Contents/Sommaire

The Inception of Western Marxism: Karl Korsch and the Politics of Philosophy
Russell Jacoby 5

The Early Castoriadis: Socialism, Barbarism and the Bureaucratic Thread
Brian Singer 35

The Meaning and Significance of "Empirical Method" for the Critical Theory of Society
H.T. Wilson 57

Le Concept de la societe fragmentaire de Louis Hartz et son application a l'exemple canadien
K.D. McRae 69

Review Articles/Comptes rendus

Sorel and the Social Uncertainty Principle
John L. Stanley 83

Reconstructing the Traditions: Quentin Skinner's Historians' History of Political Thought
J.G.A. Pocock 95

Consciousness and the World
Ken Reshaur 114

Of Leviathan Republics
Alkis Kontos 124

Marriage for Socialism: Emotions and Notions
F. Mechner Barnard 130

Books Received/Livres reçus 142

Index to Volume Three 144

THE INCEPTION OF WESTERN MARXISM: KARL KORSCH AND THE POLITICS OF PHILOSOPHY

Russell Jacoby

Philosophy continues to haunt Marxism. If Marx abandoned philosophy, later Marxists salvaged it. Georgi Plekhanov in Russia, Antonia Labriola in Italy, Georges Sorel in France and Max Adler in Austria were leading Marxists at the end of the 19th century whose main contributions did not lie within political economy but within philosophy.¹ In the 20th century philosophy has become the principal concern of Marxists from Georg Lukács to Jean-Paul Sartre.

The turn to philosophy was not a flight from politics. Rather politics infused the philosophical debates. Yet as Lenin himself realized,² no simple relationship existed between philosophical and political positions. The historical chapter which includes Lukács' History and Class Consciousness (1923) and Karl Korsch's Marxism and Philosophy (1923) is opaque if considered apart from the political context. Neither book presented any heretical political positions; yet each was soundly and quickly denounced by the keepers of the Leninist orthodoxy. Without charting the political universe of Lukács and Korsch, one cannot understand the storm their books provoked.

While studies of Lukács multiply,³ Korsch has been ignored and died forgotten in the United States in 1961. Unlike Lukács he was expelled from the Communist Party and subsequently pursued a long and isolated re-evaluation of Marxism.⁴ Yet his own work and life fed into a rich vein of unorthodox Marxism. In the United States he remained in contact with partisans of workers' councils, and established contact with the "Frankfurt School" (Max Horkheimer, T.W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, et al).⁵ At one time he was planning to collaborate with Horkheimer on a "long book on the dialectic."⁶ In this period he wrote an excellent though neglected book on Marx.⁷ His path often intersected with unorthodox Marxists. Bertolt Brecht, for example, considered Korsch his intellectual mentor, and continually sought his advice.⁸ What may be the best book by a North American on Marx in the first decades of the century — Sidney Hook's Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx (1933) — owed much to Korsch.⁹

The context and fate of Marxism and Philosophy present the issues sharply; it was a philosophical contribution which engaged a political universe. If the
latter was not always visible, it was never absent. In the wake of *Marxism and Philosophy* and *History and Class Consciousness* the term Western Marxism arose to designate a philosophical tradition that challenged Soviet Marxism. Like *Marxism and Philosophy*, which partly inspired it, the entire tradition straddled philosophy and politics. On the surface the issues were philosophical. Beneath the surface lay a mixture of political principles and tactics: the nature of a revolutionary organization, the role of the masses, the formation of class consciousness.

While Western Marxism marked a common philosophical tradition it is difficult to characterize the tradition briefly. It read Marx as attentive not only to philosophy but to the categories of subjectivity, consciousness, culture and alienation; and these terms were understood as refracted through Hegel. Marxism was not simply a "science" of revolution or a political economy, but a theory of human society and subjectivity. Soviet Marxism, as crystallized in Bukharin's *Historical Materialism* or Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, presented an opposite interpretation. Marxism was less a theory of society than a universal science of nature and society. Unlike Western Marxism, the line between society and nature was blurred, and subjectivity devalued. For the Soviet Marxists, Marxism was a purely objective science of developmental laws.10

*Marxism and Philosophy* echoed the general philosophical themes of Western Marxism. Korsch defended the centrality of philosophy to Marxism. Marxism was not simply a political economy, but a critique: and a critique included a philosophical confrontation with the "intellectual (ideological) structure of society." "Vulgar" Marxists deemed philosophy obsolete, surpassed by political economy; but to Korsch this was a fundamental misinterpretation. Marxism must be as multi-dimensional as is the social reality, and this required alertness to the ideological glue that bound society together. Korsch called for "intellectual action" and drew a parallel with Marx's statements on the relationship of political to economic action. "Just as political action is not rendered unnecessary by the economic action of a revolutionary class, so intellectual action is not rendered unnecessary by either political or economic action."11

*Marxism and Philosophy* committed the philosophical sins of Western Marxism. It attended to subjectivity, consciousness, philosophy and Hegel. These were hardly a monopoly of a western tradition, but Soviet Marxism bestowed on them a sharply different meaning. The interpretation of Hegel in each tradition is both an index and a source of the divergence. If Marx arrived at his own theory by way of Hegel, so did subsequent Marxists: their reading of Marxism was decisively colored by their reception of Hegel. Nowhere is this truer than in Western and Soviet Marxism.
distinct or universal qualities — and the validity of Marxism for Russia. Philosophical categories were scrutinized as to their receptivity to individualized Russian development or to universal and ineluctable Western evolution. Due to these pressures, Hegel, already refracted through the Western/Slavophile dialogue, assumed the role of the theorist of objective and universal development.

The two major figures in this conflict were Mikhailovsky and Plekhanov. Mikhailovsky, a populist and critic of Marxism, ardently defended the individual, and individual ethical and moral choices; in this respect he also resisted fatalism and determinism in social theory. It is not fortuitous that he dubbed his contribution “subjective” sociology, for he found extremely inadequate a purely objective approach. As he stated in his famous “What is Progress?”: “The exclusive use of the objective method in sociology ... would be tantamount to measuring weight with a yardstick ... supreme control must be vested in the subjective method.” Hegel, consequently, is viewed as the foe of the individual. “There is no system of philosophy which treats the individual with such withering contempt and cold cruelty as the system of Hegel.”

The most important rejoinder to Mikhailovsky was by Plekhanov, and the substance of his reply was adopted and repeated by the Legal Marxists and Lenin. Plekhanov celebrated Hegel and wrote a commemorative piece for the German Social-Democratic journal Die Neue Zeit. His full answer to Mikhailovsky, The Development of the Monist View of History, “reared,” according to Lenin, “a whole generation of Russian Marxists.” Contra Mikhailovsky, Plekhanov accentuated the objective, deterministic, and universal qualities of Hegel and Marx. With Hegel “the accident of human arbitrariness and human prudence give place to conformity to law, i.e. consequently to necessity.” Or as he stated in his polemic: “The ‘subjective method’ in sociology is the greatest nonsense.”

Most accounts agree that in the Populist/Marxist conflict, the Marxists were able to gain the upper hand. They were able to pin on Mikhailovsky the charges of confusion, idealism, vacillation, while they themselves claimed science, objectivity and determinism. It did not matter how one wanted or desired Russia to develop, it was in fact objectively developing towards capitalism: so would argue many of the first Russian Marxists, including Lenin. Inasmuch as this was already a chapter in the longer exchange between the Westernizers and Slavophiles, the Marxists were more than ready to stress the objective, scientific, and universal qualities of the categories of Hegel and Marx. The very term “subjective” for the Russian Marxists was irrevocably tainted by its association with the populists and their argument for a non-western and non-Marxist option for Russia.
The Soviet version of Marxism as a scientific and unified theory of society and nature was already prefigured in the response to Mikhailovsky. For Mikhailovsky, in accord with his concern for the individual, separated society from nature. His complaint against the positivists was rooted here: they devalued the individual by employing methods appropriate for biology and chemistry. The rejoinder by Russian Marxists defended the continuum of nature and society; they considered this the test of the rigor and objectivity of a science. This political crucible cast a reading of Hegel, science, nature, and objectivity, which was the mirror image of that formed in Western Marxism.

The European reception of Hegel which issued into Marxism toward the end of the century differed in kind. By the last quarter of the century the Hegelian tradition had almost disappeared, especially in Germany. It is to be recalled that when Marx averred that he was a "pupil of that mighty thinker" in 1873, it was because Hegel was currently being treated as a "dead dog." Nearly everywhere forms of positivism and social darwinism, had supplanted Hegel. Italy could claim the richest Hegelian tradition outside of Russia. The most significant and original of the Italian Hegelians was Bertrando Spaventa. Studies of Spaventa have increased in recent years not simply because of his own contribution but because his pupil was Antonio Labriola, the "first" Italian Marxist. Moreover there is practically an unbroken line running from Spaventa through Labriola, Croce and Gramsci — and Gramsci, like Rosa Luxemburg, is one of the major figures of Western Marxism. Gentile, also, was a "second generation" student of Spaventa. He published many of Spaventa's works, and since he became later a "philosopher" of Italian fascism, the interpretation of Italian Hegelianism is politically charged.

While national and political motives were Spaventa's impetus he was drawn to the active and subjective dimensions of Hegel. Man's "world, his knowledge, and his happiness — all which he is as a man — is by his own efforts. In general that is the significance of the great concept of work and history, which in essence are the same thing." The Phenomenology was the key to the Logic, and not the other way around. In Spaventa the subjective elements predominate. Exactly on the point of the dialectic of nature in Hegel, Spaventa differed from the orthodox wing of Italian Hegelians (Augusto Vera, et al). The orthodox sought to defend the whole of Hegel including the "systematical unity of nature," and transformation from quantity to quality. Spaventa, and his circle, recognized here the inadequacy of Hegel.

Labriola, a student of Spaventa, defended Hegel against the call for the "return to Kant" in his very first work. And here it was not the Hegel of the system and universal science à la Plekhanov, but the Hegel of the theory of knowledge, and the subjective and objective moments of the dialectic. The Marxism of Labriola and for a brief moment Gentile, would bear these traces: a focus on subjectivity, self-activity, philosophy and praxis; and a very deter-
RUSSELL JACOBY

mined effort to set Marxism off from its positivist deformations. It was with regard to Plekhanov, in fact, that Labriola regretted that some people turn to Marxism for "universal knowledge." The Marxism that Labriola came to was a philosophy as well as a political economy; the evolutionary or Darwinian interpretation of Marxism was especially foreign to Labriola. He retrieved the subjective and human core of Marxism.

Labriola's most important contributions "In Memory of the Communist Manifesto" (1895), "Historical Materialism" (1896), Socialism and Philosophy (1897), were followed shortly by Gentile's Philosophy of Marx (1899) and Croce's Historical Materialism and Marxist Economics (1899). Both of these were elaborations, as well as partial rebuttals, of Labriola; both emphatically displayed Hegelian roots. Croce, while contesting that Marxism was a "philosophy of history," sharply criticized Achille Loria's positivist misreading of Marx. Gentile translated the neglected Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," and centered his study on the subject/object relation and the concept of praxis. The term that he applied to Marxism, "philosophy of praxis," would later be employed by Gramsci.

In contrast to the Hegel and Marx of Russia, the Italian interpretation pursued the subjective dimension. Obviously the context was a fundamental determining force; the Russians were contesting a populism devoted to the uniqueness of Russian development; and they reached for the Hegel of objective and universal categories. The Italians were confronted with widespread positivist and evolutionary thought. Consequently, they were less interested in the Hegel of nature and science than the Hegel of spirit, consciousness and activity.

In France, the weakness and slow development of a Hegelian tradition confirm a close relationship between the "historicist" Hegel and Western Marxism. A good translation of the Phenomenology only dates from 1939. The reasons for this lateness are many, including an old and deep anti-German sentiment; but it seems clear that only after this Hegel tradition was established could a Western Marxist tradition root and grow. Hence a Western Marxism kindred to Labriola/Gramsci in Italy and to Lukács/Korsch in Germany only developed after World War II in France.

Of course this is somewhat overstated. Nineteenth-century France could boast a feeble "eclectic" Hegelian, Victor Cousin, whose inadequacies were compounded by his insufficient German. The orthodox Italian Hegelian, Vera, completed some French translations and introductions to Hegel — which have been universally denigrated. More interesting, however, are some figures at the end of the century — Georges Sorel, Charles Andler, Lucien Heer — who reveal the same preoccupations as the Italians: attention to Hegel and the subjective dimension of Marxism, and repudiation of positivist "scientific" Marxism.
HISTORY OF WESTERN MARXISM

Sorel was closely tied to Labriola and Croce. Sorel wrote the preface to the French edition of one of Labriola’s books; and another of Labriola’s books, Socialism and Philosophy, is composed of letters to Sorel. While Labriola eventually broke with him, Croce considered Sorel a kindred spirit, and was his regular correspondent. Sorel’s position on Hegel was not consistent; on some occasions he attacked, on others he defended Hegel. He was, however, a forceful exponent of praxis and subjectivity in Marx, and, consequently, a vigorous critic of the positivist and scientist pretensions of Marxism. He repeatedly denounced the notion that Marxism was a “science” like the natural sciences. Herr wrote one of the few articles on Hegel, and planned to write a three-volume study — volumes which he never completed. Very few of the French, it could be noted, who were attracted to Hegel, demonstrated interest in Hegel’s philosophy of nature.

One final issue should be mentioned here since it involves the French as well as the Italians and Russians. One index for the separation of Western from Soviet Marxism was the interpretation of Engels. After Marx’s death, Engels became the official spokesman for Marxism, and several of his pamphlets proved more popular than anything Marx wrote. While to some Marx and Engels were intellectually inseparable, others suggested that on some critical issues Engels deviated from Marx.

In fact this was one of the “heresies” of Lukács’ History and Class Consciousness. Lukács commented — and he was not alone here — that Engels “following Hegel’s mistaken lead” extended the dialectical to nature, and lost the distinction between history and nature. Consequently the dimension of subjectivity — unique to history — was eclipsed.

The evaluation of Engels highlighted not only two Marxist, but two Hegelian traditions. It is no accident that those most critical of Engels were closest to a “historicist” Hegel. While it has recently been argued that Lukács was the first to criticize Engels, initial re-evaluation is more properly attributed to the Hegelians of Italy and France in the 1890s. Soviet Marxism, however, considered the sundering of nature and society a betrayal of science. Consistent with their image of a “scientific” Hegel, they defended Engels and his philosophy of nature. Hence Soviet Marxism has been characterized by its dependence on Engels more than on Marx.

