's view.

Lenin highlights his confusion of the revolutionary period with the first phase of communism in the quote below:

In striving for socialism, however, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, therefore, that the need for violence against people in general, for the subordination of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination. (CW, Vol. 25, p. 461)

Clearly, Lenin still sees the first phase of communism as one of subordination because he can only conceive

of it in terms of capturing state power and stratification of private property. As such, Lenin goes on to say that ... in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) “bourgeois law” is not abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. “Bourgeois law” recognizes them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into common property. To that extent - and to that extent alone - “bourgeois law” disappears.

The socialist principle, “He who does not work shall not eat”, is already realized; the other socialist principle, “An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labor”, is also already realized. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish “bourgeois law”, which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labor, equal amounts of products. (CW, Vol. 25, p. 472)

This utterly contradicts Marx. Marx says bourgeois right, not law, which would assume the state. Lenin focuses on the ‘economic revolution’ solely from the technical side, from the ‘means of production’, unlike Marx who focuses on the relations of production, the separator of the producer from the means of production.

The idea that “socialism” merely equals the conversion of bourgeois private property into common property completely misunderstands Marx. For Marx, private property means capitalist property as a whole, as in the total property of the capitalist class, not simply juridically recognized individual property. State capitalism turned individual property into common property, without ever violating private property, i.e. capitalist property (see Paresh Chattopadhyay, *The Marxian Concept of Capital and the Soviet Experience*, Praeger, 1994.) Therefore, Lenin merely posits a different form of capitalism, since none of the social relations of production change under “socialism”.¹

Lenin even counterpoises the state to the working class here in his most libertarian work. The following two paragraphs highlight how far Lenin is from Marx.

We are not utopians, we do not “dream” of dispensing at once with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with

subordination, control, and “foremen and accountants”. (CW, Vol. 25, p. 430)

We, the workers, shall organize large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid “foremen and accountants” (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees).

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the postal service an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At the present the postal service is a business organized on the lines of state-capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organizations of a similar type, in which, standing over the “common” people, who are overworked and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalists, crushed the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, and smashed the bureaucratic machinery of the modern state, we shall have a splendidly-equipped mechanism, freed from the “parasite”, a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them all, as indeed all “state” officials in general, workmen’s wages. Here is a concrete, practical task which can immediately be fulfilled in relation to all trusts, a task whose fulfillment will rid the working people of exploitation, a task which takes account of what the Commune had already begun to practice (particularly in building up the state).

To organize the whole economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as all officials, shall receive salaries no higher than “a workman’s wage”, all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat - that is our immediate aim. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the laboring classes of the bourgeoisie’s prostitution of these institutions. (CW, Vol. 25, p. 430-1)

We must go even further and say that Lenin completely misunderstands Marx’s discussion of bourgeois right under the first phase of communism, believing that Marx

means the continued existence of wage-labor. The first phase of communism already assumes the end of money and the wage relation. It assumes the end of the state and of capitalist relations of production. Both phases of communism depend on what Marx called “the free association of producers”, in which the freedom of each is the precondition for the freedom of all.

Does this mean that Marx did not believe the proletariat needed a state, albeit a transitional and immediately dying state, to suppress the capitalist class? First, Marx clearly does have some kind of transient form of state in mind, but this state exists only as long as the expropriation of the expropriators continues. It has *nothing* to do with the first phase of communism (what Lenin and others referred to as socialism.)

Second, Marx did not conceive of the particular state form as “dictatorial”, as a dictatorship in the modern sense, as I have indicated elsewhere, while leaving the question of the specific form of state open. At most, we can say that the Commune formed the core of his conception, a form that certainly has none of the features of a dictatorship in the modern sense of the term. A few of Marx’s more ‘statist’ quotes should suffice to make the point, as his writing in *The Civil War in France*, and *Notes on Adolph Wagner* lean in an even more unambiguously anti-statist direction. Marx comments as follows:

“... In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat...”

“... We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class to win the battle of democracy.

“The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.”

(pp.31 and 37, *Communist Manifesto*, seventh German edition, 1906, quoted in Lenin, CW, Vol. 25, p. 407

“If the political struggle of the working class assumes revolutionary form,” wrote Marx, ridiculing the anarchists for their repudiation of politics, “and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the

dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, *they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state.*” (Neue Zeit Vol.XXXII, 1, 1913-14, p.40, quoted in Lenin, CW, Vol. 25, pp. 440-1, Italics mine)

“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.” (Critique of the Gotha Program, Marx, quoted Lenin, CW, Vol. 25, p. 464)

The Question of The Party and Consciousness

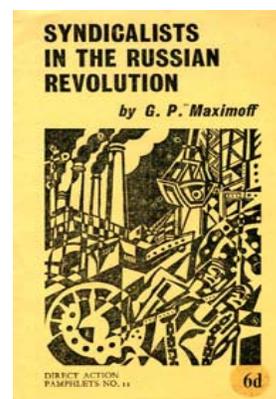
Lenin’s conception of the party depends on a notion of consciousness that he derives from Kautsky and the Second International. Obviously, Lenin makes the connection clear in *What Is To Be Done?* when he makes the claim that the working class cannot get beyond trade union consciousness, to revolutionary consciousness, without external intervention by the party. Revolutionary consciousness comes from outside the class struggle, from the development of science. (For critiques of this view, see *Open Marxism: Vols. 1-3*, Bonefeld, Gunn, Psychopedis et al, 1993-4)

Many people have claimed that Lenin goes beyond that perspective at different moments, such as in *State and Revolution*. Supposedly Lenin takes a different perspective on the question of the self-emancipation of the class. Can we support this view?

I don’t think so.

Lenin continues to view the development of class-consciousness in a mechanical way that assumes the party as a necessary catalyst and embodiment of class-consciousness. Lenin clarifies on the role of the party in *State and Revolution* in the following way,

By educating the workers’ party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new system, of being



the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organizing their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.

This conception of the role of the party still very much places the role of bearer of consciousness upon the party, as opposed to the working class. The party exists as the educator, the bearer of special knowledge and technique. Of course, we have a right to ask: Where does this privileged information come from, this privileged knowledge? Lenin answers us clearly: from the positive science of Marxism.

But then we have a few problems. Marx did not posit his ideas as a positive science of the world. When Marx used the term science, he used it in a negative way, indicating “a ruthless critique of everything existing” (*The Holy Family*, p.) For Marx, dialectics always means *negative dialectics*. Engels is the first person to fail to grasp this, and upon his partial mistakes grew a whole positivistic treatment of dialectics, which Lenin fully absorbs. Therefore, Lenin’s notion of Marxism stands juxtaposed to Marx’s Marxism.

Nor can we find a space outside the class struggle, outside alienation and fetishization, from which to claim this positive science. In Marx we find no outside to the capital-labor relation, no privileged, distanced, objective space from which we can turn the working class or our own activity or anything else into a pure object of study. Because capital is nothing but alienated labor, labor *in* capital, capital has no existence separate from labor. But because labor means nothing under capital except as alienated labor, because capitalism exists as the separation of the producers from the means of production, labor also exists *against* capital. This reveals an interconnected relation of antagonism, but an asymmetrical one: capital needs labor, but labor does not need capital. Labor exists in-against-and-beyond capital simultaneously.

In Marx, revolutionary consciousness is the special privilege of the working class, not a party of intellectuals, or even a “vanguard” of working class militants. The working class, rent by the antagonism of being in-and-against capital is the only class, as a whole, in a position to see through the process of fetishization. It is exploitation and alienated labor, not “scientific socialist ideas”, which lead to revolutionary class-consciousness for the class as a whole. Marx’s notion of self-emancipation of the class (and his notions of organization, stated in *The Communist Manifesto*, his work in the International Workingmen’s Association, and his letters towards the end of his life, including the *Gothacritik*) indicates a different notion of *consciousness* from Lenin. This different conception

of the formation of consciousness implies a wholly different concept of *state and revolution*. It also implies a wholly different conception of organization.

If I am right, that Lenin’s organizational concept embodies a departure from Marx’s approach to the problem of consciousness, and hence of organization, then where do we begin?

First, we need to engage in a serious re-examination of non-Leninist forms of organization, even those that ultimately failed. (In a sense, they have all failed, but some *failed better* than others.) The council communists drew upon and developed the question of workers’ councils, even if they made a fetish of councils at a certain point. Ultimately, they seemed to decide that revolutionary organizations should dissolve themselves into the councils and not propose a separate existence from workers’ organs of power after the revolution. Marxist-Humanism and Socialism ou Barbarie developed different conceptions of organization opposed to the idea of vanguardism, but with a strong emphasis on theory and practice unity, even if they diverge at critical points. The Situationist International developed an important critique of ‘militantism’. They also developed the councilist position on the role of Marxist organizations in the workers’ councils, projecting a purely negative, anti-bureaucratic role, but one that continues after the revolution. Solidarity in England took a mix of ideas from these different groups, and developed a series of ideas worth further investigation. I only mention here what have been critical interventions for me and each of us hopefully brings other examples and ideas to the table.

Second, we might start by asking, “Since revolutionary consciousness develops in the course of class struggle, but Marxism does not spring into every revolutionary workers’ head, what role for Marxists?” We could do worse than to return to Marx’s simple comments in the *Communist Manifesto* on the role of communists in the workers’ movement as a part of our rethinking. Degrading Marx’s organizational theory and practice formed an essential part of Leninism (especially post-Lenin Leninism.) Does that condemn us to a contemplative position? It did not do so for Marx, so I do not think it should for us either. We still have to ask, “What do we, as revolutionaries, *do*?”

The attraction of Leninism was always that it had the answer, even if it was the wrong answer.

Towards a Conception of Revolution

I have not addressed the problem of the Bolsheviks in power or even the October, even though I thought about it and such a discussion is implicit in this whole article. That would require considerably more space than we have here. At best, I can recommend a series of works that people can refer to, each of which captures a part of what I would see as developing a further critique of Leninism, especially Leninism in power.²

Instead, I would like to draw some conclusions. First, I don't think we can defend the idea that Lenin develops a coherent Marxist analysis of the state. Rather, he develops a view that suffers from a strong strain of functionalism and positivism. Second, Lenin's notion of revolution has little in common with Marx's conception of revolution as the self-emancipation of the working class. Where Lenin is right, he says nothing we could not already get from Marx. Lenin



generally misunderstands Marx's *Gothacritik*. His whole discussion of communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat is a *departure* from Marx, not an extension. Rather, Lenin extends the line of thought we

could refer to as Lassalleanism, with its fetishization of the state. In other words, we do not just have to go beyond Lenin; we have to abandon Leninism to the dustbin of history. We have to start from somewhere else entirely.

Does that mean we just go back to Marx? We have new questions to ask, and we have new experiences to assimilate. The world has not stood still since Marx, and neither has revolution. By ex-

amining some of the problems Marx grappled with, as Marx grappled with them, maybe we can help reformulate a different Marxism, what John Holloway, Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, et al, have called an "Open Marxism".

Certainly, after the 20th century, we can no longer think about power and revolution in the same terms. We cannot just say, "Look at what the Communards did." At least no more than we can afford to ignore that experience. I do not claim to have any answers, but I have questions. So I am not going to propose a new conception of revolution here, so much as I want to pose a series of points that may help us collectively to develop that conception.

1. Central to this discussion has been the notion of the state and how we understand it. Holloway, Bonefeld, Simon Clarke, and others Vital have begun vital work, which I think we need to pick up and develop. We have to go beyond the generic state or the state as an instrument of object external to the capital-labor relation. I cannot elaborate this approach here beyond the few things I have said in this article.
2. In discussing the problem of working class revolution, we have to re-open the discussion of the forms of workers' power we have seen, especially the factory councils and workers' councils. Not that this discussion ever exactly ended, but it became the minority discussion Marxism, on the fringes of a Leninist-dominated discussion, which assumed it knew all the answers. We must ask if the concept of 'smashing the state' really appreciates the whole problem of the relationship of state and revolution adequately. We need to re-open the question of the contours of revolution, starting with the recognition that we really no longer know what it looks like (having mistaken one type of revolution for another in Russia and having seen relatively few since, in a world that has drastically changed in the last 30 years.)
3. We have to grapple with the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat. First, do we even want to use this term anymore? It already seemed to be outdated in Marx's time and Engels even proposed talking about the revolutionary state not as a state but using the German for the word Commune (see his Letter

to Bebel from 1875 dealing with this topic, quoted in *State and Revolution* in the section on Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*.) Beyond that, though, we have to ask if the "transient state", as Marx's calls it, will be a necessary barrier we must overcome or a deadly detour from which no revolution can recover?

4. How do we understand communism? We have Marx's insights, his discussions after the Commune. We have a wide range of non-Leninist ideas to draw from and, dare I say it, we even need to revisit anarchism in a serious way.
5. We need to revisit the problem of organization and the role of revolutionaries. I posed those questions above, but only in the briefest outline.

These are simply some provisional questions and suggestions, but maybe that is where we need to begin. Not only do we no longer have all the answers, we have to reckon with the fact that we never did. We have to try our best to see Marx with fresh eyes and rediscover revolution.

(Endnotes)

1 I do not use the term 'state capitalism' because I happen to think it represents a mistaken notion of the relation between capital and the state. See my discussion above on Lenin's conception of the state and John Holloway's article "Global Capital and the National State" in issue 52 of *Capital and Class* from 1994 for a more thorough discussion.

