THE MODERN LEGISLATOR

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Svetozar Stojanovic

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Revolution opened up an era of great hope, not only for the international working class, but for the millions of oppressed and exploited people throughout the world. It was widely recognized at that time that the Russian Revolution had provided a model for the transformation of capitalism into a new society called "socialism". It was proclaimed to be a model "found at last" to pass the threshold from the pre-history to the real history of humanity, the practical realization of Marx's principles. More than seventy years later, people in socialist countries are rising in revolt against a model of society that once promised many hope for the future. Opposition in these countries focuses particularly on the way socialism was adopted by Lenin for the 1917 Revolution, and the subsequent interpretations and forms that socialism has taken under such men as Stalin, Mao, Tito, and Castro.

Socialism as it came to be fell short of the ideal society that Marx described as the "first" phase of communist society, and which Lenin named "socialism." The ruling communist parties misunderstood the role of economics in social

life and believed that politics was powerful enough to bring about a change in the social world. In their struggle for socialism, the communist parties embraced assumptions antithetical to those of Marx, who said in his letter to Anenkov "Give me economy and I will reconstruct politics."[1] Instead, the communists attempted to reconstruct economy through politics.

When politics determines economy, rather than the other way around as suggested by Marx, society becomes formed and ruled by ideology. The reality is always seen as something to 'fit' the ideas. The whole history of the socialist model since its emergence from the Russian Revolution has been a struggle of the ruling communist parties to "translate the theory into practice," to experiment with various institutions that were supposed to bring about socialism.

In this thesis I use the term "socialism" to refer to society as it has been created by the communist party. The concept of the communist party -- the vanguard of the proletariat -- was formulated by Lenin for the first time in 1902 in his pamphlet "What Is To Be Done?" Lenin defined the vanguard of the proletariat as that group of class conscious Marxists suited to their role in a democratic centralism. Rather than relying on the spontaneous development of class

consciousness in the working class, the Leninist vanguard was to act as a catalyst by bringing revolutionary theory and political organization to the masses: "Without a revolutionary theory...there can be no revolutionary movement."[2] According to Lenin, the revolutionary theory of Marxism was to

> educate 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.[3]

Compared with classical Marxism, Leninism gives a greater role to the revolutionary "toiler" in the vanguard of the proletariat than to the revolutionary proletariat as such, to the 'underdeveloped' or semi-colonial countries than to the 'advanced' capitalist countries; it emphasizes the leading role of the party rather than the spontaneous activity of the working class. Lenin considers it crucial that the struggle for socialism be led by the most able leaders that can be assembled. Furthermore, he rationalizes the appropriateness of the vanguard's leadership within the revolutionary movement and in the new society by seeing it as the most able and astute possessor of the revolutionary theory, namely, Marxism. Politics, thus, becomes the application of theory to the

problems of revolutionary struggle and of social construction.

I will compare the leading role of the Leninist vanguard in the construction of socialism with that of Rousseau's Legislator, who as "superior intelligence" "dares to change people's institutions" so that "in the march of time" a new society and new man will emerge. The model of society that the Leninist vanguard has built since the Russian Revolution has been in many ways as utopian as Rousseau's proposed society in his "Social Contract". For example, Kautsky refers to the society that emerged from the Russian Revolution as utopian when he says that

> The idea that the only task of socialist government is to put socialism into practice is not Marxist, but a pre-Marxist, Utopian ideal. It represents socialism as an ideal picture of a perfect society. Like all conceptions, its nature is very simple. Once it has been thought out, only the necessary power is required to realize this ideal everywhere and under all circumstances. The only task of socialist government is to put into practice the ideal conception of socialism. The more absolute its power, the sooner it will be able to do so.[4]

The Russian Revolution and all others that followed it realized a great utopian energy. Peoples unsatisfied with social conditions in pre-revolutionary societies followed the vanguards with the hope that a better society would come. All "socialist" revolutions occurred in conditions of war, when the

old systemic apparatus failed, thus creating a political vacuum soon to be filled by the militant and organized vanguards. The masses' support for the revolution and their utopian expectations gave a legitimate power to the vanguards to organize a new social order. The vanguards appeared to represent the General Will of society, which Rousseau defines as the common good.

Jacob L. Talmon, in his study on the origins of totalitarian democracy, argues that Rousseau's utopian vision expressed in "The Social Contract" led to the dictatorship of the communist party:

> The very idea of an assumed pre-ordained will, which has not yet become the actual will of the nation, the view that the nation is still therefore in its infancy, a "young nation,' gives those who claim to know and represent the real and ultimate will of the nation -- the party of the vanguard -- a blank cheque to act on behalf of the people, without reference to the people's actual will.[5]

David Lane, in his book The Socialist Industrial State, compares the interest of the working class expressed through the communist party with Rousseau's General Will:

> Leninists (at least in Russia) have no confidence in the spontaneity of the working class to perceive its own class interests, and therefore the Party has to channel workers' activity into the revolutionary cause. Even with the maturation of socialism, the Party is necessary to articulate and to aggregate the interest of the working class. Students of political theory may

> note that Lenin and his followers suggest a solution to Rousseau's problem of the 'general will' of society is defined and recognized: it is the interest of the working class expressed through the party.[6]

In his book The Yugoslav Search for Man, Oscar Grunwald suggests that in order to understand the roots of socialism one must excavate not only Lenin, Stalin, Marx, and Engels, but Rousseau and Plato as well:

> This may seem presumptuous at first. What do Plato and Rousseau have to do with Stalin and the rest? More than is commonly supposed. For it was Plato who in his Republic and other writings put forth not only the organic conception of the perfect society, but supplied it with its kingpin, the conception of the infallible and omniscient Philosopher-King. In Rousseau's social Contract, Plato's philosopher-king merely changed his name to that of the Legislator/Sovereign who was both and above the reach of the law, while called to give men constitution and equitable laws.[7]

The Leninist vanguard, as I will argue, assumed for itself the role of the Legislator and the representative of the General Will, but became also the Sovereign who through coercive measures "forced people to be free," to accept without criticism "socialism" as it is as the ideal translated into reality. As Orwell said in Animal Farm, socialism as an ideal that brought hope and sometimes justice but often death to many underprivileged and oppressed never ceased to exist:

> The 'earthly paradise' has never been realized, but as an idea it never seems to perish, despite the ease with

> which it can be debunked by practical politicians of all colours.
>
> Underneath it lies the belief that human nature is fairly decent to start with, and is capable of infinite development. This belief has been the main driving force of the socialist movement, including the underground sects who prepared the way for the Russian Revolution, and it could be claimed that the Utopians, at present a scattered minority, are the true upholders of Socialist tradition.[8]

The socialism that existed only in theory as an idea towards which humankind should strive became deformed in socialist practice into an ideology of domination and unquestionable rule of the vanguard elite. The modern Legislator/Sovereign turned the ideal of socialism into a tyranny. In "The Social Contract" Rousseau explicitly states that the Legislator should not become Sovereign. The Sovereign should be composed of the whole people. If the Legislator becomes the Sovereign "his laws would be the ministers of his passions and would often merely serve to perpetuate his injustice; his private aims would inevitably mar the sanctity of his work." If "the legislative authority and the sovereign power" are put in the same hands, Rousseau says, the society will become a tyranny.[9] The Yugoslav Veljko Korac suggests how the Leninist vanguard as Legislator/Sovereign, in legitimizing the 'ultimate goal of socialism" during Stalinism, rationalized both their own privileged position and the relative depravation of the

population as a whole:

> The high ethical standards of socialism are misapplied for the entire profane purposes, most often for those purposes that correspond to the interests of the party bureaucracy, which thinks only of itself and identifies that self with society and socialism, speaking of an ideal future while enjoying today's pleasures and considering itself the single interpreter of historical laws...In Stalinist practice, faith in socialism was transformed into one of the main levers of despotic arbitrariness which in the name of certain 'greater' future goals, and the 'future happiness of humanity', became antihuman and anticritical in the highest degree, until it finally turned into ruthless state idolatry.[10]

The richness of Marx's conceptual framework has been ossified into the vanguard's bureaucratic cliches. The vanguard used Marx as its legitimate source for socialism, but changed his thought to serve its purposes in any given moment. Marx's teaching, although revised, inverted and perverted, has been used by the vanguard as its "superior intelligence" during the revolution and in the structuring of the post-revolutionary society.

Marx's thought in the hands of the vanguard lost its primary aim as the economic and social theory of capitalism and became the guide for action. Marx himself never used the term "socialism" to refer to the society emerging from the proletarian revolution, the first stage of communist society. It was Lenin who in "The State and Revolution" stated that

"what is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first" or lower phase of communist society."[11] Marx talked about communism as the product of the laws of development of capitalism which the classical economists had been the first to discover and to try to analyze. The form or forms that communism might take would therefore only be revealed by an historical process that was still unfolding. Given this perspective, Marx refrained from any attempt to provide a detailed description, or even a definition, of communism. To him it was first and foremost a negation of capitalism that would develop its own positive identity through its long revolutionary process in which the proletariat would remake society and in doing so remake itself.

> Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise.[12]

It is my contention in this thesis that the Russian Revolution and the society that emerged from it do not correspond to Marx's teaching about a revolution that will bring about the end of capitalism and prepare the conditions for the emergence of a true communist society. Marx stated explicitly that the possibility of a proletarian revolution

would be created only in the advanced capitalist societies in which the relations of production would become universal no matter how reified, in which man would no longer be directly governed by people but by abstract reified social forces. Only then would the proletarians be conscious of social conditions that reduce them to mere "things", and only then would they bind together into a revolutionary force, and would forever leave behind the alienation of class society. But the emergence of communist society requires a long historical process, and the society that comes into being after the proletarian revolution bears the birth mark of the old society. The proletarians organize their state in the form the "dictatorship of the proletariat" which from the moment of its organization shows signs of its disappearance. The proletarian state, as Marx saw it in the example of the Paris Commune, is "a revolution against the state itself, this supernationalist abortion of society, a revolution to break down this horrid machinery of class domination itself."[13]

The abolition of capitalist private property and its immediate socialization into the means of production of the new society was, according to Marx, to develop the society's productive forces by abolishing the traditional division of labour (mental-physical, man-woman, town-country). The

appropriation of the means of production by the associated producers destroys the traditional division of labour and class rule, as well as its political expression in the state machine. Social functions usurped by the state in its rule over men rise to a higher level in a non-political administration of things which devolves not on specialized officials but on elected delegates who are at all times responsible and can be effectively dismissed.

The Russian society on the eve of the revolution was not at the stage of developed capitalism, and therefore did not have an organized and conscious proletariat as its revolutionary agent. The main preconditions for proletarian revolution, as Marx saw them, were absent, namely the high stage of capitalism and a class conscious proletariat occupying the vast majority of the population. In Russian society the proletariat barely existed, and capitalist private property was in the process of development. Russian capitalism was still a growing force, not yet in power, struggling against the fetters imposed upon it by the Tsarist autocracy and the bureaucracy, as had been the case in eighteenth-century France. Nevertheless, Lenin acted and spoke as if the bankers and industrialist were already in control. And his revolution succeeded not so much as a result of his taking over the

centres of finance and industry as by his seizure of strictly political power on the part of a determined and trained group of professional revolutionaries precisely as had been advocated by Tkachev. When Lenin organized the Bolshevik vanguard, the techniques he adopted resembled those used by the Russian Jacobins, Tkachev and his followers, who had learned them from Blanqui, more than any to be found in the writings of Marx.

The year 1917 put the possibility of revolution on the historical agenda and the Leninist vanguard seized the moment. Lenin's theory of the "weakest link" of capitalism legitimated the reversal of Marx's prediction that revolution would take place in the most developed capitalist society. The vanguard substituted for Marx's proletariat by absorbing, as Lenin said, the revolutionary energy of the masses, and institutionalized itself into the ruling power in society. It was perceived at that moment as if socialism had already arrived and only the effort of the vanguard was required to put it into practice. The vanguard's ideology prophesied human emancipation without first bringing about the political emancipation so necessary in the wake of Tsarist autocratic rule.[14] The building of socialism was equated during the Stalin era with the industrialization that was supposed to bring about a new socialism and a new socialist man -- who had to be "mass man",

not an individual. The Leninist vanguard, like Rousseau's Legislator, was transforming people's institutions into new ones that were to transform "each individual who is by himself a complete and solitary whole into part of a greater whole from which he in a manner receives his life and being."[15]

For Marx the proletarian revolution has the task of abolishing all institutions of class society, starting with the state, and organizing society as an association of associated producers. For Rousseau, on the other hand, the Legislator establishes institutions to mould society in a desirable direction, the primary element of which Rousseau sees as the disappearance of the conflict between the individual and the general will: "If there were no different interests, the common interest would be barely felt, as it would encounter no obstacle; all would go on of its own accord, and politics would cease to be an art."[16] Rousseau's Legislator, before it gives the new institutions to the people, knows what results they will bring in time. The Legislator's "superior intelligence" creates the new society and transforms its own thought into laws and institutions. The ideology of the Leninist vanguard and its actual practice sine 1917 resembles more that of Rousseau's Legislator than of Marx's revolution and social transformation.

The Leninist vanguard in theory and in practice has inverted Marx's historical materialism into historical idealism, the dominance of a single idea in society as the founding element for social change. The human will is seen to be the creator of history and of the economic laws of social development, an idea antithetical to Marx's writings.

In this thesis I refer to the society ruled by the Leninist vanguard as "socialist" (to denote ground normally covered by often interchanged terms like "state capitalism," "totalitarianism," "Soviet Regime," and "non-capitalist road."[17] I use the term "socialism" in order to avoid unnecessary quotation and long descriptive definition, and to distinguish it from Marx's "first phase" of communism as a society created by the Leninist vanguard. In relating the Leninist vanguard to the Rousseauean Legislator I further distinguish emergent forms of "socialism" from Marx's original political teaching. I consider the Leninist vanguard a specific historical hybrid formed from the Russian revolutionary tradition of the nineteenth century and Western political thought.

Each of four thesis chapters considers an aspect of this question; taken together, they form a view of the Leninist vanguard as the Modern Legislator. I first discuss Rousseau's

conception of the General Will, the Sovereign, and the Legislator in order to provide a theoretical framework for the interpretation of the vanguard as the Modern Legislator. Then I briefly discuss Marx's social theory in order to provide a contrast between Marxist theory and socialist practice. I then trace the origin of the vanguard as the Modern Legislator back to the Russian revolutionary movement of the nineteenth century. Finally, I consider the Yugoslav self-managing socialism as an example of the Leninist vanguard in power.

The thesis does not deal with the history of ideas, but rather attempts to relate different political ideas in order to offer a reinterpretation and critique of "socialism" as a society formed by the vanguard in the function of the Legislator. I see "socialist" society as one created deliberately by the vanguard and not one taking Marx's principles as its basis. I suggest that Rousseau's conception of the Legislator has found its practical realization in the vanguard's actions in creating "socialism". I also suggest that Marx's thought has been used by the vanguard as the "superior intelligence" of the Legislator, providing it with an overly idealistic vision of the future that has no chance of being realized at this moment in history. "Socialism" as we know it can thus be seen as an essentially political

phenomenon, brought about by the creation of new institutions, rather than the result of the dissolution of institutions in the wake of progressive economic forces, as Marx had argued. If a legitimate socialism is ever to be realized, it will be only in the distant future, and only as a result of a gradual, worldwide social evolution dependent upon the spontaneous expression of the General Will of humanity -- or not at all.

ENDNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1]Marx, Karl & Frederick Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 5 (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 432.

[2]Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, Collected Works (from "What Is To Be Done?") (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967), p. 234.

[3]Lenin, Selected Works in One Volume (from "The State and Revolution") (New York: International Publishers, 1980), p. 281.

[4]Kautsky, Karl, Selected Political Writings, Ed. Gode, (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 133.

[5]J.C. Talmon, The Rise of the Totalitarian Democracy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), p. 48.

[6]Lane, David, The Socialist Industrial State (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1976), p. 22.

[7]Grunwald, Oskar, The Yugoslav Search for Man (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin Publishers, 1983), p. 148.