Both the French and Italians recognized that Engels gave a scientific and positivist cast to Marxism. Gentile claimed that Engels “never penetrated profoundly the philosophical part” of his friend’s theory; and that he had transformed the Hegelian notion of “immanence” into the “Platonic idea of transcendental nature.” These Italian criticisms, which included those of Croce, culminated in Rodolfo Mondolfo’s major analysis of Engels from 1912. Mondolfo stated, among other things, that Engels was less interested in the critique of consciousness than Marx; and that Engels transformed the subject/object dialectic into a causal relation.
Sorel, for his part, had a very dim view of Engels. He charged that Engels had no philosophical training, and was confused about Hegel; and moreover that Engels passed off evolutionary theory as historical materialism. He thought that Engels' term “scientific socialism” was misleading, bearing more the imprint of Spencer than Marx. Andler sought to separate Marx' and Engels' respective influence in the text of the Communist Manifesto; and he judged Engels one of the prime agents of what he called the decomposition of Marxism. The “decomposition of Marxism” was a course that Andler gave in the mid 1890s, and the subject of a book he never completed. Sorel borrowed the title for his Decomposition of Marxism (1908).

Andler sought to separate Marx' and Engels' respective influence in the text of the Communist Manifesto; and he judged Engels one of the prime agents of what he called the decomposition of Marxism. The “decomposition of Marxism” was a course that Andler gave in the mid 1890s, and the subject of a book he never completed. Sorel borrowed the title for his Decomposition of Marxism (1908).

The point of this, is to illuminate the nexus of philosophical and political categories. The line of conflict between Western and Russian Marxism was simultaneously philosophical and political. A bifurcated Hegelian legacy fired the political disputes. That the translation of philosophy into political categories contained many ambiguities and misunderstandings need not be belabored. However, the “historicist” Hegel translated into politics suggested a different logic of revolution from that derived from the “scientific” Hegel.

In the “historicist” Hegel, the categories of subjectivity and consciousness are transcribed into a notion of the self-formation of a class: the class attains (self) consciousness through its own activity. To cite Lukács, the most emphatic representative of this politicized “historicist” Hegel: with Marxism “the very meaning of social development, emerged from its previously unconscious state ... the laws of social development ... awoke to self-awareness, to consciousness .... This consciousness — in Hegelian terms, the development towards self-consciousness of society, the self-discovery of the Spirit seeking itself in the course of history ... is alone cut out to become the intellectual leader of society.” The embodiment of this consciousness is the proletariat, and not its representative in a party. A party itself, in fact, is evidence that the proletariat has not yet attained class consciousness. The workers’ councils, conversely express “the ability to act and the power of the proletariat.”

Here in the early Lukács the Hegelian concepts began to inch towards political formulations; and the direction this took conflicted with the predominant Soviet formulations. The premium placed on consciousness, self-activity, and subjectivity, eliminated or drastically redefined the Leninist idea of the vanguard party. This challenge to Leninism, rooted in a different philosophical tradition, would be posed by a series of “left” splits in the first years of the Communist Parties.

Korsch indicated in 1930 that the philosophical conflict provoked by Lukács and his books in 1923 was only a “weak echo” of the “political and tactical disputes” of “some years before.” This was accurate; by the end of 1923 the period of the political offensive, the revolutionary upsurge, had long subsided. Unlike the first post-World War I years, politics lost an immediacy. This was
not only hindsight; it was a regular pronouncement by Lenin, Trotsky, and others, that the revolution was off the agenda for the moment, that there was a "slowing down of the revolutionary tempo." The task was to dig in and prepare.

Yet the distance between the "Red Years" and 1923 was not very great; and the years mirrored the distance between the political and philosophical dimensions. Not only were the revolutionary upsurges in Germany, Italy and Hungary still vivid memories, so were the existence and threats of "left" oppositional movements. Here "left" signifies what Lenin bestowed on it: a "left" split in and from the new Communist Parties who were members of the Third Communist International. The quotation marks around "left" suggested the Leninist position: the "left" was left in name, not fact. In these years the "left" or "ultra-left" was the plague of the Communist Party.

When Korsch was denounced in 1924 as an ultra-leftist there was no ambiguity over the political meaning of the term, and there was little doubt about Korsch’s links to it. The evidence up through 1924, however, on Korsch’s credentials as an ultra-leftist is not without uncertainty. This is to be expected. First, Korsch was extremely active in several roles, as Communist Party Reichstag representative, editor of a theoretical journal, and regular contributor to the daily communist press. It is obvious that Korsch would not air heretical views in all the forums. Secondly, the situation was objectively unclear. The post October 1923 period brought a "left" turn in the German Communist Party (KPD) as will be discussed below. At the time it was difficult to foresee the outcome of this change in direction.

The political heresy of "left" communism is inextricably linked to Western Marxism. Yet if the philosophical component shaded off into the mysteries of Hegelianism, the political lacked another kind of coherence; it was always sharper in its critique of Soviet Marxism than in posing a compelling alternative. This need not be overstated; there were political issues and alternatives. These were presented and, less frequently, an attempt was made to realize them. The ambiguity that surrounds the political dimension is illustrated by one of the sources of Western Marxism, Rosa Luxemburg.

Luxemburg is claimed by both Leninists and non- or anti-Leninists; and this suggests the duality of contribution. Yet in the long run the Leninist tradition assimilated Luxemburg only with difficulty. Increasingly in the 1920s the Communist International (Comintern) attacked the sin of "Luxemburgism." Luxemburg’s critique of Lenin from 1904 and the Russian Revolution from 1918 proved to be unpalatable. The repudiation of Luxemburgism was facilitated by the fact that her successor, Paul Levi, was expelled from the Comintern; and Levi published her essay in 1922 on the Russian Revolution. It showed, he stated, "the deep antagonism between Luxemburg and Bolshevism."
On a series of issues Luxemburg assumed positions that were unacceptable to Soviet Marxism — issues which included *imperialism*, *nationalism*, and *organization*. While all these are linked, the last is the most important to our discussion. The organizational question includes the relationship of the party (and leadership) to the masses, and of theory to praxis. Consistently she charged that Lenin (and also Kautsky) over-valued leadership and fetishized organization.

The perspective of Rosa Luxemburg valued spontaneity. This meant that she paid attention to the subjective state of the masses; it seemed to her that the obedience that Lenin demanded was a problem, not a solution. The working class was already too subservient and obedient; a tendency implanted by the factory, and military and state bureaucracy. She suggested that "self-discipline" was the goal to be achieved "not as a result of the discipline imposed" by a Central Committee or a capitalist state, but "by extirpating, to the last root, [the working class's] old habits of obedience and servility."

More concretely, Luxemburg questioned parliamentary tactics and trade unionism. To achieve revolution by electoral politics or by minimal economic reforms bypassed the authentically revolutionary drives of the masses. Trade unions lacked the power to suppress exploitation, and electoral politics could only attain formal democracy. Both these positions constituted important elements of Western Marxism.

Luxemburg herself suffered from some fundamental ambivalences. Nevertheless she is justifiably associated with a series of propositions which formed a sharp critique of prevailing Leninism, and which projected a partial alternative. The distrust of a parliamentary route, of trade union politics, and of revolution "from above" formed part of her legacy. She prized "self" activity of the masses, and little incensed her more than restricting Marxist theory to the elite of the party. If philosophically, the interpretation of Engels was an index for the Soviet/Western Marxism split, politically the index was the interpretation of Luxemburg.

II

The murder of Rosa Luxemburg confused the issue of her political legacy; and she was plundered by all political groups. It is necessary to dig more deeply into the political history of the KPD to find where the political and philosophical dimensions of Western Marxism intersect. Elements of this intersection can be found in the formation of "left" communism and the Communist Worker's Party of Germany (KAPD).

The story of the KPD, the most important party outside the Soviet, was marked by splits, expulsions and unifications. The primary issues were tactical and political: the degree of centralization in the party and the Third In-
ternational, and the utilization of trade unions and parliaments for revolutionary ends. The result of the first major split in the KPD was the KAPD, at its founding congress (1920), KAPD counted close to half of the KPD membership.\textsuperscript{80}

The KAPD is important here because it represents a convergence of neo-Hegelianism and leftist politics.\textsuperscript{81} Obviously the paramount issues were tactical; and behind the tactical issues of trade unions and electoral politics stood the question of leadership. The first statement from the opposition delegates who would form the KAPD declared that "revolutionary action must not be commanded from above by a secret leadership, but must emerge out of the will of the masses."\textsuperscript{82}

The analysis of leadership depended on an essentially theoretical position: the revolutionary process relied upon the subject (the proletariat) attaining (self) consciousness. Frequently this was presented in neo-Hegelian terms. The accent was placed on the immanent development of the subjective dimension, including the psychological. The inaugural program of the KAPD stated: "The psychology of the German proletariat in its present constitution bears only too clearly the marks of centuries of militaristic enslavement .... The subjective moment plays a decisive role in the German revolution. The problem of the German revolution is the problem of the self-conscious development [Selbstbewusstseinsentwicklung] of the German proletariat."\textsuperscript{83} The Hegelian language betrays here its politics, or conversely, the politics betrays its Hegelian philosophical sources. The problem was not the formation of a disciplined party to lead the revolution, but the self-consciousness and self-activity of the masses.

Much of the theoretical inspiration for the KAPD was derived from Anton Pannekoek in particular, and the "Dutch School," including Hermann Gorter, in general.\textsuperscript{84} A long history of opposition to the majority social democrats marked Pannekoek and the Dutch School. Their analysis hinged on the role of consciousness and self-activity in the revolutionary process. The obstacles to revolution were modes of activity that suppressed self-activity and consciousness in the proletariat; and these included both bourgeois culture and ideology and the tightly organized party that sought to command revolution.

For Pannekoek it was exactly here that Kautsky first, and later the Bolsheviks, missed the point. Surmounting capitalism was not simply or primarily a tactical problem as to how and when to seize power. The force of capitalism lay primarily in the cultural and subjective dimension; its power consisted in the "domination of bourgeois culture" which "infiltrated" the entire society and formed a "cultural organisation and discipline."\textsuperscript{85} From this perspective, the Communist Party "underestimates" the task to be accomplished; for liberation from this cultural domination must accompany, if not precede, any specific tactics, and indeed is the index of successful tactics — success being the ability to release the proletariat from bourgeois culture.
Russell Jacoby

These were persistent motifs in Pannekoek, who in fact was much inspired by his interpretation of Joseph Dietzgen. Pannekoek’s “World Revolution and Communist Tactics” (1920), a fundamental “left” text, was published in Kommunismus. This Vienna based journal, a regular outlet for left communists, including Lukács, was dissolved, after several years, by the Comintern.

According to Pannekoek, capitalism was constituted out of intellectual and material elements. While the material dimension, or more concretely, the economic collapse, was requisite for revolution, it did not suffice. Germany in the recent past had experienced an economic and political collapse of the bourgeoisie, but not a successful revolution. The reason was the “secret power,” of the bourgeoisie, its “spiritual power over the proletariat.” The proletariat was subjectively and culturally mesmerized. For this reason the decisive battle of the future would be fought in the arena of culture and Geist.

The KAPD, Pannekoek, Gorter and other groups and individuals constituted what would be labelled and denounced as “left” communism. While “left” communism was defined primarily on the tactical level, Pannekoek argued the theoretical and tactical were inseparable. “The problem of tactics ... is how to root out of the proletarian masses the traditional bourgeois modes of thought that paralyze its power.” Trade unions, parliaments, as well as vanguard parties smacked of traditional bourgeois culture and organization. Conversely, workers councils, that is, activity derived from the proletariat itself, and spontaneous actions struck bourgeois culture at its source.

Two final points: “left” communism was the significant heresy in the first years of the Third International. The terminology received official confirmation in Lenin’s pamphlet Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder (1920). As a fact and label “left” communism (later also called ultra-leftism) retained a reality in the Comintern. Precisely the same charges of “leftism” would be levelled against Korsch and Lukács.

Secondly, “left” communism became indistinguishable — for the most part — from Western Marxism. Many of the “leftists,” especially the Dutch, justified their politics by the specific conditions of Western Europe. The depth and vigor of bourgeois culture, Pannekoek and Gorter believed, were unique to Western Europe; this was the fundamental difference between Western Europe and the Soviet Union, where bourgeois culture was relatively weak. The weakness of bourgeois culture in the east dictated different tactics; there Geist and ideology were not the supreme questions. The most trenchant reply to Lenin’s Left-Wing pamphlet, Gorter’s “Open Letter to Comrade Lenin” (1920) pursued this very distinction.

Gorter argued that Lenin’s tactics were wrong in generalizing from the Russian experience. In doing so he obscured the basic social differences be-
tween societies. In Russia an alliance decisive for victory was struck between the proletariat and the peasantry. In Western Europe, however, the proletariat lacks the possibility of peasant allies; moreover the European proletariat is immeasurably older and larger than the Russian. In brief, the class and general structure of bourgeois society in Western Europe fundamentally diverged from the Russian reality.

From these preliminaries a series of political consequences followed. Deprived of peasant allies in the west, the proletariat was forced back on itself. In concurrence with themes in Lukács, Luxemburg, and (some of) Gramsci, the proletariat itself — or its own intellectual dependency — blocked the revolution. The categories of culture and consciousness again moved to the fore. The economic crisis had come and gone; and the paralysis of the proletariat stemmed from extra-economic causes, its intellectual enslavement. The defeat of the revolution rested on "the Geist of the masses." To Gorter, the intellectual liberation of the proletariat was the task — a task specific to Western Europe which could not be assumed by a party.

III

We turn now to Korsch's own place in this dense net of Hegelianism and "left" communism. Korsch was condemned, along with Lukács, at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International (summer, 1924). His major theoretical contribution to date was *Marxism and Philosophy*. Was this grounds alone to identify Korsch as a "left" communist? If not, Korsch provided enough additional political clues; but these can only be understood within the context of the KPD, the Comintern, and in particular, the immediately preceding event, the "German October" (October 1923). The Soviet leaders, especially Trotsky and Zinoviev, had invested their hopes for a successful German Revolution in the "German October", and more or less promoted it. Not only was the "German October" the final offensive for the German party, it was a profound defeat.