2 Places to start include Paresh Chattopadhyay, John Holloway, Werner Bonefeld, Raya Dunayevskaya, the Situationist International and Guy Debord, Maurice Brinton and Solidarity, Anton Pannekoek, Paul Mattick, Sr., Italian Autonomist Marxism, and more. A whole subterranean tradition in Marxism exists, which we need to re-examine, starting with *Marx himself*.



APPENDIX: Why Leninism is Not 'Red Fascism'

If Lenin, in his most 'libertarian' work, in fact defends a kind of 'state' capitalism, what do we make of Bolshevism? Many in the anarchist and libertarian Marxist circles refer to Leninism as 'red fascism', but it seems to me that this is very wrong in important ways. Not because Leninism did not kill the Russian Revolution; not because Trotsky was not an authoritarian, but because Leninism has played a distinctly different role in relation to capitalism than fascism has.

We need to think clearly about what fascism was. I think that this quote from Werner Bonefeld's review of Johannes Agnoli's "Fascism Without Revision" sets out some interesting points succinctly: "In conclusion, Agnoli sees Fascism as a counter-revolutionary force that seeks to disempower the 'dependent' (proletarian) masses and to repel their emancipatory aspirations through a preemptive politics of terrorist 'pacification' and, once so domesticated, through a politics of depoliticisation effected through the institutionalization and legalization of the 'labour question'. Fascism, he argues (p. 111), attacked not only the revolutionary working class. Such an attack belongs to the 'normality' of the politics of the bourgeois state. Fascism also attacked the reformist working class movement and focused the integration of the working class into the bourgeois 'system' on issues such as Volk where the mutual 'friends' gain a material existence not only through state organized 'pleasure trips' but also, and most importantly, through the deadly persecution of the 'foe'. Italian Fascism, in contrast to the German volkisch conception of the 'national', focused on the incorporation of 'class', seeking to subsume the potentially subversive under the obligation of responsibility. Of course, only the fascist trade unions were invited - and were the only ones left to be invited - to participate in tripartite discussions. As Agnoli shows, the efforts by employers to reassert their right to manage was in no way diminished, rather it was strengthened, through the politics of incorporation. Within the corporatist framework, the employers were endorsed as the producers and labour's role was that of a dependent who knows its 'natural' position that is visited upon those without property since Roman-times: the natural position of the worker in Italian corporatism was that of the plebes. Agnoli

sums this up with the metaphor of the one national boat: the majority rowing the minority navigating.

In sum, historical Fascism is understood as an attempt at managing the reproduction of bourgeois society.”

If fascism is a terrorist attack on the working class, Leninism hardly played such a role in Russia *prior* to assuming state power. Leninism in fact pursued the organization of the working class for the overthrow of capital and the establishment of communism, an idea which no fascists hold to, even the Left Fascists discussed by Agnoli. Now, Leninism may formulate the politics of liberation in all kinds of authoritarian ways, but it does so from within the historical workers’ movement, not outside it. Leninism in power did become the vanguard of developing capitalism (‘state’ capitalism) in Russia. And Leninism in power did certainly lead to an absolutely murderous regime which used all kinds of terror against the working class. But, unlike fascism, this beast grew out of the workers’ movement itself, out of its own contradictions and limitations.

If anything, Leninism may best be understood as what it was always accused of being: Jacobinism. But I mean it in the literal sense, that Leninism became the vanguard of capitalist development, but originally as the expression of the radical desires of the masses. This combination of workers’ struggles and capitalist development should be nothing new on this list. That Bolshevism should become Jacobinism is no surprise; Leninism was the marriage of Marx, the workers’ movement and bourgeois revolutionary ideology, especially in its conceptions of science, organization and communism, which came from Engels, Lassalle, Blanqui and Bakunin. That 20th Century Jacobinism turned into Thermidor is no surprise. This is a part of Trotsky which is actually quite astute, except that Leninism was always a theory of the bourgeois revolution (one need simply consider the actual content of Lenin’s formula: ‘democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants’), but from within the workers’ movement in a less developed country. Another way to say this is that Leninism was Social Democratic reformism in a situation which made bourgeois democratic demands revolutionary.

In the face of an actual working class and a world of capital and workers’ revolts, Jacobinism and Thermidor, which had already ushered in terror

extensively in the French Revolution, recur on a hitherto unknown scale. But is this fascism? Were the Jacobins fascists because they used terror to establish capitalism? What is left of the meaning of the term fascism at this point? Certainly, for those for whom communism has always been possible from any society, Jacobinism and fascism may be the same thing, but I reject that completely. This would be a dividing line between certain kinds of utopians and Marx.

On another note, let’s consider for a moment what the Russian Revolution was a part of. Bolshevism struggled with its own contradictions, but until Lenin’s death the eye was always on the spread of the revolution. That Leninism employed means which were anathema to revolution is only to say that Leninism was as limited as Jacobinism in France, which also spread revolution, and which also had to give way to Thermidor because of its distrust of the masses. I don’t want to reduce Bolshevism to “distrust of the working class at the same moment as reliance upon it”, but it is not exactly inaccurate either, is it? After all, the Bolshevik revolutionaries did not brave prisons and exile and poverty and death for the sake of order, but for the overthrow of Czarism and capitalism. Leninism lived a contradiction which the recurrence to “Leninism = red fascism” simply cannot account for, and dangerously so. It confuses the Jacobins with Thermidor and Bonapartism.

Fascism, in its turn, did not inspire revolutionary upheavals anywhere else, nor did masses of radical workers say “I wanna be a fascist!” No, they flocked to what they thought was the party of the international revolution, and boy were they wrong, but not because they were secretly fascists. They flocked to what, in the developed capitalist countries, amounted to a very militant reformism which could contribute to the instability of capitalism, but which did not have a politics that would do anything but leave the working class vulnerable to fascism, Keynesianism and war.

I am loathe to call Maoism or the other nationalisms using Lenin’s name “Leninisms” only because they were all based, unlike Bolshevism, in the countryside and used means and methods very much unlike Leninism, which was an integral part of the European workers’ movement. Maoism, Castroism, Guevarism, etc. all reflected a very different social base, what one could refer to as a peasantry proper, a peasantry not yet subordinated to the capital-labor relation, and

therefore non-working class forces. They all engaged in the raising of armies and the conquest of the cities, with the immediate smashing of all labor insurgency. And yet, how much Leninism differed in power is questionable. That capitalist development in the 20th century tended towards the massification of the state, i.e. the state taking on the role of banker, employer, social worker, in the face of mass working class power (something which fascism helped to put into place), and the state as 'development capitalist' is certainly obvious. That "state" capitalism represented the predominant trend in the face of labor's struggle against capital is also obvious.

What is less clear, it seems, is that Leninism was not fascism. Leninism, in one way, is the failure of the working class to overthrow capitalism, a failure which still helped expose the real content of 'scientific' Marxism, hence the critiques by the council communists and Hegelian Marxists, but which also expressed the workers' movement folding in upon its own contradictions. Fascism was nothing of the sort. Fascism was a club, a weapon. Fascism overthrew NOTHING. This is why I would insist that anyone who thinks of fascism as a mass workers' movement understands nothing.

In one sense, there is a break between Leninism and Stalinism, a break based upon the final annihilation of the Jacobins by Thermidor and the institutionalization of Bonapartism. It is not a counter-revolution in the normal sense however, since Leninism under Lenin was already Thermidor, much as Jacobinism already contained aspects of Thermidor, but a new stage of development in which youthful exuberance and mass violence must be shed and the right to social control returned to the state. Bourgeois revolution had to give way to bourgeois stability, a stability which cost far more violence because stability had to be imposed on not a class in embryo with little social power compared to the mass of small proprietor (The French Revolution), but upon a powerful working class with international dimensions (The Russian Revolution.)

As for today, Leninism maintains these contradictions. I do not oppose Leninism as a kind of 'red fascism', but as a kind of militant reformism, as a reformism that has produced people whose profession is total social control (a la Debord.) As such, they are agents of capital to the same degree as trade union bureaucrats and other enemy elements within the working class,

with this difference: the unions have become institutionalized as organs of management, while Leninism, at least in the U.S., has not attained this status. The situation is somewhat different in countries like France and Italy, where the Communist Parties are major institutional parties and even the 'revolutionary' (read: sectarian) Leninists are much larger and more influential. Does that mean that they could become the vanguard of fascism? I doubt it, actually. I think that Leninism as revolutionary opposition is in fact all but dead and has been for some years, maybe decades. Leninism can serve to disorient people looking for revolutionary ideas, can mislead struggles, and can act, in other words, like class struggle reformists, but Leninism will not be able, in the developed countries, to lead the state except as a kind of recuperative and parliamentary reformism. Bolshevism's social base (as statist vanguard of the transformation from formal to real subsumption) has weakened and diminished, and aspects of Bolshevism have been subsumed within capital (and in that sense continue.) The return to fascism, as the use of terrorism to save capital, is in fact far more likely and far different.



The Reform of the State: Global Capital and the National State

John Holloway*

1. What state?

This article grows out of the experience of teaching a course on 'The Crisis of the Welfare State' in the Maestría de Ciencias Sociales in FLACSO (Mexico). To talk about the crisis of 'the welfare state' or the reform of 'the state' in an international setting immediately raises the question of 'which state?



where?' To someone who has lived most of his life in Europe, there is an additional problem: of what relevance are ideas developed in Europe about 'the state' to people whose main point of reference is the Paraguayan, Bolivian or Argentinian state? The answer can only lie through some concept of the fragmentation of a united world. This article is an attempt to develop that point.

2. The state

The very concept of the 'reform of the state' (or the 'crisis of the welfare state') points to the fact that we are identifying something common in the development of different states, and therefore proclaiming that an analysis oriented to one particular state is insufficient. The states appear to be quite distinct, separate entities, and yet we speak of the reform of 'the state' or the crisis of 'the state' as though

there were just one state, assuming some sort of unity between that which appears to be separate. How can we understand the relation between the development of different states as a unity of the separate, the unity-in-separation/ separation-in-unity of 'the state' and the multiplicity of different states?

In the tradition of political science, the state is taken as a basic, and largely unquestioned, category. The overwhelming majority of work in the discipline takes one particular state as its almost exclusive framework, analysing political developments as though they could be understood in purely national terms. This is particularly true of work in the United States and Europe, where theorists still wallow in the myth of national self-sufficiency: for example, it has been common, on both left and right, to analyse 'Thatcherism' or 'Reaganism' as purely national phenomena, rather than as part of a global shift in the relation between the state and capital. In Latin America people have been far more conscious of the world context within which the current changes are taking place, but there is still a sense in which the unquestioned category of 'the state' restricts and defines discussion.

If the state is taken as the starting point, then the world (in so far as it appears at all) appears as the sum of nation-states. Trends or developments which go beyond the borders of one state are discussed either in terms of inter-state relations (as in the tradition of the 'sub-discipline' of 'international relations') or in terms of analogy (as in the 'sub-discipline' of 'comparative politics'). Both start not from a concept of the unity of nation states but from their separation: common trends can be understood only as part of the inter-state network of power relations exercised either directly between states or through institutions such as the International Monetary Fund; or else in terms of similarities between states in ideas, political institutions or social structures - as in the currently influential regulation theory, with its nationally defined concepts of Fordism and post-Fordism.

Certainly inter-state pressures, pressures from international organisations, and institutional and theoretical fashions play an important role in shaping the development of the state, yet they are insufficient to explain the depth and the global dimensions of the changes currently taking place. To explain the changes in terms of pressure from the IMF, for example, simply

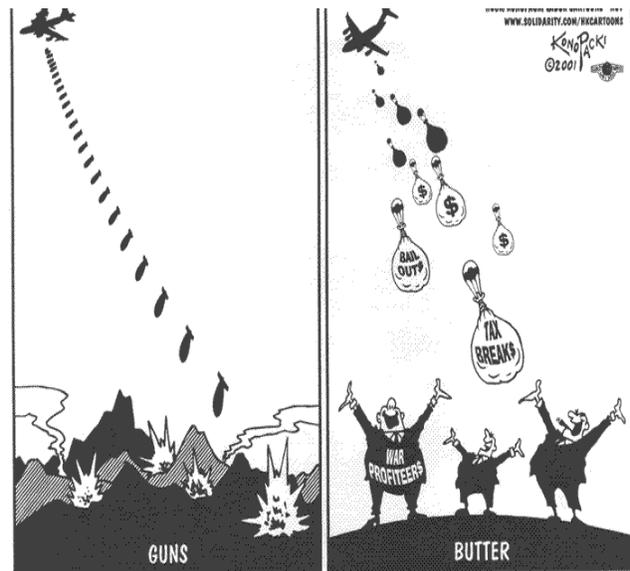
throws the question to a different level: what lies behind the policy-orientation and influence of the IMF? Similarly, to explain the changes in terms of the influence of neo-liberal thought simply raises the question of why neo-liberal thought should have gained such influence in different countries at this particular time. Comparative analyses which focus on the occurrence of similar socio-economic changes in the different countries, as in the regulationist analysis of Fordism, take us deeper, but the analogies, although suggestive, tend to be sketchy and superficial (Clarke 1988/1991). It would appear that to reach a satisfactory understanding of the changes taking place at the moment we need to go beyond the category of 'the state', or rather we need to go beyond the separateness of the different states to find a way of discussing their unity.