[8]B. Crick, George Orwell: A Life (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 507.

[9]Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, The Social Contract and Discourses, ed. and trans. G.D.H. Cole (New York: Everyman, 1973), p. 195.

[10]Quoted in B. Agger, Western Marxism : An INtroduction: Classical and Contemporary Sources (Santa Monica: Goodyear, 1979), p. 208.

[11]Lenin, Selected Works, p. 287.

[12]Marx & Engels, Collected Works (from "The German Ideology") Vol. 5, p. 49.

[13]Marx, The First International and After (From "Political Writings"), ed. David Fernbach (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 249.

[14]Pre-revolutionary Russian society was semi-feudal and semi-capitalist. Political revolution and its consequence, political emancipation, did not occur to dissolve the remains of feudalism into, as Marx wrote in The Jewish Question, "on the one hand individuals and on the other hand material and cultural elements which formed the life experience and the civil situation of these individuals" (p. 28). The Russian autocratic state before revolution can be described in Marx's words as an organization in which "the state as a whole, its consciousness and activity -- the general political power -- appeared as a private affair of a ruler and his servants separated from the people" (p. 28). Man as a member of civil society did not exist in Russian society and was not recognized as such in the rights of man (p. 29) (Karl Marx, Early Writings (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963)). After the October Revolution, which, according to Lenin, was to bring about human emancipation, the society did not go through the kind of political (bourgeois) revolution which according to Marx brings about political emancipation. The newly organized state machine was to be the instrument for universal human emancipation, even though Marx had specifically stated throughout his writings that the state as an instrument of oppression had to be dissolved first in order for human emancipation to be achieved.

[15]Rousseau, p. 194.

[16]Rousseau, p. 185.

[17]Rudolf Bahro in his book The Alternative in Eastern Europe has said that "those convinced of the reality of a genuine socialist and communist perspective in the Marxian sense must distance themselves most strongly from the uncritical use of the concept of socialism" (p. 22). Bahro said that the most exact description of "socialist society" is "proto-socialist". He emphasized that even "early socialism" would be a wrong description for socialist society "by analogy with the first phase of the capitalist era. In early capitalism the fundamental features of the later fully developed capitalist formation were already present while in our case socialization as the decisive characteristic of socialism as a formation is still completely entoiled by etatism" (p. 22). Bahro points out that recent proclamations of the Soviet block countries regarding the "actually existing socialism" bring more confusion: "in the countries of the actually existing socialism you will have trouble finding any" (p. 30). He also says that socialism as an ideal exists only

in the writings of the socialists and that the theory and the practice of society that calls itself socialist is a pathological devaluation of the socialist ideal" (p. 22). The Alternative in Eastern Europe (London: NLD, 1978).

CHAPTER 1

The Formation of the General Will and the Superior Intelligence of the Legislator

The starting point of Rousseau's thought was a very radical criticism of contemporary civilization: he challenged some of the basic pre-suppositions of an age that prided itself on its "philosophy," that is, its rational and enlightened view of man's place in the world. Far from treating modern culture as the culmination of a long process that had taken humanity from darkness to light, Rousseau considered it to be an unmaskable sign of corruption: intellectual achievement had been accompanied by moral decadence. Although critical, Rousseau's belief was optimistic. Since man's corruption has come from society and not from his original nature, there is hope for man: the loss of freedom and equality, human dignity, and happiness can be redeemed in a new form of society.

In The Social Contract, Rousseau intends to investigate a form of society "worthy of man's nature." He proposes to

start this investigation by "taking men as they are" and "the laws as they should be."[1] He stages his investigation in the state of nature, or rather at the end of the state of nature, the state of war,[2] when men were already "as they are," individualized and each uniquely defined by the variety of his private interests. Rousseau acknowledges that it is a problem "to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which uniting himself with all, may still obey himself as before."[3] However, conditions of war "can subsist no longer and the human race would perish until it changes its manner of existence." Only by uniting all their powers can men overcome the resistance of the state of war. All of their powers united into one single power allow them to act "in concert":

> I suppose men to have reached the point at which the obstacles in the way of their preservation in the state of nature show their power of resistance to be greater than the resources at the disposal of each individual for his maintenance in the state. That primitive condition can subsist no longer; and the human race will perish unless it changes its manner of existence. But, as men cannot engender new forces, but only unite and direct existing ones, they have no other means of preserving themselves than the formation, by aggregation, of a sum force great enough to overcome the resistance. These they have to bring into play by means of a single motive force, and cause to act in concert.[4]

The association that is a "problem to find" when individuals

are guided by their particular interests forms only when those same individuals realize that by uniting into one common force they can easily overcome any kind of resistance. Rousseau calls such unity "moral and collective" because

> each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is no associate over which he does not acquire the same rights as he yields others over himself, he gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has.[5]

Each individual gives up his rights, surrendering them to the community, so that no individual can have claims against the community. Rousseau feels that we gain as much as we lose -- and we gain the protection of what we have. Rousseau expresses the essence of the social contract as follows:

> Each of us puts his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.[6]

Rousseau's view is that the act of association makes the contracting individuals into something more than an assemblage of men who think as individuals: their act of association makes them into a moral entity and a collective self -- a sovereign people whose sovereignty is shared by its members but is not divisible among them:

> If the clashing of particular interests made the establishment of societies necessary, the agreement of these very interests made it possible. The common element in these different interests is what forms the social tie; and, were there no point of agreement

> between them all, no society would exist. It is solely on the basis of this common interest that every society should be governed.[7]

Once individuals are associated in this manner, their moral potential begins to be realized:

> The passage from the state of nature to civil society produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice of instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulse and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclination.[8]

Above all, man acquires "moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law we prescribe to ourself is liberty."[9]

These changes in man are not, of course, to be thought of as taking place instantaneously with the making of contract. Rousseau is speaking rather of what will happen to the individual in a properly organized society. The individual is no longer a purely self-interested creature who lacks a sense of justice. His relation to the other forces him to use reason, and since he is under the authority or power of no person, he is required to use his conscience. He is equal to the others because the social contract

> substitutes, for such physical inequality as nature may be set up between men, an equality that is moral and

> legitimate, and that men, who may be unequal in strength or intelligence, become every one equal by convention and legal right.[10]

Rousseau thinks that society "worthy of man" should be based on the will and not on power: "Let us admit that force does not create right, and that we are obliged to obey only legitimate powers."[11] G.D.H. Cole says that

> Rousseau's cardinal contribution to political theory is his assertion that will and not force is the only legitimate basis for social obligation, and that the General Will, present in every citizen, provides the only nexus between men that is consistent with reason and capable of reconciling the claims of society with those of personal freedom and self-expression.[12]

In "The Second Discourse," Rousseau expresses his belief that force was a founding element of civil society, and that this force can be seen in "the right of the strongest" and in "the right of the first occupier." Force has established inequality and enslavement of men in civil society. In The Social Contract, he also considers this same question, and says that

> The right of the first occupier, though more real than the right of the strongest, becomes a real right only when the right of property has already been established. Every man has naturally a right to everything he needs, but the positive act which makes him proprietor of one thing excludes him from everything else. Having his share, he ought to keep at it, and can have no further right against the community. This is the way the right of the first occupier, which in the state of nature is so weak, claims the respect of every man in civil society. In this right we are respecting not so much what belongs to another as what does not belong to us.[13]

At every stage of human existence, Rousseau writes in "The Second Discourse," force involves inequality in some form or another; nothing can change the essential fact that men are born with different capacities and aptitudes. In the state of nature, physical inequality presents no problem because men's isolated and dispersed condition prevents any serious conflict; all have to face one fundamental limitation, physical necessity, that constitutes a universal condition that governs every effort at self-preservation. This limitation involves a general and inescapable form of equality that overrides all individual differences. In society, where men are brought into close contact with one another, awareness of physical inequality can lead to a disastrous conscious distinction between strong and weak, between the state of tyranny and the state of oppression. The majority of men would be the helpless victims of a small but powerful minority. Rousseau's criticism of contemporary society lays great stress on this particular point. Some means, therefore, must be found, if not of eliminating physical inequality, at least of relating it to conditions that neutralize its harmful effects. Rousseau's solution is a legitimate political order, an order that legally accepts all members of the society as equals.

The Sovereignty of the General Will

Rousseau's conception of the political association rests upon a close inter-dependence of the part and whole, and it is noteworthy how frequently the terms "each" and "all" appear together in the discussion of sovereignty in The Social Contract. This point is already apparent in Rousseau's conception of a political association in which "each giving himself to all gives himself to nobody."[14]

Rousseau's conception of sovereignty establishes this link between "each" and "all" by presupposing a complete reciprocity and equality of commitment. The social contract, based on the idea of unanimous consent and absolute sovereignty, establishes among citizens such equality that they all commit themselves on the same conditions and must all enjoy the same rights. The rights and duties must be an integral part of the citizen's life. To allow any individual exemption from either of those fundamental aspects of the civil association would make genuine political freedom impossible, because it would expose the citizens to the inequality that arises from man's subjection to the arbitrary will of others.

Rousseau believes that men do not resent or fear dependence as such, but only an irrational dependence on other

people. In Emile, he earlier puts this point very forcibly:

> There are two kinds of dependence: dependence on things, which belongs to nature, having no morality, is not harmful to freedom and does not engender vices; and dependence on men, being uncontrolled, engenders them all, and it is through this dependence that master and slave become mutually depraved. If there is some means of curing this evil in society, it is through substituting law for man and arming the general will with a real strength that is superior to the influence of any particular will. If the laws of nations could have, like those of nature, an inflexibility which no human force could overcome, dependence on men would again become dependence on things; in the commonwealth all the advantages of the natural state would be combined with those of all the civil state; to the freedom which keeps man exempt from vices would be added the morality which lifts him up to virtue.[15]

The absolute, indivisible, and inalienable nature of sovereignty makes it possible to achieve this impersonal dependence -- this dependence on this that avoids dependence on people by locating supreme political authority in all members of the society. Conditions are equal for all because all freely accept them; in obeying the common authority established by their own will, the citizens are in some sense obeying themselves:

> The Sovereign, being formed wholly of the individuals who compose it, neither has nor can have any interest contrary to theirs; and consequently the sovereign power need give no guarantee to its subjects, because it is impossible for the body to wish to hurt all its members. The Sovereign, merely by virtue of what it is, is always what is should be.[16]

Sovereignty, Rousseau holds, "is nothing else than exercise of

the general will [and] can never by alienated . . . . The Sovereign, who is no less than a collective being, cannot be represented except by himself; the power indeed may be transmitted, but not the will."[17]

The will that animates sovereignty is necessarily different from the particular will of an individual concerned with satisfying his own desires; sovereignty involves a "general will" inspired by social obligation rather than by selfish interest. Rousseau also distinguishes the "general will" from the "will of all"; the latter is simply the physical sum of the particular desires of individuals who happen to be seeking the same objective:

> There is often a great difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest in account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills.[18]

The general will presupposes a deliberate attitude of mind and a firm determination to seek the common good. As such, it is not susceptible to the vagaries, hesitation, and weaknesses that influence the behaviour of individuals, for, in Rousseau's words, the general will is always "constant, incorruptible, and pure."[19] When it becomes less than this, it ceases to be the general will.

Why then does Rousseau give to the general will,

which he calls the only legitimate foundation of society, the power "to force people to be free" when he explicitly states at the beginning of The Social Contract that force does not create a legitimate power? This question has troubled many of Rousseau's critics; however, before we attempt to interpret his intentions, let us consider further Rousseau's own writings on this point:

> In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertakings, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all person dependence. In this lies the key to the working of the political machine; this alone legitimizes civil undertakings, which, without it, would be absurd, tyrannical to the most frightful abuses.[20] [my emphasis]

In order to understand why the general will forces people to be free, we need to return to Rousseau's conception of dependence. Rousseau maintains in The Social Contract that "man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they." In civil society, no one is free; the chains of dependency bind them all equally, thereby "destroy[ing] natural freedom for all time, establish[ing] forever the law of property and inequality, chang[ing] a clever usurpation into irrevocable right, and for the profit of a few ambitious men

henceforth subject[ing] the whole human race to work, servitude, and misery."[21] Men are born free and they are equal by nature, but that equality and freedom

> under bad government . . . is only apparent and illusory; it serves only to keep the pauper in his poverty and the rich man in the position he has usurped. In fact, laws are always of use to those who possess and harmful to those who have nothing; from which it follows that the social state is advantageous to those men when they all have something and none too much.[22]

Because Rousseau takes "men as they are" into a society "as it should be," governed by the general will, there is always a tendency on the part of some individuals to fall back to their old habit of exercising their particular will contrary to the will of society, the general will. The individual will, guided by egoism and ambition, tends to subject other individuals to its control. The dependency of the civil society[23] could reappear again and the whole social project of freeing men from domination would be in vain. The general will expressing the common interest of society would interfere in such a situation, forcing the violators to rethink their doings, possibly even punishing them (perhaps for their own good), all in order to preserve freedom and equality in the "collective body politic." The general will compels people to be free whenever a situation dictates with the purpose of preventing the renunciation of freedom people already have. If

people renounce the freedom given to them by the general will for some personal gain, they will also give up the responsibility for the morality of their actions, and so again become corrupt and dependent:

> To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man, to surrender the rights of humanity and even its duties. For him who renounces everything no identity is possible. Such a renunciation is incompatible with man's nature: to renounce all liberty from his will is to remove all morality from his acts.[24]

Sovereignty of the general will,

> drawing its being wholly from the sanctity of the contract, . . . [cannot] do anything derogatory to the original act. As soon as the multitude is so united in one body, it is impossible to offend again one of the members without attacking the body, and still more to offend against the body without the members resenting it. Duty and interest therefore equally oblige the two contracting parties to give each other help.[25]

When the sovereignty of the general will forces people to be free, it does that with the "whole body," as Rousseau says, meaning that people themselves are the sovereign and they represent and execute the general will. The general will cannot be represented because "merely by virtue of what is, [it] is always what it should be." In this idea is contained Rousseau's criticism of the representative government:

> I am merely giving the reasons why modern peoples, believing themselves to be free, have representatives, while ancient peoples had none. In any case, the moment a people allows itself to be represented, it is no longer free: it no longer exists.[26]

In any case, the fact of the general will is not enough to secure the effective expression of its deeper social purpose. Just as the individual will has to be expressed through the personality as a whole, so does the general will require some kind of concrete and objective form if it is not to remain merely an abstract and empty formula. This is why it has to be embodied in the law. It is to law alone, says Rousseau, that men owe justice and freedom. When the laws are ignored or corrupted, the state is lost beyond redemption.

The "Superior Intelligence" of the Legislator

Rousseau does not see laws in any narrow legalistic sense. Their strength does not lie in their complexity and subtlety, but in their simplicity and limited number. The real source of laws, for Rousseau, is man. When he attempts to draw up a constitution for Poland, he frequently insists on this principle, namely, that the only laws that will really benefit the Poles are those that are accepted by them in their hearts. "The true sanctity of the state is in the hearts of the Poles."[27] What Rousseau calls "law" is substantially what we have come to call fundamental law or the constitution. The establishment of the fundamental laws will clearly determine

the entire history of society.