The defeat of the German October led to a shake-up in the German party — which became part of the emerging conflict between Zinoviev and Trotsky. Even to the participants the relationship between these two factional fights proved mysterious. The problem for the Soviet leadership was to saddle someone with the German disaster. Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer, the leadership and the so-called right of the KPD, did not exempt the Comintern in their post-mortem of the defeat. They concluded that the Comintern misjudged the objective conditions, minimizing the disjuncture between Germany and the Soviet Union. This position was unacceptable to Zinoviev for it cast a dark shadow on his role.
Trotsky’s *New Course*, with its criticism of the Soviet party, had just appeared as a booklet (January 1924). By some logic Zinoviev managed to link Trotsky and Brandler as responsible for the setback. The vehicle for this link was Karl Radek, who had been associated with each. Hence it was possible for Zinoviev to evade responsibility for the defeat. That Brandler and Trotsky drew opposite conclusions from October 1923 seems not to have mattered. Attacking the leadership of Brandler and Thaleimer, Zinoviev counseled and commanded: “We must have a change of leadership.” He then threw his support to a new and left leadership of Ruth Fisher and Arkady Maslow. They agreed on at least one crucial point: that there was no misappraisal of the objective conditions by the Comintern, but inadequate leadership by Brandler and Thalheimer of the German Party.

However — and this defines the entire subsequent period — the alliance between the “left” of Fisher and Maslow and the Comintern was unstable. The “left” attained power as the reliable agent of the Comintern; yet the left tended to be “left” in the sense of Lenin’s *Left-Wing Communism*. This meant that from the perspective of Soviet Marxism it was guilty of the same sins as the KAPD. Fundamentally the “left” challenged the Soviet model of hegemony of the European revolutions. Maslow himself was easily identified as a “leftist.” In the immediate past he had contact with the Worker’s Opposition, a left Soviet group. This was serious enough to attract Lenin’s attention. A committee of the Comintern, in fact, was charged with investigating Maslow’s record.

The instability, then, was defined by a Comintern/left KPD alliance which was grounded on a fundamental antagonism. None of this was absolutely clear in 1923 and early 1924, but neither was it totally obscure. If anything Zinoviev perceived more accurately than the left, the dangers of the alliance. From the very beginnings of the alliance, and the victory of the “left” in KPD, Zinoviev warned of the dangers of leftism and ultra-leftism, distinguishing repeatedly between the responsible proletarian elements and irresponsible intellectuals of the left. This motif was persistently reiterated by Zinoviev until September 1925 when the left was removed; and it was removed for precisely the sins of leftism and ultra-leftism. The element of truth was that the left did contain a high percentage of the intellectuals. It is here where Korsch gets early targeted as one of the intellectuals who are guilty of ultra-leftism.

The Ninth Party Congress of the KPD (April 1924) sealed the victory of the left in the post-October months. Zinoviev’s letter to the Congress (March 26, 1924) already distinguished the responsible leftists from the irresponsible. Moreover, Zinoviev noted that one leftist (Samosch) had advanced resolutions that would effectively dissolve the Comintern. At least to some of the delegates the letter was a surprise. The alliance between Zinoviev and the left had been against the right of Brandler and Thalheimer; now Zinoviev was also attacking the left.
This was no isolated intervention by Zinoviev, nor a real shift; he had been cutting away at the left even while helping it to victory. In addition to the letter to the Ninth Congress, Zinoviev fired off a series of messages warning of the dangers of left intellectuals. At the end of March, Zinoviev (and Bukharin) wrote to Ernst Thälmann and Paul Schlecht warning that tendencies were surfacing in the party which were irreconcilable with Bolshevism: there were pressures to exit from the trade unions, to renounce the united front, and to "retreat to the perspective of Rosa Luxemburg in the organizational question" — all "left" tendencies. More damaging, some elements in the party had spoken of a "crisis in the Comintern."102 On the same day, Zinoviev wrote to Fisher and Maslow: "Do not imagine that the ultra-left does not represent a serious force." The banner of Rosa Luxemburg is raised, and the united front is attacked in the Comintern.103

The new leadership of Fisher and Maslow sought to parry the attack. Fisher claimed that stray pronouncements defending Rosa Luxemburg "misled the Executive of the Comintern that the formation of an ultra-left wing was a real danger." Actually, the danger was on the right.104 The Politburo of the KPD replied to Zinoviev's letter to the Ninth Congress declaring that intellectuals could be found in both wings of the Party. Moreover it noted that "under the appearance of a struggle against the 'ultra-left', there is in reality a struggle against the party leadership."

In this atmosphere, clouded by charges of ultra-leftism against the left KPD leadership, Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* appeared. Lukács, though he was fast covering his tracks, was easily identified as part of an ultra-left: he had been denounced by Lenin for it, and had participated in the journal *Kommunismus*, which had been closed by the Comintern for its left orientation.

Korsch in an "Afterwards instead of a Forward," which appeared in the edition of *Marxism and Philosophy* published in the Grünberg Archiv, expressed his solidarity with Lukács. "*History and Class Consciousness* touches at many points on the questions raised here; as I presently see the matter I am pleased to state my fundamental agreement with [Lukács]."106

On the eve of the Fifth World Congress (June 1924), an issue of *Internationale* (edited by Korsch) appeared containing Korsch's "Lenin and the Comintern" back-to-back with an article by Boris (Roninger) on the program of the Comintern. Both of these would be considered ultra-left provocations. In addition the issue contained a review by Korsch of several books, including Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*. Here Korsch criticized Béla Kun, identified with Zinoviev, for crassly attacking Lukács' book. Moreover he suggested that Bukharin was defending "a specifically bourgeois method of science."107
The article by Boris was a provocation if only because of its attack on Bukharin; moreover Boris was identified as an ultra-leftist, and had once advocated that the KPD break ties with the Comintern — an ultra-left position. His article was a full-scale defense of Rosa Luxemburg, and a critique of Bukharin, which did not even exempt Lenin from criticism. For Korsch to publish this, along with his own criticism, on the eve of the Fifth World Congress was rightly interpreted as a direct assault on Comintern policies.

Finally, Boris participated in the 1923 Summer Academy. The Summer Academy gathered a number of Marxists, including Korsch and Lukács, in order to discuss their respective books. It also included Friedrich Pollock and Felix Weil, who would be instrumental in founding the Institute for Social Research ("The Frankfurt School"). It represented a moment of independent Marxism. It is not fortuitous that most of the participants played a role in the formation of Western Marxism.

The Fifth Congress opened in June with a leading address by Zinoviev. With regard to the KPD, his pronouncements were entirely consistent with his earlier letters. He attacked the ultra-left, naming Lukács and Korsch, and denounced them as intellectuals, or, this time, as professors. "‘If we get a few more of these professors spinning out their theories, we shall be lost.’" He relegated to Bukharin the full response to Boris. Again Fisher sought to parry the blow, this time by disassociating Korsch from Boris. "‘... When Korsch and Boris are named in the same breath ... when Comrade Korsch is thrown into the same pot as Boris ... this the German Party will not allow.’"

What is surprising is not the identification of Korsch as an ultra-leftist, but the recent claim that it was all based on a misunderstanding; and that at this date Korsch was not an oppositional figure. According to Douglas Kellner, the notion that Korsch resisted Comintern leadership prior to September 1925 is a "‘myth.’" In particular Kellner argues that Korsch’s "‘Lenin and the Comintern’ has been misread as a critique of Comintern leadership, when in fact it is an endorsement."

Several points should be made. Even apart from this article, Korsch was identified and denounced as an oppositional leftist. His publication of Boris’s article, his own critique of Bukharin and Béla Kun, his solidarity with Lukács, his Marxism and Philosophy, and even his status as an intellectual — all these unmistakably revealed a "‘left’" orientation. It is true that "‘Lenin and the Comintern’ hardly telegraphed Korsch’s heresy, but this was not necessary; it is a subtle, perhaps opaque, defense of Lenin against deviations. Yet it contained a qualified apology for the Luxemburgian interpretation of Marxism, and the Hegelian dimension of Marxism; moreover it criticized the codification of Leninism. It concluded: "‘For a positive fixation of the essence of Leninism as a method, the present moment in the development of the Comintern is just as
little appropriate as the fixation of a final Communist program, valid for an entire epoch of Communist politics."\textsuperscript{116}

In addition Zinoviev, with no ambiguity, took Korsch to task for the article, and his "defence" of Lenin, at the Fifth World Congress. "The editor of the magazine, Comrade Korsch, 'defends' Comrade Lenin from many deviations from Leninism. I believe that we should give Comrade Korsch the friendly advice to above all study Marxism and Leninism.... I believe that it is not too much to demand of the German Party, when I ask that the magazine \textit{Internationale} be placed in the hands of Marxists."\textsuperscript{117} Korsch would later complain of the attacks on this article. In a review of Stalin's \textit{Lenin and Leninism}, some months after the Congress, he mentioned in passing that his "Lenin and the Comintern" was "unjustly and without foundation attacked at the Fifth Congress as a critique of Leninism...."\textsuperscript{118}

For Korsch it was only the beginning. The next months saw the left leadership of Fisher and Maslow succumb to — or embrace — the Comintern position; they became eager Bolshevikizers, sniffing out Luxemburgism and ultra-leftism. Maslow himself replied to Boris's article\textsuperscript{119} and the Central Committee of the Party formally condemned it.\textsuperscript{120}

The rest of the story can be told briefly. Korsch increasingly moved toward the left opposition, and Fisher and Maslow increasingly conformed to Comintern policy; this meant they were on the alert, as was Zinoviev, for left deviations and the West European Marxist heresy, or what Fisher called "the West European theoretical school," meaning Korsch and Lukács.\textsuperscript{121} In this period, Korsch is more than once identified as part of the radical opposition.\textsuperscript{122}

The story ended happily for no one. The maneuvers culminate in the Tenth Party Congress of the KPD in July 1925. While this nominally reaffirmed the victory that Fisher and Maslow had obtained at the previous Congress, in reality it was their demise.\textsuperscript{123} Only a few weeks after the Tenth Party Congress, Zinoviev turned decisively against the leadership of Fisher and Maslow. This shift appears as one more obscure change of direction in the Comintern only if the nature of the alliance from the beginning is not perceived. It was always unstable, and this was clearer to Zinoviev than to Fisher and Maslow. Despite their conversion to enthusiastic Bolshevikizers, they remained suspect as intellectuals and tainted by their relations with the left opposition. They were convenient allies only when the right discredited itself in October 1923.

The German Party was discussed by the Executive Committee of the Comintern in the middle of August 1925, some weeks after the Tenth Party Congress. What Zinoviev stated then is partly true; he originally supported Fisher/Maslow "reluctantly," as the best opponents to Brandler; moreover he always distinguished between the "good proletarian elements" and the intellectuals in the left.\textsuperscript{124} These discussions, which included members of the German party, signalled a transition. Word of the change did not reach the
party at large until Zinoviev’s “open letter” was published in the main party newspaper, *Die Rote Fahne* on September 1, 1925. The “open letter” called for the cashiering of Fisher and Maslow — and was the most direct intervention of the Comintern into the KPD to date.

Essentially, Fisher and Maslow were accused of failing to fight vigorously against the ultra-left. Maslow was even more violently attacked since by his past and writings he stood closer to the ultra-left than Fisher. “Comrade Maslow sought to oppose a ‘pure’ ‘left’ specifically ‘West European’ Communism to the ‘opportunism’ of Leninism.”

The “open letter” of Zinoviev “caused sensation and panic” in the Party. Few anticipated that the left leadership of Fisher-Maslow, that had been put in power with Zinoviev’s blessings, would be so unceremoniously discharged. It did not take long for the Party to vote them out. Within days of the “open letter,” District Meetings of the Party were called. It was then that Korsch spoke out openly. At the District Meeting in Frankfurt on September 9, Korsch denounced the “red imperialism” of the Comintern.

The rest of Korsch’s development need not be recounted here — not merely for lack of space, but because it was consistent in its loyalty to an independent Marxism. For this he paid the price of isolation which was the fate of many Western Marxists. He went on to form a left faction within the Communist Party. Expelled from the Party, he proceeded to develop a critique of Leninism and the Soviet Union. In the future was his critical evaluation of Kautsky, his reappraisal of *Marxism and Philosophy*, and his book *Karl Marx*. In the United States his closest contacts were with advocates of workers’ councils, — the living legacy of the KAPD and the “Dutch School.” Throughout his life, Korsch stitched together the politics and philosophy of Western Marxism. In the US “desert,” as he called it, this was sometimes difficult. One of his last letters stated that after the damage of the Stalin episode he was still holding on to “another dream: to theoretically restore the ‘ideas of Marx.’”

Department of History  
University of California, Irvine
1. The argument of Perry Anderson in *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London 1976, that Western Marxism's attention to philosophy breaks with "classical" Marxism, is not exact — as he half admits in his "Afterword."

2. Lenin's major philosophical work, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (1909), was a sharp critique of the followers of Ernst Mach and Richard Avenarius. Lenin in this philosophical conflict was vulnerable on a critical score: many of the followers of Mach were Bolsheviks, especially a key supporter of Lenin, A. A. Bogdanov. Moreover, the Marxist philosopher Lenin prized the most, Plekhanov, was at the time a political opponent. Lenin alluded to this embarrassing fact once in the book by noting there were also Machian Mensheviks — that is, in addition to Mach's Bolshevik supporters. "Plekhanov in his criticism of Machism was less concerned with refuting Mach than with dealing a factional blow at Bolshevism. For this petty and miserable exploitation of fundamental theoretical differences, he has already been deservedly punished — with two books by Machian Mensheviks." V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* Peking, 1972, p. 431. In the introduction Lenin declared that his opposition was united philosophically "despite the sharp divergence of their political views." (p. 5). For several years, in fact, Lenin worked energetically to separate philosophical from political disputes. As he explained to Gorky, "In the Summer and Autumn of 1904 Bogdanov and I reached a complete agreement, as Bolsheviks, and formed the tacit block, with tacitly ruled out philosophy as a neutral field." Lenin sought to preserve this agreement. While despising Machism (or what he understood by it), he wrote to Gorky "Proletary must remain absolutely neutral towards all our divergences in philosophy and not give the reader the slightest grounds for associating the Bolsheviks, as a trend ... with empirio-criticism or empirio-monism." See Lenin and Gorky: Letters, Reminiscences, Articles, Moscow, 1973, pp. 32-33. It was in this period that Lenin protested to *Die Neue Zeit* when it mentioned that the philosophical disputes in the Russian party were political ones. "This philosophical controversy is not a factional one.... Both factions contain adherents of two philosophical trends ("Statement of the Editors of Proletary," in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 13, Moscow, 1962, p 447). The point here is only that where politics and philosophy seem to present no problem — in Lenin — there is a tangled relationship. One of the best accounts of these events is in David Joravsky, *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science*, London, 1961, pp. 24ff. Cf. Manuel Sacristán, "Lenin e la filosofia," *Critica marxista*, IX(1971), pp. 87-118. On Bogdanov see Dietrich Grille, *Lenins Rivale. Bogdanov und seine Philosophie*, Köln, 1966, and for a partial rebuttal of Grille, see George Katkov, "Lenin as Philosopher," in *Lenin: The Man, the Theorist, the Leader*, ed. Leonard Schapiro and Peter Reddaway, New York, 1967.