Here, dependency theory offers itself as an attractive alternative, in so far as it emphasises the unitary character of the world, insisting on the importance of understanding the actions of particular states in the context of the bipolar relationship between centre and periphery, the periphery being subject to exploitation by the centre. Here there is a concept of the unity of the separate states, in so far as all are elements of a bipolar world. However, in so far as the 'centre' and the 'periphery' are understood as the 'central states' and the 'peripheral states', the analysis remains very state-oriented. In this sense it is closely related to the tradition of international relations: although the emphasis is on the primacy of the world system over particular states, the world system is understood basically as an international state system, with the central states as the dominant actors, and with the only possible path out of dependence lying through the action of peripheral states (see Dabat (1992) for a similar critique). As in the mainstream tradition, the state defines a distinction between internal and external, the difference being that in dependency theory, the emphasis (in relation to the dependent states) is very much on the external, rather than the internal determinants of state action. Developments such as the state reforms being carried out in the peripheral states can, in this perspective, be understood only in terms of the external constraints arising from the centre-periphery relationship, but there is no concept which allows us to understand the dynamic of that relationship.

3. The State as a Form of Social Relations

Each state proclaims its own separateness from other states, its own national sovereignty. In order to understand that which allows us to speak of the crisis or reform of 'the state' as though there were only one state, we need to soften that separateness, to dissolve the state as a category.

To dissolve the state as a category means to understand the state not as a thing in itself, but as a social form, a form of social relations. Just as in physics we have come to accept that, despite appearances, there are no absolute separations, that energy can be



transformed into mass and mass into energy, so, in society too there are no absolute separations, no hard categories. To think scientifically is to dissolve the categories of thought, to understand all social phenomena as precisely that, as forms of social relations. Social relations, relations between people, are fluid, unpredictable, unstable, often passionate, but they rigidify into certain forms, forms which appear to acquire their own autonomy, their own dynamic, forms which are crucial for the stability of society. The different academic disciplines take these forms (the state, money, the family) as given and so contribute to their apparent solidity, and hence to the stability of capitalist society. To think scientifically is to criticise the disciplines, to dissolve these forms, to understand them as forms; to act freely is to destroy these forms.

The state, then, is a rigidified (or 'fetishised', to borrow the term used by Marx) form of social relations.

It is a relation between people which does not appear to be a relation between people, a social relation which exists in the form of something external to social relations. This is the starting point for understanding the unity between states: all are rigidified, apparently autonomous forms of social relations.

But why do social relations rigidify in this way and how does that help us to understand the development of the state? This was the question posed by the so-called 'state derivation debate', a slightly peculiar but very important discussion which spread from West Germany to other countries during the 1970s¹. The debate was peculiar in being conducted in extremely abstract language, and often without making explicit the political and theoretical implications of the argument. The obscurity of the language used and the fact that the participants often did not develop (or were not aware of) the implications of the debate left the discussion open to being misunderstood, and the approach has often been dismissed as an 'economic' theory of the state, or as a 'capital-logic' approach which seeks to understand political development as a functionalist expression of the logic of capital. While these criticisms can fairly be made of some of the contributions, the importance of the debate as a whole lay in the fact that it provided a basis for breaking away from the economic determinism and the functionalism which has marred so many of the discussions of the relation between the state and capitalist society, and for discussing the state as an element or, better, moment of the totality of the social relations of capitalist society.

The focus of the debate on the state as a particular form of social relations is the crucial break with the economic determinism implied for example by the base-superstructure model (and its structuralist variants). In the base-superstructure model, the economic base determines (in the last instance, of course) what the state does, the functions of the state. The focus on the functions of the state takes the existence of the state for granted: there is no room in the base-superstructure model to ask about the form of the state, to ask why, in the first place, social relations should rigidify into the apparently autonomous form of the state. To ask about the form of the state is to raise the question of its historical specificity: the existence of the state as a thing separated from society is peculiar to capitalist society, as is the existence of the 'economic' as something distinct from overtly

coercive class relations (Gerstenberger 1990). The question then is not: how does the economic determine the political superstructure? Rather, it is: what is peculiar about the social relations of capitalism that gives rise to the rigidification (or particularisation) of social relations in the form of the state²? The corollary of this is the question: what is it that gives rise to the constitution of the economic and the political as distinct moments of the same social relations? The answer is surely that there is something distinctive about the social antagonism on which capitalism (like any class society) is based. Under capitalism, social antagonism (the relation between classes) is based on a form of exploitation which takes place not openly but through the 'free' sale and purchase of labour power as a commodity on the market. This form of class relation pre-supposes a separation between the immediate process of exploitation, which is based on the 'freedom' of labour, and the process of maintaining order in an exploitative society, which implies the possibility of coercion (cf. Hirsch 1974/1978).

Seeing the state as a form of social relations obviously means that the development of the state can only be understood as a moment of the development of the totality of social relations: it is a part of the antagonistic and crisis-ridden development of capitalist society. As a form of capitalist social relations, its existence depends on the reproduction of those relations: it is therefore not just a state in a capitalist society, but a capitalist state, since its own continued existence is tied to the promotion of the reproduction of capitalist social relations as a whole. The fact that it exists as a particular or rigidified form of social relations means, however, that the relation between the state and the reproduction of capitalism is a complex one: it cannot be assumed, in functionalist fashion, either that everything that the state does will necessarily be in the best interests of capital, nor that the state can achieve what is necessary to secure the reproduction of capitalist society. The relation between the state and the reproduction of capitalist social relations is one of trial and error.

To speak of the state as a rigidified form of social relations is to speak both of its separation from, and its unity with, society. The separation or rigidification (or fetishisation) is a process constantly repeated³. The existence of the state implies a constant process of separating off certain aspects of social relations and defining them as 'political', and hence as separate from

‘the economic’. The antagonism on which society is based is thus fragmented: struggles are channelled into political and economic forms, neither of which leaves room for raising questions about the structure of society as a whole. Venezuela is an obvious example at the moment, where the stability of the existing society depends very much on being able to channel social discontent into the established procedures of the political system, on being able to impose certain definitions on an ill-defined rejection of the existing order. This process of imposing definitions on social struggles is at the same time a process of self-definition by the state: as a rigidified form of social relations, the state is at the same time a process of rigidifying social relations, and it is through this process that the state is constantly reconstituted as an instance separate from society (Holloway 1980/1991, 1992).

4. National States as Forms of the Global Totality of Social Relations

‘The state’ is thus doubly dissolved: it is not a structure but a form of social relations; it is not a totally fetishised form of social relations but a process of forming (fetishising) social relations (and hence a constant process of self-constitution). But the discussion is still at the level of ‘the state’: nothing has yet been said of the fact that ‘the state’ is not one state but a multiplicity of states. As otherwise sympathetic critics of the ‘state derivation’ approach have pointed out (Barker 1978/1991, von Braunmühl 1974, 1978), the debate “treats the state as if it existed only in the singular. Capitalism, however, is a world system of states, and the form that the capitalist state takes is the nation-state form” (Barker 1978/1991, 204).

At one level, this criticism is misdirected, because the state derivation debate was concerned not with the understanding of a particular state, but rather with the understanding of ‘statehood’ or, better, ‘the political’. The derivation of ‘the political’ from the nature of capitalist social relations abstracted from the existence of ‘the state’ only in the form of a multiplicity of states. In the context of analysing the general relation between state and society, it was, as Picciotto points out, “convenient to assume a correlation between the society and the classes within it and the state within that society”⁴. Yet, convenient or not, this point was never made clear in the debate, and the result was a serious confusion between ‘the state’ in the sense of

‘the political’ (henceforward referred to simply as ‘the political’) and ‘the state’ in the sense of the Mexican, Argentinian or German state (henceforward referred to as ‘the national state’)⁵. This led to an impoverishment of the concept of ‘the political’, and it also contributed to some of the difficulties in carrying the debate further once the general theoretical argument had been made.

What are the implications of opening up this distinction between the political and the national state? The political, it was seen, is a moment of the totality of capitalist social relations. Once the constraints of state-oriented thought are abandoned, it is clear that the ‘totality of social relations’ can only be understood as a global (world-wide) totality. The global nature of society is not the result of the recent ‘internationalisation’ of capital (a concept which implies a moving out from a historically and logically prior national society) but is inherent in the nature of capitalism from the beginning (cf. von Braunmühl 1978; Clarke 1991; Picciotto 1985/1991). Relations between workers and employers, between producers and consumers, between financiers and industrialists, all transcend national frontiers. Capital is inherently a global relation.

The political, then, is a moment of a global relation, but it is expressed not in the existence of a global state but in the existence of a multiplicity of apparently autonomous national states. The political is fractured: this fracturing is fundamental to an understanding of the political, a crucial element that is lost if it is assumed that society and state are co-terminous. The world is not an aggregation of national states, national capitalisms or national societies: rather the fractured existence of the political as national states decomposes the world into so many apparently autonomous units.

The distinction between the political and the national state thus gives a new dimension to the concept of the state as a process of fetishising or rigidifying social relations. The decomposition of global society into national states is not something that is accomplished once national boundaries are set. On the contrary, all national states are engaged in a constantly repeated process of decomposing global social relations: through assertions of national sovereignty, through exhortations to ‘the nation’, through flag ceremonies, through the playing of national anthems,

through administrative discrimination against 'foreigners', through war. The more feeble the social basis of this national decomposition of society - as in Latin America, for example, - the more obvious its forms of expression. This decomposition of global social relations is a crucial element in the fragmentation of opposition to capitalist domination, in the decomposition of labour as a class.

The national state, then, is crucially a form of fracturing global society. Seen in this light, there is a basic territorial non-coincidence between the state and the society to which it relates. The "convenient" assumption, mentioned by Picciotto, of a correlation of state and society is quite simply wrong. Each national state is a moment of global society, a territorial fragmentation of a society which extends throughout the world. No national state, 'rich' or 'poor' can be understood in abstraction from its existence as a moment of the global capital relation. The distinction so often made between 'dependent' and 'non-dependent' states falls. All national states are defined, historically and repeatedly, through their relation to the totality of capitalist social relations. The distinction made by Evers, for example, in his development of the state derivation debate in relation to the capitalist 'periphery', between the 'central' states in which there is a "social identity between the economic and the political sphere" and the 'peripheral' states, in which there is no such identity (Evers 1979, 77-79), is quite invalid. In spite of the national orientation of most theorists in the 'richer' countries, the existence of the national state as a moment of the global capital relation is no less crucial for an understanding of Thatcherism in Britain, say, than it is for an understanding of the rise of neo-liberalism in any so-called 'peripheral' country (as Bonefeld 1990 convincingly shows).

This is not to say that the relation between global capital and all national states is the same. On the contrary, although all national states are constituted as moments of a global relation, they are distinct and non-identical moments of that relation. The fracturing of the world into national societies means that every state has a specific territorial definition and hence a specific relation to people within its territory, some (usually but not always - South Africa, Kuwait - the majority) of whom it defines as 'citizens', the rest as 'foreigners'. This territorial definition means that each state has a different relation to the global relations of capitalism.

The territorial definition also means that each state is immobile in a way that contrasts strongly with the mobility of capital. The national state can change its boundaries only with difficulty, whereas capital can move from one side of the world to the other within seconds. Where national states are solid, capital is essentially liquid, flowing to wherever in the world the biggest profits are to be made. Clearly there are obstacles to this flow, limits to this mobility. Crucially, the reproduction of capital depends on its (transitory) immobilisation in the form of productive capital, involving its embodiment in machinery, labour power, land, buildings, commodities. Other obstacles also impede the free flow of capital, such as state regulations or the existence of monopoly situations, but, in its most general and abstract form, money, capital is global, liquid and fast-flowing. Money knows no personal or national sentiments.

The relation of the national state to capital is a relation of a nationally fixed state to a globally mobile capital. It is in these terms that both the relation between the national state and the world and the relation between national states must be conceptualised. This is important because it has been common, particularly on the left, to discuss the relation between the state and capital as though capital were immobile, as though it were attached to particular activities, places or persons. This gives rise to analyses of political development in terms of conflict between capital fractions (textile capital versus chemical capital, say, or banking capital versus industrial capital) as though capital were in some way tied down to a particular activity⁶, or, more to the point in the present discussion, to the discussion of the state in terms of some sort of fusion, unity or interlocking between the state and 'national capital', as though capital were tied down in some way to some particular part of the world. The link between the state and capital is shown in terms of family links, personal connections, the existence of military industrial complexes, and these links are theorised as showing the capitalist nature of the state (as in Miliband 1969), or in terms of a 'fusion' of state and monopolies (as in state monopoly capitalist theories), or as the formation of competitive state-capitals (as in state capitalist theories such as Barker 1978/19917), or in classic theories of imperialism. All of these approaches treat capital as though it could be understood in terms of its personal, institutional or local attachment, instead of seeing these attachments as transitory moments, staging posts in the incessant flow

of capital. Certainly personal, institutional and political links exist between groups of capitalists and national states, but 'groups of capitalists' are not the same as capital and often national states are obliged to break their links with their capitalist friends and act against them in the interests of securing the reproduction of capital as a whole (cf. Hirsch 1974/1978). The relative immobility of the national state and the extremely high mobility of capital makes it impossible to establish such a simple relation between a national state and any particular part of world capital (Murray 1971; Picciotto 1985/1991).