But how, then, are such fundamental laws to be introduced? Rousseau does not wish to cast doubt upon man's essential goodness, but rather to bring enlightenment to those who may be incapable of finding it by their own efforts, for, as he says, "the general will is always upright, but it is not always enlightened.[28] People often need a guide to enable them to combine understanding and will in a way that contributes to their own well-being and that of the community as a whole. This no doubt explains Rousseau's preoccupation with the Legislator, the "superior intelligence," who creates the principles of society, and is, therefore, the originator of society itself:

> In order to discover the rules of society best suited to the nation, a superior intelligence would be needed. This intelligence would have to be wholly unrelated to our nature, while knowing it through and through; its happiness would have to independent of us, and yet ready to occupy itself with ours; and lastly, it would have, in the march of time, to look to a distant glory, and working in one century to be able to enjoy in the next.[29]

The Legislator occupies in every respect an extraordinary position in society, says Rousseau, even though he cannot rule and is not bound by the social contract; yet, he discovers the best institutions for society. His role is first of all that of the Educator, for he is dealing with people who,

politically speaking, are little more than children. He is never granted any official authority, and therefore as Rousseau says, he

> must have recourse to an authority of a different order, capable of convincing without violence and persuading without convincing. That is what has, in all ages, compelled the fathers of all nations to have recourse to divine intervention and credit the gods with their own wisdom . . . .[30]

His function is to develop possibilities that already exist in the society but have not yet been fulfilled. Among the things "a Legislator must have in mind before undertaking the institution of a people" are these:

> Firstly, he must not try to change the institutions of a people which is already law-abiding and civilized. Still less should he try to re-establish institutions where people have abolished them, to revive worn-out machinery; for the force of the law is like the savour of salt. So one can give strength to a people that never had it, but not to give it back to one which has lost it. This I regard as a fundamental maxim.[31]

In other words, the Legislator legitimizes already established institutions and "invents" new ones with the purpose of strengthening already existing ones. But the whole work that he does "now" will really have an effect in the future. People, in time socialized into new institutions and educated by the Legislator's laws, will, by becoming less dependent on other men, be made free and equal human beings. It was the Legislator who "dared" to change society and the people:

> He who dares to undertake the making of a people's

> institutions ought to feel capable, so to speak, of changing human nature, of transforming each individual who is by himself a complete and solitary whole, into part of a greater whole from which he in a manner receives his life and his being; of altering man's constitution for the purpose of strengthening it . . . . He must, in a word, take away from man his own resources and give him instead new ones alien to him, and incapable of being of use without the help of other men.[32]

The Legislator has the awesome responsibility of framing a new system of institutions. His laws not only have to create a new system of political institutions, but also have to regulate a system of property relations, considering that property relations were in the first place the cause of men's inequality and lack of freedom. In order for a society to be continually ruled by the general will, which by its very nature dictates only equality and freedom, the property relations should be arranged in order that "all have something and none too much."[33] The law then "only assures them [the people] legitimate possession, and changes usurpation into a true right and enjoyment into proprietorship."[34] But the Legislator's task is not easy: because the individual interest, as Rousseau says, is always stronger than the collective will, the Legislator must convince people that the renunciation of property rights to the community, including property rights, really means that they gain more than they lose.

In order to help each individual to overcome this

difficulty, and to teach the people "to know what they want," the Legislator should employ, not his own language, but the language of people. Rousseau recognizes this when he says

> that there is a further difficulty that deserves attention. Wise men, if they try to speak their language to the common herd instead of its own, cannot possibly make themselves understood. There are a thousand kinds of ideas which it is impossible to translate into popular language . . . . The Legislator, therefore, being unable to appeal to either force or reason, must . . . be capable of constraining without violence and persuading without convincing.[35]

"Only the great soul of the Legislator . . . can prove his mission," concludes Rousseau, and says further that "the true political theorist admires, in the institutions [he sets] up, the great and powerful genius which presides over things made to endure."[36]

What then will assure the Legislator's successful mission of changing society and man? Rousseau's answer is this:

> What makes the constitution of a State really solid and lasting is the due observance of what is proper, so that the natural relations are always in agreement with the laws on every point, and law only serves, so to speak, to assure, accompany, and rectify them.[37]

In conclusion, the incipient changes in a society brought about by the general will assure the success of the Legislator's mission. His "superior intelligence" is only able to catch that moment and direct it toward its full realization in a

distant glory, when, "if there were no different interests, the common interest would be barely felt, as it would encounter no obstacle; all would go on its own accord, and politics would cease to be an art."[38]

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

[1]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses ed. and trans. G.D.H. Cole (New York: Everyman's Library, 1973), p. 194.

[2]The problem of restructuring a society that Rousseau presents in The Social Contract is an outcome of his analysis of the formation of civil society presented in "The Second Discourse." In "The Second Discourse" Rousseau sees the state of war, the last stage of the state of nature, to lead to the formation of civil society. In The Social Contract he goes "back" again to the state of war, referring to it as follows: "I suppose men to have reached the point at which the obstacles in the way of their preservation is the state of nature . . . "

[3]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 174.

[4]Ibid., p. 173.

[5]Ibid., p. 174.

[6]Ibid., p. 175.

[7]Ibid., p. 182.

[8]Ibid., p. 177-8.

[9]Ibid., p. 178.

[10]Ibid., p. 181.

[11]Ibid., p. 168.

[12]G.D.H. Cole, "Rousseau's Political Theory" in Essays in Social Theory (London: Macmillan, 1938), p. 259.

[13]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 179.

[14]Ibid., p. 174.

[15]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile (New York: Everyman's

Library, 1948.), p. 311.

[16]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 176.

[17]Ibid., p. 182.

[18]Ibid., p. 185.

[19]Ibid., p. 182.

[20]Ibid., p. 177.

[21]Ibid., p. 165.

[22]Ibid., p. 181, Rousseau's footnote.

[23]Rousseau's intention in The Social Contract is to eliminate dependency of man on man by neutralizing man's egoism through the General Will. The society formed by the General Will before it is legitimized by the laws of the Legislator is still a "young" society or, as explained through the vocabulary of Marxism, a "society in transition." The reappearance of dependency endangers the "revolutionary" accomplishment of the General Will, which is essentially the abolition of the dependency of man on man. Dependency as such still exists, but now it is the dependency of man on society, or "happy dependence," as Rousseau called it.

[24]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 170.

[25]Ibid., p. 176.

[26]Ibid., p. 242.

[27]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Rousseau: Political Writings ed. and trans. Frederick Watkins (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953), p. 613.

[28]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 193.

[29]Ibid., p. 194.

[30]Ibid., p. 196.

[31]Ibid., p. 295.

[32]Ibid., p. 194.

[33]Ibid., p. 181.

[34]Ibid., p. 180.

[35]Ibid., p. 196.

[36]Ibid., p. 197.

[37]Ibid., p. 205.

[38]Ibid., p. 185, Rousseau's footnote.

CHAPTER II

From Reified Relations to Socialized Humanity

Marx, like Rousseau before him, finds human history to be a depressing tale of continuous corruption in which those with economic power use it to acquire political power and to oppress masses of peoples. Both Rousseau and Marx agree that ultimately it is the introduction of private property into society that leads to its corruption and to the institution of civil society and the state. However, Marx presents a more thoroughgoing economic interpretation of history than does Rousseau.[1] In so doing he maintains that the state is merely the instrument used by the dominant class or combination of classes to oppress other classes. Rousseau is aware of the importance of the economic factors and motives that contribute to the shaping of social and political history, but he did not see them as Marx does in terms of the "classes," "class struggle," or "exploitation." Rather, he talks about the inequality of material possessions as having been the main reason for the corruption and dependency of man on man

throughout the whole history of civil society.[2]

Moreover, although both Rousseau and Marx regard the actual societies of history as corrupt, both believe in the possibility of establishing a "new" society that would abolish corruption. But while they share a similar view of the future human society as one in which man's potential and freedom would be realized, they disagree on the means by which such ends might be achieved. Rousseau proposes a "just state" formed by a social contract as the way by which corruption and the dependencies inherent in civil society can be abolished. In other words, he sees the legitimate political order (based on the general will) to institute a "just" system of social relations in which men "becomes every one equal by convention and legal right."[3]

For Marx, on the other hand, conceptions of justice, or the legitimate political order, do not bring about changes in the corrupt conditions of civil society. Moreover, he holds that with the abolishment of the civil and legal protection afforded private property a new set of social relations would emerge. Judicial concepts -- including the notion of justice itself -- will not have any role in the structuring of social relations in the communist society.

In discussing political revolution and political

emancipation in The Jewish Question, Marx praises Rousseau for noticing the distinction between "homme" and "citoyen" in the modern political state. Rousseau points to the existence of such a duality in modern society, and thus in the life of its members, and asks how modern man could be restored to a holistic condition, how the dualism of private and public, or civil and political life, could be overcome. This question Rousseau answers in The Social Contract through the conception of the general will and the educative task of the Legislator.

Marx, however, gives a different answer to Rousseau's question, saying instead that

> human emancipation will be complete when the real individual man has absorbed in himself the abstract citizen, when an individual man, in his everyday life, in his work, and his relationships, has become a social being, and when he recognizes and organizes his own powers as social powers, and consequently no longer separates this social power from himself as political power.[4]

With these words, Marx also criticizes Rousseau's idea of human emancipation embodied in the task of the Legislator; instead of a people's being bound by social contract and bringing about their emancipation by legislation and education, Marx sees freedom as being achieved only through social revolution:

> [social revolution is] a human protest against an inhuman life, because it begins from the single individual, and because the social life, against his exclusion from which the individual reacts, is the real

> social life of man, a really human life. The political aspect of the revolution consists in the movement of the politically uninfluential class to their exclusion from political life and power.[5]

This conception of revolution recapitulates aspects of Rousseau's concept of the General Will, and includes the Hegelian concepts of freedom and reason understood as rational autonomy, the actualization of "mutual recognition" and the removal of "alienation" and "objectification." In the same way that Rousseau moves from the critique of the institution of private property to one of civil society, Hegel from the critique of religious to civil society, Marx sees the removal of religion and the struggle against private property as the beginning of the revolution towards human emancipation. Marx's social revolution includes the liberation of man from all forms of cultural, religious, legal, and economic domination and is, therefore, not merely a political revolution that replaces one set of rulers with another while leaving the social structure intact. The social, proletarian revolution, as Marx sees it, would announce the end of both the bourgeoisie and proletariat;[6] it would universalize freedom and herald the arrival of the classless society.

The French Revolution was for Marx a political revolution, and thus an unfinished revolution: "It dissolved civil life into its constituents without revolutionising these

elements themselves and subjecting them to criticism."[7] To succeed, Marx adds, the French Revolution broke society up into constituent elements of individual men, each bent on satisfying his own egoistic needs independent of any moral consideration: "Feudal society was dissolved into its foundation, into man. But into man as he actually was the foundation of that society, into egoistic man."[8]

As a result, the liberation brought about by the French Revolution was only partial and dualistic. As a political revolution, it released one class (the bourgeoisie) from its inability to dominate another (the proletariat) and, as a necessary consequence, hardened the division between the two. All this arose, says Marx, because the Revolution was concerned only with political realities and not with revolutionizing social realities whose essence is the labour system. The revolutionizing of labour relations is central to a successful revolution and, because the French Revolution failed to achieve this, Marx reckoned it to be only partially successful.

Furthermore, Marx saw in the freedom cry of the French revolutionaries a self-defeating reality. The only liberty achieved by the individual was his freedom to become bourgeois, the members of which class can exist only with their dialectical opposite, the proletariat. The bourgeois

revolution may have brought freedom for some, but in the same stroke it brought enslavement for others. The French Revolution contained an inner paradox; it promised freedom for all but gained it only for a few. In The Holy Family, Marx expands on the idea of the failure of the French Revolution; here he sees the mass of people being unable to identify themselves with the revolution's "real life principle," namely freedom, "because this was limited to the bourgeoisie."[9]

The Proletariat -- From Class-in-Itself to Class-for-Itself

A bourgeois, capitalist society for Marx is essentially a class society, a society whose fundamental dynamics are determined by the oppression of one class by another. But Marx does consider capitalist society to be the highest stage of human development so far. No age had witnessed such a mastery by men over forces of nature. But the industrial civilization had not destroyed alienation and class society; on the contrary, it had brought with it the ultimate dehumanization of man. According to Marx, man had turned into a commodity and was sold on the market. He had become a piece of equipment to be attached to machines. Marx sees capitalist society as one

huge market in which circulate not only commodities but also human labour power as well as ideas, emotions, friendships, love, and beauty. It is a society in which everything that had once

> been communicated but never exchanged, given but never sold, acquired by never bought -- virtue, love, conviction, knowledge -- passed into commerce. It is a time of general corruption, of universal venality, or, to speak in terms of political economy, a time when everything, moral or physical, having become a marketable commodity, is brought to the market to be assessed at its true value.[10]

Marx describes capitalism as a system in which man is limited and crippled, in which he is reduced to his labour power, and his labour power is bought as a thing, regarded not as a creative power, but as merely a quantity of energy that can be efficiently objectified and sold on the market for a good profit.

In the Critique of the Gotha Program, Marx says that human labour power is a force of nature, and that capitalists falsely ascribe supernatural creative power to labour:

> The bourgeois have very good grounds for ascribing supernatural creative power to labour; since precisely from the fact that labour depends on nature it follows that the man who possesses no other property than his labour power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men, who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labour. He can work with their permission, hence live with their permission.[11]

Marx says that as labour develops socially and becomes

thus a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the non-workers. This Marx sees as "the law of all history."[12] The message of Marx's thinking is not that workers could better adjust to the situation of bourgeois society by demanding higher wages for their labour power; their labour power is a mere commodity and appropriately recompensed. The implication of his thinking is rather that workers should reject the status of things, or commodities, and change the whole social framework within which they find themselves alienated. The ruling class has a vested interest in the preservation of alienation; therefore, human emancipation and the realization of human potential can be achieved only through a revolutionary transformation of the whole economic and political structure:

> The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production -- antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence -- but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The pre-history of human society accordingly closes with this social formation.[13]

"The productive forces developing within bourgeois society," the proletariat, is that segment of society that has, for Marx, a paradoxical existence. Existing in the crevices of society, is

> a class in civil society that is not of civil society,

> a class that is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society having a universal character because of its universal suffering and claiming no particular right because no particular wrong but unqualified wrong is perpetrated on it; a sphere that can invoke no traditional title but only a human title . . . , a sphere, finally, that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society, thereby emancipating them; a sphere, in short, that [in its] complete loss of humanity [] can only redeem itself through the total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society as a particular class is the proletariat.[14]

Marx sees the proletariat as a universal class, as the potential protagonist of a radical revolution that can realize "true human emancipation." The uniqueness of the proletariat as a class is that it has no particular interest to affirm in maintaining the civil society that rejects it. The proletariat emerges as a class of civil society with the emergence of capitalism, as a class essential to the framework of modern production relations but denied property, personhood, and human dignity. The proletariat, alienated from everything human, becomes entirely rootless, cosmopolitan, devoid of beliefs and illusions. Deprived so of all human ties, alienated from human society itself, the proletariat will emerge, fully conscious of itself as a class within the capitalist world, and hence equipped with a deep understanding of the very aspects of that world, its strengths, its weaknesses, its inherent downfall, and aware of the seeds of progress that it carries within

itself. The proletariat will become able to be the "grave-digger" of society that had formed it. In The Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx says "let the ruling class tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have the world to win!"[15]

The proletarian revolution as Marx understands it is, broadly speaking, a socio-political event designed to remove the condition of alienation whose prime locus is to be found in the relations of production. But besides emphasizing the social and political tasks of the revolution, he emphasizes also the philosophical ones. In the introduction to The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Marx states that philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat and that the proletariat finds its intellectual weapon in philosophy. In this view, philosophy is essentially a revolutionary philosophy; it is an attempt not only to interpret the world but to change it. By this Marx does not mean that philosophy or philosophers should change the world; what he means is that philosophy should be essentially a critical disciple of society. This criticism has the primary task of illuminating man about the truth of his alienated situation in a way that he not only becomes aware of his condition but also attempts to rectify it:

The immediate task of philosophy is to unmask human

> self-alienation in its unholy forms now that it has been unmasked in its holy form.[16]

Once man has become conscious of the attempt to rationalize his alienation in the form of religion or ideology (the holy form of alienation), his philosophy must then extend criticism to the real situation as an advocate of change. Philosophy must become "practical," that is, it must discover a "weapon," a "material basis," in order to realize itself. That force Marx saw in the proletariat. In his early writings, Marx talks of philosophy as an intellectual guide to the revolutionary actions of the proletariat, but he also emphasizes that "it is not enough that thought should strive to realize itself; reality must also strive toward thought."[17] The reality, the proletariat in its everyday life and struggle with the bourgeoisie, will acquire knowledge of its existence and organize its power for the revolution. Marx sees in the shortening of the working day the beginning of unity of physical and intellectual labour. Having more spare time, workers will be able to gather together, to educate themselves and organize. "The emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself."[18]

The reified social relations of the bourgeois society form the proletariat into a "class for itself." The proletariat comes to realize for itself its alienated position

in society; it realizes that neither machines nor technology enslave it but the social relations that turn the members of the proletariat into things. Marx then argues that the alienation of the social world is therefore suddenly reified. For when human production takes place independent of the control of the members of society who provide that production, the producing class reifies (that is, sees in the concrete rather than the abstract) its own activity. The very fact of the divorce between the action of the production and the agency of that production brings about this reification. The human world is no longer conceived as social, as man-made. Human relations are instead seen as a function of relations between things. This characteristic of "thinghood" pervades the consciousness of man and impinges upon the reflective consciousness of philosophers, writers, economists, sociologists, politicians, and so on. Reified consciousness, because it cannot conceive of man as social, reduces human activity to an autonomous, law-governed structure, and is, therefore, a false consciousness. The object of human labour becomes a commodity with attributes other than those invested in it by producers. It appears, therefore, to have a life of its own:

> The existence of things qua commodities, and the value-relation between them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with the material relations arising

> therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things.[19]

Talking about the dialectical movement of the proletariat from the class-in-itself to the class-for-itself, Marx follows Hegel's dialectical logic, although interpreted in a materialistic form. For example, in The Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel explains the dialectic of consciousness in the following words:

> Consciousness in itself has to express itself outwardly and becomes for-itself, and this means simply that it has to posit self-consciousness as one with itself . . . . And finally, when consciousness itself grasps its own essence (the knowledge of itself in reality by overcoming its otherness), it will signify the nature of absolute knowledge itself.[20]

Marx's explanation of the dialectical movement of the proletariat from the class-in-itself to the class-for-itself takes place in a reality of the bourgeois society. With the emergence of bourgeois society, the proletariat emerges as a determinate class of the society, as a class-in-itself. At first, the proletariat sees its quality, the wealth that it produces, as a quality of others, the bourgeoisie. With the advancement of the bourgeois society, the proletariat starts to realize on its own, and with the help of the revolutionary philosophy, scientific socialism, the inverted reality of its existence: the products of workers' labour stand independent

of them, are turned against them, and dominate them. The proletariat negates the inverted reality through the class struggle with the bourgeoisie and becomes a class-for-itself. This process has taken place in reality, not in thought.