HISTORY OF WESTERN MARXISM


17. The populist social thinkers accentcd the subjective and distinct qualities of Russia which separated it from the West. See Alexander Vucinich, Social Thought in Tsarist Russia, Chicago, 1976, pp. 185ff.


28. More precisely, he was a student of Donato Jaja.


33. For a discussion of differences between Spaventa and Vera, see Paul Piccone, "From Spaventa to Gramsci," Telos, 31 (1977), pp. 58-61.


38. He explained to Engels that he arrived at Marxism because of his Hegelian education; see Antonio Labriola, Lettere a Engels, Roma, 1949, letter March 14, 1894, p. 142.


40. For a summery of Gentile’s analysis of Marx, see H.S. Harris, op. cit., pp. 45 ff.; and for a critique of Gentile’s reading of Marx, see Alberto Signorini, Il giovane Gentile e Marx, Milano, 1966.


44. See the study by Alfred Cornelius, Die Geschichtslehre Victor Cousins unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des hégelischen Einflusses, Genève, 1958.


47. See “Author’s Postscript to the French Edition” and “Author’s Preface to the French Edition,” both in Socialism and Philosophy, Chicago, 1918.


52. According to Andler, Herr planned to write a Hegel book as early as 1887. Andler reproduces a sketch of the preface to the three projected volumes, C. Andler, Vie de Lucien Herr, Paris, 1932, pp. 41 and 58 ff.

53. Herr judged it the least satisfactory part of the system; Koyré thought it arid, Kojève judged it absurd. See Salvadori, Hegel in Francia, p. 73. Representative in this regard is Georges Noël, La logique de Hegel, Paris, 1967, p. 160. First edition: 1897.


57. Comments depreciating Engels in comparison with Marx were not uncommon in the 1890s; one example: Ernst Seillière, Littérature et morale dans le parti socialiste allemand, Paris, 1898, p. 310.

58. "Marx and Engels are in the same manner 'guilty' of applying the dialectic to nature.... Not Engels, but Lukács has transformed the teachings of Marx," A. Deborin, "Lukács und seine Kritik des Marxismus," Arbeiterliteratur, 10 (1924), p. 619.


60. Gentile, La filosofia di Marx, pp. 125-127.

61. Croce, What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel, p. 206-7.


63. Ibid., pp. 9ff.; 237. Mondolfo was less critical than Gentile of Engels. See the comments in Nobetto Bobbio, "Introduzione," Mondolfo, Umanismo di Marx, Torino, 1968, pp. xxiv-xxv. Labriola, who had been a friend of Engels, was unconvinced; he wrote to Croce: "I am such a cretin that I do not see the differences (between Marx and Engels)," Labriola, Lettere a Benedetto Croce 1885-1904, Napoli, 1975, letter, December 31, 1898, pp. 323-4.

64. See "Is there a Utopia in Marxism?" (1899) in From Georges Sorel, p. 130. He wrote to Croce: "...it seems to me that Engels only had a general scientific education.... He did not have very clear ideas, notably on Hegelianism. He has contributed a great deal in leading historical materialism down the path of evolutionism and making it into an absolute dogmatism," "Lettere," La Critica, XXV (1927), p. 51, letter, December 27, 1897.


70. Ibid., p. 61.


74. P. Levi, "Einleitung zu Rosa Luxemburg 'Die russische Revolution,'


78. To avoid oversimplifying a Lenin/Luxemburg antagonism see Luxemburg's "Blanquism und Sozialdemokratie" (in Internationalismus und Klassenkampf — Neuwied, 1971); this contains a partial defence of Lenin.


80. See the figures in Hermann Weber, Die Wandlung des deutsche Kommunismus, Band 1, Frankfurt, 1969, pp. 39 and 362. For the KPD the Weber volumes are indispensable.


28


85. "Der neue Blanquismus," (1920), in Organisation und Taktik, p. 120.

86. Dietzgen was an odd bird, and it is difficult to assess his thought or influence. Pannekoek himself noted that Dietzgen's philosophy "did not seem to have, until now, exerted any perceptible influence on the socialist movement." (Pannekoek, "The Position and Significance of Joseph Dietzgen's Philosophical Works" (1902), in Dietzgen, The Positive Outcome of Philosophy, Chicago, 1906, p. 35. However all the key figures of the Dutch School were attracted to Dietzgen. Pannekoek wrote frequent essays, and Henriette Roland-Holst a book, about him. Gorter was one of his translators. See Hans Bock, "Anton Pannekoek in der Vorkriegs Sozialdemokratie," Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung, Band 3 (1975), hrsg. Claudio Pozzoli, pp. 107 ff. In any case, what Pannekoek took from Dietzgen, or found in him, was an account of the role of ideas in the historical process.

87. Pannekoek's "Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik," was published in Kommunismus and later, with an addition, as a brochure. An editorial note in Kommunismus commented that it was a "very important contribution," although it "might stand in certain antagonism to the line of the Moscow Executive Committee, Kommunismus I (1920), p. 976. Kommunismus was the journal of the Vienna Bureau of the Communist International. Many Hungarians, including Lukács, were part of its staff; several of Lukács' essays which later would make up History and Class Consciousness appeared first there. Like many projects with which Pannekoek was associated, Kommunismus was accused of 'leftism', and after a short period was closed. See Branko Lazitch, Milorad Drachkovich, Lenin and the Comintern, vol. 1, Stanford, 1972, p. 200.


100. “Artikel des Genossen Sinowjew” (March 26, 1924) in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX Parteitags der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands*. Abgehalten in Frankfurt a/M vom 7. bis 10 April 1924. hrsg. von der Zentrale der KPD, Berlin, 1924, p. 78-79.


HISTORY OF WESTERN MARXISM


113. Douglas Kellner, "Korsch's Revolutionary Marxism," in Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory, ed. D. Kellner, Austin, 1977, p. 45. In many respects Kellner is drawing upon Michael Buckmiller’s work. See his "Marxismus als Realität. Zur Rekonstruktion der theoretischen und politischen Entwicklung Karl Korsch.," Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung. Band I, pp. 15-106. Apart from the facts and context, Kellner’s argument that the condemnation of Korsch was based on a misunderstanding is based on a misunderstanding. "There was supposed to be some kind of profound connection between 'idealistic deviations' and ultra-leftism. Hegel would have smiled."


117. Zinoviev, Fünfter Kongress, p. 54.


123. Zinoviev’s letter to the Congress denounced Korsch as part of the ultra-left: See "Brief des Exekutivkomitees der Komintern an den X Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands," *Rote Fahne*, July 9, 1925.

124. "Die erste Rede des Genossen Sinowjew. Aus den Verhandlungen des EKKI über die deutsche Frage," *Rote Fahne*, September 26, 1925. This speech was delivered August 13 but was published on September 26 and the following day.


128. On the report that Korsch cried out "red imperialism," Kellner states: "I have yet to discover any evidence for this story and suspect it is part of the Korsch legend." Kellner, "Korsch’s Revolutionary Marxism," p. 69. Yet Korsch’s remarks were widely noted at the time. An anonymous article in *Die Rote Fahne* at the end of September entitled "Down with Petty Bourgeois Anti-Bolshevik Spirit" made the conventional distinction between decent proletarians and irresponsible intellectuals on the left. As an example of the latter it cited Korsch’s remarks from the Frankfurt District meeting. It quoted Korsch as saying "that through an alliance of the Soviet Union with capitalist states, the revolutionary principles of the Comintern could be placed in danger." It further stated that "Korsch characterized the campaign for international trade-union unity, as a ‘product of Russian foreign policy’ and spoke of ‘red imperialism,’ and a ‘possible 1914 of the Comintern’." — brief Ernst Meyer in a letter cataloging the responses to Zinoviev’s "open letter" also cited Korsch’s comments. "Comrade Korsch followed so closely the style of the anti-Bolshevik tendency that he spoke of a ‘red imperialism’ (of the Soviet Government)...." — brief Ernst Meyers in Weber, *Die Wandlung*, Band 1, pp. 413-14 (October 3, 1925). Heinz Neumann, who later organized the Canton Commune and was for some years a favorite of Stalin, attacked Korsch’s remarks at length. Korsch “wishes to show, that in case of a war, the alliance of the Soviet Union with capitalist states could place in danger the revolutionary fundamentals of the Comintern." Heinz Neumann, "Der neue Kurs der KPD," *Die Internationale*, VIII (1925), pp. 528-29. (For his efforts Neumann was later arrested and disappeared in Stalin’s jails. His companion, Margaret Buber-Neumann, was one of the communists delivered to the Gestapo during the Soviet-Nazi pact: see her *Als Gefangene bei Stalin und Hitler*, Stuttgart, 1968. Her sister, Babette Gross, was no more fortunate in the choice of a companion. He also disappeared. See her *Willi Münzenberg*, n.p.; Michigan State U.P., 1974. Neither Neumann nor Münzenberg could swallow the Comintern position on fascism.) The flurry of activity over Korsch’s remarks caused him to publish a brief "explanation" in several party newspapers; this tried to put to rest three allegations about "Korschism." See "Eine Erklärung des Gen. Korsch," *Neue Zeitung*, September 24, 1925. These allegations were that Korsch had made an "anti-bolshevik and anti-Soviet speech" at Frankfurt; that there was a "group" that included Korsch, Boris, Rolf and Dr. Weill; and that he was forming a left faction. Korsch asserted that he always supported the Russian Revolution and no such group existed. The "explanation" also appeared in *Die Rote Fahne*; an editorial note which followed it correctly observed that the explanation was lame. "The above explanation provides no clarification on the dispute. Comrade Korsch does not give the text of what he has said, nor does he concretely dispute what the Frankfurt party newspaper reported he said," *Rote Fahne*, September 27, 1925.

32
The Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, Volume One, Number One, has been reprinted in an all new SPECIAL SECOND EDITION.

Please send $3.50 for each copy ordered to:

Managing Editor
Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory
Room 630, Lockhart Hall
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9

The Loyola University Lecture Series in Political Analysis

Loyola University of Chicago announces the sixth presentation of its continuing program, The Loyola Lecture Series in Political Analysis. During the two week period of November 5-16, 1979, Professor Glenn Tinder of the University of Massachusetts - Boston will deliver a series of six public lectures entitled, "Against Fate." Professor Tinder's presentations will examine the possibility of recovering the true art of politics and its appropriate sense of civility during an age increasingly characterized by the spirit of mastery. These lectures are made possible by a grant from the Kemper Educational and Charitable Fund.

For further information please contact Dr. James L. Wiser, Department of Political Science, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan, Chicago, Illinois 60626.
Within the last two years much has been heard about an event that has rocked the intellectual salons of the Parisian "scene". Marxism, it seems, has just been condemned to death. The party for the prosecution, the "nouveau philosophes", having suddenly been made aware of the reality of the Goulag, has denounced the guilty with all the brutal pathos of former sinners who have just been saved. Now it is not my intention to join the cycle of denunciation and denounce the denouncers. (Beyond the knee-jerk reactions, how many in North America have actually read these authors?) Instead I would prefer to preface this essay by robbing the event of some of its novelty. Given the collective amnesia that accompanies the rise and fall of successive intellectual "fads", it would seem to be the fate of every "progressive" generation within the last forty years, at least in France, to have to combat the empire of Marx's ghost anew. In such a situation, one must move beyond the event and its apparently indefinite repetition, and examine the work of those theorists who have examined the underlying issues with the greatest depth and whose perspectives promise to be the most fruitful.

It is with this in mind that I have chosen to write this essay as an introduction to the work of Cornelius Castoriadis (and that of his pseudonyms: Jacques Chaulieu, Paul Cardan and Jean-Marc Coudray). For Castoriadis has pursued over the last thirty years a course that, while originating within orthodox Marxism and following its best impulses, has sought in a rigourous and exemplary fashion to question its most central tenets, and to extend this questioning to a more general reflection on the very nature of society and of its apprehension within theory. His thinking is marked by a certain dynamic quality that constantly pushes analysis forward, beyond the complacent assertion of what it already knows as given by the categorical structure of the moment. For the analysis, each time that it attains a given position, is obliged by following through its own implications, to re-examine its original presuppositions, such that a continuous, self-critical movement is set in motion. It is this
movement, this relentless critical thrust, that solicits our own interrogation and demands that we re-examine our own intellectual development, whether individual or collective.

**Bureaucracy Unravelled**

Castoriadis once summarized his intellectual evolution by noting that he "had pulled 'the right string' — that of bureaucratization — and had simply and ruthlessly kept pulling". Bureaucratization: the concept, although indebted to the pioneering work of Max Weber, was pulled from an essentially Marxist perspective. However, the unravelling of this concept could only proceed in a contradictory fashion relative to Marxism; the latter provided a privileged position from which bureaucratization could be criticized, but only by turning Marxism into the privileged object of critique. This movement was to be inherently unstable.

Castoriadis began pulling where the bureaucratization of Marxism was most obvious: the Soviet regime, and its associated regimes and parties. His critique of the latter had already led to his split with the Greek Communist Party and his subsequent adherence to the Fourth International. However, it soon became apparent to him that the Trotskyist analysis of the Soviet regime was condemned to recover and repeat similar bureaucratic moments in its own theory and practice. Thus in the late forties Castoriadis (now living in France) broke with the "apparatchiks in exile" and their Leninist heroics, and helped form a new party, Socialisme ou Barbarie, which published a journal by the same name (henceforth referred to as SB). In the journal's second issue an important article appeared that spelled out his critique of the Soviet regime and of the Trotskyist analysis. At a more immediate level he lampooned secondary aspects of the Trotskyist position of the period: the belief that the communist parties were social-democratic parties in disguise, unwilling and unable to expropriate the bourgeoisie (a belief soon contradicted by the events in Eastern Europe); that these parties should be given "critical" support (when in fact such support was suicidal); that the Soviet regime represented a "degenerated workers state" (the Soviet regime, however, no longer had anything "workerist" about it, and those of Eastern Europe, not having undergone a "proletarian revolution", had not "degenerated"); that this degeneration was due to isolation (it now embraced half the world) and backwardness (it was now the world's second industrial power); and that this regime was transitional (when in fact it presented a remarkable stability). However, underlying and supporting these relatively superficial aspects of the Trotskyist position, was the idea that the Communist regimes contained a socialist base (defined in terms of the abolition of private property) coupled with a terrorist superstructure (defined in terms of "bureaucratic deformations"). Now
THE EARLY CASTORIADIS

Castoriadis was quick to point out, not only that such a distinction was grotesque — rendering the inseparability that underlay the separation meaningless — but that this conception of the base failed to penetrate beyond the juridical forms to the relations of production.\(^3\) Observed in terms of the latter the Soviet regime presented a “strata”, the bureaucracy, that had control over both the means of production and the distribution of the product, and attempted to expropriate the maximum surplus from the workers in their own (the bureaucracy’s) collective interest. Thus the analysis concluded that the bureaucracy was in Marxist terms, a “class”, that it had nothing “parasitic” about it, and that it was intimately connected to the base; in point of fact it organized the base. Castoriadis had reversed the signs: the juridical forms had been revealed as part of the superstructure, the bureaucracy, as part of the infrastructure. Henceforth the abolition of private property, nationalization and planning could in themselves only be considered meaningless from the perspective of the construction of a “socialist” society.