The competition between states and the changing positions of national states in relation to global capital can therefore not be adequately discussed in terms of competition between 'national capitals'. The discussion must start not from the immobility of capital but from its mobility. In so far as the existence of any national state depends not just on the reproduction of world capitalism, but on the reproduction of capitalism within its boundaries, it must seek to attract and, once attracted, to immobilise capital within its territory⁸. The competitive struggle between national states is not a struggle between national capitals, but a struggle between states to attract and/or retain a share of world capital (and hence a share of global surplus value). In order to achieve this end the national state must try to ensure favourable conditions for the reproduction of capital within its boundaries (through the provision of infrastructure, the maintenance of law and order, the education and regulation of labour power, etc) and also give international support (through trade policy, monetary policy, military intervention etc) to the capital operating within its boundaries, largely irrespective of the citizenship of the legal owners of that capital.

In this competitive struggle positions of hegemony and subordination are established, but a hegemonic position does not free states from the global competition to attract and retain capital. Relative positions of hegemony and subordination are based ultimately on the existence of more or less favourable conditions for capital accumulation in the different state territories: hence the long-term decline of Britain as a hegemonic power and the present instability of the inter-national position of the United States. Conditions for capital accumulation depend in turn on the conditions for the exploitation of labour by capital, but there is no direct territorial relation here. Capital may

accumulate in the territory of one national state as the result of the exploitation of labour in the territory of another state - as in the case of colonial or neo-colonial situations, but also in cases where states, through tax advantages or other incentives, make themselves into attractive locations for capital accumulation (the Cayman Islands and Liechtenstein are obvious examples).

National states thus compete to attract to their territory a share of global surplus value produced. The antagonism between them is not an expression of exploitation of the 'peripheral' states by the 'central' states (as dependency theorists suggest) but rather expresses the (extremely unequal) competition between them to attract to their territories (or retain within their



territories) a share of global surplus value. For that reason, all states have an interest in the global exploitation of labour. It is true, as dependency theorists argue, that national states can be understood only by reference to their existence in a bipolar world characterised by exploitation, but the exploitation is not the exploitation of rich countries by poor countries but of global labour by global capital, and the bipolarity is not a centre-periphery bipolarity but a bipolarity of class, a bipolarity in which all states, by virtue of their very existence as states dependent on the reproduction of capital, are located at the capitalist pole.

The relation between national states is thus not adequately understood as an external relation, even though it presents itself as such. If the national state is a moment of the global capital relation, then neither the global capital relation ('international capital') nor other states can properly be understood as being external to it. In trying to understand the development of any national state, it is thus not a question of choosing between the 'external' determinants of state development (favoured by dependency theory in the case of 'peripheral' states) and the 'internal' determinants (preferred by regulation theory (Hirsch 1992).) Nor can state development be understood as being the result of a combination of endogenous and exogenous motor forces, the solution pursued by Dabat (1992). The distinction between inside/outside, internal/external, endogenous/exogenous reproduces the apparent autonomy of national states, and so reinforces the murderous rigidification of social relations which national boundaries represent, but is not adequate as an explanation of state development. All national states manipulate the internal/ external distinction as a crucial element of practical politics. All states which have dealings with the IMF, for example, present the results of such dealings as being externally imposed, whereas in reality they are part of 'national' political conflict, or rather of the seamless integration of national and global political conflict. This is equally true of the terms 'imposed' by the IMF on the British state in 1976 (an important victory for the right in Britain) and the terms 'imposed' by the IMF on the Venezuelan state, which form an important element of the Venezuelan state's strategy to restructure society in such a way as to create more favourable conditions for capital accumulation. Global capital is no more 'external' to Cochabamba, or Zacatlán or even Sant'ana do Agreste than it is to New York, Tokyo or London, although the forms and consequences of its presence differ enormously.

Understanding the development of the national state cannot be a question of examining internal and external determinants, but of trying to see what it means to say that the national state is a moment of the global capital relation. Most obviously, it means that the development of any particular national state can be understood only in the context of the global development of capitalist social relations, of which it is an integral part. The 'global development of capitalist social relations' is not a logical process nor something 'out there', but the historical outcome of conflict, a

conflict which, although fragmented, is global. The structure of that conflict (ultimately the form of capital's dependence on labour) creates certain rhythms of development, expressed most clearly in capital's tendency to crisis (cf. Holloway 1992). However, the relation between any particular national state and global development is a complex one. Although the fact that all national states are moments of the same global relation is expressed in the occurrence of common patterns of development, as illustrated by the theme of 'the reform of the state', the differential relation of national states to global capital means that the forms taken by the struggles around the development of global capital, and hence the development of the national states, can differ enormously, and often what appears at first to be a common development (the reform of the state, for example) conceals a large number of different (and competitive) strategies to achieve a redefined relation to a global capital in the process of restructuring.

In all this there can be no functionalism. One of the problems associated with the analysis of 'the capitalist state' as though there were only one state was that it led very easily to the functionalist assumption that because the state was a capitalist state it therefore performed the functions required of it by capital. As pointed out in the account of the state derivation debate, this is already an unjustifiable conclusion at the level of 'the state', but the weakness of the functionalist argument becomes much clearer when it is borne in mind that capital is global and 'the state' is a multiplicity of national states: it cannot be assumed from the fact that the reproduction of global capital would be promoted by some political action that some state or states will achieve what is required (Picciotto 1985/1991). It cannot be assumed that capital will always solve its crises.

5. The Reform of the State: The National Politics of Global Overaccumulation

The national state is fixed, capital flows globally. Capital flows globally, but at any given moment it has some territorial location, be it in the account of some financial institution or tied up in the bricks and mortar of some factory. The different states compete to attract and immobilise the flow of capital. The relation of particular national states to global capital is mediated through this competitive process of attraction-and-

immobilisation. The relation can perhaps be imagined in terms of a series of reservoirs seeking competitively to attract and retain the maximum amount of water from a powerful and largely uncontrollable river.

As the river metaphor suggests, national states do not control the overall pressure, the speed and volume of the flow of water. This can be understood only in terms of that which produces the movement of the water in the first place. The national states, the reservoirs of our metaphor, can only respond to changes in the magnitude and power of the river.

The major changes in the organisation and conceptualisation of the state which have taken place over the last fifteen years or so not only in Latin America but throughout the world are a response to a radical change in the flow of the river of capital.

To understand the change in the flow of capital, we must go to its source, the relations of capitalist production. The form taken by the flow of capital depends on the conditions of capitalist production. The flow of capital is incessant but not undifferentiated. Capital flows through different functional forms, existing now as money, now as productive capital embodied in the means of production and the labour power employed, now as commodities. Each form has different implications in terms of the speed of geographical mobility. Capital in the form of money can travel from London to Tokyo in seconds. Capital in the form of productive capital embodied in machinery, buildings, workers etc. is much less mobile geographically. Capital in the form of commodities is clearly somewhere in between the other two forms in terms of mobility. In all this, productive capital plays a decisive role, since it is production which is the sole source of surplus value and hence of the reproduction and expansion of capital. Capital, however, is blind to such theoretical considerations: it will flow into whichever form appears to offer the biggest profits, the best possibilities for expansion. Thus, if production does not offer good profits and if commodity markets are saturated, capital will flow into the money form. The result will be a radical change in the mobility of capital. This is essentially what has happened over the last twenty years or so, and is the key to the changes in the organisation of the national states.

The destruction caused by the second world war and the pre-war depression, combined with the

experience of fascism in a number of countries, created favourable conditions for capitalist production globally. The twenty-five years or so after the war was generally a period of high and steady growth based on the profitability of capitalist production. The flow of money was of course important, but it played a subordinate role to the development of production. The resulting relative stability of capital created the basis for the development of a certain type of relation between national state and global capital, giving credibility to the image of a world composed of 'national economies'. The relative stability also created an environment in which it was possible for the international agreements established after the War to regulate the economic relations between national states: particularly important in this respect was the Bretton Woods agreement which, by creating a system of fixed exchange rates, regulated to some extent the movement of money between national states and hence insulated national states to some degree from the global movement of capital (cf. Bonefeld 1990; Holloway 1992a). This relative insulation, founded on the relative stability of productive capital and bolstered by international regulation and by national policies to control the movement of capital, provided the basis for the state-oriented politics of this period, be it the politics of the Keynesian welfare state or the politics of import-substitution. The same relative stability also made possible the creation of reasonably stable alliances between the national state and groups of capitalists - the sort of alliances fixed conceptually in the theories discussed above (military-industrial complex, state monopoly capitalism etc); and also between the state and bureaucratised labour movements, as found in the many varieties of corporatist political development⁹. Many of the theoretical conceptions concerning the state that are still common - particularly the abstraction of 'the state' from the world, discussed above - arose from the experience of this period, which was also a period of rapid expansion for 'political science' and the social sciences in general.

The relative insulation of the national state came to an end with the end of the long period of post-war boom. From the mid-1960s there are clear signs of growing instability. The conditions which had made production profitable throughout the post-war period were weakening: the costs associated with the exploitation of workers (often referred to as the organic composition of capital) were rising, the discipline

established by the war period was weakening, the state bureaucracies associated with the previous pattern of development were proving costly for capital. Investment in production came to be a less secure means of expanding capital. There was, in other words, an excess of capital, an over-accumulation of capital. In the years of boom, there had been a rapid



accumulation of capital: more capital had accumulated than could now find a secure and profitable outlet in productive investment. When that happens, then, in much the same way as bees swarm when there is no longer enough honey in the hive to support an expanded population, capital swarms - part of it gets up and flies in search of a new home¹⁰. More precisely, capital assumes the liquid form of money and flows throughout the world in search of a means of gaining profit. Instead of embodying itself in the bricks and mortar, machinery and workers of productive investment, it flows in search of speculative, often very short-term means of expansion. Many of the factories which have now become unprofitable are closed down and the buildings and machinery sold: the capital released remains as money, which may be transformed into productive investment elsewhere, but is more likely to remain in the form of money as long as conditions for productive investment remain relatively unfavourable. The difficulties of production express themselves in an increase both in the supply of money, as previously productive capital converts itself into money and offers itself for loan, and in the demand for money, as the capital which remains in production tries to overcome difficulties through borrowing, and states try to reconcile growing social tensions through increasing their debt.

The crisis of production relations is expressed in the liquefaction of capital. There is a sharp change in the relation between productive capital and capital held in the form of money¹¹: money, instead of appearing to be subordinate to production, now appears as an end in itself. The flow of capital, previously relatively stable, turns into a fast-moving torrent and this torrent sweeps away the institutions and the assumptions of the post-war world. One of the first pillars of the post-war world to collapse was the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates based on a fixed parity of the dollar with gold. The rapid growth in the 1960s in the quantity of dollars held as money outside the United States (and outside the regulatory powers of any national state), the so-called Eurodollars, led to an undermining of the position of the dollar and the abandonment in 1971 of the Bretton Woods system, which was eventually replaced by a system of floating exchange rates. The breakdown of the system of fixed exchange rates means that national states are now subjected far more directly to the flow of global money: the adoption of policies apparently harmful to the interests of capital now leads far more quickly to the reactions on the money markets and the weakening of the national currency (Clarke 1988; Bonefeld 1990).

The breakdown of Bretton Woods is just the first step. The rapid growth in world money markets throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and the increased speed of movement which is facilitated by the application of new technology, has drastic consequences for the organisation of national states. National states seek to attract and retain capital within their territories: what this means changes radically with the new liquidity of capital. Competition between states to attract their share of capital increases sharply, obliging all national states to find new ways of making themselves attractive to capital. The fact that a far higher share of capital is invested on a short term basis means that states are under constant pressure to maintain conditions which will hold capital within their territory. The old ideologies go: the new rule of money finds expression in the new ideologies of neo-liberalism, supply-side theory, monetarism, all of which say in one way or another: the state must retreat, the market and money must rule. The old alliances go. The established links between groups of capitalists and the state come to be seen as a hindrance once it is seen that capital in its money form attaches to no group of people and no particular activity. The patterns of corporatist domination through trade unions also come

under strain: what is needed to attract global money is a new organisation of work, a new 'flexibility' and new discipline that is incompatible with the old trade union structures, a new way of 'learning to bow' (cf. Peláez and Holloway 1990/1991). Money, in its desperation to find a way of expanding itself, forces open areas previously closed to private capitalist investment: everywhere areas of activity previously controlled by national states are being privatised, opened up to the torrent of money in search of a profitable home. Even the most solid bastion of them all, the Soviet Union, is opened up and torn apart by money.

And then there is debt. The transformation of capital into its money form means that much of that money is offered for loan, that it is converted into credit and debt. The last years of the post-war boom were sustained by a rapid expansion of debt. In the late 1970s, after the crisis of profitability had made itself evident in the richer countries and monetary austerity had been proclaimed, the flood of money came south, particularly to Latin America, offering itself to governments looking for a way of containing social tensions, and converting itself into debt. After it became clear, on the Mexican government's declaration of difficulties in 1982, that Latin America was not a safe location for loans, the money flowed north again, breaking the short-lived attempts at tight monetary control in the United States and giving rise to a massive expansion of consumer debt and, especially in the United States, of military-led government debt. With debt comes a new politics of debt, both inter-nationally and within national states (Cf. Holloway 1990; Cleaver 1989). The growth of debt means the growth of discrimination, discrimination between those deemed worthy of credit and those who are not, a new division that has made itself horribly obvious both between national states and in society throughout the world. For debtors, whether state debtors or private debtors, debt means a more intense subjection to money.