Marx's proletariat and Hegel's state are both endowed with similar qualities. Hegel's state provides the universal mediating moment through which all societal divisions are unified; Marx's proletariat provides society's unifying point because it dissolves within itself all social divisions. For Hegel, the unifying moment provided by the state is the opposite pole of alienation, while for Marx, the proletariat carries within itself the possibility of the abolition of alienation. Just as Hegel sees the state as the realization of freedom and reason, so Marx sees the same ideals being achieved within the disappearance of the proletariat as a distinct class. Furthermore, it could be said that two concepts of Rousseau's philosophy, the General Will and the state (the social contract), are elaborated in Hegel's and Marx's philosophy: while Hegel, as Rousseau, sees in the state (the social contract) the realization of human freedom, Marx, over time, transforms Rousseau's General Will into a proletariat, as a force for the realization of human potential and freedom.

From Revolutionary Praxis to the Society of Socialized Humanity

In The Civil War in France, Marx does not hesitate to express the notion that in order to build a radically new world, the working class "will have to fight its way through long battles and a whole sequence of historical process that will completely transform man and events."[21] The problem does not lie in achieving ideals, in leading Utopian lives, but in developing "the elements of the new society that have already evolved in the bosom of bourgeois society."[22] The "elements of new society" embody the class conscious proletariat, its political praxis that is noble struggle, an act of art; to act politically in a human way, implies for Marx, among other things, "to create according to the law of beauty."[23]

According to Marx, the struggle of the proletariat will not be an easy one, but its essence will contain a noble cause -- the liberation of humanity from the bondage of class society. The proletarians' struggle, its political praxis, would not represent the domination of one social group over the rest of society; on the contrary, it would be an activity with universal characteristics, and it would concern each human individual. Such an activity without subjugation, tutelage, and fear is extremely attractive and it will become a daily

need. By participating in such activity, the individual will develop an important dimension of his social being and will acquire ample space in which to express his potential and possibly affirm himself as a gifted, strong, and creative personality. For the first time in history, it would become clear that in the social division of work there is no need for a special profession, a special group of people who decide and rule in the name of others. In the experience of the proletarian revolutionary struggle, Marx sees the "germs of a new society already developing in the old":

> No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.[24]

Marx always insists explicitly that the proletarian revolution would be possible only in an advanced capitalist society in which "the relations of production [are] universal, no matter how reified," in which man is no longer directly governed by people but by "abstract reified social forces."[25] In such conditions, the revolution would only "help" the ending of capitalism; it would have brought its own downfall through

the crisis of overproduction. "The immediate purpose of capitalist production is not 'the possession of goods,' but the appropriation of value, of money, of abstract wealth."[26] In a moment when the basic motive of capitalist production, namely, "profit," would no longer be realizable, the crisis of capitalism would beget new social forces that would not be operating within it. The socialization of the means of production done through a variety of means would signify the beginning of the social revolution. Only then would the freely associated producers be able to put the whole process of social life under their consciously planned control. But this requires a material basis that is "the product of a long and painful history of development."[27]

Marx holds that history is made by man, but that man makes history not as he wishes but as circumstances (particularly his position in the social structure) force him to make it. Moreover, history is made not by individuals but by classes, for even great individuals act only as exponents or representatives of specific social classes. The mastering of social circumstances by man would mean the rupture of historical processes, that man would be able to create a society worthy of him. The revolutionary action of the proletariat Marx considers to be a master of the social

circumstances, a discontinuity of historical processes, a rupture, as he says in The Communist Manifesto:

> The Communist Revolution is the most radical break with the relations of production inherited from the past; no wonder, therefore, that the most radical break with traditional ideas occurs in the course of its development.[28]

Marx's vision of the society of the future has nothing to do with the false, Utopian vision of socialism as a sort of terrestrial paradise in which there is no more pain or grief or sorrow; the future society leads to the radical transformation of the human condition, material and spiritual, in the sense that the world of man develops more and more into a world of genuine humanity, "socialised humanity."[29] Contrary to the often repeated objections of his critics, Marx does not consider communism, or "socialised humanity," the ultimate goal of history but only as "the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future";[30] he does say that communism is "the definite resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man."[31]

But between a society that emerges from the proletarian revolution and the society of "socialised humanity" lies a long historical process, but a process dominated by conscious human activity and not by circumstance:

> What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on his foundations, but on the contrary, just as it emerged from capitalist society;

> which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.[32]

The "birth marks of the old society" in the new society Marx sees in the existence of the state, classes, and labour, not forced any more, but still not yet free. In The Critique of the Gotha Program Marx says that

> between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into another. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.[33]

The state still exists, but "if the workers replace the dictatorship of the bourgeois class with their own revolutionary dictatorship," they, in doing so, "give to the state a revolutionary and transitory form."[34]

With the same conception in mind, Engels writes to Babel in March, 1875:

> Since the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, during the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people's state: so long as the proletariat uses the state, it does not use it in the interest of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist.[35]

Marx and Engels point out that historically the existence of the state is connected to the existence of the classes. As

long as classes exist, one class will use the state apparatus to hold down its adversaries; in the case of Engels' point, the proletariat uses the state as an instrument against the bourgeois adversaries:

> So long as the other classes, especially the capitalist class still exists, so long as the proletariat struggles with it (for which when it attains government power its enemies and the old organizations of society have not yet vanished), it must employ forcible means, hence governmental means. It is itself still a class and the economic conditions from which the class struggle and the existence of classes derive have still not disappeared and must be either removed out of the way or transformed, this transformation process being forcibly hastened.[36]

Marx and Engels do emphasize that "communism is not for us a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism that real movement which abolishes the present state of things."[37] Precisely because the "present state of things" is itself contingent and not an absolute or "given" factor, it necessarily follows that the specific character and content of the tasks to be accomplished during the transition period by the "proletariat organized as a ruling class," and the periodization of these tasks, cannot be arbitrarily defined in advance, except in the most general sense.

The most important factor that determines the condition or nature of the transition period may well be the level of

development attained by the productive forces. The nationalization of the means of production is only one of the tasks required of the working class during the transition period, as is clear from Marx's exposition of the concept of the proletarian dictatorship in The Class Struggle in France. Here Marx depicts the task as the suppression of all the conditions of existence of capitalist social relations of production. Inseparable from this conception, as Marx makes clear in his account of the Paris Commune, is the elimination of bureaucracy and thereby the restoration to the social body proper of "all the forces hitherto absorbed by the State parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society."[38] And, as a matter of course, the victorious proletariat is obliged to take measures "to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible."[39]

What can be seen as particularly important is that Marx envisages an evolution of the mode of distribution during the transition period, an evolution that would differ in the first and the higher phases of communist society in correspondence with the level of development attained by the forces of production. In the first phase, distribution would be effected in accordance with the labour time contributed by each individual, mediated through the issue of vouchers exchangeable

against consumer goods. In The Critique of the Gotha Program, Marx explained the basis of distribution in the first phase of communist society:

> Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except the individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given amount of labour in one form is exchange for an equal amount of labour in another form.[40]

It could therefore be said, Marx observes, that the "equal right" is still in principle during the first phase of communist society, although this is in reality a "bourgeois right" and "a right of inequality." Since equality in this instance consists in the fact that each individual contribution to society and hence his or her entitlement to consumer goods is measured in labour time, as an "equal standard," it follows, precisely by virtue of the fact that "it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity as natural privileges," that "equal right is an unequal right for unequal labour."[41] Marx emphasizes that

> one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, and one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right,

instead of being equal, would have to be unequal.[42]

For Marx, as for Lois Blanc before him, the principle of communist distribution of goods is neither strict equality of share nor amount of work, but human need. The solution is neither uniformity nor mere diversity, but individual and group diversity within a generically identical structure of basic human potential and need. Each individual, as a human being, has a capacity for the unlimited development of these senses, of reason, of communication, of problem-solving, of creative association and introduction of novelties, of harmonizing relationships within a group or a broader community. Also, each individual has some primary biological, social, and psychological needs -- from the needs for food and sex to the need for action, self-identification, and self-affirmation.

Individual self-realization presupposes a very different society, different not only from capitalism, but also from the society in the period of transition:

> In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordinations of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly -- only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banner: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.[43]

In order to create a basis for the free development of man's potential, humankind must do away with a socioeconomic structure that by its very nature feeds man's greed and possessiveness. The proletarian revolution and the proletarian state are means to this end but are not ends in themselves. Marx insists that the existence of the proletarian state should be only temporary, and that with its creation this state brings the seeds of its own dissolution, and the dissolution of the proletariat as a class. The realm of freedom of socialized humanity begins when the state and law no longer exist. At the end of Das Kapital, volume III, Marx writes:

> The realm of freedom only begins, in fact, where that labour which is determined by need and external purposes ceases; it is therefore, by its very nature, outside the sphere of material production proper. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature in order to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce his life, so also must civilized man, and he must do it in all forms of society and under any possible mode of production. With his development the realm of natural necessity expands, because his wants increase, but at the same time the forces of production, by which these wants are justified, also increase. Freedom in this field cannot consist of anything else but the fact that socialized mankind, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with Nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power, and accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under such conditions as are proper and worthy of human beings. Nevertheless, this always remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human potentiality for its own sake, the true realm of freedom, which however, can only flourish upon the realm of necessity as its basis.[44]

This paragraph contains the essence of Marx's thought: man can never transcend the realm of necessity, which is material production. In the realm of freedom, "the associated producers regulate their interchange with Nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power." For Marx, in communism man will be in harmony with himself, his fellow man, and with Nature. Humanity will experience the warmth of the fire that the Promethean (the proletariat) has stolen from the gods. A liberation corresponding to that which Marx thinks would be brought about by communism is in fact suggested by Shelley in his poem "Prometheus Unbound":

> And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
> One with the other even as spirits do,
> None fawned, none trampled . . .
> The loathsome mask has fallen, the Man remains --
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed -- but man:
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the King
> Over himself.[45]

The kingless, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless society, according to Marx's teaching, can only come through a long and painful historical process, out of historical necessity, following the laws of material production. That society cannot emerge as man-made, according to some revolutionary blueprint or ideology. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that

determines their consciousness."[46] Here is the core of Marx's historical materialism, the law of history and human development.

The Paris Commune and Its Influence on Marx's Teaching

Marx's theory and its political goals, in the time when he wrote, did not correspond to those of the proletariat, and were not known by the majority, an ignorance Marx attributed to the historical "immaturity" of the proletariat. He believed, however, that this "immaturity" would be overcome by the process of class consciousness-raising undergone by the proletariat as the result of its growing awareness of the unlimited contradictions inherent in capitalism. Once the proletariat had constituted itself as a revolutionary class, conscious of its mission and ready to carry it out, the ways and means of accomplishing its task were to be derived from the then prevailing political and economic situation. He insisted that the revolution was to be the result of the directly organized action of the proletariat as a class, or that it was not to be at all: the "greatest productive force," he said, "is the revolutionary class itself."[46] He said that the

proletariat should organize itself into a "party," but that this party would develop naturally out of the "soil of modern society itself"[47] as the self-organization of the proletariat.

The events of the Paris Commune changed Marx's thinking: in The Civil War in France he emphasized a more political means of bringing about the social transformation he urged in the Manifesto and elsewhere. For example, in the Manifesto he holds that the de-politicization of the state power will be the main characteristic of the society in the transition period, the first phase of communism, namely socialism, though Marx never used that term.

> All socialists are agreed that the political state, and with it political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into simple administrative functions of watching over the true interest of society.[48]

The short experience of the Paris Commune had shown Marx that the political struggle of the proletariat to achieve a state power could be the means for the realization of the social revolution. The Paris Commune was established by the political act of the Paris proletariat, by its own apprising. It did not represent the social revolution Marx had in mind, but just its beginnings.

> The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his slavery. The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economic foundations upon which rest the existence of

> classes, and therefore of class rule.[49]
>
> The Communal organization once firmly established on a national scale, the catastrophes it might still have to undergo would be sporadic slaveholders' insurrections, which, while for a moment interrupting the work of peaceful progress, would only accelerate the movement, by putting the sword into the hand of the social revolution.[50]

Marx emphasized that the Commune was "a revolution against the state itself," and that the political power which the proletariat substituted for the bourgeois state was fundamentally different in character from the power it supplanted. The most significant effect which the experience of the Commune had on the way in which Marx and Engels conceptualized the transition to socialism was that they no longer presented the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the disappearance of the state as two separate and distinct stages within the transition period. Still, the Commune was a state "governmental machinery" of the proletariat:

> The people, after the first rise, have not disarmed themselves and surrendered their power into the hands of the republican mountebanks of the ruling class, [but rather]...by the constitution of the Commune, they have taken the actual management of their revolution into their own hands and found at the same time, in the case of success, the means to hold it in the hands of the people itself, displacing the state machinery, the governmental machinery of the ruling class by a governmental machinery of their own.[51]

The "true secret" of the Commune, Marx declared, was

that "it was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing classes against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour."[52] Here Marx echoes Rousseau's proposition that the social contract provides the solution to the corrupting of civil society when "at once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a corporate and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life, and its will."[53] As with Rousseau's social contract, the extension of the communal structure, for Marx, was to have created a genuinely unified and co-ordinate organization at the level of the social formation as a whole. Like Rousseau, he did not see the Commune consisting of the representatives of the people, but by its delegates; and as Rousseau postulated that the General Will should be performed by the executive and the legislative duties in the social contract, so "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, but executive and legislative at the same time."[54]

Just as the Commune embodied for Marx the essential elements of his concept of the proletarian dictatorship, so too

the existence of the social contract for Rousseau presupposed the action of the General Will which forced people to be free. Both theorists have the concept of a dictatorship that is not a dictatorship, a concept that has to be applied to society in the period of transition. Colleti, who also has drawn attention to the similarity between concepts articulated by Marx in The Civil War in France and those developed by Rousseau in The Social Contract, said that Marx's political theory was based on the ideas of the eighteenth-century French philosopher

> to whom the critique of parliamentarism, the theory of popular delegacy and even the idea of the state's disappearance can all be traced back. This implies in turn that the true originality of Marxism must be sought rather in the field of social and economic analysis than in political theory.[55]

Marx's earlier polemic on the separation of the state and civil society written in the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the Right, and in The Jewish Question, is resolved in The Civil War in France by the assimilation of the civil society into the state as the first step toward the state's disappearance.