So far the analysis followed a mode of procedure and terminology traditional to an “orthodox” Marxism; the political was criticized by moving beyond the juridical appearances to the economic essence as defined by the reality of exploitation.\(^4\) (In fact the analysis was accompanied by an “ultramist” scenario whose elements were even more orthodox; on the basis of the falling rate of profit, the rising rate of exploitation, and the mechanisms of imperialist expansion, it deduced the immanent outbreak of a Third World War.) However, once the implications of this analysis were drawn out, it would find itself on unfamiliar terrain.

In the first place these implications had touched on the very nature of capitalism. The analysis had shown that in terms of the productive relations, the Eastern regimes appeared similar to those in the west, and this similarity would become increasingly evident as the Eastern regimes liberalized and the Western regimes grew more and more bureaucratic. Certainly there were differences, but in large part they only served to confirm the underlying identity; for, at bottom, the Eastern regimes had merely taken that formal “rationality” embedded in the individual capitalist enterprise and applied it to the total organization of the economy and society. In short the Eastern regimes proved to be a concentrated, rationalized and “condensed” form of capitalism, or what Castoriadis termed “integral bureaucratic capitalism”. They revealed the “essence” of capitalism. This “essence” was to be found not so much in the division between capitals, as in that between “command” and “execution”, between planners and planned; and capitalism’s irrationality was to be located not so much within the anarchy of the market, as within the “rationality” of the productive process. As such capitalism could only be overthrown by abolishing the division between those commanding and those executing the commands, and socialism could only be realized as the
management of production by the producers themselves. And it followed that socialism could not be legislated from above, but had to be instituted from below by the autonomous action of the mass of workers.

In light of these conclusions, what then was the role of the party? The experience of the Russian revolution had demonstrated that the party was not innocent (nor was the proletariat, but that is a much stickier problem). Guilt did not belong simply on the side of this or that historical "accident" (whether "isolation" or "backwardness"). Indeed the party had proved to be the privileged point for the importation of a bureaucratic "rationality" into the workers' movement and its revolution. How then was a repetition of the past to be avoided? At one level this posed problems relative to the party's internal organization. Once the Leninist and Social Democratic positions had been criticized, one had to ensure that all members of the party functioned in an autonomous and equal manner — and this involved considering the relations between members of the party as more than purely "political" relations. Despite the group's best efforts, the actual functioning of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* never really provided a solution; Castoriadis complained about certain members being unable and unwilling to take an active role, and members complained that "they felt that they had to write twenty-five pages of critical exposition on Hegel before they were ready to debate with Castoriadis". At another level there were the problems concerning the relation between the party and the workers. Again, once one had criticized the more obvious bureaucratic forms, there was the much more difficult problem of how this relation was to be conceived in its positivity. Obviously the party could not force the workers into realizing their own autonomy. This was simply a contradiction in terms. But even if the party was not to lead the workers, but only to encourage or inform them, this still implied that the workers were to some extent ignorant of their real interests and therefore required the party's intervention. And such intervention appeared to contain the seeds of the party's privilege vis-a-vis the workers and their history. No matter how one posed the problem, the party's separation from the mass of workers was in contradiction with the workers' self-activity. For even if the party was able to abolish this separation, would it not be threatened with losing its integrity and coherence as a political project? The problem seemed insoluble and served only to fuel a series of disputes and scissions, most notably between Castoriadis and Claude Lefort.

Despite the absence of any positive solution, by the very act of addressing these issues, Castoriadis was led to broach another more perplexing problem. This problem concerned not merely the contents of the theory — its analysis of the past, evaluation of the present and prescription for the future — but the very mode in which the theory was elaborated and valorized. It was a matter of comprehending how theory was endowed with an authoritative certitude and
consequently, how the theorist himself became a hidden political category blessed with a certain authority, and even authoritarianism. In short, it was a matter of the problem of "bureaucratic theory". For coextensive with the distinction between execution and command was that between the theorist who, having understood History and the corresponding interests of its major actors, is able to deduce a revolutionary strategy and tactics, and those others who, led by the latter, are raised out of their "immediate" interests in order to become the cannon-fodder of this strategy. This critique of "traditional theory", of that mode of theorizing which in this case allowed the revolutionary theorist to establish a space from which he could pontificate on the truth of history and the real interests of the proletariat would, however, be elaborated only after a long and tortuous process.8

The "bureaucratic rationality" inherent to a certain mode of theory was glimpsed soon after the critique of the Soviet regime, and once again Castoriadis began pulling at this theory's privileged locus within Marxism: economic theory. As noted before, the critique of "integral bureaucratic capitalism" had proceeded in orthodox fashion, puncturing the polity's juridical forms by penetrating into a hidden economic reality. Furthermore it was noted that Castoriadis had accepted Marxist economic categories in their entirety, including the underlying concept of laws. But now one had to ask, what was this region entitled the economic, what endowed it with its integrity and intelligibility, and what was the significance of the categories used to grasp it? Once these questions found a response, the "economic critique of the political" would be replaced by a "political critique of the economic" such that, in the end, neither "economics" nor "politics" could be conceptualized in the traditional manner.

The critique began with the problem of the determination of wages and of their evolution. According to Marx wages are determined by the costs of the labour force's reproduction. But what determines the costs of reproduction? Two possible answers are given. In the first, wages revolve around a subsistence level; but after the second half of the nineteenth century this was empirically false. In the second, wages are determined by "historical and moral factors"; but nothing is said about the contents and direction of this relation. For Marx the problem did not seem all that serious since he believed that wages either remained constant or increased at only a very slow rate. However, such a belief could be maintained only by abstracting the workers' struggles for higher wages out of the equation. But workers do struggle for higher wages, and this struggle, in part, "determines" the wage rate and its evolution. (This is particularly true of a period like the present, when, given full employment policies, the restraining influence of the supply and demand for labour is minimally felt.) In other words, wage rates must be seen as the result of a balance of forces in struggle and as such remain fundamentally indeterminate.
BRIAN SINGER

Thus there is nothing in the economic, considered as a separate region of society subject to its own laws, that would allow one to deduce the evolution of wages. Nor is there any "rational" scheme that would allow one to deduce an "optimal" wage rate. And given the indeterminacy of wage rates, and therefore of the mass of wages (variable capital), it follows after a moment's reflection that nothing can be said in advance about the rate of exploitation (surplus over variable capital), the organic composition of capital (constant over variable capital), or the rate of profit (surplus over variable and constant capital). In short there can be no economic laws.

What concerns us here is not the specifics in the critique of this or that aspect of Marxist economics, but the logic of Castoriadis' critique as a whole — a logic which demonstrated that, at bottom, the economic is if not illogical, at least alogical. In other words it cannot be conceived of as a region separated from the rest of society, as a region that can be grasped by a technical science based on a closed system of law-like determinations. Of course the economic, and particularly the free market economy, was at the time of Marx instituted with a certain degree of autonomy (and even primacy), but this autonomy was not "absolute", since the central variables of the economic were heterogeneous and accidental to the economic. It is true that the economic exhibited and still exhibits a "local" regularity and intelligibility, but this regularity is bathed within a sea of indeterminacy. Indeed, the economic appears as that sphere in human affairs which is preeminently rational, where the quantifiable appears as essential, and pure maximalization as optimal; but for all this we cannot consider the economic as a "homogeneous flux of values" without emptying it of all its contents. These points, however, while they are important, only suggest what for Castoriadis was the essential, namely, that insofar as Marxist economics must eliminate the workers struggles from the parameters of its theoretical vision, it can only conceptualize the worker as being a commodity like any other, as incapable of autonomous activity, as totally reified by capitalism. In short, it realizes in theory what capitalism attempts to realize in practice, but cannot.

If the workers are not to be seen as merely passive objects of economic laws, neither are the bourgeoisie. At one time, during the period of laissez-faire capitalism, one could perhaps speak of the bourgeoisie's inability to intervene in the economic, and of its lack of a coherent political vision, but since that time it has learned from hard experience how, within certain limits, to regulate the economy. In fact it has learned how to incorporate the workers struggles over wages within a dynamic equilibrium that assures the expansion of the internal market, via the constant and increasing flow of wage goods. In such a situation what remains of a conception that perceives the primary contradiction of capitalism as that between the relations and forces of production, of a conception whose critique is based on capitalism's inability to realize that
optimal maximalization inscribed in the "rationality" of the economic? Such a critique is meaningless from a revolutionary perspective, that is from a perspective that suggests the positive contents of a new society, of a society that would struggle to break with the sovereignty of the economic. This is not to say that economic crises have been eliminated, though it is increasingly unlikely that they will take on a catastrophic form. Such crises might very well occur in the future — though they will not result from "economic laws" but will depend on, for example, the decision of a few desert chieftains to raise the price of oil. What is equally important, other types of crises might occur and probably will occur. However, these at best provide a negative condition for revolutionary activity; in themselves they provide no guarantee for the emergence of a socialist society.

If it is futile to search for guarantees in a world of indeterminacy, one can still attempt to pinpoint an activity that prepares workers for the positive constitution of a new society. Such an activity cannot be found in the worker's wage struggles, since, even though they demonstrate the workers' autonomy and combativity, they do not, as suggested earlier, present an irresolvable contradiction for capitalism. Nor do they — and this point is fundamental — demonstrate that the workers are potentially willing to and capable to concretize the rupture with bureaucratic capitalism by taking production into their own hands. Castoriadis was forced to look further, beyond the "determination" of labour's exchange value to that of its use value. And once again labour reveals itself to be a commodity unlike any other. For when the capitalist purchases a ton of coal he knows how many calories can be extracted from it, yet when he buys a unit of labour power he never really knows its use value, i.e., its productivity, for the latter remains dependent on a different type of struggle, one which unfolds on a daily basis within the work-place. In this struggle the capitalist or manager has at his disposal a number of weapons — the fragmentation and hierarchization of the labour process, scientific management, piece rates, bonuses, technological forms, etc. — all of which seek to expropriate the control of the worker over his own activity in order that he will become a passive object in a productive process "rationally" organized from above and "from outside".

However, the workers are able to resist. In the first place, in opposition to the formal organization of the productive process they can institute informal organizations which, though fragmentary and transitory, embody in an embryonic form a new rationality that originates from within the productive process and that responds as much to the needs of the producers as those of production. Thus they demonstrate in their everyday activity, at a level which need be neither explicitly self-conscious nor political, the arbitrary and violent character of the bureaucratic organization of production. Their very activity suggests that in a new society, labour need not be a necessary evil to be com-
pensated by increased consumption or leisure, but can be instituted on a new basis and endowed with a new meaning or signification. In the second place, the workers “passively” oppose the bureaucratic organization of the productive process by, paradoxically, complying with its demands, that is to say, by withdrawing their initiative. In most cases this results in waste and a deterioration of quality (a particularly acute problem in the eastern regimes, precisely because there bureaucratic capitalism exists in a “purer” form). In extreme cases, e.g. “work to rule”, the productive process simply grinds to a halt.

Such analyses were, for Castoriadis, of great theoretical importance, for they provided the key to understanding the contradiction fundamental to bureaucratic capitalism whether in the east or west (and by contradiction was not meant the “objective” mechanics of breakdown). They suggested that bureaucratic “rationality”, being abstractly conceived and instituted from above and outside, is incapable of directly controlling all aspects of the productive process, particularly in a dynamic system where old methods are soon rendered obsolete and new situations constantly emerge. Thus, although the system attempts to exclude the workers’ active participation, it constantly requires, and is forced to solicit, their initiative and responsibility. In short, the system demands that the worker be simultaneously a subject and an object; absolute reification is impossible. The instability inherent in this situation unleashes an implicit struggle whose forms and contents are being ceaselessly redefined and transformed, and whose effects are translated throughout the economy and society. It is a struggle within which neither side can act without affecting the other side and the situation common to both sides. And consequently it is a struggle that produces a dynamic in which every problem poses solutions and every solution, problems.

The process of bureaucratization, and the parameters of Castoriadis’ analysis, would not remain restricted to the point of production. “Bureaucratic capitalism seeks to achieve on the scale of society what it is already incapable of achieving at the shop-floor level: to treat the activities of individuals as so many objects to be manipulated from the outside.”16 The generalization of this process is due in part to the failure of the traditional workers movement as expressed, following the traditional dichotomy, in both its “subjective” and “objective” aspects. As regards the latter, the working class in the traditional sense of the term, has become a diminishing quantity. Certainly the proportion of those earning wages and salaries is increasing, but one can not for all that simply transfer the characteristics of the proletariat to the totality of the working population. Even the distinction execution and command is coming to have only an analytic validity, since the pure types at either pole are becoming increasingly rare as the intermediary strata within the bureaucratic pyramids expand. As such the working “class” is becoming increasingly differentiated.
and heterogeneous, and consequently the totalizing of such a group into a coherent political agent is becoming increasingly difficult. This, according to Castoriadis, need not represent an insurmountable obstacle. The "universality" of the class — and the very fact of its being a "class" — is never a simple reflex of its "objective" situation, but is always created and instituted within its political practice. But such a "subjective unification" is not occurring. The workers' organizations, their unions and parties, are largely bureaucratized and as a result (and cause) their "constituents" no longer actively participate in them. The implicit and everyday struggles within the productive process, although undiminished in intensity, are unable to achieve an explicitly political expression. It even appears that political activity, that is activity turned towards society as a whole, is becoming increasingly impossible. These tendencies, however, were for Castoriadis only an aspect of a process that went much deeper.