The national state is not what it used to be. As a moment of the global relation of capital, it no longer has the same significance: an internal shift in the forms of capitalist domination has taken place. There is, as Marazzi puts it, "a shift in state power to the world level - the level at which monetary terrorism operates" (Marazzi 1976, 107). Political decisions taken at the level of the national state are now more directly integrated into the global movement of capital. In this sense it can be said that the national state is hollowed

out. Democracy too, where it exists is hollowed out: since political decisions are in any case more directly subject to global capital, it becomes easier to reconcile the democratic political form with the interests of capital. It is this hollowing of democracy, Cavarozzi et al (1992) suggest, which is the key to understanding why the growth of democracy in Latin America in recent years has gone hand in hand with a growth of poverty and of social inequality (not, of course that these have been limited to Latin America). The hollowing of democracy also brings its problems, however: the subjection of the national state to global capital makes more difficult the national decomposition of society, and gives rise to tensions evidenced in very different ways by the current difficulties of the Venezuelan government, the fall of Thatcher in Britain or the recent speech of President Salinas of Mexico distinguishing his patriotic 'social liberalism' from the neo-liberalism which knows no national sentiment.

In all this, capital appears all-powerful. Money is the brashest, most arrogant form of capital. Its successes throughout the world have been many and obvious. And yet the dominance of money is the manifestation of capital's weakness. Bees in swarm too are the brashest, most arrogant form of bee, yet they are in swarm precisely because there was not enough honey to go around. Money dominates because production has ceased to be so attractive for capital, but ultimately it is production and only production which provides the honey: production is the sole source of capital's self-expansion. It is not the breaking of old patterns by money, nor the 'reform of the state', which holds the key to the recovery of capitalist health, but the reorganisation of production, the restructured subjection of the power of labour to capital; and despite all the changes in the organisation of production, and despite the aggressive politics of capital over the last ten or fifteen years, it is not clear that capital has yet succeeded in achieving this end.

Bees which swarm for too long die of hunger. The weakness of the basis of money's rule has become increasingly obvious in the last few years since the stock market crash of 1987: the collapse of so many banks and financial institutions amid scandal after scandal after scandal in all the financial centres has made it plain. Many of the bees in swarm have indeed died, and are continuing to die in the 'credit crunch' which is at the core of the present recession. Whether this destruction of over-accumulated capital is

sufficient to create a basis for a return to healthy capitalist production on a global basis remains doubtful, however, and it seems increasingly unlikely that the collapse of the Soviet Union will provide the hoped-for solution. The deep recession experienced by all the apparently most powerful 'economies' in the last couple of years make all the claims that capitalism is emerging into a new phase of profitable production (sometimes referred to as post-Fordism) seem unconvincing. The much discussed flow of capital to Latin America in the last year or two is probably more a turn in the flow of capital (away from the currently unattractive conditions in other countries) than the regional resolution of capital's difficulties. It seems likely that the world will continue to suffer from the violence and volatility of the national (and inter-national) politics of global overaccumulation.

Footnotes:

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1. On the state derivation debate and its spread, see for example: Holloway and Picciotto (1978); Clarke (1991) (Great Britain); Vincent (1975) (France); Perez Sainz (1981) (Spain); *Críticas de la Economía Política* (1979; 1980); Sánchez Susarrey (1986) (Mexico); Archila (1980); Rojas y Moncayo (1980) (Colombia); Fausto (1987) (Brazil).

2. The state derivation debate revived the question that Pashukanis had posed in 1923: "Why does the dominance of a class not continue to be that which it is - that is to say, the subordination in fact of one part of the population to another part? Why does it take on the form of official state domination? Or, which is the same thing, why is not the mechanism of state constraint created as the private mechanism of the dominant class? Why is it disassociated from the dominant class - taking the form of an impersonal mechanism of public authority isolated from society?" (Pashukanis 1923/1951, 185). This question eventually cost Pashukanis his life, since its implication, namely that the state is a specifically capitalist form of social relations, was incompatible with Stalin's attempt to build a statist 'socialism in one country'.

3. It cannot be assumed, as Jessop does (1991), and as Hirsch seems to assume, at least in his later work, that the particularisation of the state is a process completed at the origins of capitalism. For a critique of Jessop, see Holloway (1991).

4. "There has been a tendency for Marxist analysis of the capitalist state to focus on the state, the individual state. This is perhaps a greater tendency in Marxist than in non-Marxist writing, since the Marxist emphasis on the class nature of the state makes it necessary to discuss the state in relation to the structure of society, and it becomes convenient to assume a correlation between the society and the classes within it and the state within that society" (Picciotto 1985/1991, 217).

5. In that sense, Colin Barker (1978/1991, 208) is quite right when he criticises an article by Sol Picciotto and myself (Holloway and Picciotto 1977/1991), saying "their whole article is concerned with an abstraction called 'the state' whose connection with the actual states of the capitalist system is not adequately developed".

6. For a seminal critique of 'fractionalism', see Clarke 1978

7. Although Barker's critique of the limitations of the state derivation debate is basically correct, the conclusions which he draws about the need to analyse the national states in terms of competing state-capital blocks is thus quite wrong.

8. The extent to which particular states can break from these constraints in revolutionary situations would require a separate discussion, which is not attempted here.

9. Many of these interconnections have been analysed in the regulationist discussion of Fordism, but since regulation theory takes the national state and not global capital as its frame of reference (cf. Clarke 1987/1991, Hirsch 1992), it has not succeeded in relating these issues to the mobility of capital. The orientation of regulation theory to the national state is a reflection of the fact that the national state in the post-war period probably played a more central role in the global containment of labour than at any other time; but because the national state is taken as given in regulation theory, this remains quite untheorised.

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Respect Your Enemies—The First Rule of Peace: An Essay Addressed to the U. S. Anti-war Movement

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**The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Fear of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary for commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them.
-Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (1651)**

1. Introduction.

There is now a fledgling anti-interventionist, anti-war movement in the US. It will have a lot of work to do in the near future, although the present threat of war on Iraq is the most pressing issue it faces. The question is: can the antiwar movement do its work effectively and successfully? At the moment it is not completely marginalized, if the votes in Congress are any indication. On October 9, between one-quarter to one-third of the congressional representatives voted against granting George W. Bush "war powers." But in order to show itself as expressing the majority perspective in this country, it needs new arguments, a new respect (as in "look again") for its opponents, a deeper understanding of the reasons for the actions of its opponents, and a realistic assessment of their weaknesses. For its old arguments do not seem convincing to the majority of US citizens, and its lack of curiosity about its opponents and their reasoning is dulling its strategic sense.

2. Losing Arguments.

In the run up to the Iraqi war, the anti-war movement has put forth a number of arguments to the U.S. public to justify its opposition to the Bush Administration's position. Two of the most important are: (1) an invasion of Iraq will lead to the death of many innocent civilians (on top of the hundreds of thousands killed in the last decade directly or indirectly by the sanctions) and that is immoral; (2) the important

principle of national sovereignty will be violated by such an invasion (even if it is done with UN approval), and that threatens to bring the world back to a Hobbesian “state of nature” where nations will war against nations with the excuse that they do not like each other’s treatment of their populations. Neither of these arguments has had much persuasive effect. Why?

The first argument is sound. It is true that a U.S. attack on Iraq under conditions of contemporary warfare, especially in the way the U.S. military fights war so that it will suffer no casualties from enemy fire, would involve the death of thousands of innocent civilians. It is also true that such deaths are immoral, since a government’s intentional inflicting of civilian casualties is a war crime.

But unlike the picture that logicians paint, sound arguments are not necessarily winning arguments. Perfectly reasonable people can agree that it is immoral to kill innocent Iraqi civilians but also come to the conclusion that it is more immoral to leave Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath Party in power since it can cause even more Iraqi and non-Iraqi (including U.S. civilians’) deaths. At the moment, it appears that the second argument is trumping the first within the minds of many moral and reasonable (and immoral and non-reasonable) people in the US.

The “national sovereignty” argument is also problematic. It is true that national sovereignty is an important political value, especially since the period of decolonization. Third World governments have rightly appealed to this principle to criticize the tendency of old and new colonial powers to intervene in their internal affairs and bring about “regime changes” favorable to the past and future imperialists. People in the antiwar movement are likely to have been in one or more efforts to oppose U.S., British and/or French interventions in the Third World, so they are sympathetic to this argument.

The problem is that these very same people are strong supporters of human rights doctrines that contradict an absolute “national sovereignty” principle. Antiwar activists do not in general believe that any government which violates the human rights of its population or is preparing to threaten the human rights of people outside its territory ought to have sovereignty. Consequently, any use of this argument has a tendency to divide the movement internally. We saw this in the NATO-Kosovo and the U.S.-Afghanistan wars. Defending the Taliban’s national sovereignty, for example, was hardly an easy pill for the feminists in the antiwar movement to swallow. So, this argument

is even weaker than the first, since it is both unconvincing to those outside the movement and tends to divide the movement from within.

This means that new arguments must be devised that both trump the counter-arguments of the opposition and do not divide the movement internally. But why has the antiwar movement been so inadequate in its arguments? We think it is due in large part to the antiwar movement’s lack of respect for its opponents in the Bush Administration and to its failure to grasp the underlying imperative propelling the administration’s actions. It looks at the ungrammatical President, the secretive Vice-President, the Dr. Strangelovian Secretary of Defense and the Lady Macbeth-like National Security Advisor and concludes they are just lackies of a right-wing conspiracy fueled by the oil industry. However, the greatest error in any struggle is to disrespect your opponents. This adage is especially true when the other side is winning!

3. Oil, War and Neoliberalism.

We are told that Communism collapsed in 1989, but many have argued that the political economy of post-WWII capitalism, Keynesianism, collapsed a decade before to be replaced by a system that was called at first Thatcherism and Reaganism, and later neoliberalism and/or globalization. This system claimed that the basic institution of modern society ought to be the Market not the State, and that the best form of all social interactions is the commodity form. This conception of social life had a great propaganda triumph with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist bloc. More importantly, it set into motion a remarkable shift in the economic policies of most Third World countries (under the name of Structural Adjustment Policies) that opened them to foreign investment, lower tariffs, and unrestricted movement of money across their borders. Finally, it undermined the guarantees of subsistence (early retirement, unemployment benefits, health care, free education, etc.) that the working class in Western Europe and North America had won in a century of struggle (Midnight Notes, 1992).

The early 1990s was a remarkable period of triumph for neoliberalism and globalization. Never before had the economic policies of the planet been so homogenous, while institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization were given the financial and legal power to keep the governments of the planet true to the rules of the neoliberal global economy.

Up until July 1997, the supporters of this political economy seemed invincible. Then, the “Asian Financial Crisis” struck. Ever since, there have been breathtaking reversals that have put neoliberalism into question more rapidly than the rapid pace of its triumphs. We need not detail the recent stock market bubble burstings, the recessions, the financial system collapses, the dramatic devaluations, and the dot.com fiascoes. They constitute an international crisis of neoliberalism and globalization — but not simply because the 1990s globalization boom ended in the “loss” of trillions of dollars in a very short time.

First, they signaled a serious ideological defeat, for at the very moment of this collapse an international anti-globalization movement had taken to the streets of the major cities of the planet to contest the institutions of the neoliberal order (Yuen et al., 2001). This post-Cold War oppositional movement, especially after the anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle at the end of 1999, voiced a powerful critique of the system whose truth literally materialized before the world’s eyes at the instant of its articulation.

On top of that, the fraudulent nature of neoliberal capitalism revealed itself in the so-called scandals involving Enron, Arthur Anderson, Tyco, WorldCom, etc., showing that the corporate “masters of the universe” had taken the neoliberal gospel of deregulation to be synonymous with a license to defraud their workers and, much more worrisome for the system, their investors.

Equally problematic was the inability of this neoliberal regime to actually increase wages and income for a decisive part of the U.S. proletariat and the “middle classes” in the Third World in the 1990s. Neoliberalism is often called a 20/80 system. If it can dramatically increase the incomes of at least 20% of a country’s or the world’s population, then the other 80% could be forced to go along with the project. Whatever the wisdom of this cynicism, by the beginning of the 21st century neoliberalism’s failure to do even this was becoming clear.

In the U.S., for example, the more than twenty years of wage decline was reversed in 1997, and for the following two years the average wages increased modestly. This was the first consistent multiple-year increase since the 1960s (Caffentzis, 2001). But by 2000 this increase had halted, and wages have stagnated since. A similar problem revealed itself in Africa, Latin America and much of post-1997 Asia (with China as an exception): the “middle classes” were being decimated. This failure was especially revealed in the

Argentine bank deposit freeze in the last year which reversed the gains of Argentina’s 20% and have made them sworn enemies of neoliberalism.

Often when one system enters into crisis, ruling classes’ strategists have something else in place. But not always. In the case of neoliberalism/globalization, there is no alternative system waiting in the wings, for the moment at least. It has to be preserved, or else

The Bush electoral coup of 2000 made it clear that there were very powerful forces in the world (from the Supreme Court to the major corporate CEOs) which were willing to face governmental illegitimacy at the heart of the system in order to put the Bush group in the position to deal with the crisis.

That should give the antiwar movement pause. The Bush Administration takes power not in a moment of business-as-usual, but in the midst of a systemic crisis that transcends a mere recessionary blip in the US.