It is undeniable that Marx's conception of socialism is premised upon the existence of a very high level of development of the productive forces, including the proletariat itself. Marx did not believe that the initial phase of industrialization would be a likely starting point for

socialist revolution. However, in the latter phase of his life, in his correspondence of 1881 with the Russian Populist Vera Zasulich, a Populist at heart who moved to Marxism not for its philosophy but because of her indignation at oppressive government, Marx emphasized that the "historical inevitability" of the origin of the capitalist mode of production depicted in Das Kapital was "expressly limited to the countries of Western Europe," and went on to express the conviction that the Russian "peasant commune could, given favourable conditions, discard its primitive features and turn into an element of the socialized economy."[56] Marx was thus prepared to modify his basic theories if such was necessary to encourage genuine revolutionary activities, and the experience of the Paris Commune and its aftermath influenced such aspects of his thinking. So, if Marx would not call the revolutions of the twentieth century proletarian, he was not innocent of encouraging their development in any case. In 1882, in the "Preface" to the Russian edition of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels conclude that

> If the Russian revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point of a communist development.[57]

The conditions in the Russian Empire were obviously

very different from those in the Western European states that Marx and Engels had in mind when formulating their revolutionary theory. The Communist Manifesto had been written with the object of proclaiming the "inevitability of the impending dissolution of modern bourgeois property"[58], but in the Russian Empire, alongside the "rapidly developing capitalist swindle and bourgeois landed property,"[59] more than half the land was owned in common by peasants. The question therefore arose whether the commune, which, "though greatly undermined," was nevertheless still a form of the "primeval common ownership of land," could "pass directly to the higher form of communist ownership,"[60] or would have to pass first "through the same process of dissolution" that constituted the "historical evolution of the West?" Marx and Engels were inclined to accept the first possibility, or at least they did not reject it. If the Russian revolution became the "signal for a proletarian revolution in the West," so that both revolutions complemented one another, then the present Russian institution of common landownership might serve as the "starting point for a communist development."[61]

Marx considered the possibility of a revolution in Russia as something complementary to the revolution in the West. He would not accept or refer to the revolution in Russia

as "proletarian," because Russian society in the initial stage of industrialization lacked the proletariat, the agent of the revolution. Russia was a giant stride away from Marx's basic position which asserted that "no social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed."[62]

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1]Rousseau did not have an understanding of history as Hegel and Marx did, although his "historicism" appears in a description of human nature as historical category. Man changes because social conditions change. Rousseau's "history" is presented in "points." There are always "some points" that men reach for Rousseau that change his "manner of existence."

[2]It could be said that Rousseau's conception of dependence approximates Marx's understanding of class society and exploitation.

[3]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses ed. and trans. G.D.H. Cole (New York: Everyman's Library, 1973), p. 181. For Rousseau the "just" political order comes into being by law, through de jure procedure.

[4]Karl Marx, Early Writings ed. and trans. T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 31.

[5]Karl Marx, Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, eds. Bottomore and Rubel (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 242.

[6]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Collected Works, Vol. IV (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 61.

[7]Marx, Selected Writings, p. 240.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Marx and Engels, Collected Works IV, p. 231.

[11]Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p. 526.

[12]Ibid., p. 527.

[13]Karl Marx, Writings of Young Marx on Philosophy and

Society, eds. E.P. Eston and K.H. Godatt (New York, 1967), p. 263.

[14]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 500.

[15]Marx, Writings of Young Marx, p. 267.

[16]Ibid., p. 269.

[17]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 485.

[18]Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I (New York: International Publishers, 1983), p. 72.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 57.

[21]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 623.

[22]Ibid., p. 620.

[23]Ibid., p. 63.

[24]Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 21.

[25]Marx, Kapital, Vol. I., Ch. IV.

[26]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 446.

[27]Marx, Capital, Vol. I., 316.

[28]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 489-90.

[29]"The standpoint of old materialism is "civil" society; the standpoint of the new human society, socialised humanity (Marx, The Thesis on Feuerbach in Marx-Engels Reader, p. 145.

[30]Marx, Early Writings, p. 144.

[31]Ibid., p. 145.

[32]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 539.

[33]Ibid., p. 538.

[34]Karl Marx, Political Writings (The First International and its Aftermath), ed. David Fernbach (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 327.

[35]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 327.

[36]Marx, Political Writings, p. 333.

[37]Tucker, "German Ideology," Marx-Engels Reader, p. 198.

[38]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works Vol. I (London, 1968), pp. 248-309.

[39]Ibid., p. 289.

[40]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 289.

[41]Ibid., p. 530.

[42]Ibid., pp. 530-31.

[43]Ibid., p. 531.

[44]Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. III (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), pp. 538-39.

[45]Quoted by S.S. Prower in Karl Marx and the World Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 396.

[46]Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 21.

[47]Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, p. 479.

[48]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II (Moscow: Progress Publishers, n.d.), p. 635.

[49]Karl Marx, Political Writings, Vol. III (The First Draft to the Civil War in France), p. 234.

[50]Ibid., p. 253.

[51]Ibid., p. 261.

[52]Ibid., p. 264.

[53]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 174.

[54]Marx, Political Writings, p. 267.

[55]Lucio Colleti, From Rousseau to Lenin (New York: Monthly Review Press: New York, 1972), p. 241.

[56]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), pp. 319-20.

[57]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962), p. 28.

[58]Ibid., p. 29.

[59]Ibid., p. 28.

[60]Ibid., p. 29.

[61]Ibid., p. 30.

[62]Marx, Critique of Political Economy, p. 21.

CHAPTER III

The Origin of the Modern Legislator

While Marx might be regarded as formulating the laws of history, Lenin concentrated on political action. Lenin added a dimension to the theory of Marxist political action that came primarily from the experience of the Russian revolutionary movement of the nineteenth century. Lenin's "Russification" of Marxism transformed Marx's critical theory of society into a guide for revolutionary action, and into a means by which that action was to be justified. Marx's philosophy in Lenin's hands became politics, political action, analysis, and decision. Lenin regarded politics as a science: it provided the "right answers" for political activists and revolutionaries who were seeking to overthrow the existing political order and to create a new society.[1]

In his pamphlet "What is to be done?" (1902), Lenin spelled out his political strategies by concluding that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."[2] He emphasized that merely "spontaneous" movement

of the working class will never achieve more than improvements in the conditions and status for various sections of the working class within the existing social framework. A working class movement will never "spontaneously" set itself social aims more radical than are comprised within general and often rather sentimental ideas of "social justice." So he concluded, too, that "spontaneous" forms of organization will never surface to achieve socialism. Only revolutionary organization can achieve it, "armed" by Marx's scientific socialism, the basis for its strategy and tactics.[3]

Revolutionary politics for Lenin was to be made "professional." He was concerned in "What is to be done?" to create in Russia an illegal revolutionary party composed of "professional revolutionaries." Ten years later, such a party was created to be the vanguard of the proletariat in its struggle for socialism. The vanguard was to be the true representative of the proletariat because it was "molded by the laws of history to be its representative."[4] Equipped with the "superior intelligence" of Marx's scientific socialism, the vanguard's task was to lead the class to the conquest of political power and after that through socialism and communism. This means that henceforward the course of history is directed by the "will" - the consciously taken decisions - of the

"professional revolutionaries" who understand the laws of history. It is not that individual wills are effective, but that the vanguard's well-informed decisions are. The revolutionary vanguard is in control, and the laws of history are no longer determined independently of its will. The vanguard's "will," in order to become executioner of history, must first become the General Will of society and the Legislator of the new political order.

The secret elitist revolutionary organization which was to seize power on behalf of the oppressed and impoverished majority already existed in the Russian revolutionary movement before Lenin formulated his theory of the vanguard of the proletariat.

The Roots of the Vanguard as Socialist Legislator

The Napoleonic wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought many Russian officers into close contact with the ideas and political institutions of Western Europe. On their return home they saw more clearly the evils of Russian society with Tsarist autocracy and serfdom, and showed a strong desire for reform. By 1824, two groups of young army officers

were active in a clandestine way. The Northern Society, under the leadership of Nikita Muraviev, planned for a constitutional monarchy on the English model and a federal form of administration with a large degree of local autonomy. The Southern Society, under Pestel, desired a republic of a Jacobin type with strong centralized administration. Both groups urged the abolishment of serfdom.

The Southern Society and Pestel as its leader proposed something that would give a specific character to the future Russian socialist movement, a guide for action and the blueprint of a new society. In his work, Russian Justice, Pestel proposes a blueprint for reforming Russian society, a dictatorial form of government after overthrowing the Tsarist regime.[5] Herzen, the founder of Russian socialism, considered Pestel a socialist before socialism, because Pestel condemned private property, proposed a radical agrarian reform, and said that "the true goal of any government should be the establishment of welfare for the greatest possible number; the comfort of the few should give way to the welfare of all."[6]

The Northern Society staged an unsuccessful coup in December of 1825 known as the Decembrist uprising. The coup, as well as a rebellion raised by the Southern Society, was quickly put down. Poor organization, the absence of a plan of

action, and the lack of any contact beyond their narrow circles doomed the Decembrists to failure. But their attempt initiated the long story of the Russian revolutionary movement that culminated in the events of 1917. The Decembrists created a legend which lent moral and poetic justification to the revolutionary movement.

The unrest of the generation that followed the Decembrists was characterized by the formation of discussion groups among university students. The young men of the 1830s, drawn from various social classes but united by their desire to serve humanity and their opposition to any form of oppression, were the first recruits of the Russian intelligentsia. The intelligentsia not only led the development of Russian social thought, but, in view of the suppressed condition of the masses, was also chief revolutionary force until the end of the century.

The generation of the 1830s went through a brief period of enthusiastic interest in the abstract principles of German abstract philosophy. Soon it passed via left Hegelianism into an equally fervent interest in French utopian socialism.[7] In this way the French social utopian thought and the experience of the Jacobins molded the Russian socialist movement before the coming of Marxism. Especially influential was Louis-

Auguste Blanqui's doctrine of the Jacobins' experience during the French Revolution, of their secret, highly centralized, elitist organization, their ability to be the protagonist for social change, and their role in the new dictatorial society. The Blanqui doctrine also confirmed the already existing theoretical orientation and experience of the movement. What is important to note, however, is that while Blanqui's ideas have found a fertile ground in Russia, the ideas and the experience that spread from these ideas were Russian. Although the ideas of the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists were the result of Russian conditions, they nevertheless had a universal character. Their ideas and practice can be traced in the development of the contemporary revolutionary elites.

In Russian history, Jacobinism and Blanquinism are connected with the prophecy of the future society; their tendency is to skip capitalist social formation and go directly into the establishment of socialism, as in a society of total human equality - economic, moral, and even intellectual. By that, the character of the revolution is determined, in which the revolutionary majority, the alpha and omega of the doctrine of the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists, compensates for the absence of the revolutionary proletariat.

Plehanov, the founder of Russian Marxism, has pointed

out that the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists were mistaken in their examination of social relations, because instead of real social relations they considered their will as the main revolutionary force; their will, revolutionary determination, and firm revolutionary organization characterize the Russian Jacobin and Blanquist movements.[8] According to the logic of the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists, the socialist revolution is possible in every society. Most important is the seizure of the mechanisms of state and the rearrangement of society executed by dictatorial means according to their own plan.

The Russian Jacobins and Blanquists became known in the early 1860s, in the time of the great social upheaval in Russian society, as well as in the revolutionary movement. Tkachev in the late 1860s formed a theory that sprang from the main ideas of the Jacobins and Blanquists. With his work Russian Jacobinism and Blanquism became a system, the main elements of which were these:

a) the determination of the historical moment for the revolution in Russia;

b) the determination of the social forces and the main revolutionary forces;

c) the determination of the revolutionary organization and its character;

d) the acquisition of state power; and

e) the role of the dictatorship of the revolutionary state in the formation of the new society.[9]

The Russian Jacobinism and Blanquism, thus, came into conflict with the main stream of the Russian revolutionary movement - anarchism and progressivism - as well as with the main stream of the Western European revolutionary movement - Marxism.

When the secret revolutionary organization of Russian Jacobins and Blanquists, Zemlya i Volya (Land and Will), was dissolved, or, in other words, when the terrorist party, Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), was formed, Russian Jacobinism and Blanquism came into being all over Russia as the first revolutionary organization. Although the history of the Narodnaya Volya ends with its involvement in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, the works of its theorists (or rather the works of the theorist Tkachev, since the Narodnaya Volya did not develop any new theory but instead applied practically the theory already formed by Tkachev) continued to be widely read by the Russian revolutionaries.

As a result of their involvement in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, the leaders of the Narodnaya Volya were prosecuted, and their speeches in the courts revealed the true nature of their organization and ideas.[10] Spoken in a moment

when no mercy was expected from the Tsarist prosecutors, these speeches gave valuable testimony to the state of the revolutionary spirit in Russia. They were agitated speeches in the name of the party, speeches in which the future of the revolution was put above personal needs, and openly stating the necessity of the terror as the means for social transformation.[11] These speeches were significant not only in the revolutionary determination of their speakers, but also in the nature of the social regime in Russia that they reflect, since it is this social regime that in fact has determined the nature of its opposition.

In the West, the roots of the phenomenon of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet epoch have already been searched in Russian history. Russian messianism, as it has been noted, was one of the dominant factors in Russian history. The historical tendency of the Russian soul both to embrace Christianity and to see Moscow as the Third Rome has doubtless allowed the country and its people a considerable degree of emancipation. The Western ideas that came to Russia in the nineteenth century did not change the average Russian's way of thinking, but rather confirmed it by solidifying Western ideas in Russian experience.

The doctrine of Louis Blanqui concerning the necessity

for a firm centralized organization of the revolutionary elite was accepted as the main element of the Russian Jacobin and Blanquist movement, and thus provided a basis for the development of Lenin's conception of the vanguard. The Leninist Bolshevik party, as the revolutionary vanguard of the workers and peasants, took unto itself the Marxian role of the proletariat as executor of the Will of History. The Russian communist movement, its revolution, and the society that came out of it, can be seen as the synthesis of the experience of the French Jacobins brought to Russia in the form of Blanquism together with the teaching of Marx and the Russian nineteenth-century revolutionary experience. Moreover, the experience of the Russian revolution, like that of the French Revolution, can be seen also from the Hegelian point of view as a necessary dialectical consequence of the attempt to realize absolute freedom.

But the realization of absolute freedom, Marx postulated, was only possible after a long process of historical development. In the German Ideology he said that "so long as the productive forces are still insufficiently developed to make competition superfluous, and therefore ... give rise to competition over and over again, for so long the classes which are ruled [will] be waiting for the impossible if

they have not the "will" to abolish competition and with it the state and law. It is only in the "will" of the ideologists that this "will" arises before conditions have developed far enough to make its production possible."[12]

In Russia, "the will of the ideologists" was aimed at the revolutionary transformation of society, a transformation for which "conditions had not developed far enough" to make possible. Lenin's theory conceived of the proletarian revolution as the product of great minds, who, conscious of inexorable trends, would create order and progress out of chaotic elements, that is, out of the masses, by organizing them in a rational fashion.