At its most profound level, the bureaucratization of the productive process strips work of its significance as a process creative of meaning. Or, more specifically, the meaning of work is reduced to that of the pay-cheque, as a means to consumption. And consumption is, in its turn, also becoming bureaucratized; fuelled by a vague sense of "something lacking" and fulfilled passively as a spectacle, it exists as the simple production and manipulation of needs. And coextensive with the bureaucratization of production and consumption is the disappearance of collective solidarity: a sense of community is giving way to an anonymous juxtaposition of individuals; collective activity is receding behind a wave of privatization; and political activity, being smothered by a barrage of propaganda and a play of imagery, is being emptied of its meaningful contents. This, however, is only one half of the process, since the fundamental contradiction of bureaucratic capitalism remains intact. As society becomes increasingly "one-dimensional", the conflict is generalized to all levels of social life. Given then the existence of implicit and everyday struggles in the spheres of sexual, familial, personal, pedagogical and cultural relations, the struggle around production loses its privilege (which is not to say that it becomes unimportant) both within bureaucratic capitalism and, what is equally important, in terms of the creation of a socialist society. And given that these struggles put into question the meaning and orientation of all aspects of social activity, the revolutionary project can no longer be conceived only in terms of the self-management of production, but in terms of the self-management of society or what would later be termed its "auto-institution".

One would think that Castoriadis' analysis provided, even if only in seminal form, the elements necessary for theorizing the struggles of the late sixties. However, by the beginning of the second half of this decade, Socialisme ou Barbarie, if not its individual members, had exhausted itself. In June of 1967, a circular was distributed announcing the dissolution of both the party and the
BRIAN SINGER

journal. In this circular Castoriadis invoked the following reasons: the impossibility of bridging the gap between theory and practice, the disappearance of politics, the unlimited capacity of the general population for self-deception, the consumerist attitude of new members towards the party's activities, and the individualist forms of rebellion adopted by the alienated — forms "which are not even deviant, but the indispensable complement of cultural publicity". 19

What we seem to have here is the ascendency of the "pessimism" inscribed within the analysis of the "one-dimensional" tendencies immanent to the process of bureaucratization. 20

Of course the collapse of SB was only a partial failure. The disintegration of the party did not prevent its theory from exercising "subterranean" effects of far-reaching consequence, helping to open up the space from which a new revolutionary discourse would burst forth only a year later. 21 Nonetheless, we might take up this opportunity to interrogate the theoretical limits of this success.

Castoriadis always painted in bold strokes, and although many of his ideas may at this late date appear familiar, the rigour and force with which they were argued allows them to remain both interesting and compelling. However, one hesitates before the expanse of his central category: bureaucracy. What are we to think of a category that subsumes the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and China under the same designation? In part this problem arises because the concept retains from Marxism a certain fetishism for the infrastructure — not in the sense of the structure of the economy, but the sense of that which lies behind the economy, that which was always Marxism's real concern, exploitation, or more generally, the structure of power. Power, however, is not simply articulated through a functional hierarchy of roles or an order of command. It also partakes of a symbolic dimension, and it is the latter that enables a society to define itself as an "ordered totality" and to maintain a "political" discourse on itself as a "signifying totality". With this in mind how can we ignore the difference between a society whose representation of power is raised so far above society that it attempts to enclose the latter within a single and unified discourse and practice, and one whose representation remains only partially external, constantly dependent on and open to the possibilities inscribed within a recognition of its own internal divisions? And how are we to treat a process (I am thinking here of the Chinese Cultural Revolution) which attempts to destroy the bureaucratic mediations separating the instance of power from the "masses", by moulding these "masses" into the image of that power; a process in short, which attempts to destroy the structure of power by generalizing and fixing its representation within each and every individual? I am not trying to argue here for an absolute separation between the structural and symbolic aspects of power; even in the case of the Cultural Revolution the attempt to eliminate the externality of power only resulted in its delirious reproduction as manifested by certain aspects of the cult of the personality. 22
am, however, trying to argue for the importance of what Castoriadis will later call a "signifying" dimension, and I should suggest that a recognition of the latter will necessitate a rethinking of the problem of structural mediations.

Perhaps Castoriadis approached the problem of signification when he noted that at its most profound level, bureaucracy is destructive of meaning — a process not restricted to the sphere of production. As such bureaucracy is not foreign to signification — even if it exists as the latter's negation. Moreover, his earlier analysis should have alerted him to the fact that, although the destruction of meaning may exist as a fundamental tendency, it is strictly speaking impossible. The order that bureaucratic "rationality" attempts to fix cannot exist in a world of total "non-sense"; bureaucratic "rationality" is constantly forced to co-opt, solicit and recreate meaning. And it is this requirement of meaning that endows it with its specificity; social institutions can never be only the embodiment of a purely abstract "formal rationality". The fact that this "rationality" partakes of a world of sense has profound effects on both its own articulation and on the manner in which "substantive" meanings are elaborated. In other words the externality of bureaucratic rationality can only be partial. By forgetting this, one runs the risk not only of closing off one's analysis to entire dimensions of social reality, but of transforming the critique of bureaucracy's externality into an external critique. It should be noted that when, after the lapse of approximately a decade, Castoriadis re-examines some of the problematics explored in SB, he can do no more than reiterate his earlier ideas. It would seem that the critique of "bureaucratic capitalism" had reached an impasse.

The critique of "bureaucratic theory", however, was to be renewed, extended and deepened. It was as if Castoriadis' intellectual evolution, having exhausted itself in the analysis of modern society, could only revive itself by turning inward. In part this was always the case; the critique of the various aspects of the modern bureaucratic system always rebounded onto a critique of the manner in which Marxist theory handled these problems. However, as this process unfolded, Castoriadis was increasingly led to rethink the problem of theory per se. This would not concern the falsification of this or that idea, or even all of them together, but the mode in which these ideas related to each other, and consequently, the mode in which they related to reality and practice. Such a project lay beyond the framework of the publication schedules of a small magazine, and beyond the scope of the collective activity of a political organization.

The Thread of Bureaucratic Rationality Pulled Further

We have already seen the basic "mechanisms" of bureaucratic "rationality" and how they function, and, in the critique of Marxist economics, we saw how
these mechanisms were transposed into theory. In particular, we saw how theory had constructed the economic as a realm separated from the rest of society; how it attempted to grasp this realm as a closed set of determinate relations in the rationalist sense; and how it attempted to treat its object as just that, an object to be apprehended from the outside. And we noted how the workers' activity escaped such a thematization and in the end, rendered it meaningless. This critique would be extended and deepened; it would move beyond the economic theory to the underlying theory of history and from there to the underlying metatheory or philosophy of history.

The centrality accorded to the economic in Marxism is based on the autonomization and primacy accorded to the infrastructure and within the latter, the autonomization and primacy accorded to the forces of production or technique. The productive forces are then endowed with an active nature as expressed by the essentially linear increase in the range and quantity of goods produced, while the relations of production are endowed with a passive nature, reflecting the development of technique, although undergoing progressive and qualitative changes when no longer able to contain the increase in the productive forces. And what is true of the relations of production applies all the more to the superstructure. This conception has a number of serious defects. At the factual level the progressive development of technique only provides a very rough approximation to actual history — one need only think of the Dark Ages. And as for the superstructure in terms of what could one gauge its progress? The problems that arise at the factual level, however, are only indications of problems that lie at a much deeper level: within Marxism's categorical structure. For the infrastructure is conceptualized as belonging to the realm of matter (and the superstructure is conceptualized as belonging to something less than matter, but something that falls under matter's determinations). And this reference to matter, what does it suggest if not that the infrastructure can be grasped according to the model of the natural sciences, according to a material causality that postulates a closed set of determinate elements and relations such that the same causes produce the same effects? But production and technique are not simply given in nature, they are human creations — and as Marx noted in a famous passage in the first volume of Capital, human creation is not simply reflexive (based on material causality) but also reflective (based on final causality: the objectification of ideas according to a schema of means and ends). Why then should technical ideas be privileged relative to other types of ideas? Because they are materialized? But then so are juridical ideas, being materialized in courts, prisons, judges, prisoners, laws, etc. Of course the latter do not exist only as material objects, but then neither do the productive forces. And here we come to what, for Castoriadis, is the heart of the "matter": social objects (including social individuals) exist — are perceived, used and created — only insofar as they have a
THE EARLY CASTORIADIS

sense or meaning for the society under consideration, that is to say, only insofar as they are mediated, either directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, in a "network" of significations. Thus a machine in capitalist society is not merely the sum of its material properties. It is also and above all capital, and it therefore has a significance that is independent of its material (and technical) properties and that refers to its social qualities. Similarly, the goods produced by these machines have a commodity-signification (though these are not the only significations of machines and goods). Thus a machine or good in capitalist society (or any other moment of this society) exists in the full sense of the term suggested above, only insofar as it implies and refers to other aspects of capitalist society. Significations always exist as an open "system" of referrals and counter-referrals, that is they always refer to other significations and social "realities". One can therefore not hold a conception that perceives those significations embedded in the "infra-structure" as complete in themselves, and those in the "superstructure" as referring to something else (the infra-structure). There are no "autonomous" significations, and consequently, there are no determinate and determining significations.

Of course in a bureaucratic society which in accordance with a self-destructive tautology institutes as one of its central significations, "production for the sake of production", and in which technique is perceived as the indispensable means for the latter's realization, production and technology will be endowed with a relative primacy and autonomy. The fact that the latter is reproduced theoretically within Marxism, is a mark of both its rootedness in and understanding of this society. Marxism, however, does not restrict this primacy and autonomy to capitalist society, but attempts to give it an "ontological" status, such that in all societies, past, present and future, the infrastructure determines the superstructure. This conception supposes that in all societies there exist the same fixed and discrete "substances" linked to each other in the same fixed and determinate relations. It assumes a thought whose categories, corresponding to the "substances" and their relations, are also discrete and determinate, having the same meaning throughout. In short it presupposes the same articulation of human activities in all societies, and calls forth a "trans-historical" thought (even if its realization is historically contingent) that can, in spite of "appearances", grasp this articulation, thereby rendering the "essence" of society transparent to the gaze of the theorist. By endowing production and technique with an ontological status, and by conceptualizing the latter in terms of material causality, Marxism attempts to impose a "rationality" on history from the outside — a "rationality" that in its specific contents is deeply capitalist in inspiration and in its general form is wedded to a dogmatic concept of truth.

Now history and society appear to involve material causality, but they can not be reduced to such causality. If they could, we would have to deny (or treat...
as insignificant) all human motivation and all meaning, such that society and history would appear as unmotivated and meaningless, as a sort of chaos of brute facts embedded in causal chains. In order to escape these problems the existence of meaning in society and history can be attributed to the conscious activity of individuals motivated by specific ends pursued according to specific means. But this formulation only raises other problems. How is it that these means and ends pursued by numerous individuals are integrated into a larger collective unity? And if we move beyond the naive idea of a sovereign individual consciousness motivated according to a final cause, if we consider unconscious intentions and undesired effects, how is it that society appears to present a coherence and history an "internal logic", that underlies all conscious and unconscious intentions, all desired and undesired effects, such that even the "accidental" appears as having a larger significance? And how is it that this coherence and this "logic" appear to endow history and society with a value, meaning and intention (in the metaphorical sense) independent of and beyond the values, meanings and intentions lived by individuals? How is it that significations not only exist within society and history, but society and history themselves appear as signifying totalities — as if significations construct an order of meaningful links, other than and yet inextricably woven into all "local" causes whether material or final, conscious or unconscious, intentional or accidental? At this point we are on the threshold of what will become one of the Castoriadis' major concerns: the enigma of institution.

Marxism is not unaware of the existence of such an "internal logic" at work within society and history. More than perhaps any other theory, it has understood that significations can be assigned to social activities and historical phases, and it has attempted to totalize these significations by constructing a general signification for all historical societies — a signification that is realized in the struggle for and establishment of a communist society. But how does Marxism establish such a pole of signification, and how is this pole related to that of material causality? Castoriadis answers: "by affirming that everything must be grasped in terms of causation, and that at the same time everything must be thought in terms of signification, that there is only a single and immense causal chain, which is simultaneously a single and immense chain of meaning". Marxism collapses the problem of signification into a tight synthesis of two causal orders; inscribed in and superimposed on a reason of fact (material causality as expressed in laws of history) is a reason of value (final causality as the realization of reason in history). And the unfolding of this reason, this ever-present and invisible subject that expresses itself through the movement of objects, is not only teleological, it is properly theological:
THE EARLY CASTORIADIS

with the enslavement of the subject... But the latter is only a moment, certainly a very long one, in the Calvary of reason. There is a *ratio abscondita* to this "negative" development that will in the end engender its "positive opposite". Here is the Judeo-Hegelian influence. But the final synthesis is not Judeo-Hegelian: it is Greek. The ultimate finality that orients the whole of historical development is a good life (*eu xên*) in *this* world.... Reason, at the end of and after its ruses, is Providence: the ultimate realm of freedom is guaranteed to us by historical necessity....

Thus, Marxism, by labouring under the sign of a double determinism, attempts to reduce the totality of experience to a series of known rational determinations. In the end Marxism simply repeats Hegel’s claim that "the real is rational" and thus slips back into the manoeuvres typical of what Castoriadis will later term "inherited thought" or the "traditional logico-ontology". Marxism, like the latter, seeks to assure itself of its capacity to grasp the ultimate truth of the real by forging the real in the image of its own *a priori* categorical structure. In this forced attempt at a perfect fit, it endows the "theoretico-speculative" with an autonomy, primacy and sovereignty that renders all disputes between "materialism" and "idealism" secondary. In order to attain a sovereign knowledge over history, the "theoretico-speculative" must be given a place that allows it to submit all of history to its gaze — a place outside of history, or consubstantial to the end of history. In the end it matters little whether this place falls under the denomination of a "science" removed from the influence of history, or of a "universal class" that would incarnate history in its final form. In both cases that which escapes the "theoretico-speculative" is precisely that history which it attempts to theorize. For that which escapes the "reason" of theory — and it is always a particular reason — can only be perceived as unreasonable, accidental, and ultimately meaningless. Theory remains closed in on itself; locked in the symmetry of its own tautology, it has its mechanisms to maintain both the purity of its perspective and the "universality" of its vision. History on the other hand is the source of impurity and particularity; it is the constant emergence of the unexpected, the creation of the new. The attempt by theory to escape history can only result in a sterility of perspectives.

There can be no privileged place, no transcendental perspective, that permits the existence of a complete and closed theory. History can only be known with history, and historical knowledge is itself historical. In this sense our understanding of the past, the meanings we attribute to it, are in part dependent on the significations we live in the present. This is not to say that "true"
knowledge of the past can only be attained from within the past, that the past is transparent to itself; if this were the case, there could be no historical knowledge. Nor is it this to say that the present provides perspectives that allow a "final" gasp on the past's significance; if this were the case there could be no history of historical interpretation. There can be no absolute knowledge of history; the significance of the past is always open to other significations. Historical knowledge is always relative (which is not to say that just anything can be said), and it is this relativity that is the source of both its limitations and its fecundity. That Marx gave an inordinate weight to the role of productive forces of past societies taught us something about these societies. That our society differs to some extent from that of Marx, that our society contains different significations, allows us to relativize and circumscribe Marx's history, and to say something else about that history. History can never be given as an already completed sequence of facts. The particularity of the present enables us to constantly remake and reinterpret the particularity of the past; and the particularity of the past, in its turn, allows us to relativize and circumscribe the particularity of the present — assuming that we do not dogmatically transpose the latter onto the former.