The Bush Administration’s answer to the crisis of liberalism is simple: War. The 1980s and 1990s saw the building of an elaborate international regime of trade, capital transfer and money flow, but it did not see the development of an institution of violence that would enforce the rules of neoliberalism. Certainly the UN was hardly the vehicle for such a job, since the important players (the permanent members of the Security Council) were not a unified collection of states that could or even want to enforce the rules of neoliberalism. Nor was there on the historical horizon an international body of armed men and women that would have the global monopoly of violence. The Clinton/Gore effort to create a such body — one the U.S. government could control from behind the scenes under the guise of a formal equality among national participants — was anathema to the most powerful fraction of the U.S. ruling class. Its suspicion of Clinton’s efforts was behind the extraordinary animus expressed in the impeachment proceedings of 1998 and the electoral coup of 2000. There was a genuine fear that the Clintonites would sign away, on a formal level at least, the U.S.’s imperial role in the 21st century.

Supporters of the Bush administration often described this role by analogy with the place of the British empire in the 19th century world system. That century’s international gold standard and free trade (called economic liberalism) required a hegemonic state that would make sure that the rules of the system were followed. That state was Great Britain. A central ideological problem with liberalism both old and new is that it presents itself as an autonomous, self-

regulating system, but it is not. It needs to have an enforcer, since individuals and governments, especially those who are being put into crisis or are chronic losers, are tempted to break the rules. In the 21st century, according to this reasoning, the only state that could play Great Britain's role is the United States. (For a sophisticated presentation of this argument see Ferguson, 2001; for a discussion of the military aspects of the U.S. role in this scenario see Armstrong, 2002.)

Of course, history is over-determined (i.e., there are multiple causes for most historical events) and "it is no accident" that Iraq has become the first major test case of this policy. After all, Iraq, a member of OPEC, has the second largest proven oil reserves on the planet. Therefore, Iraq's fate is of vital interest to anyone interested in the oil industry, and the Bush family, Vice President Cheney and National Security Advisor Rice were and are all deeply involved with oil. They are familiar with the oil industry's problems and sympathetic to the oil companies' desire to return to the world before the nationalization of the oil fields that took place throughout the world in the early 1970s. Certainly a quick "regime change" in Iraq leading to US-imposed privatization of the oil fields would help set the clock back before 1970, and not only in Iraq.

However, increasing the immediate profits of the oil companies, though important, is not the consideration that makes Iraq the first object of the new Bush policy. Oil and natural gas are basic commodities for the running of the world's industrial apparatus, from plastics to chemicals, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, and energy for cars and electric power plants. Whoever controls the commodity, its price and the profits it generates, has a powerful impact on the whole capitalist system. Yet oil is an unusual commodity. It is exempt from the rules of neoliberalism. The trading rules of the WTO do not apply to oil; and OPEC, a self-proclaimed if not completely successful oligopoly, is tolerated in a period when the "free market" ought to be determining the price of all commodities, especially basic ones. How could it be that even though OPEC now controls about 80% of the "proven oil reserves," it operates in contradiction to the larger rules of the neoliberal game? No wonder neoliberalism is in crisis.

This peculiar singularity is intensified by the nature of the main political figures in OPEC (aside from Iraq's Ba'ath regime): in Iran there are the desperate Islamic clerics, in Saudi Arabia there is a ruling class that is divided between globalization and Islamic fundamentalism, in Venezuela there is the populist

government of Chavez, in Ecuador there is a government that was nearly seized in a rebellion by the indigenous, in Libya there is Ghaddafi (need more be said?), in Algeria there is a government that just narrowly repressed an Islamist revolution, and in Nigeria and Indonesia there are "democratic" governments with questionable legitimacy that could collapse at any moment. This list constitutes a "rogues gallery" from the point of view of the thousands of capitalists who send a tremendous portion of "their" surplus to OPEC governments via their purchases of oil and gas. With such a composition, OPEC is hardly an institution to energize a neoliberal world.

Of course, OPEC was not always a political or economic problem. In the 1960s and in the early 1970s, OPEC was a relatively pliable organization, and nationalization and monopolistic pricing were still acceptable elements of the accepted Keynesian political economy of the day. Iran was under the Shah, the Ba'athists had just lost their Nasserite zeal, Ghaddafi's fate was still undeveloped, Venezuela was a tame neo-colony, Indonesia was under the communist-killer Suharto, Nigeria was under the control of General Gowon, and the Saudi Arabian monarchy's Islamic fundamentalism was considered a quaint facade under which the movement of billions of "petro-dollars" could be recycled back into the U.S.-European economies (Midnight Notes, 1992).

But that was then and this is now. From the Bush Administration's viewpoint, OPEC needs to be either destroyed or transformed in order to lay the foundation of a neoliberal world that would be able to overcome the crisis and truly control the energy resources of the planet. The Bush administration is putting as much pressure as possible on OPEC's members. In April of 2002, there was a U.S.-supported coup d'état in Venezuela against the Chavez government, the leading price hawk in OPEC. It failed. In August 2002, it was Saudi Arabia's turn. The RAND corporation issued a report claiming that the Saudi Arabian monarchy was the "real enemy" in the Middle East and should be threatened with invasion if it did not stop supporting anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli groups. However, that verbal threat has been nullified by the Bush Administration as its war plans have unfolded.

The Iraq government is clearly the weak link in OPEC. It lost two wars it instigated. It is legally in thrall to a harsh reparations regime, it cannot control its own air space, and it cannot even import freely but must have UN accountants approve every item it wants

to buy on the open market. Ideologically and economically it is prostrate.

A US-sponsored Iraqi government committed to neoliberal policies would definitely be in a position to undermine OPEC from within or, if it leaves OPEC, from without. Such a transformation would make it possible to begin a massive investment in the energy industry that might be an alternative to the spectacular failure of the high-tech sector that has dissolved hundreds of billions of dollars. Rather than the now-uncertain computer- and bio-technology sectors, the more traditional oil-driven sectors will be given primacy in re-launching profitability.

There is an additional reason for Iraq having the dubious honor of being the first test case for the hegemonic role of the US: weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein's regime has been very interested in investing in industrial development that has in the past also been used to develop chemical and biological weapons. These weapons were used extensively in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The Bush administration has put forward a doctrine with respect to Iraq that, if generalized, would look something like this:

(1) Almost any advanced technological production process can be used to create "weapons of mass destruction."

(2) Any such production process not directly controlled by a multinational corporation (MNC) headquartered in the US (or Japan or Western Europe) can be used by a government to create weapons of mass destruction.

(3) No government outside a list agreed upon by the US government ought to have the capacity to build weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, no government (whether democratically elected or not) outside of the agreed list can be allowed to exist unless its advanced technology is controlled by an acceptable MNC.

This argument means that the US government has taken on the role of overseeing and vetoing all forms of industrial development throughout the world in perpetuum. Autonomous industrial development not controlled by an approved MNC by any government is out of order. Hence this "war on terrorism" doctrine becomes a basis for the military control of the economic development policies of any government on the planet.

The consequences of such a doctrine are, of course, enormous, although their immediate impact is on the Hussein regime (and any of its successors). For even if Saddam Hussein could prove beyond a

reasonable doubt that there were no chemical, biological or atomic weapons in Iraq at this moment, the Bush doctrine would not be satisfied. The mere existence of industrial capacity not owned and controlled by MNCs in Iraq that could be used in the construction of weapons of mass destruction would violate the doctrine.

This doctrine shows us that the struggle now unfolding in Iraq is not only about oil. What is at stake is the shape of planetary industrial development for decades to come. The combination of the restoration of oil-driven accumulation with the imposition of the Bush doctrine on global industrial development ensures that the "suburban-petroleum" mode of life we are living in the U.S. (and increasingly in Western Europe) will lead to endless war.

4. An Antiwar Strategy

Given the over-determined character of the moment, an antiwar movement must look for arguments and allies that would not deal with Iraq alone but direct its attention to the Bush Administration's policy as a whole. What are its weaknesses? They lie in two areas: money and people, and both involve the military.

It is not clear how many regions of the world in the coming years will be put into crisis, condemned to such a chronically low and unsustainable position that the people of those regions will be tempted to break the rules of the neoliberal game. Thus, the Bush Administration has been careful to reject any suggestion that the U.S. is the military force of last resort for neoliberalism. Instead of locating the rule-breakers in the vocabulary of neoliberal economics, they are presented as threats to the security of US citizens. The U.S. has labeled its enemies using moral and political categories like "evil," "rogue," "terrorist," and "failed."

There are different types and levels of these enemies, according to the political criminology provided in the speeches of Bush and his advisors. First there are the "axis of evil" countries (Iraq, Iran, North Korea) and the "rogue states" (Cuba, Libya and, previously, Sudan). The "failed states" category (which includes Sierra Leone and Somalia) is very open, since much depends upon the definition of "failure." For example, is either Haiti or Argentina now a "failed state"? Finally, there are the unspecified "forty or fifty countries" that might harbor (more or less actively) international terrorists. This articulation of the enemy in the endless war against both terrorism and states with potential for creating weapons of mass destruction

is open ended and can include more than a third of the nation states on the planet.

With Communism, it was relatively clear what constituted the enemy, i.e., states ruled by Communist parties, and one could plan for the financial requirements of the conflict. While the project of the Bush administration outlined above necessitates a substantial increase in military investment, the uncertainties of the neoliberal order make it impossible to predict the required size of the increase.

At the moment, the projected military budget allocation for 2003 is \$372 billion. This means that in real terms the US has returned to the ten-year average (1982-1991) of the Reagan-Bush years of \$370 billion (O'Hanlon, 2002: 2). What will the 2007 budget allocation for defense be? It is now slated to be \$406 billion (in constant 2002 dollars) (O'Hanlon, 2002: 2). But how can we take seriously a five-year projection that depends upon the vagaries of "failed states," "rogue states," "countries harboring terrorists," etc. — or, in our reading, those states and peoples who have broken with the rules of the neoliberal order due to necessity or desire.

This uncertainty is a basic weakness of the Bush Administration's policy. Undoubtedly there will be the possibility of pillage in the case of Iraq, through the seizure of its oil fields to defray the costs of the adventure. Perhaps this possibility of pillage has convinced many in the U.S. that an invasion is acceptable. But pillage will not be possible in most future applications of the doctrine. Consequently, the future of education, social security, Medicare, agriculture, and ecology will be held hostage to the open ended demands of the hegemonic role. There will be many who will not.

The second weakness of the Bush Administration's policy lies with its assumption that U.S. soldiers will not be casualties in the coming wars of neoliberalism. This assumption is part of the social contract of contemporary U.S. life—you are not going to die fighting on foreign soil in a war—and is often called the "Vietnam Syndrome." It is one of the most peculiar victories of the U.S. working class in the 20th century. The fact that the government fulfilled its side of the bargain has made it possible to keep more than a quarter million soldiers outside U.S. territory after the end of the Cold War (O'Hanlon, 2002: 8). Between 1989 and the present, only a small number of U.S. troops have been killed by enemy fire in Panama, the Gulf War, Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo and Afghanistan,

largely because very few were exposed to direct enemy fire.

We are clearly in a time similar to the Era of Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century when European armies equipped with machine guns, long-distance artillery, and gun boats that could penetrate rivers, attacked poorly armed peoples in Africa, Oceania and Asia, slaughtering and conquering them with almost no losses. It was only after World War II that the colonized rebels could hold some technological and strategic "parity" with the colonial power, as can be seen in the two Vietnam Wars of independence (first from the French, then from the U.S.). The U.S. military now is so superior technologically to its opponents that it can carry on its activities without a loss from enemy fire, just so long as it does not have to occupy a particular territory. But this is exactly what U.S. troops will have to do in order to bring about the "regime changes" U.S. foreign policy requires. The Palestinian revolt against Israeli occupation should make quite clear that the most sophisticated of armies will suffer a regular flow of casualties when occupying a hostile population.

The fate of thousands of Gulf War veterans who were made chronically ill by their own army speaks to another aspect of the issue of war casualties: A military machine that takes no casualties from the enemy inevitably inflicts casualties on its own personnel. The reason for this is very simple. The process of protecting against an enemy's aggression is (1) to anticipate it or (2) to respond to it in an extremely short period of time. Both options, when taken to extreme, lead to self-inflicted casualties.

The actions required to prepare for anticipated future threats eventually lead to a logic that accepts small risks of self-inflicted casualties in order to counter an enemy threat. But the act of anticipating possible threats causes the anticipations themselves to multiply. Consequently, the small, separate preventative risks will multiply until self-inflicted casualties become a certainty. Thus, vaccinations designed to prevent the consequences of biological attacks will themselves kill some soldiers; etc. Similarly, if reaction speed to an enemy threat must be reduced to a minimum, the ability to detect the true identity or source of the perceived threat is reduced as well. This invariably leads to friendly fire incidents. As the drive for adding new threats and reducing reaction time intensifies, the military machine will become perhaps the greatest enemy to its own constituents.

Therefore, the assumption that U.S. troops will be casualty-free is exactly what will be challenged by the new U.S. hegemonic role in the war for neoliberalism and globalization. The U.S. military will have to occupy Iraq for a long period of time in order to guarantee that the oil fields will be privatized and that a “regime change” would lead to a dissolution or transformation of OPEC. Further, the action of a military machine operating under the Powell Doctrine of “overwhelming force” can become its own troops’ worse enemy. These factors, not the immediate invasion itself, will lead to a substantial loss of U.S. soldiers’ lives and a violation of the “no casualties” social contract. The antiwar movement needs to warn the U.S. working class of this danger, clearly and distinctly.