> The habits of the capitalist system are so strong; the task of re-educating people in these habits for centuries is a difficult task which demands a lot of time. But we say: Our fighting method is organization. We must organize everything, take everything into our own hands.[13]

The task of the Bolshevik vanguard was to organize, educate, and direct Russian masses, unsatisfied with the existing social conditions, into the potential revolutionary forces. In the passage quoted from "What is to be done?" Lenin quotes the following words of Kautsky and speaks of them as being penetratingly accurate:

> The socialist consciousness today cannot come into being except on the basis of a profound scientific consciousness. In reality, a contemporary economic science is the condition of socialist production as

> much as, let us say, technology, and the proletariat, despite all its desires, cannot create either the one or the other; they are both born from the contemporary social process. The representative of science is not the proletariat but the bourgeois intelligentsia: contemporary socialism was born in the heads of some members of this section of society, and they have communicated it to proletarians distinguishing themselves by their intellectual development, and they in turn introduce it into the class struggle of the proletariat wherever conditions make it possible. In this way, socialist consciousness is something imported from outside the class struggle of the proletariat and not something spontaneous.[14]

A little later in his letter to the "federation of the North" Lenin wrote:

> Socialism, insofar as it is the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class, undergoes the general conditions of birth, development and consolidation of an ideology, that is to say it is founded on all the material of human knowledge, it presupposes a high level of science, demands scientific work, etc....In the class struggle of the proletariat which develops spontaneously, as an elemental force, on the basis of capitalist relations, socialism is introduced by the ideologists.[15]

Lenin understood Marxism as a theory that develops rather than as a corpus of unchanging doctrine. He held, as Marx did, that theory should give meaning to reality and reality life to theory. The reality he faced was an underdeveloped Russian society composed of a peasant majority and a small number of urban proletariat. If revolution was to be accomplished in Russian society, and revolution was Lenin's primary aim, then Marx's notion of the proletariat had to be

broadened into an "alliance of workers and peasants"; and the spontaneous consciousness-raising process of the proletariat, had to be sped up by ideological education. The strategy of the Populists to "go to the people" was used by the vanguard for the agitation and political indoctrination of the masses. As Lenin said in "What Is To Be Done?",

> To bring political knowledge to the workers the social democrats must go among all classes of the population, must dispatch units of their army in all directions.[16]
> . . .
> The social democrat's ideal should not be a trade union secretary, but a tribune of the people, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; he must be able to group all these manifestations into a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; he must be able to take advantage of every petty event in order to explain his socialist convictions and his social democratic demands to all, in order to explain to all and every one the world historical significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.[17]

Ideology for Lenin became a tool in the hands of the vanguard to guide and rule the masses. He believed that the masses, guided by ideology, could change the world. Therefore the prime task of the vanguard in preparing for the revolution is to spread its activity in society at large by recruiting new professional revolutionaries who will in turn recruit other new ones, and so on.

> To "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to social democratic activities, and ...such people must train themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional

revolutionaries.[18]

What Marx has said about the revolutionary experience of the proletariat as the source for the practice of the proletarian state confirms and opposes that of the vanguard's revolutionary activities and the reality of the Soviet state. Marx's intention that the proletariat organize in a human way meant that professionalism, elitism, and inequality of any kind would be absent from the proletarian movement. Organized out of necessity, in times "which can substitute no longer," the proletarians, and humanity in general, would experience for the first time the unity of Rousseau's General Will, of all for one and one for all. Only such unity and solidarity, such human co-operation, could bring about the destruction of class society, and such a feeling of solidarity could not be preached, it had to be experienced. The struggle of all, where everyone is accepted and recognized equally, continues in the struggle for the new society. Yes, it begins as a dictatorship, but as a dictatorship of history against pre-history. It begins in ugliness but ends in beauty. The movement from the realm of alienation to that of realized humanity starts with the shortening of the working day, Marx maintained, when proletarians in their newfound spare time educate themselves from the book of history.

The revolutionary actions of the vanguard did provide the source for the practice of the Soviet state. The way in which the vanguard organized itself in the revolution was the way in which it organizes its society. In modern social science, this type of Soviet society (and all other societies which came into being as a result of revolutions led by vanguards) are called "movement regimes." The revolution does not end the existence of the movement; on the contrary, it institutionalizes it as a state power. The principle purpose of the movement becomes the principle purpose of the "movement regime" as well.

The vanguard's leadership and democratic centralism are two political forms that dominate the revolutionary movement as well as the post-revolutionary state. Each rests on the same general hypothesis regarding the means of emergence of experience and the best way to employ it once it comes into being. The idea is that expertise, both theoretical and practical, results from "professionalism." Since the creation of socialism involves a bitter struggle against intransigent and very powerful capitalist forces, Lenin argued that it is essential that "socialism" should be led by the most able leaders that can be assembled. Furthermore, the vanguard's leadership within the revolutionary movement and in the new

state is rationalized and legitimized by its possession of the "revolutionary science," Marxism-Leninism. Politics, thus, becomes the mechanical application of objective theory to the problems of revolutionary struggle and of the socialist construction. The vanguard party is simply a mass of individuals who are political experts as a result of their devotion to political practice. One program will surface, for it has the power of science behind it.

What Marx said about the practice of the proletarian state's being based on the experience of the revolutionary movement corresponds methodologically to the practice of the Soviet state's continuation of the vanguard's revolutionary experience. The voluntarism in revolutionary actions, the constant question "What is to be done?", as well as the idea that people "do not know their own good" and therefore cannot will it, dominates the Russian revolutionary movement. The Program of the Executive Committee of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), in accordance with the teaching of Tkachev stated the following:

> We are convinced that the People's Will is the only power which could change the existing social norms and could form the new one . . . . The People's Good and the People's Will are our two most important, and inseparable, principles . . . . The whole Russian reality is against the People's Will. The People's Will in such a situation does not have a chance to formulate itself; the people do not have possibilities even to think what is good for it . . . . But we see

> that the old, traditional principles are still alive within our people: the right to land, the right to communal and local self-government, freedom of thought, the old Russian communal sentiment . . . . In order for the People's Will to become the legitimate source of society, we, our party, should take the political power from the existing government and give it to the people...We think that the People's Will would be realized in a new society through the constitutional assembly elected free by the universal suffrage.... Although we have the People's Will as our guiding principle, we think that it is our duty to present to the people our program which we will propagate until the revolution, and which we could recommend to the constitutional assembly...To realize our goals, our party's activities should be: the propaganda and agitation, the destructive terrorist activities, organization of the secret societies and the gathering around one center, gaining influence in all levels of society, the organization of the revolution.[19]

The important point that should be stressed is that the nature of the Russian Tsarist absolutist society determined the nature of the revolutionary movement in the nineteenth century. The Russian social and political conditions had more influence on the character of the revolutionary movement than its leader and theorists; a repressive society cannot have a democratic opponent. Therefore, critical thought became more radical as the society became more repressive.

The Russian Jacobinism and Blanquism introduced three things into the Russian revolutionary movement: the secret elitist revolutionary organization, the formation of the people's will through agitation and education by the revolutionary organization, and the leap from feudalism into

socialism. "A people cannot liberate itself," writes Tkachev in People and Revolution: "not now nor in the future, a people left on its own does not have the strength and power to realize the 'people's revolution.' Only us, the revolutionary minority, can do that, and as soon as possible -- to liberate the people."[20]

Tkachev's theory of a leap in social development, of a secret and elitist revolutionary organization, and of a dictatorial state as a means for the realization of the social revolution, could have been left as part of the remains of revolutionary extremism as it had been in its original Blanquist form or just one of the social Utopian theories if it had not been transformed by Lenin into the Bolshevism. Lenin gave only a Marxist tone to one already existing tradition, a tradition that overthrew old Russian society and established a basis for a new one to emerge.

Rousseau was right when he said that posterity would appreciate his ideas; and posterity, in saluting Marx, in fact, salutes Rousseau without knowing it. Rousseau's idea of the General Will, and not Marx's proletariat, has dominated revolutionary movements; it was the General Will that started the Russian revolution, that ended the war, the insecurity, the famine. The common interest of the Russian people in 1917 was

food and peace, not some theoretical model of the future society. Immediate needs must be fulfilled in the struggle for self-preservation; as Rousseau said, only "conditions which can substitute no longer" create the General Will, create a revolution. The professionally trained vanguard saw its chance in October of 1917 to lead the "General Will" in the direction of revolution. And the people followed the vanguard with enthusiasm, believing that a better world would come. Mayakovsky's poem captures the mood of the moment:

> We will smash the old world
> wildly
> we will thunder
> a new myth over the world.
> We will trample the fence
> of time beneath our feet.
> We will make a musical scale
> of the rainbow.
>
> Roses and dreams
> debased by poets
> will unfold
> in a new light
> for the delight of our eyes
> the eyes of big children.
> We will invent new roses
> roses of capitals with petals of squares.[21]

The revolution revealed the unseen human energy. Between February of 1917 and about the end of spring 1918, an experience of direct democracy occurred in Russia on an infinitely larger scale than that of the Athenian democracy or the Paris Commune. Its international importance, from a

practical and theoretical point of view, remains immense. This experience was based on the creation of the "councils" or "soviets," committees of all sorts that arose spontaneously throughout the country's vast territory. Everywhere these truly "self-managing" bodies proliferated: workers' committees, peasants' committees, soldiers' committees, sailors' committees, factory and neighbourhood committees. These "councils," or "soviets" or "committees," appeared everywhere since "any section of the population which considered itself underprivileged could constitute itself as an independent soviet."[22]

Generally speaking, each community, each group, each minority tended to constitute itself as an autonomous body and to negotiate on equal terms with the government and other revolutionary organizations. It was through these bodies that the masses made revolution and imposed it both on the parties and on the government. The measures of agrarian reform, nationalism, workers' control over production, people's tribunals, and so on were spontaneous mass creations before they were institutionalized by the government. The people by themselves engaged in the greatest attempt ever seen on a mass scale at direct democracy and direct power.

During the ascendant phase of the Russian revolution,

Lenin sincerely believed that, on the basis of the practical experience of the soviets, a state would be built that resembled the Paris Commune; it would be fully democratic for the overwhelming majority of the population, and therefore would be able to wither away rapidly when it ceased to be a political state in the service of a majority over a minority. Lenin, therefore, proceeded from the idea of the founders of Marxism, but he did not understand the essential difference between the two historical circumstances. Unlike the Russian revolutionary experience, the Paris Commune was an experience of direct democracy limited to a town with a proletarian majority lacking either peasants or a structured political party that would centralize the important state function.

In the events after 1918, the vanguard changed the course of the revolution by abolishing the power of the soviets and direct democracy, and establishing a dictatorial state. This was not a triumph of Marxism as it was claimed, but was rather, in effect, the triumph of the Russian revolutionary tradition finally realizing the ideas of the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists. It was confirmation of what Marx said in The Eighteenth Brumair of Louis Bonaparte:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.[23]

Legitimation of the Revolution--the Dictatorship of the Vanguard

Lenin was fully aware that the course of events in Russia bore no relation to traditional Marxism, although he did not consider the theoretical problem in all its facets. The massive strength of the Russian revolution lay not in the class conflict between workers and bourgeoisie but in the aspiration of the peasants, the war time debacle, and the longing for peace. It was a "socialist revolution" only in the sense that it transferred the state power to the vanguard, but certainly not a socialist revolution that confirmed Marxist predictions concerning the fate of capitalist society. But, more than anything, it was a Russian revolution because it bore a relation to the theoretical and practical experience of the Russian revolutionary movement.

The constitution of 1918 legitimized the revolution and established the vanguard as the Sovereign of the new society. The dictatorship of the proletariat turned out to be the dictatorship of the party. Lenin himself explicitly states the vanguard's exclusive role in society in 1919, two years before the de facto establishment of a political monopoly in the U.S.S.R.:

> Yes, the dictatorship of one party! We stand upon it and cannot depart from this ground, since this is the part which in the course of decades has won for itself the position of vanguard of the whole factory and industrial proletariat.[24]

Although Lenin until then had never used the expression "the dictatorship of one party," the whole of his earlier works suggests that, in the absence of the proletariat, the post-revolutionary state will be organized in the name of the proletariat and led by the vanguard. The vanguard should be "the teacher, the guide and the leader," not only of the revolutionary movement, but of the new state as well. The leading position of the vanguard legitimizes the "superior intelligence" of Marxism, as Lenin said in The State and Revolution:

> 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 a new system, of being the teacher, the guide and the leader of all working and exploited people in organizing their social life without bourgeoisie and against bourgeoisie.[25]

In addition, Lenin notes that

> The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organization embracing the whole of that class because in all capitalist countries (and not only over here, in one of the most backward) the proletariat is still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted in parts (by imperialism in some countries) that an organization taking in the whole proletariat cannot directly exercise proletarian dictatorship. It can be exercised only by a vanguard that has absorbed the revolutionary energy of the class.[26]

The events of the Civil War, as much as anything, were damaging for the new Soviet state, and helped the vanguard to consolidate its power in society. The effects of the Civil War on the Soviet working class itself were catastrophic. The workers had largely dispersed into villages to keep from starving. The peasantry was in open rebellion against the system of grain seizures that had been imposed as a military measure in order to feed the Red Army and the urban population. Never had the regime been less popular.

The social compact of society in 1921-2 had considerably changed from that of 1917. The years of the Civil War brought a significant decline in revolutionary enthusiasm, an enthusiasm that had been the exceptional element of the revolution and its realization in the dictatorship of the proletariat in the first place. In 1917 the vanguard based the legitimacy of its power on the majority of the "soviet," each of which was based on the principle of class representation and which together were the definite organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1921-22, the theory of the workers' state continued to rest on the "soviets," but these "councils" were not and could not be representative. It was not, in fact, possible for them to represent a working class that practically no longer existed. But at the same time, the party's mentality

had changed in the period up to and including October of 1917. Lenin and the vanguard never imagined that they could take and keep power without the support of the majority of workers, or of the workers and peasants. Up to the revolution, during it, and for some time afterwards, they continued to try and take their political decisions based on the idea of proletarian democracy; but towards the end of the civil war, this notion no longer pertained since the working class were scattered and "declassed." In these conditions the vanguard identified their own will and their own thinking with what they believed to be the will and thinking of the working class, and their tendency to see themselves as the interpreters of the class interests of the proletariat made this substitution so much easier.

Although the Soviet proletariat almost disappeared during the Civil War, Bolshevik practice continued to be based on an organic relationship between the party and the class. This could mean, and did mean, only that Lenin and his comrades substituted themselves for the proletariat:

> They identified their own will and ideas with what they believed would have been the will and the ideas of a full-bodied working class, if such a class had existed. Their habit of regarding themselves as the interpreters of the proletarian class interest made that substitution all the easier. As the old vanguard, the party found it natural for itself to act as the <u>locum tenens</u> for the working class during that strange and, it hoped, short interval when that class was in a state of dissolution. Thus the Bolsheviks drew a moral justification for the usurpatory role from their own

> tradition, as well as from the actual state of society.[27]

Many Marxists since the revolution saw the danger of the transformation of the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the party or vanguard. Lukacs, who was at that time a supporter of Lenin, said that the proletariat was not prepared for the practical task of socialism:

> The proletariat seizes state power and establishes its dictatorship: the realization of socialism is now a practical task -- a problem for which the proletariat is least of all prepared.[28]

The dictatorship of the proletariat, according to Rosa Luxemburg, "must be the work of the class and not of a little leading minority. It must be subjected to the control of the complete public activity; it must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of the people."[29] She maintains that socialist society should only be a historical product "born out of the school of its own experiences, born in the course of its realization, as a result of the developments of living history, and not as ready-made formula which lies completed in the pockets of the revolutionary part, which needs only to be carried out energetically in practice."[30]

If the Russian proletariat was "least prepared" for the "practical task of socialism," the well organized and disciplined vanguard was "tempered" by its revolutionary

activities for such a task. "The question of power," says Lenin in Toward the Seizure of Power, "is the fundamental question which determines everything in the development of a revolution . . . . The seizure of power is a matter of insurrection; its political purpose will be clear after the seizure."[31] After the seizure of power, Lenin and the vanguard faced an important question: What is to be done? Their answers and political purposes were the same as those that Lenin recorded in 1902 when he wrote his pamphlet in answer to the same question. "We must organize everything, take everything in our own hands."[32] The organization of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in Lenin's words, marked "the historical moment [when] theory is translated into practice, is enlivened by practice, corrected by and verified in practice."[33]

Lenin's vision of Marxism was one that actually did not guide his political action. It blinded him to the difference between the driving forces of production and the driving forces of his own will. But the belief that he was a Marxist in possession of the sure keys to the future contributed to his concealing from himself and his followers the fact that he was actually choosing between historical possibilities rather than carrying out historical necessities. He was re-determining history and not following its alleged laws. In relation to

their professed goal, the actions of Leninists were not unintelligible -- since they believed that the historically inevitable had to come to pass through their own efforts -- but, rather, insensitive, and indifferent, and in the end unintelligent in the light of socialist ideals. Since the end was guaranteed by history, by the laws of class struggle, any means, any method, was justified if it were successful. For it could then be claimed that it was deducible from the law of class struggle. The Legislator would always legitimize its own doings, thinking that history is on its side.