The problem with Marxism, however, is not so much that it remains a particular theory with only a relative validity, but that it attempts to "ontologize" this particularity into the myth of a purely rational history. Now such a history is impossible: "a rational history would be much more incomprehensible than the one we know; its total rationality would be based on a total irrationality for it would be of the order of pure fact, and a fact so brutal, solid and all-encompassing that we would suffocate". Nor can history be conceptualized as a total chaos; the latter would render all thought and activity equally meaningful, that is to say, equally meaningless. And it is because history is neither totally rational nor totally chaotic, that there can be a praxis of history; a praxis that finds support in "reality" but is not determined by that "reality"; that utilizes and is utilized by logical schemas but is not their simple expression. For praxis is above all that activity by which men give their individual and collective lives a meaning that cannot be pre-assigned; that can be neither predicted on the basis of a pre-existing situation, nor deduced from an already-given theory, nor legislated by a pure and lucid consciousness. By constituting itself as a closed and complete theory, Marxism tended to eliminate the problem of praxis at the level of theory. At the level of "practice", of course, it became merely the technical application of pre-established truths. To a contemplative theory was added the complement of a bureaucratic practice.

It will be said that Castoriadis' critique of Marxism is only partially correct. After all, Marxism, more than any other theory attempted to break with the contemplative dualism and incorporate an active relation to practice. Is not
Castoriadis then merely using the theory of Marx to criticize that of Marxism, or perhaps using certain aspects of Marx's theory to criticize other aspects? In part Castoriadis agrees: one can find within Marx the germs of a new mode of theorizing history (in the early writings, in the historical writings, and in the concept of "class struggle"). However, it is precisely because Marxism attempted to transcend the traditional mode of theorizing that it cannot be treated like any other theory. It is because Marxism attempted to generate a historical praxis, that we cannot interrogate and interpret a few texts in the search for a "true" or "good" Marx. Instead we must examine Marxism's present historical actuality, its contemporary significance, and it is at this level that Marxism has attempted to attain a bureaucratic monopoly on truth and, where possible, on power. Certainly there has been a degeneration: "[Marx] wanted to be neither Newton nor Mohammed, but [his historical fate] is not foreign to the fact that he has become both at once; such is the ransom of his destiny, with none other like it, of the Scientific Prophet". Marx, however, is not innocent. As should be evident by now, his writings lend themselves to such a degeneration. His genuine intuitions tended to remain without any sequel, being buried under that which they were meant to deny.

Castoriadis' critique of Marxism is perhaps not totally justified. Even by his own standards, it is too harsh. For underlying his critique lies an attempt to reduce Marx's thought to a system, a determinate set of ideas that correspond, perhaps for polemical reasons, more to a particular representation — even if, to be sure, it is the dominant representation — of Marx's work than to the work itself. The latter, however, is sufficiently indeterminate so as to escape any attempt to reduce it to any single or even series of significations. As such I have refused to quote Marx in order to prove any particular assertion made in this essay. For the point is not to establish what Marx really said, but what he allows us to say. In the wake of the "nouveau philosophes" with their clumsy dualisms and sledgehammer denunciations we must take the risk of reading Marx and of learning from him. To quote Claude Lefort: "[Marx] is important for [us] because in the present (we are) continually referred to his work, because [we] have never finished reading it, because it provides the place for a questioning which goes far beyond the conclusions it happens to draw".

And what applies to Marx applies to Marxism. Is not a movement which is so widespread that it has become part of the general social environment, and so differentiated that it speaks both the discourse of power and that of its opposite, amenable to other significations? Is not Castoriadis — at least until 1964 — an example of Marxism's potential creativity? There is always the danger that the critique of the "theoretico-speculative" will reproduce within its own critique that which it seeks to criticize — if only by reducing the object of its critique to "theoretico-speculative" schemas, and thereby rendering itself external to that object. And yet, in spite of these qualifications, Castoriadis'
commentary remains valid. The inability of certain tendencies within Marxism to attain total closure should not blind us to the fact of their overwhelming predominance. Unless we wish to link ourselves to an honorific genealogy, it remains true that "in order to recover Marx, we have to break with him". This is not to say that we should simply recover Marx under another denomination; we cannot let Marx's insights remain without consequences.

What is needed then is the elaboration of a sort of "anti-theory" which refuses to enclose itself in its own "truth"; a theory whose totalizations are always provisional and whose foundations are always uncertain; a theory that constantly recognizes its own limits not only on its frontiers, but in its very heartland. For theory must take seriously the idea that "every rational determination leaves a non-determinate and non-rational residue, that this residue is just as essential as that which has been analyzed, that necessity and contingency are continually imbricated in each other..." Theory must recognize the irreducibility or alterity of that which lies outside theory, of its own otherness. And with this in mind what then would be this theory's relation to activity and in particular, revolutionary activity or praxis? Certainly the latter would neither exist as the pure application of established knowledge (as technique) nor as an activity without knowledge (as reflex). Such activity would be supported by knowledge, but this knowledge would always be fragmentary and provisional, for it would emerge only within and through this activity. And this activity itself would exist as indeterminate, as an exploration with neither fixed ends nor means, as constantly open to the world with and within which it is engaged. And this world and those present within it would exist for activity not simply as objects to be manipulated, but as irreducible and autonomous subjects, always-already-present and always-changing. And revolutionary praxis would be that activity which explicitly recognizes the others' alterity and aims at the realization of the others' autonomy.

It should be understood that when Castoriadis speaks of the other he is not referring only to the other person, another logos in either the singular or plural. He has in mind that which both limits the logos and provides the condition for its existence and its creativity; that which is the other for both the individual (the unconscious and the body) and the "collective self" (institution and history). And, just as one cannot postulate the existence of a sovereign thought that would exhaustively grasp all experience, one cannot postulate the existence of a sovereign ego that would replace the phantasmatic content of the unconscious with its own clearly-defined propositions. The complete suppression of the unconscious by an absolutely free and rational consciousness could only result, if it were possible, in absolute unfreedom and irrationality. The problem lies elsewhere; not in the unconscious but in its relation with consciousness. Similarly one can not postulate the existence of a society that would eliminate all institution.
THE EARLY CASTORIADIS

If by communism ... one understands a society in which all resistance, thickness and opacity would be absent; in which everybody's desires would agree spontaneously, or even, in order to agree, would have need only of a dialogue that would never be weighed down by the glue of symbolism; a society that would discover, formulate and realize its collective will without passing through institutions, or whose institutions would never be a problem — if that is what is meant, it must be clearly stated that that is an incoherent reverie, an unreal and unrealizable state whose representation must be eliminated. It is a mythical formation, equivalent and analogous to that of absolute knowledge, or of an individual whose "consciousness" has absorbed all being.36

Revolutionary activity cannot be based on the search for a total and totalitarian transparency in an attempt to institute the end of history, that is, the end of institution. Again social alienation does not reside in the fact of institution, but in the relation of society to its own institution. But what then is this institution? How is it that society is able to establish an apparent collective will out of numerous individual desires and an apparent coherence out of a manifold number of events? How is it that such unity is given to society only through the introduction of a certain measure of opacity that resists absorption? And how is it that society is never truly capable of escaping the menace of time? What then accounts for the fixity of the instituted and the fluidity of the instituting? And what is the relation of "rationality" to institution, and how is the former limited by the latter? These are questions that in a sense were always latent in Castoriadis' writings, but that, once having risen to the surface, would have to be confronted head on in spite of and because of their very abstractness. They are also questions that we, as readers tacitly participating in the risks of following Castoriadis' theoretical evolution, must make our own.

Social and Political Thought
York University

Notes

1. This quote is taken from Dick Howard, "Introduction to Castoriadis", Telos, 23 (Spring 1975), p. 119. This article and the interview that follows provide a certain overview of Castoriadis' oeuvre, particularly the earlier period. The later period is examined in greater depth in the last chapter of Dick Howard's The Marxian Legacy, (New York: Urizen Books), 1977, pp. 262-301. cf. also Castoriadis' "Introduction" to his La société bureaucratique, 1: Les rapports de production en Russie, (Paris: ed. 10/18, 1973), pp. 11-61.)

3. There is a tendency to attribute all the accomplishments of "socialist" regimes to the base, and all their "short-comings" to the superstructure — which only demonstrates that the distinction refers less to "fact" than to "value".


5. Such explanations, even if they contain a germ of truth serve only to distance our reflection on the significance of the event under question. As such they teach us nothing: At best we can only hope that the next revolutionary upsurge occurs under circumstances different from that of the last one. Cf. "Sur la dégénérescence de la révolution russe", *La société bureaucratique, 2*, op. cit., pp. 381-386.


8. This problem was approached in a series of articles of which the most important are "Bilan, perspectives, tâches", SB (March 1957), reprinted in *L'Expérience du mouvement ouvrier, 1*, op. cit., pp. 383-407, and "Prolétariat et organisation", op. cit., though its full implications were only drawn out with "Marxisme et théorie révolutionnaire", SB 36-40 (April 1964 to June 1965), reprinted in *L'Institution imaginaire de la société*, (Paris: Seuil, 1975), pp. 13-230.

9. What's more — and this is a related but different point — if one considers that technology is introduced unevenly into the economy, it becomes impossible to develop a consistent measure of constant capital (because: given two machines both in use, one older, less efficient, requiring a greater expenditure of labour time for its production, and the other newer, more efficient, requiring a lesser expenditure of labour for its production - we cannot for all that say that the value of the former is greater than that of the latter).


11. These ideas obviously extend beyond Marxist economics to all economic thought. For a critique of the latter see some of Castoriadis' more recent writings, in particular, "Science moderne et
12. Castoriadis sardonically notes that "if we must at all costs assure ourselves of the inevitability of an economic collapse of capitalism, it is because we think that these same masses ... are always motivated only by their economic situation. Here the contradiction reaches the grotesque. But the essential point is that one has the same representation of the workers that the bosses have (or had). It is in effect strictly equivalent to say that a worker works only under constraint or with the incentive of a bonus, and that workers only make a revolution when forced by their economic situation". "La question de l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier", L'Expérience du Mouvement Ouvrier, 1, op. cit., p. 15, translated in abridged form as "On the History of the Workers' Movement", Telos, 30 (Winter, 1976-77), pp. 3-42.


14. Needless to say, this only deepens the preceding analysis concerning the indeterminacy of the economic, since the struggle over "a fair day's work" concerns not the contractual value of the wage, but the real contents behind this abstraction.

15. Once again, fifteen years later, elements of this analysis have been reproduced within certain sectors of the left. For example, cf. Harry Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century, (New York: Monthly Review, 1974), and André Gorz, "The Tyranny of the Factory", Telos 16 (Summer 1973).


20. Castoriadis' analysis, however, had always attempted to bring to light those counter-tendencies which these original tendencies necessarily evoked. Are we then to ascribe SB's demise to a temporary forgetting of the possibilities highlighted by its own theory? Or perhaps this "crisis of confidence" should be ascribed to the disorientation resulting from the break with the traditional workers' movement and all that this implied in spite of what was proclaimed in the journal's articles. (This break had already led to a split within SB during the early sixties.) Or perhaps the generalization of social struggles to all of society, and their subsequent diffuseness, combined with the inner movement of the critique of bureaucracy, had rendered the notion of the party unbearable — if not in theory, at least in practice. (For Lefort and those who had left SB to form the I.C.O. in 1958, the notion of the party had already in some sense become unbearable in theory.)

21. For Castoriadis' on-the-spot reaction to the May events see his essay "La révolution anticipée" (the title is only partially honest), published under the pseudonym of Jean-Marc Coudray in Mai 68: La Brèche, (Paris: Fayard), 1968.

22. Thus, as the masses were incited to identify with Chairman Mao, the latter came to be seen as increasingly non-identical with the masses, being endowed with eternal youth, the gift of poetry, record-breaking athletic capacities, etc. The preceding ideas are indebted to Claude Lefort's masterly analysis of Stalinism in Un homme en trop: Réflexions sur "l'Archipel du Goulag", (Paris: Seuil), 1976.

23. Cf., for example "La question de l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier" op. cit.
24. The following section is by in large based on the long essay "Marxisme et théorie révolutionnaire", op. cit., and in particular its first two sections.

25. The same problem can be raised with respect to the "progress" of the productive forces. In terms of what has there been progress? In terms of the capacity to produce? to expropriate the workers of their activity? or to wreak havoc on the environment? Because production appears to treat mathematizable quantities, the problem appears simpler, but is in fact equally complex.


27. This applies not only to Marxism's meta-theory of history, but also to the construction of some of its more specific concepts. For example, the concept of "class", is referred to both its situation in the relations of production and its "historical role". "Thus the object (class) receives its final dignity. Its existence is tightly bound from two sides by the totality of existants: it has its necessary and sufficient causes in what has already been, its final cause in what must be. It accords as much with the logic that dominates the effects of things as that which governs the acts of subjects." "La question de l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier", op. cit., p. 56.

28. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

29. For a variety of reasons Castoriadis rejects the notion of the "proletariat as the universal Class". In the first place the proletariat no longer represents itself as a "class", let alone as a "universal class". Second, the proletariat is not undifferentiated, and any attempt to pose its "universality" results in the imposition of only one of its moments (the party) over the others. Third, all differences are not class differences and the absence of the latter does not imply the absence of that which escapes (and resists) the universal. Fourth — and this is not an unrelated point — the suggestions of an undifferentiated rational totality which underlies this concept has "totalitarian" implications; the imposition of such a totality results in the attempted suppression of all "otherness" — that very stuff out of which history is made.

30. More advanced versions of Marxism, in order to avoid a total determinism, postulate the possibility of either socialism or barbarism. Thus history is free: it can become either totally rational, or totally irrational. Once again that which escapes theory, not only has no signification, but is the negation of signification.

31. IIS, op. cit., p. 72.


35. IIS, op. cit., p. 76.

A critical theory of society is opposed to the contradiction between its structure and that of its object.