More troubling than this danger is the increasing violation of worker’s contractual rights that will be the inevitable immediate casualty of this militarization. It is a trend that started in the Reagan years and was intensified during the Clinton Administration (Caffentzis, 2001). This trend is often euphemistically called a crisis of “civil liberties.” But if we examine the increase in the prison population, the attack on habeas corpus, the end of welfare rights and the draconian changes in immigration policy, we see that a new era of non-contractual semi-slave work has been introduced in the U.S. during the 1980s and ’90s. The Bush Administration has intensified this trend by attacking workers’ contractual rights under the rubric of the “war on terrorism.” The post-9/11 mass arrests based on no charges, the refusal to provide “terrorist” prisoners legal counsel or habeas corpus relief, the imposition of Taft-Hartley provisions on the West Coast dockworkers, and many other actions shows the Bush Administration’s direction: the extreme restriction of contractual freedom.

A continued contraction of these rights will parallel the inevitable rise in ill-health and death among residents of the U.S. In response to war costs and tax cuts, everything from access to medical care to public health, occupational and environmental safety regulations and interventions will be reduced or eliminated. Tamed as the U.S. media is, these facts are already being printed with growing regularity. The deaths that will inevitably follow should be counted as casualties of war.

We believe that if the antiwar movement emphasizes the fact the Iraq invasion is part of an overall strategy of endless war that will jeopardize the U.S. population’s life, liberty and property in order to try to secure an economic system that will continue to

be in deep crisis, then we can lay the foundation for a major change in the political debate and sentiment in this country. (And lest we be misunderstood, we do agree that one continuing, necessary task of the antiwar movement will be to bring to the attention of the U.S. population the massive casualties around the planet that will ensue from the endless war to preserve capitalism.)

5. Conclusion: No Fear

The Bush Administration’s policy is not a product of crackpots, it is a desperate initiative to try to militarily save a failing world economic system. Many people in South and Central America, Africa and Asia have lost hope in finding themselves in this system and are trying to recreate their lives outside the precincts of neoliberalism. The same threatens to happen here in the U.S. That possibility, and not the machinations of Al Qaeda or Saddam Hussein, is the Bush Administration’s deepest fear.

Now it is time to learn from the wisdom of an enemy philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, the defender of the absolute state. In the epigraph we quoted, Hobbes locates the source of peace in three passions: Fear, Desire, and Hope. The Bush Administration has effectively used Fear to stifle opposition. It correctly claims that the right not to be killed is the greatest human right. It has asked for a carte blanche to defend that right and impose Peace on the world through the sword. Bush often pointed to the cinders of the World Trade Center towers to win the “war powers against Iraq” resolution, for the Fear is real. Not accidentally, however, the Bush Administration spokespeople have forgotten the other passionate sources of Peace—Desire and Hope. They know that they cannot stimulate these passions even rhetorically without rousing derision throughout the planet. Their economic and social system is that bankrupt. This is the Bush Administration’s deepest weakness: it cannot win on the basis of Fear of Death alone.

That is why our movement cannot simply trade Fear for Fear with the Bush Administration, or be amplifiers of the Fear on which the administration thrives. We cannot best them in this game. Of course, it is our civic duty to point out bureaucratic failures and hyperboles that endanger people in the U.S. or abroad and, if we have good evidence, to point out past, present, or future U.S. government complicity with Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein’s regime. But unless we can call to the other passionate sources of

Peace, we will be bankrupt as the Bush regime and its supporters.

The antiwar movement should, therefore, speak to the Desires and Hopes of the people of the U.S., from universal healthcare to a healthy environment. We also need to bring the demands of the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s into our demonstrations, forums and programs, especially the wisdom behind the slogan, "This Earth is Not For Sale," i.e., an end to the privatization of the gifts of the planet and its history. We can work out the details, it is the direction that is crucial now.

We leave you with a historical example in support of our thesis. The most effective way the threat of nuclear terror was answered in the 1950s was not the antinuclear war movement, but the black revolution in the U.S. and the anti-colonial movement around the planet. Black people in the U.S. and colonized people in the rest of the world made it clear that B-52 bombers and their hydrogen bombs were not liberating them, and they refused to be delayed by them. They declared that their civil liberation was a precondition for the "Desire of such things as are necessary for commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them" that could lead to Peace. Indeed, it has been the thwarting of this Desire and this Hope by the imposition of a neoliberal economic order that has been the source of most of the War of the last two decades.

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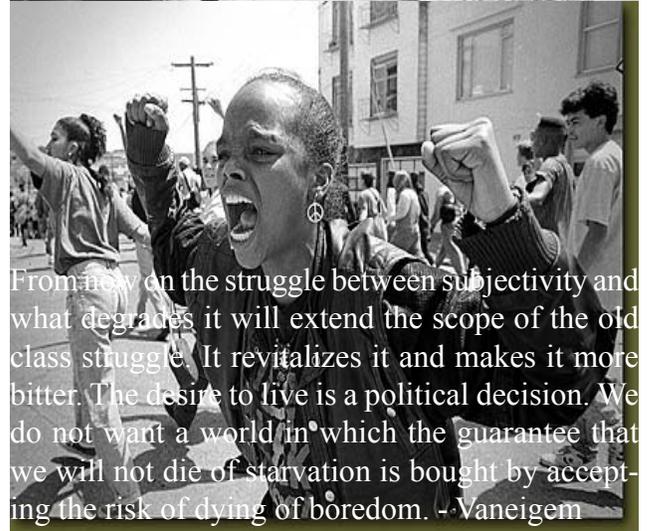
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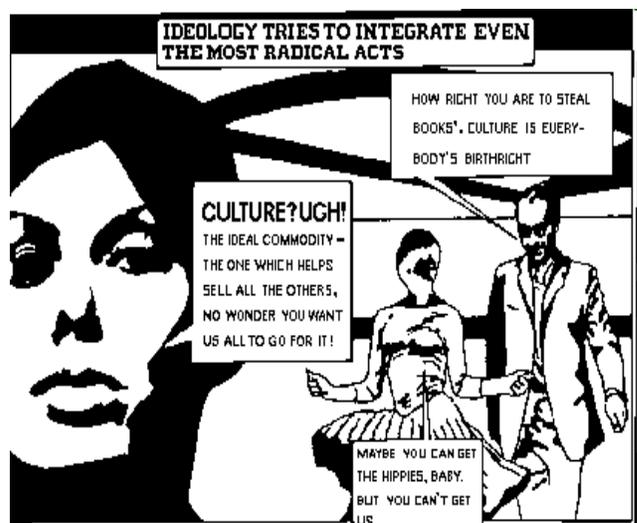
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From now on the struggle between subjectivity and what degrades it will extend the scope of the old class struggle. It revitalizes it and makes it more bitter. The desire to live is a political decision. We do not want a world in which the guarantee that we will not die of starvation is bought by accepting the risk of dying of boredom. -Vaneigem

REVOLUTIONARY THEORY is now the sworn enemy of all revolutionary ideology — and it knows it. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*



Book Reviews

Change the World Without Taking Power

John Holloway

Pluto Press, 2002, pp. vi-237

The blather of *ontology, causality, identity, desire* is utterly boring and therefore counterrevolutionary. The theorists who philosophize reality are watching for what happens next, are fixated upon interpreting “society” and will never act. In their arrogance they arrogate unto themselves the power to declare the death of the Subject. They are like umpires in a life and death game, a game of power, of dead labor (capital) against living labor. Umpires can call you out or tell you that you are safe or throw you out of the game, but they cannot transcend the game itself: they are arbiters of the game. Even ‘bad calls’ resonate for us as nothing more than acts of bad faith. No surprise here: the highest ambition of capital is to turn secret agents into revolutionaries and revolutionaries into secret agents.

We don’t need the scatology of bloodless umpires. We don’t need a theory *of* ‘society,’ but rather theory *against* ‘society,’ unfit for undead, loveless referees in search of virtual lives. For us, what is only ‘is’ because it denies our practical-critical activity. We zero in on capital’s contradictions, historicity and mortality in a quest for destruction, not deconstruction.

Change the World Without Taking Power overflows with theory *against*, moving from the scream to *our* screaming, which the hulking science of the Big House rules unscientific, irrelevant, impolite. ‘Class struggle’ becomes our practical-critical activity against the business of is-ness, against class-ifying us by our objectification. Class struggle is infused with the tension between classes as process and classes as objects. “We do not struggle as being working class, we struggle against being working class, against being classified.” (pp. 143-4) Capital’s abusive relation places us simultaneously in and against capital. Our alienation grounds the very possibility of revolution. In-and-against screams that *we* are the subject of revolution.

“Foul ball!”, yell the umpires. “Now you introduce The Subject, too? But don’t you know that you are merely agents?”, cry the secret agents.

‘Society,’ ‘capital,’ ‘reality,’ ‘structures’ are nothing but our doing, our creativity, turned against us, our alienated subjectivity.

This is a negative dialectic, dialectic at its finest rather than the false dialectic seemingly inscribed in tablets of stone, delineating laws of culture, society, and thought standing above historical human practice. Holloway’s dialectic is anti-matter: negating, antagonistic, uncertain and yet totalizing. Our very doing, our own human self-activity, our transforming of nature into a part of our own social metabolism implies negation and totality. Holloway critiques the whole attempt to set the possibility of revolution on the grounds of non-contradiction and positive theory, from Engels to Empire, with stops in-between.

In the process, Holloway raises the title as question: Can we change the world without taking power? Power exists as power-to and power-over, where the former indicates our doing and the latter indicates power as oppression, domination, exploitation. Power-over suffuses the antagonistic relation between capital and labor, but, posed in terms of revolution, power-over appears most glaringly in the state. ‘Theory of’ sees the state as a tool whichever class controls it. Holloway annihilates this by showing ‘the state’ as a mode of existence of the capital-labor relation.

Holloway then challenges the notion of communism as an end. Using Marx’s idea that communism is the real movement which abolishes the present state of things, Holloway destroys any unitary notion of communism as ‘a society,’ a state of ‘being.’ This disrupts the whole notion of revolution, returning uncertainty to our struggle, returning our struggle to *us*, instead of making it the outcome some capital logic.

“You are outta here!!!”, scream the umpires, from behind their Empires. But they are wrong. We are not “outta here.” “Here” is nothing but our moving antagonism, our struggle. Only we don’t usually see our power because our self-activity, as both alienated and potentially transcendent, does not appear to us directly, except as mediated by fetishizing forms which hide its content. Holloway makes fetishism the centerpiece of his approach to dialectic and critique. Our alienated self-activity becomes a process of struggle between fetishization and de-fetishization. In the end, we see that the umpires themselves are not only not “outta here”, they are in fact so “Safe!” that they lack negative purchase; no revolt against being, but only the aspect of being revolting.

Holloway's book is not without problems, however.

Holloway does not *adequately* raise the *content* of the problem of organization. He could surely pose the question as rigorously as he poses everything else. The move from individual social acts to collective social acts involves our self-organization, including the organization of pro-revolutionaries. Holloway could at least pose some of the problems raised, but not resolved, by council communism, Left Communism, Marxist-Humanism, Operaist/Autonomist Marxism and the Situationist International. This failure deepens when he fails to counterpoise an alternative content to communism.

Organization often becomes an oversight for pro-revolutionaries who have the organizational privileges provided by academia. The pro-revolutionary *qua* professor has a captive audience, an imperative to write and publish, and special access to multiple mediums. For the rest of us, the struggle is always for creating/finding *commune-ity* and sharing our ideas, often with people who see no reason to learn our lingo even when they engage with us.

The deeper failure slides by almost imperceptibly, like a shadow of the first problem. For a book which starts from screaming, and which reasserts the negative dialectic, uncertainty, alienation and fetishism, subjectivity, and objectivity as subjectivity in the mode of being denied, etc, Holloway shouldn't be so... *polite*. Holloway encourages becoming impolite, *screaming*, but his style, overburdened with the passive tense and 'being' verbs he criticizes, encumbers his content. I am not complaining that Holloway writes badly, but once drawn the sword must finish its cut.

Should we not embrace that Mephistophelian polemical style made famous by Marx and the Situationists? Aphorism, epigram, inversion, détournement, bitchiness: all the blades with an edge sharp enough for the task at hand. Should we not invoke Valerie Solanis and scream that the revolutionary ontologist/secret agent is completely egocentric, trapped inside his desiring machine self, incapable of empathizing or identifying with others, of love, friendship, affection or tenderness. He is a completely isolated unit, a rhizome, incapable of rapport with anyone. His responses are entirely visceral, not cerebral; his intelligence is a mere tool in the service of his desires; he is incapable of mental passion, mental interaction; he can't relate to anything other than his own spectacular sensationalisms?

Polite, passive language interferes with sincerity, refusal, and a sense of *commune-ity*. Capital can afford politeness, passivity (and pacification) because it has the cop, the jailer, the judge, the psychiatrist and many others with which to be rude and imposing.

The gravest limitation of Holloway's book is simply that his form does not convey the true rudeness of his content. Our words, like our theory and our organizations, must be prefigurative, destructive, negative, bitchy, impolite, *incorrigible*. Screaming, we listen.

Chris Wright and Suprina Hawkins



Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism

Steve Wright

Pluto Press; Sterling, Virginia 2002
ISBN: 0745316069; (May 2002) \$29.95

Long known as a key English language source on the Italian new left, *Storming Heaven* languished in a drawer for several years as a completed but unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. It's recent publication contributes much to bringing to light matters both historical and theoretical which are important to revolutionaries seeking to elaborate a viable political project today.

Storming Heaven details the history of workerist currents in Italy from their precursors in the late 1950's through to their collapse by the early 1980's. Wright makes clear that the Italian far left was shot through with contradictions and disagreements, while noting the ideas shared by participants in often highly charged conflicts. These conflicts proved tremendously productive, as the workerists generated a number of important insights, such as class composition, refusal of work, and the extension of capital into all avenues of life by the creation of a 'social factory'.