If, as Rousseau said, "the Legislator is a founder of a nation," then we can conclude that the vanguard as Modern Legislator is a founder of socialism.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]For Lenin, the "right answers" in politics were coming from Marxism, as he himself said: "Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true" (The Sources, SW1:44). Lenin believed that a Marxist analysis should be informed not only by the demonstrable facts of a situation, but also be their relevance to the general movement of society.

[2]Vladimir Lenin, What Is To Be Done? (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 56.

[3]Lenin's development of Marxism in What Is To Be Done? lay in his emphasis on the importance of organization. Lenin did not favour a widely recruited trade union type of party organization in Russian conditions, but it would be mistaken to say that Lenin wanted a small conspiratorial type of party at all times. The party was intended to draw into its activity the wider masses.

[4]V.I. Lenin, Selected Works in One Volume (New York: International Publishers, 1980), p. 331.

[5]Carl Launder, European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements, Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 394).

[6]Ibid., p. 389.

[7]The Western ideas in Russia gained a specific Russian connotation combined with the Russian tradition of messianism and slavifilism. In the last instance, they contributed to the formation of the revolutionary elite that was to carry social change.

[8]Launder, European Socialism, p. 411.

[9]Latinka Perovic, Planirana Revolucija (The Planned Revolution) (Zagreb: BIGZ and Globus, 1988), p. 49. (my own translation from Serbo-Croat.)

[10]Ibid., p. 241.

[11]Ibid., pp. 210-49.

[12]Karl Marx, The German Ideology (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 87.

[13]Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 73.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Op. cit. In Mihajlo Markovic, The Contemporary Marx, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1974), p. 62.

[16]Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 79.

[17]Ibid., p. 56.

[18]Ibid., p. 126.

[19]Perovic, Planirana Revolucija, pp. 223-25.

[20]Ibid., p. 237.

[21]Op. cit. In Vincent Geoghegan, Utopian and Marxism (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 75.

[22]See Adam Ulam, The Unfinished Revolution (Colorado: Western Press, 1979); David Lane, Leninism: A Sociological Interpretation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Carr Edward Hallett, The Bolshevik Revolution 1817-1921 (London, 1952).

[23]Robert C. Tucker ed., The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p. 595.

[24]Op. Cit. In Hallett, The Bolshevik Revolution, p. 236.

[25]Lenin, Selected Works, p. 281.

[26]Ibid., p. 321.

[27]Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky, 1921-1929 (London, 1959), p. 13.

[28]George Lukacs, Lenin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press,

1974), p. 72.

[29]Rosa Luxemburg, Rosa Luxemburg Speaks (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 389.

[30]Ibid., p. 390.

[31]Lenin, Selected Works, p. 395.

[32]Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 82.

[33]Op. cit. In Vasil Ivanov, In the Age of Real Socialism (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1981), p. 16.

CHAPTER IV

Self-Managing Socialism: An Experiment of the Modern Legislator

The Yugoslav self-managing socialism evolved from a Stalinist prototype police state (1944-50) in search of an independent road to socialism following the break with Stalin and the Cominform in 1948. The dispute with Stalin produced a curious ideological problem for the Yugoslav Communist Part (the vanguard): it had to justify its revolution as socialist while totally divorcing itself from the leading example of socialism at that time in the Soviet Union. Thus, the Yugoslav communists early in the their history were impelled to assume the dual role of both the innovator and the defender of their socialist tradition.

Despite a willingness to seek precedent in the work of Marx, Lenin, and Gramsci, and to revive the experience of the Paris Commune and the Russian soviets, the vanguard's ideology of self-management sprang primarily from the conditions in which the new Yugoslav socialist regime found itself after the

war. Among the factors constituting the political background against which the Yugoslav vanguard inaugurated self-management were the success of the anti-fascist struggle and the need to unite mutually hostile social and ethnic elements in a new society whose very existence had been threatened.

Once the innovative beginnings became evident in the introduction of workers' councils in 1950, continued economic and political isolation from the socialist block encouraged the Yugoslav vanguard to adopt an increasingly pragmatic interest in economic development and industrialization, and to experiment with new forms of organization and control. Practical experimentation was followed by subsequent legislation. The Yugoslav vanguard, the "Modern Legislator," was changing society by restructuring the superstructure. The new self-managing institutions were seen as conscious mobilizers of the collective will (the General Will).

The Leninist legacy gave the Yugoslav vanguard the role of the creative agent in the process of history and social events. But the experiment of self-management and the ideology that grew out of it, revolutionary for its time in comparison with the Soviet Union, did not correspond to Marx's notion of the dialectic between revolutionary theory and practice. Workers' councils did not grow out of the revolutionary

experience of the workers, but instead came into being through the law of the Legislator, the vanguard. Therefore self-management cannot be seen as the continuation of the experience of the Paris Commune and the Russian revolutionary soviets, as official Yugoslav ideology states, but rather as revolutionary theory applied in a particular historical moment by the "Modern Legislator." The evolution of self-management was not the result of the crystallization of working class consciousness transforming itself into organized political action, as a democratic political decision from the bottom up from the widest sources of the mass movement, but as the political goal of those in power to stay in power.

The idea of workers' councils, and idea that arose in the international communist movement as a resistance to the Stalinist regime, is opposed to the essential negation of political forms of the old society. But it does constitute the first act of social transformation, the liberation of the working class consciousness from the domination of the old world. The day-to-day self-management of society, in an active and direct way, is the essential prerequisite for crossing the threshold that divides the past from the "socialist" present. In this respect, self-management is a new aspiration, corresponding to a high level of social development, as

indicated by the size of the movement that it embraces, and the subjective and objective possibilities that exist for its application. This indicates that self-management is no longer the desire of a small vanguard minority but rather is the reflection of a widely felt need that has matured with the overall social development of a great part of society. For this reason it is mistaken to describe self-management as an updating of themes that were outlined in the past by such people as Prudon, Bakunin, or Marx himself. People do not move en masse toward self-management because they recall theoretical schemes summarily stated in the past, but because they need to express the aspirations that spring from their real social experience. Concrete social conditions in the factory, the firm, the office, the neighbourhood, and the country as a whole, then, determine the desire for self-management, for the free and democratic organization and management of social life in all spheres and at all levels.

The idea of self-management presupposes that people themselves are the creators of history in a given condition, that is, in the objective determined framework of possibilities. In this way, the idea of self-management presupposes an open, activist interpretation of history in which the gap between law and contingency, necessity and

freedom, has been closed. The philosophy of the vanguard is essentially different in this respect. The vanguard advocates voluntarism[1] regarding the future and absolute determinism regarding the past. History is then understood as a linear process in which the vanguard never has any chance of going wrong; the vanguard becomes the executioner of history.

The vanguard makes considerable effort to give an appearance of permanent dialectical movement and perfection to the society that it controls. It considers in depth the implications of new social forms, new institutional frameworks, new programs. On the one hand, forms and institutions can be changed even before they have been properly tried: on the other, programs can be suppressed even before they are realized in practice. The programs that are applied in practice, like self-management or perestroika, are always explained by the vanguard as a dialectical progression of the past.

In the 1950s, when self-management was introduced, Yugoslav society was neither theoretically nor practically ready for a radical transformation of either the conception of socialism or of the structure of society. Inaugurated as a result of the urgent need to differentiate itself from the Soviet model of socialism, the concept of self-managing socialism was necessarily vague, self-contradictory, and

compromised. Formulated in this historical context, the idea of self-management was burdened by both the content of the old model and the initial ideological orientation of the vanguard.

Yugoslav self-managing socialism suffered the old illness of socialism in general -- the inversion of Marx's historical materialism into socialist historical idealism. Instead of thought following the logic of reality, reality follows the logic of thought. What for Marx was the end of revolution, the ideological revolution that changes the superstructure, is now the beginning of socialism. The vanguard's permanent revolution, the modification of the superstructure, becomes a kind of permanent experiment in theory and practice. The ideology is always written in the future tense, alluding to a "distant glory" when its program will "become a part of human hearts," as seen in The Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1958:

> The further development of socialism will transform the social structure of Yugoslavia, which will gradually lose its class features and antagonism. It will increasingly be characterized by a freer and stronger socioeconomic unification, as required by an advanced division of labour and in accordance with the collective interests of society and with the personal interests of the citizens. On such a foundation a new civilization will spring up, which would consciously be shaped by millions of people according to their needs.
>
> Such social and political relations must necessarily give rise to a new humanism in relations among people. The new fundamental social role of the factory, cooperative, commune, school, social organization and

> family consists in fostering sincerity, trust, a love of mankind, understanding, tolerance, cooperation and mutual assistance, in short, human warmth and comradeship among people.[2]

By knowing that such a "distant glory" will be difficult to achieve, the "vanguard as the teacher, the guide, and the leader . . . will strive to educate man in the spirit of such aspiration."[3] This is why ideological and moral factors, spiritual creativity and indeed acceptance of material sacrifices for the sake of achieving certain ideological, moral, cultural, and political goals are gaining increasing importance in social life. These factors are the embodiment of social consciousness and are becoming a spiritual motive force and orientation for practice.[4]

In its attempt to change the face of socialism, the Yugoslav vanguard had to resurrect the Stalinist "mass man" into the individual self-manager whose interests were one and the same with society's.

> Socialism cannot subordinate man's personal happiness to some kind of "higher aims", because the highest aim of socialism is the personal happiness of man. On the other hand, no one has the right to pursue his personal interests to the detriment of the collective interests of all.[5]

Self-management was supposed to be the means by which the human being outgrows his alienation, or reduction to a mere means, characteristic of the labour in capitalist society. A

free, self-managing human community is, according to the Yugoslav vanguard, one that negates simultaneously both the egoistic individual and the alienated institutionalized socialist mass man. But what kind of a relationship should the vanguard have with this new socialist self-manager, who consciously manages his factory, office, school, or hospital, and who governs his country? In other words, can social self-management as a form of direct democracy coexist with the vanguard's monopoly over society? If social self-management essentially means the decentralization of decision-making power in the economy and society, the prerequisite for the withering away of the state, will the vanguard wither away?

The Yugoslav vanguard's ideology attempts to combine the decentralization of the economy with de-bureaucratization and democratization in the political sphere, although practice, as elsewhere, has lagged behind theory. Since in the USSR the state bureaucracy under Stalin became a power over the people, the 1958 Draft Program of the vanguard proclaimed that

> the question of the gradual withering away of the state arises as the fundamental and decisive question of the socialist system.[6]

The gradual withering away of the state was to be accomplished by the decentralization of the governmental machinery, separating it from the party apparatus, and

transferring increasingly greater responsibility of the state organs to the local bodies, particularly the commune. Harking back to the young Marx, philosophical Lenin, and the anarcho-syndicalist thought, the Yugoslav vanguard asserted that the commune was to become neither only nor primarily a school of democracy, but democracy itself. With the anticipated withering away of the state, bureaucratic tendencies in the form of conservatism, dogmatism, state capitalism, and pragmatic revisionism of Marxism will disappear. The complete withering away of the state would signify or reflect the withering away of the remains of class antagonism, the alleged roots of alienation in contemporary socialist societies. It would, hence, usher in the communist era, an era in which Marx's principle "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," would be implemented.

According to the vanguard's theory, social self-management (radnicko sampluravljanje) and social self-government (drustveno samoupravljanje) should take over the state function and constitute the foundation and the very essence of direct socialist democracy. The constitution of 1974 reaffirmed the commune as the basis sociopolitical unit, and also proclaimed a new unit of workers' self-management, the basic organization of associated labour, as more fundamental

than workers' councils.

Along with decentralization of the state and economy, the Yugoslav communists also embarked upon the decentralization of their vanguard as well, at least in theory, and even envisaged the withering away of the vanguard itself. The concept of the withering away of the vanguard, ever since it was formulated by Tito in 1952, has caused a good deal of trouble for the Yugoslav communist leadership. That was one of the reasons that Djilas rejected the party and Marxism-Leninism, although not socialism in general.

The 1958 Program linked the withering away of the party with the withering away of social antagonisms or contradictions and the abolition of all forms of coercion, including the state.

> The leading political role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia will gradually disappear in the perspective, as the forms of all direct socialist democracy become stronger, develop and expand. This disappearance will proceed parallel to the objective process of the withering away of all social antagonisms and all forms of coercion which historically grew out of these antagonisms.[7]

This interpretation of the withering away of the party meant that the party reserved the right as the alleged vanguard of the proletariat to decide when and even if the so-called social antagonisms have withered away, and hence, when or whether the party should follow in its wake. Such a

formulation was certainly disquieting for a new self-manager who may have to wait a very long time for the realization of direct or any other type of democracy. Tito himself adamantly upheld that view:

> There can be no withering away or winding up of the League of Communists until the last class enemy has been immobilized, until the broadest body of our citizens are socialist in outlook.[8]

At a time when the party is supposed to wither away, its role in society does not lessen, but increases. The increasing role and responsibilities of the party in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism and communism was supposed to manifest itself in the party's efforts to act as a catalyst in the continuing revolutionary transformation of society, as a guardian of socialist morals and the essence of socialism. In its most far-reaching statement to date, the "Resolution of the Ideological-Political Foundation of Yugoslavia," adopted at the 9th Congress in March 1969, the LCY stated unequivocally that the communist party

> must be a part of the revolution, of the ceaseless revolutionizing of all monopoly, including its own; it must be a party that keeps moving forward and not one that conserves relationships dating from the early phase of socialism, and fossilizes them.[9]

Although the party never lived up to its promises, the events of the early 1970s, the nationalist stirrings throughout Yugoslavia, and the conflict with the Praxis group made the

League of Communists revise its theory. The 10th and 11th Party Congresses reaffirmed the party's ideological-political power and monopoly in Yugoslavia. Tito was especially careful in the early 1970s to place Yugoslavia's continuing institutional pluralism in proper perspective:

> Socio-political organizations are not a transmission of the social role of the League of Communists. But neither can they be parallel political organizations fighting for power or wielding a specific kind of influence over the consciousness of man. Each of them has its specific role, its tasks in a specific field of social life, and for this it is accountable to its members. It is precisely for this reason that the League of Communists must play the unifying ideological and political role.[10]

Since the party as the vanguard of the proletariat possesses "scientific" knowledge of social processes, it is only natural that it "should be the leading and guiding ideological-political force in society."[11] But where does that leave the "pluralism of the common interests" on which self-managing socialism as a form of direct democracy rests? The pluralism of the common interests does not mean the open competition of different ideas and interests, but the unification of different interests into a common interest - the building of self-managing socialism.

The pluralism of the common interests represented a modified form of the slogan used by the vanguard in the revolution: "brotherhood and unity." Edvard Kardelj, who

formulated the concept of the pluralism of the common interest, expressed as much in his report to the Second Congress of Self-Managers of Yugoslavia:

> For our multinational country, the pluralism of the common interest is the only way to build a truly socialist democracy. Our peoples, divided by history, religion, and nationality, should freely exercise their religious, national, personal, and other interests, but they should always have in mind, that we all, as Yugoslavs, have one interest in common, the interest which stands above all our personal interests - the building of our self-managing socialist democracy.[12]

The pluralism of the common interests, defined in Kardelji's words, assumes that the common interest of the Yugoslav peoples is the "building of self-managing socialist democracy," and that this interest should stand above all personal interests. The interest of the individual and the interest of the society, thus, should become one and the same. The "pluralism" in this concept suggests that after individuals have accepted the "common interest," namely, the building of the socialist self-managing democracy, as their own, they can pursue other interests, because their first commitment has been given to the "common interest."

The notion of the Yugoslav pluralism of the common interest parallels Rousseau's conception of the General Will:

> Each of us puts his person and all of his power under the supreme direction of the general will, and in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.[13]

Rousseau holds that the sovereignty of the general will cannot be represented, because it is inalienable and indivisible. However, the general will of self-managing socialism resides in the sovereignty of the vanguard, for it is the representative of the general will, its sovereign and executor. Moreover, the vanguard's position in society made it the Legislator of self-managing socialism. For Rousseau, the Legislator cannot rule, because, if he does, a society resolves into a tyranny:

> He who has command over the laws ought not any more to have it over men . . . . When Lycurgus gave laws to his country, he began by resigning the throne . . . . Rome, when it was most prosperous, suffered a revival of crime and tyranny, and was brought to the verge of destruction, because it put the legislative authority and the sovereign power into the same hands.[14]

The Praxis Group levelled a similar criticism. The philosophers, sociologists, and economists of the Praxis Group maintained that self-managing socialism, if it is to become in practice as it is written in theory, cannot co-exist with the monopoly of the communist party in society. Mihajlo Markovic expressed the common statement of the Praxis Group:

> The introduction of self-management in Yugoslavia represents the revolution in the revolution. It opens up a new horizon of socialist development. Self-management can exist only as a self-determination of the people or not at all. The League of Communists should transfer its power to the self-managers, who freely, in their every day life, would realize the real socialist democracy.[15]

In Rousseau's terms, Markovic and the Praxis Group were saying

that when the League of Communists gave self-management to its country, it should have resigned its dominant position in society. Self-management can only represent the common interest of society, but not when

> the state and party stand above the system of self-management at the grass roots, and are able to intervene, to impose decisions from outside.[16]

But the League of Communists did not accept the criticism of the Praxis Group, maintaining that

> in socialist self-managing democracy, the League of Communists and other factors of organized socialist social, scientific, cultural, and other consciousness and action are formed and organized as a creative component part of the self-managing and democratic community of free producers, and not as an alienated political factor in a competitive fight for power over society, social labour, and its product and outcome.[17]

The League of Communists did not intend to resign from its powerful position in society, holding the same feelings toward self-management as Rousseau held for the general will, namely that

> the general will is always right, but the judgment which guides it is not always enlightened.[18]

The people could not be trusted to arrive unaided at the common good expressed in the principle of self-management: the vanguard had to lead the way. Edvard Kardelj contended that the party had the task of leading the fight for "progressive social positions" in all fields.[19] Najdan Pasic claimed that

the formal division of power and sovereignty, seniority and subordination are fading away within self-managing institutions, whereas the party "retains a certain monopoly: that of representing the long-term interests of the workers, while conforming its views in a democratic procedure with others."[20]

The Praxis Group based its criticism of self-managing socialism on Marxian premises. They held, as Marx did, that the real emancipation of society would have to start from the "real individual," as a "protest of the inhuman life." The Praxis philosophers found it necessary in their critique of socialism, especially Stalinism, to focus on a long-neglected entity in the socialist world -- man. As a result, the Praxis philosophers embarked on a redefinition of Marxism-Leninism by developing what they consider to be the essential concept in Marxism that was missing in Stalinism: Marx's philosophy of man. They have pointed out that socialist societies have gone to the extreme of collectivism in their attempt to uproot the "capitalist evil" of individual egoism. The Praxis philosophers held that the shift in emphasis from the isolated individual to an abstraction called the "collective" was contrary to the humanistic inspiration of the "original" Marxism.[21]

The Praxis Group has argued that man as a being of praxis was the missing link between Stalinism, which continued the classical dehumanization and alienation of man, and authentic socialism or socialist humanism, for which the realization of the individual was the only legitimate goal. The group also stated that this conception of man as a social being as well as a being of praxis, a creative and self-creative being, should form the basis for the socialist self-managing society. Man as a being of praxis was conceived of by the Praxis Group as the key to the achievement of a more human world, a world in which the individual becomes socialized and society individualized in accordance with Marx's vision of "a restoration of the human world of human relationship to man himself."[22]

The members of the Praxis Group considered self-managing socialism as a giant field of social experimentation pioneering a new futuristic system, but the essence of this new system would be a quest for a radical transcendence of all classical political institutions like the state, party, army, police, and security services. Without that transcendence, self-managing socialism would be only the experiment of a Modern Legislator who presents itself as the alleged defender of the general interest from particularistic tendencies. The

critique of self-managing socialism by the Praxis Group can be re-read in Rousseau's The Social Contract:

> He who holds command over the laws ought to have not any more over men; or else his laws would be the ministers of his passions and would often merely serve to perpetuate his injustice: his private aims would inevitably mar the sanctity of his work.[23]

Presently, the leadership of the Yugoslav vanguard has openly stated that self-management does not work. The experiment of the Modern Legislator has failed, leaving the concept of self-management to be remembered only as a Utopian idea. Perhaps, we can discover the main reason for the failure of the experiment of the Modern Legislator in Yugoslavia in Rousseau's words:

> The wise Legislator does not begin by laying down laws good in themselves, but by investigating the fitness of the people who are destined to receive them.[24]

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Voluntarism is a theory that attaches too much weight to the human will as a factor in history, and too little to "objective," that is economic, factors. The inversion of Marx's historical materialism into historical idealism was done by Lenin, who placed human will, or the will of the vanguard, in the center of the social change. The word "voluntarism" comes from the Latin world voluntas-voluntatis, which essentially means "will."

[2]Blagije Bokovic and David Dasic, eds., The Socialist Self-Management in Yugoslavia, Documents (1950-1980), Socialist Theory and Practice (from the Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia) (Belgrade, 1958), pp. 124-5.

[3]Ibid., p. 124.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 123.

[6]Ibid., p. 128.

[7]Ibid., p. 129.

[8]Ibid., p. 120.

[9]Ibid., p. 209.

[10]Ibid., p. 223.

[11]Ibid., p. 209.

[12]Ibid., p. 324.

[13]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses (New York: Everyman's Library, 1973), p. 175.

[14]Ibid., p. 195.

[15]Mihajlo Markovic, From Affluence to Praxis (Ann

Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), p. 120. The so-called "Praxis Group" consists of the Yugoslav intellectuals, the university professors -- philosophers, sociologists, economists -- who during the 1960s and early 1970 gathered around the radical Marxist journals Praxis and Filosofija and who, in 1963, instituted an annual International Summer School on the island of Korcula, supplemented since 1971 by Winter Philosophical Meetings in Serbia. The group has been attacked by regime spokesmen for a wide variety of wrongs, ranging from alleged opposition to the workers, self-management, economic decentralization of Yugoslavia's emerging market economy, to the accusation of misleading and corrupting the youth and attempting to transform a student rebellion and dissatisfaction into a broad confrontation between the young people and the foundation of the socio-political system, as well as undermining the leading role of the League of Communists, and so on.

[16]Ibid., p. 234.

[17]Bokovic and Dasic, Socialist Self-Management, p. 112.

[18]Rousseau, Social Contract, p. 193.

[19]Edvard Kardelj, Nasa Drustvena Kritika (Our Social Critique) (Beograd: Komunist, 1974), p. 213.

[20]Najdan Pasic, Yugoslovenski Samouprvani Sistem (The Yugoslav Self-Managing System) (Beograd: Komunist, 1976), p. 145.

[21]The philosophy of the Praxis Group was Marxist-Humanism. They have argued that communist society in Marx's terms is first of all a humanist society.

[22]Karl Marx, Early Writings ed. and trans. T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 132.

[23]Rousseau, Social Contract, p. 195.

[24]Ibid., p. 197.

CONCLUSION

Lenin's theory and the experience of the Russian revolution changed Marx's theory, which stated that the social transformation of society from capitalism into socialism was only possible in an economically advanced society, where the industrial workers, the proletariat, constituted the majority of the population. The creation of the new society is portrayed by Marx as the conscious act of the proletariat itself, as its own emancipation. Lenin shifted the revolution from the advanced countries to the backward ones, where the communist party became the revolutionary agent. The followers of Lenin have accepted the Russian Revolution as a model for the transformation of capitalism (or pre-capitalism) to communism (or various forms of socialism).

The socialist countries underwent a profound political change as a result of either a revolution or an external military intervention by the countries in which the socialist revolution had taken place earlier.

The essential features of this change are these: the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and the introduction of a state controlled economic system, and the

abolition of the political power of the bourgeoisie and the replacement of multi-party parliamentary pluralism by a one party system in which political status is the unique source of power. The constitutions in these societies proclaim: elimination of exploitation and all class inequalities, remuneration according to work, the decisive role of the workers in social decision-making, and a considerable extension of human rights, which in addition to civil liberties, comprise also the right to employment, social security, free education, and so on.

However, in all these societies there is a wide gap between the principles of their constitutions and their social reality, which still preserves various kinds of inequality and various forms of domination and oppression characteristic of class society. The gap is the consequence of the fact that the revolution was never completed in any of these countries. The revolution in the Marxian sense is a radical transformation of the relations of production; it involves the abolition of all those social structures that allow one particular social group to dispose of objectified labour and to appropriate a considerable part of the surplus value. According to Marx, seizure of political power is only the beginning, only an "episode" in the process of transcending all existing social

contradiction.

The dichotomy between ideology and reality is explained by the fact that the political phase of the revolution started in backward societies which missed the liberating effects of the Enlightenment and the bourgeois democratic revolutions. They never went beyond certain typically feudal institutions and patterns of social behaviour, involving entrenched privilege, discrimination before the law, the subordinations of both the legislature and judiciary to executive power, the public treatment of political leaders as absolute monarchs and the reduction of the citizens to loyal and obedient subjects, ready to follow the machinations of those political policies as dictated from above. Under those conditions it did not take long for the vanguards of the revolutionary movements to emerge as new ruling elites.

The socialist countries cannot be described as either socialist or state capitalist: they are a curious mixture of various elements, and even when they give the impression of considerable stability, they hide, below the surface, many sharp, latent conflicts and contradictions. One of the most crucial problems inherent in these societies is that they have not yet developed democratic and non-violent strategies for the resolution of conflict. The reason for this shortcoming is not

just the lack of a democratic tradition from an early progressive liberal bourgeoisie era, because the nature of their revolutionary movements during the time preceding the accession to power is, as I have argued, also especially pertinent. Facing the tremendous power of their entrenched establishments, the socialist agents of change had no chance of a successful overthrow of that power unless they developed a monolithic unity, extreme discipline, and a spirit of uncompromised militancy. Participants in such movements continued in this way over the decades to look out for class enemies even when there were few around.

In spite of all the differences between the various socialist countries, all of them suffer from the old "illness" of Leninism - the inversion of Marx's historical materialism into socialist historical idealism. Even the recent theory of the "real socialism" suggests that inversion:

> In a scientific historical context the term "real socialism" means the practical social materialization of scientific socialism, i.e., "real socialism" in the broadest sense means a real socialist social order, built or being built on the basis of the ideas, laws and ideals of scientific socialism.
>
> The establishment of the real socialism marks "the historical moment when," in Lenin's words, "theory is translated into practice, is enlivened by practice, corrected by and verified in practice."[1]
>
> For Marx, theory cannot be translated into practice; on

the contrary, theory is a critical aspect of reality; it follows practice, it does not create it. The task of the Legislator, however, as Rousseau maintained, is to "translate laws into practice." The Legislator "would have, in the march of time, to look forward to a distant glory, and, working in one century to be able to enjoy in the next." For Rousseau, the Legislator is the founder of the nation, the state, the new social order. He is "the engineer who invents the machine"[2] by discovering "the rules of society best suited to nation." Only the Legislator's "superior intelligence," according to Rousseau, can prove his mission.[3]

The communist vanguard is the founder of the new social order, claiming on its side the "superior intelligence" of Marxism. The vanguard - the "Modern Legislator" - was building socialism according to the "ideas, laws, and ideals of scientific socialism," thinking that Marx's scientific socialism had given it its role as the executioner of history. The evolution of the Modern Legislator almost followed along the lines that Rousseau suggested to Montesquieu: "At the birth of societies the rulers of the Republic establish institutions, and afterwards the institutions mould the rulers."[4] The Russian Revolution has established the vanguard as the Modern Legislator, who, in time, took the shape of Stalinism, Tito

ism, and Maoism.

The role of Rousseau's Legislator is to legitimize the already formed society based on the General Will. The formation of the General Will which comes in "conditions which can subsist no longer," namely, the conditions of war, is in a way a revolution which "changes the manner of existence."[5] The pledge of all to the common good is a revolution which establishes new relations among men, but that can happen only when people do not have any other option, when they must unite in order to survive. All social revolutions started in the conditions of war, insecurity, and famine. The people rose up in Russia in 1917 and in Yugoslavia in 1941 because the conditions of war endangered their existence. Their common good, their General Will, was peace, freedom, and bread. They did not think of a new social order at the moment when "tomorrow" was uncertain. In the midst of war and the collapse of the old political order, the well organized communist parties were able to become the leaders of the masses, promising them a better world. In uncertain times the masses followed the "promised good."

In both the Russian and Yugoslavian revolutions the masses followed the communist vanguard who, in time "absorbing their revolutionary energy," organized a new society, placing

itself as Sovereign. The Sovereign of the new society, in order to preserve both the revolution and its sovereign position, became the Legislator, changing social institutions which would in time bring the "distant glory" of communism. The vanguard Sovereign-Legislator became the creator and executioner of the society's common good, which is the General Will. But unlike Rousseau's Legislator, who was "unable to appeal to either force or reason," and who "must have recourse to an authority of a different order, capable of constraining without violence and persuading without convincing,"[6] the Modern Legislator's execution of the General Will of society, which was according to "him" the building of socialism, always used forced to implement "his laws."

Interpreting socialism as a society formed by the Modern Legislator, we directly negate socialism as the realization of Marxian principles. In The Jewish Question Marx criticized Rousseau for placing the emancipation of man and society in the hands of the Legislator. According to Marx's teaching, socialism would be only an act of political revolution that replaces a set of rulers while leaving the social structure unchanged. Socialism is still a civil society in which all members oppose the vanguard's authority. Although I have suggested that socialism can be re-interpreted through

Rousseau's Legislator, I also suggest that Rousseau can provide the best critique of the Modern Legislator:

> Any man may engrave tables of stone, or buy an oracle, or feign secret intercourse with some divinity, or train a bird to whisper in his ear, or find other vulgar ways of imposing on people. He whose knowledge goes no further may perhaps gather round him a band of fools; but he will never found an empire, and his extravagances will quickly perish with him.[7]

Currently socialism is experiencing a crisis in all important domains of social and political life: politics, economics, social structure, morals, ideology. Yugoslavian political theory openly admits that the crisis of socialism is a crisis of socialist identity, that the legitimacy of the post-revolutionary vanguards is being questioned, and that it is not able any more to maintain its legitimacy in society simply by calling on the revolution.[8] The ideological exhaustion of the existing project of socialism cannot provide any new alternatives to the growing social and political problems. Communist vanguards are still hiding behind an ideology of Marxism-Leninism that has lost touch with reality. The alternatives offered by the communist vanguards are still coming from "above," and their peoples are accepting them with reservation. It may very well be that Marxian historical materialism is not a thing of the past, but of the future.

ENDNOTES TO CONCLUSION

[1]Vasil Ivanov, In The Age of Socialism (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1981), p. 16.

[2]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses (New York: Everyman's Library, 1973), p. 194.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 173.

[6]Ibid., p. 196.

[7]Ibid., p. 197.

[8]Jovica Trkulja, "Marksism Izmeju Apologije i Nihilizma" (Marxism Between the Apology and Nihilism) in Ideje, Casopis Za Teoriju Savremenog Drustva (The Journal for the Theory of the Contemporary Society) April (1987): 33.

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