A central concept, class composition refers to both the technical composition of the production process and the political composition of the working class. Workerists studied class composition via methods derived from sociology and oral history, conducting surveys and discussions with workers. These enquiries sought to discover the sources and forms of their resistances, both in the histories and memories within working class culture and the material bases for resistance found within the production process.

Through these studies, the workerists discovered the political function of technology. Faced with sometimes intractable proletarian resistance, employers used technology such as automation to wage a counter-attack on workers, to affect a decomposition of working class power and break workers' organization. In turn, confronted with the changed circumstances the working class was forced to develop new forms of resistance and organization in order to achieve a political recomposition appropriate to the changed technical composition.

In response to de-skilling, separation between employees in the workplace, and other aspects of capital's attack, younger workers would begin to refuse to enter the factory altogether, thus undercutting capital's traditional use of unemployment as a means of controlling workers. This threat to capital's dominion forced capital to expand into other aspects of life, leading to condition in which "the whole of society exists as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination over the whole of society." (p. 38) The entry of immigrants, youth, and women into the workforce in turn spread conflict to other sites within the socialized production process - neighborhoods and homes, schools and universities. This in turn helped create the 'new social subjects' and the upheavals which would eventually unravel the workerist organizations.

The view of the political nature of technology resulted in conflict between the workerists and the Italian Communist Party. As with many Marxists, the PCI held to a productivist view of technology as a neutral force which capital didn't make full use of. The workerist idea that technology was a weapon against the working class did not sit well with the communists' idea that revolution would entail even greater productivity (an ideology which justified in the Russian communist use of technology to force Stakhanovist speed-ups onto workers in Russian factories.)

Despite their clashes with the Italian Communist Party bent on parliamentary success, many of the workerists never escaped from the conceptual field defined by the vanguard party. Some like Mario Tronti would eventually return to the Italian Communist Party. Others like Antonio Negri would identify an unclear and rarefied revolutionary subject in the emerging 'socialized worker,' a formulation overlooking important differences in order to posit a compact class subject capable of opposing capital. Still others would constitute alternative vanguard organization and seek to identify Leninist 'weakest links' in the process of capitalist accumulation.

Nearly all shared a preoccupation with factory struggles and a tendency to hold up one portion of the working class as that which could form a revolutionary subject capable of leading the rest of the class and to which all other struggles should be subordinated. The search for one class subject to lead the rest of the class and the 'factoryist' over-emphasis on industrial workers

blinded the workerists to the full ramifications of some of their own insights. Development of these insights in a non-vanguardist context, particularly the account of struggles “within capital’s total circuit of production [but on] a horizon beyond the immediate process of production” is still a pressing and incomplete project. (p. 95)

The Italians’ overturning and recurrence of vanguardism in thought and organization is a common refrain in the history Wright details. These are the book’s most tragic moments, when the workerists fail to break from “a quite traditional, if dissident, political outlook.” (p. 53) Despite their important insights, parts of the Italian left repeatedly fell back into varying forms of vanguardism, in part overwhelmed by the rapid changes in Italy and in part due to a failure of vision.

These are simultaneously the book’s moments most resonant with our political condition today. Standing in the post-cold war world amid the rapid changes of globalization it’s easy to lose one’s bearing and fall back into old forms. In order to move forward from our situation we must surpass the Italian workerists while preserving those of their conceptual innovations which are still useful. While the Italians “force[d] the lock obstructing the understanding of working-class behavior in and against capital, only to disintegrate in the process” we must put their tools to use in the “task of making sense of those treasures which lie within” and carry on the revolutionary struggle. (p. 227)

Nate Holdren



The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker

2000, Beacon Press, Boston

It’s no surprise to Marxists that studying history reveals much relevant to today. Still, it is a rare pleasure to find a work as full of firsthand accounts, meticulous in detail, and political relevance as Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker’s book *The Many Headed Hydra*. Linebaugh is a member of the Marxist journal collective *Midnight Notes* and author of *The London Hanged*, which describes the disciplining of the early proletariat. Rediker is a Pittsburgh history professor who wrote an award winning book on seafaring and piracy, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.

Hydra focuses primarily on the 17th and 18th century Atlantic economy. The book is not a work of economic history, though, but a history from below, like Howard Zinn’s excellent *People’s History of the United States*. Linebaugh and Rediker portray a litany of uprisings, refusals, and revolts by workers opposing early capitalism. The authors perform a great service to all radicals by supplying us accounts of our forbears in resistance in their own words. *Hydra* provides accounts of insurrections, movements, and individuals that may otherwise have been lost to us.

The book takes its title from a prominent pair of metaphors in 17th century ruling class discussions — Hercules and the Hydra. Hercules embodied the self-conception of the ruling classes’ ongoing struggle to stamp out the evils of revolt and mold proletarians into the class discipline demanded by capital. The Hydra embodied all that the ruling classes feared — and still fear — about the proletariat.

The Hydra was a mythical many-headed snake who would grow two new heads whenever one head was cut off. Similarly, working class struggles have arisen again and again at new points and with new methods of attack, despite capital’s attacks on workers’ power. The Hydra metaphor is particularly apt to contemporary class struggle, occurring in myriad ways and arising at myriad points to threaten capital’s dominance. The central aim of capital’s brutality (the increase of which demonstrates capital’s desperation) is to break or prevent the coordination of resistance of the multiple ‘heads’ of the global working class.

The ruling class nightmare of workers’ political recomposition is clear in *Hydra*’s discussion of the discourse on proletarian monstrosity, forerunner to racism, one of capital’s most effective weapons against the working class. Fear of workers’ power haunts the

ruling class today, knowing as they do that workers “do not forget, and... are ever ready from Africa to the Caribbean to Seattle to resist slavery and restore the Commons.” (p. 353) Capitalists can’t cut off all the heads of the proletarian Hydra, since capital requires the value produced by our labor. This dependence forces capital to find new methods to contain us in the capital relation and suppress proletarians who would ‘turn the world upside down’. The authors provide numerous accounts of resistance and insurrections ‘turning the world upside down’ both on land and at sea, wreaking havoc upon the operation of transatlantic capitalism.

Hydra details how the labor of sailors was crucial for maritime production, rendering the Atlantic economy a particularly vulnerable point to attack capitalism. Hydra demonstrates that ships and ports were a tool for both capital accumulation and proletarian resistance. Aboard ships sailors faced a harsh and deadly class discipline, vicious corporal and capital punishments, lethal working conditions and lack of provisions. Simultaneously, sailors mixed between cultures, learned new languages, and spread knowledge and practitioners of insurrection among the sailors, slaves, soldiers, servants, and workers of the Atlantic economy.

A widespread form of rebellion against the brutality of early capitalism was piracy. Pirates enjoyed a much more egalitarian and democratic life than slaves, servants, or sailors. Sailors aboard merchant ships frequently mutinied when pirates attacked, joining the pirates. A number of women became pirates, escaping the increasingly narrow range of options within capitalist patriarchy in favor of the more self-determining piratical life.

Pirates preyed upon seafaring commerce, disrupting the trade in goods, slaves, and servants, thereby threatening the accumulation of Atlantic capital. The centrality of the maritime made pirates’ flotillas of resistance particularly dangerous to capitalism. In response to increasing disruption of accumulation, capital attacked piracy with the same ferocity it employed in enclosing common lands. Capital then as now can not coexist with any alternatives that threaten its separation of workers from the means of existence.

Confronted with capital’s brutal “campaign of terror” on land and at sea, proletarian resistance, though

“forced below decks” did not disappear but transformed itself “into an existence that would prove both fugitive and durable.” (p. 156) Every time capital broke up a slave rebellion or put down a mutiny, some of the rebels were killed to make an example, while the rest were dispersed. Capital can’t kill all the laborers who supply it’s lifeblood. This dispersal spread people with skills, experience, and memories of powerful resistance to new places in the transatlantic economy, where they often linked up with others conspiring to end capital’s rule.

The presentation of resistance at every moment of capital’s accumulation and development drives home the point that capitalism was — and is — a social relation imposed and maintained by force. Our resistance forces capital to continually modify itself to survive. In a sense, the ruling class deludes itself, it is no Hercules but Proteus, shifting shape to dodge the blows of our resistance and retain its hold.

Hydra’s most inspiring passages present cycles of struggle largely unknown today that resisted capitalism’s foreclosure and foreshortening of human possibility. These cycles remind us that despite capital’s oppression “[t]he volatile, serpentine tradition” of proletarian resistance lives on, “raising its heads unexpectedly in mutinies, strikes, riots, urban insurrections, slave revolts, and revolutions” (p.173) striving for human freedom. Hydra doesn’t only provide inspiring stories from the untold lineage of proletarian struggles. The book leads us to look closely at contemporary capitalism’s global circuits, to circulate our knowledge and our struggles, and to speed the growth of new hydra heads, communities of revolt embodying alternatives antithetical to capitalism.

Nate Holdren



Web Sites Worth Visiting:

Pick of the Issue: Aut-op-sy

Well, none of us might have met if it wasn't for this web site. The listserve is good and while discussion quality and quantity varies wildly, it's a very good listserve as things go with a lot of good folks espousing autonomist Marxism, Situationist ideas, anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, council communism, Bordigists, and more. They also have a good selection of articles and links on the main page. Check it out!
http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/aut_html/

Others this month:

Harry Cleaver's Homepage

<http://www.eco.utexas.edu/facstaff/Cleaver/index.html>

Aufheben, great British Marxist journal..

<http://www.geocities.com/aufheben2/>

Class Against Class, Lots of good articles.

<http://geocities.com/cordobakaf/>

For Communism - John Gray, the ultimate libertarian Marxist file sharing site.

<http://www.geocities.com/~johngray/>

Break Their Haughty Power, Loren Goldner's Homepage, council communist stuff

<http://home.earthlink.net/~lrgoldner/>

The Commoner, great online web journal

<http://www.commoner.org.uk/>

Midnight Notes, one of our favorite collectives

<http://www.midnightnotes.org/>

Wages for Housework campaign. Mostly British, but has good links

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/crossroadswomenscentre/index.htm>

Wildcat - Germany, great site and good articles.

<http://www.wildcat-www.de/en/eindex.htm>

Kolinko, more German comrades doing interesting stuff with call centres

http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/kolinko/eng/e_koidx.htm

Situationist International Online

<http://members.optusnet.com.au/~rkeehan/>

No War But The Class War, a must visit British site to inspire us here against U.S. war mongering

http://www.geocities.com/nowar_buttheclawar/

Red and Black Notes, a good U.S. journal

http://ca.geocities.com/red_black_ca/

Ultra Left Council Communism, good texts, bad sound file for Council Communist stuff

<http://www.geocities.com/WallStreet/9973/council.html>

Who We Are (A Work in Progress)

Without claiming to agree on everything, we share a common interest in the ideas and practices of Karl Marx, council communism, The Situationist International, autonomist Marxism, Wages for Housework, class struggle and communist anarchism, the Zapatistas, and other libertarian traditions obscured or ignored by Official Marxism and mainstream political thought. Our concern is not with some 'General Theory' of how capitalism works (it doesn't!), but a critique of how capital tries to present itself as natural, eternal, rational, necessary, as the only way to live. We view our critical effort as part of the process of struggle, as helping to clear away the

ideological rubbish which stands in the way of our liberation, and begin to establish a space for something new.

As individuals we have been and are involved in a variety of different struggles. Some past efforts have been dead ends, replicating, in one way or another, the slow death capital calls life. Others have offered glimpses of something more, possible futures which sustain us today. In this current project we carry the history accumulated during our collective lives: influences, ideas, experiences, relationships built and sometimes burnt. Hopefully this helps us avoid repeating past mistakes, but there of course are no sure guarantees.

We see another way to live, a way embodied in the daily and historical struggles of the working class, which we call communism. Communism is not some distant future, but

the actualization of the real struggles of our class and it will only be realized as the self-activity of our class, not as the work of parties or states.

We're not aiming to speak authoritatively. We want to contribute a political space to develop ideas and discuss practices. We want a political language and practice which makes sense to our experiences and can help us move forward. We do feel we have some answers, and we do know that a lot of what passes for answers are dead ends, but we also have a lot of questions. This space is devoted to that questioning and struggle. We welcome response and engagement from comrades also concerned with this process.

Solidarity,
Autonomy Editorial Collective



The Editorial Collective at our day jobs.



Production and Submission Guidelines:

*Use as much clear and simple language as possible. How we write is also a political issue. Of course, feel free to violate that where necessary.

*Feel free to use different styles. We encourage detournement, plagiarism and other expropriative practices.

*All articles should be single spaced.

*All main text (non-headers) should be in 11 pt. Times New Roman.

*All quotes separated from the text by indentation should be in 10 pt. Times New Roman.

*Margins should all be set to 1".

*Headers should be in 11 pt. Arial Black or bolded Arial, your choice.

*Titles should be in 12 pt. Arial Black or bolded Arial, your choice.

*Authors name in 12 pt. Arial, no bold.

*Text in pictures can be whatever your artistic heart fancies, but text under pictures giving descriptions of photos, for example, should be in 10 pt. Times New Roman.

*Endnotes ONLY!

*Endnotes and bibliography in 10pt type please, Times New Roman, bolding on specific words only (since some words may be bolded, which would be lost if we bold the whole note text.)

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