Theodor W. Adorno

I

The problem of the relation between knowledge and practice has always been a central concern of those individuals engaged since the 1920s in formulating the "critical theory of society". To some extent the result of a rethinking of Marxism as it pertained to the theory and practice of revolution in the advanced societies, particularly Germany, the critical theory of society has sought to account for these societies through the development of a critical posture which first and foremost addresses itself to Marx and Engels but in their name. To continue to be true to Marxian concerns and commitments in the face of significantly altered social and economic conditions, not excluding the development of capitalism as a global system, it would be necessary to confront the "scientism" and "latent positivism" of Marx himself, as well as his linear and mechanistic conception of social change. Equally necessary would be the effort to reformulate the static relation between the substructural "mode of production" and the political-cultural superstructure which Marx inherited virtually intact from political economy.

The social sciences as interventionist, or potentially interventionist, disciplines committed to "empirical social research" figure prominently in this latter reformulation. These disciplines, after all, are not simply neutral agents that carry out research on the relations between alleged sub- and super-structural elements at a distance from these elements. This very reformulation is in part necessitated by the degree to which the social, behavioural and ad-
ministrative "sciences" have become a force of production which no longer constitute a mere reflection of productive forces that determine them. The dialectical character of society as simultaneously formed, formative and forming can nowhere be seen in bolder relief than in the present situation of interpenetration and interdependence among corporations, bureaucracies, governments and these disciplines. Indeed, one could make a good case for the claim that the imperatives of these disciplines are more and more a necessary condition for successful "practice" among decision-makers and policy-makers in advanced industrial societies.

The gradual shift away from the critique of capitalism and economic organization toward the critique of instrumental reason and "Society" as a false totality was virtually given in critical theory's analysis of traditional theory. Traditional theory was simply the necessary "other side" of the methodical empiricism carried out by Popper's (and Weber's) responsible rational theorist in the social sciences. Disciplined observation in the social sciences effectively short-circuited reflexivity because its purpose, like both science and capitalism, was to serve appropriative and accumulative interests in knowledge as a grasp rather than a glimpse. The critical theory of society saw the relation of the social sciences to instrumental means/end rationality in a decidedly dialectical way. Not only was means/end rationality the operative concept of reason to be found in the proper working of the social sciences as success-oriented "technological" disciplines with an interventionist bias and the requirement of "results". This very interventionist bias and results orientation revealed the instrumental relation of the social sciences themselves as disciplines and knowledge — accumulating (or producing) activities functioning as agents or "means" to ends defined outside them by authorities in economic, political and bureaucratic organizations.

What the social sciences, following the lead of science, do to "theory" is thus done to the social sciences themselves. Just as theory becomes an instrumental handmaiden obliged to serve data accumulation and intervention by both agreeing to and assisting in its structural decomposition into testable, falsifiable hypotheses, so also do the social sciences that demand such an activity of theory limit themselves to a success orientation which can only be realized if they accede to external norms and standards of reason as instrumental rationality, norms which define "progress" in terms of progressive differentiation and specialization. This differentiation, however, does not simply take the form of a parallel development between these disciplines and the social division of labour which includes them. As already noted, these disciplines become a force of production because their norms and canons are effectively "generalized" to encompass commonsense practices formerly subject to custom, convention and tradition. At the same time that this occurs, its effect is to reveal the subjugation of the social sciences to society because
CRITICAL THEORY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

their mission is to realize Society as an historically and culturally specific collective which is thereafter fetishized as the only alternative to social disorder and disorganization.

II

The issue of the relation, real and "ideal," between the critical theory of society and empirical method in the social sciences thus underscores the contrast between social theorizing as a reflexive activity or enterprise and sociological theory as a repudiation of reflexivity. While the first addresses "society" as simultaneously a concept and a phenomenon, the second views itself, with Parsons, as a subset of sociology's academic division of labour. The "partial reflexivity" of the critical theory of the first generation, embodied in the idea (and practice) of negativity or "negative dialectics," fundamentally abjures as falsely concrete the empirical view or understanding, since it proceeds out of the assumption that the facts are concrete and theory "abstract" when precisely the opposite is the case.¹

Sociological theory, in subordinating itself to this false concreteness, accedes to the position that it can only vindicate itself in the "real world" that sociology says it understands from a distance by permitting (indeed applauding) its structural decomposition into testable, falsifiable hypotheses. Its only defense then becomes that it is now ready, willing and "available" for utilization as a means or instrument for carrying out a version of the Western project in microcosm, namely, sociological research directed to the appropriation of facts and the accumulation of probabilistic generalizations. The production of these generalizations demands hypotheses, along with operational definitions effectively predefining the "significance" of the "behaviour" of sample populations en route to stating those always tentative conclusions. The rationale for this allegedly linear and serial development, whose progress involves "theory" in these recurrent acts of intellectual suicide, must be clear: intervention in social life in the interests of piecemeal and incremental change where such activity presupposes a "knowing" elite (man) and an ignorant mass (nature).²

Recent efforts to reach a compromise between the critical theory of the first generation (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse) and the incremental or piecemeal approach of Karl Popper and Hans Albert, most notably by Habermas and his followers and students, is as professionally unacceptable and methodologically confusing to sociologists as it is an analytical washout for supporters of critical theory as a reflexive negative dialectics.³ The idea of "splitting the difference" in the interests of reaching such a compromise, originally termed "radical reformism" by Habermas, but more recently labelled "critical social science", reflects Habermas' disillusionment with the West German student protest movement which reached something of a climax in 1968-69. It is worthwhile...
H. T. WILSON

quoting Habermas in full on the reasons for his "conversion" from the position he had taken during the German Sociological Association meetings of 1961, later to become part of, the "Popper-Adorno" controversy, and elsewhere.

Under other historical conditions, the juxtaposition of the categories "revolution" and "reform" constituted a sharp line of demarcation. In industrially advanced societies it no longer discriminates between possible alternative strategies of change. The only way I see to bring about conscious structural change in a social system organized in an authoritarian welfare state is radical reformism. What Marx called critical-revolutionary activity must take this way today. This means that we must promote reforms for clear and publicly discussed goals, even and especially if they have consequences that are incompatible with the mode of production of the established system. The superiority of one mode of production to another cannot become visible under given structural conditions of military technology and strategy as long as economic growth, the production of consumer goods, and the reduction of average labour time — in short, technical progress and private welfare — are the only criteria for comparing competing social systems. However, if we do not deem insignificant the goals, forms and contents of humane social and communal life, then the superiority of a mode of production can only be measured, in industrial societies, with regard to the scope it opens up for a democratization of decision-making processes in all sectors of society.4

The point here is that support for what sounds suspiciously like Mannheim's "fundamental democratization" does not necessarily rule out commitment to negativity. Practical conditions always constitute some form of "piecemeal social engineering" simply by dint of their ongoing character. As a recommendation such a nostrum is meaningless for the practical realm precisely because it is inherent in the practice of an unfinished and/or false totality — society. But as a recommendation to social theorists which allegedly puts them in an either/or situation where they can choose either "ontology" or constructive action it is an all too familiar instance (following Durkheim) of empiricizing (and thereafter reifying) the dichotomy between thought and
action. Such a posture fails to take into account that here we are not dealing with two "options" — points of view whose differences are seen to presuppose far more basic agreements (consensus?) given an empirical conception of the concrete (parts, events, facts) and the abstract (wholes, "relations," theories). In effect, one "side" does not accept the ground rules which include (ironically given the empiricist commitment to the concerns of formal logic) the view that negativity is incompatible with support for reforms, whether piecemeal or radical.

The critical theorist does not "support" such reforms in the practical realm by turning away from negativity. He rather engages these reforms as constructive changes which are at one and the same time an effort to make the social whole more human by seeking to improve it in a way which (necessarily) begins by taking its structure as a (false, incomplete) whole as essentially "given." He neither disputes the "good will" of participants in these efforts, nor does he reify society by acceding to its alleged monolithic character as a totality in which dialectical movement in the direction of becoming has ceased or become meaningless. But he knows the difference between such efforts — as well as the social science which stands behind and effectively legitimizes them — and critique as a negative dialectics. In a certain sense, then, intervention in the interests of the sort of change which can be realized by and through such efforts tells us as much about the advanced societies as social structures and social process as it does about the social sciences as "disciplines" which simultaneously name and are named. Sociological theory, by inverting its relation to "research" in the act of acceding to the academic division of labour, reflects its real role as the light infantry of a technological social science required to prove its claims to professional status and governmental/corporate "support" by its capacity to produce with a fair efficiency "works" valued as relevant by those who direct the dominant institutions of society.

The point about a social science which puts "theory" in the service of non-reflexive technological efforts at intervention of this sort is thus that its claim to neutrality is the way it reveals its auspices in the attempt to hide them. The idea of standing "outside" a topic with nothing more than one's values, Weber's vaunted "value-relevance," presupposes that the world can be construed in such a way that it is amenable to "explanation" part by part. It is the inside/outside, beginning/ending presumptions given in causal inference as the quintessential form of lawfulness or connectedness which serves to underscore the refusal of empiricism and methodical empiricism (the social sciences) to admit that what underlies and makes possible their enterprise is precisely their unacknowledged presumption that reality is necessarily a concrete rather than an abstract totality after all. That the dialectical character of this whole is the reality, rather than an arbitrary way of looking at it "intellectually," is effectively covered over by the accusations of Popper and his cohorts which
H. T. WILSON

Habermas' "critical social science" only aids and abets in its "radicalization" of false concreteness.10

Explanation presupposes a whole which we must thereafter pretend not to recognize because of the way knowledge and knowing have themselves been defined in terms of grasp, appropriation, accumulation and investment. This requires that the whole be presumed real only by reference to parts which demand that it be frozen, and thereafter carved up and put out.11 Explanation thus constitutes a manifestation in the social and political realm of that quintessential one-dimensionality which grants individuals their "subjectivity" only on condition that they yield up their reason to scientific, technological and organizational-bureaucratic conceptions of reason as rationality.12 From the standpoint of a social science committed to intervention, ex-planations are the only conceivable knowledge-productions "relevant" to its enterprise, which means that theory must necessarily content itself with a subordinate instrumental role as a means to this appropriative effort. The implications of this commitment leave theory no choice but to bow to the demand that it not only permit, but actually assist in, its structural decomposition into testable, falsifiable hypotheses.

What all this means, of course, is that there is no way the critical theory of society can possibly abjure its combined commitment to negativity and ultimate optimism on grounds that now we have a "good reason" for getting involved in radical reformism and therefore for turning away from the critical task. It also means that the attitude it must take to empirical method may conceivably endorse its reformist objectives as valuable given society as a false totality while at the same time viewing its increasing predominance vis a vis both theory and practice as indicative of the character and direction of the false whole itself. In effect, empiricism (and empirical method) must remain of central interest to the critical theory precisely because it constitutes the core of a programme whose technological concerns and interventionist bias self-confirm its promise of incremental and piecemeal successes given a frozen and carved up whole, while its widening ambit threatens to annihilate thought and reconstitute practice in its own image. To say that the social sciences reveal their auspices in the effort to hide them through the assertion of a neutrality conditioned only by relevance is to suggest that what makes their inversion of theory and method of central significance is the fact that it shows how much sociology and society belong together.13 The critical theory can hardly afford to ignore or underrate the importance of "intellectual" activities so indispensable to its understanding of society as a false whole.

This is why Adorno was so concerned in the years following his wartime experience in the United States with the need to take the social sciences seriously. He made his point unambiguously, without in the process acceding to either
piecemeal or radical reformism as a substitute for thought, in the following statement:

My own position in the controversy between empirical and theoretical sociology, so often misinterpreted, particularly in Europe, I may sum up by saying that empirical investigations are not only legitimate, but essential, even in the realm of cultural phenomena. But one must not confer autonomy upon them or regard them as a universal key. Above all, they must terminate in theoretical knowledge. Theory is no mere vehicle that becomes superfluous as soon as the data are in hand.\(^{14}\)

Adorno is speaking here to the bargain which all forms of knowledge honouring a scientistic vision have effected with society. This "compromise" promises that knowledge and knowledge-claims will be tolerated only on condition that they overcome any residual interests in reflection which, for Bacon and Popper alike, are at best "a courtesan and not for fruit or generation," and begin in the boundary-as-limit posed by the truncated reason that is Western rationality.\(^{15}\) The reason for not "conferring autonomy" on the facts or viewing them as a "universal key" is that they are the result of intervening in a false whole whose partiality is covered over by assertions about concreteness, "relations" and technological self-sufficiency. To "intervene" is necessarily to serve this whole by acceding to its one-dimensional vision of the world as an abstract totality whose reality is to be discovered in its "parts" and in the explanations which presuppose and proceed from them.\(^{16}\)

III

It might be argued that the foregoing has presumed interventionist concerns and "interests" when empirical method in the social sciences need not have such an animus at all. We would respond that this is highly doubtful, given the fact that even where a particular social scientist claims to be interested in engaging in "empirical" research for its own sake, this work is necessarily "available" for utilization as a means for intervention by others, whether social scientists or "users" in the corporations, governments, professions or unions. The academic division of labour to which social science as theory and method accedes, however poor a mirror of society as a social division of labour, is nevertheless integrated into this larger structure in quite specific and continuing ways through the dependence of the university and "research" on the above institutions.\(^{17}\) Even the individual researcher, allegedly employing
empirical methods in the absence of any specific or general interventionist interest, must publish or otherwise make visible his efforts if he is to gain the recognition on which his advancement and/or status depends. Finally, even were we to grant the above claim, the points we have made regarding intervention itself as a feature of the whole it claims to be "outside", save for the matter of values, would hold with even greater force for an empirical method allegedly uninterested in anything other than an accurate registry of "the facts." 

Radnitsky's effort to bridge the gap — which was first articulated in detail in the "Popper-Adorno" controversy — by underwriting Habermas' "global programme" for a critical social science carries the attempted reconciliation of critical theory and social technology to something of an end-point. His determination to find common ground on which Anglo-American empiricism and continental dialectics and hermeneutics can build a discipline committed to "radical reformism" echoes a similar false "theoretical" resolution achieved earlier by Parsons and Mannheim. In both cases, the resolution was false because it was effected sociologically and therefore in express opposition to the continuing reality of societal contradiction as a feature of social structure and the social division of labour. Quite apart from a view of language which comprehends itself as a neutral instrument "outside" society, whose "standards" commit it to smoothing over rather than embodying social contradiction, this development bears no relation whatsoever to the continuing need for the critical theory as a negative dialectics.

Not only is radical reformism no substitute for the critical theory of society; it also fails as a meaningful reorientation of sociology as a discipline whose theories serve its accumulative and either directly or indirectly interventionist objectives. Indeed, the idea of a "reflexive sociology" is itself a contradiction, since sociology's scientistic pretensions, given in its commitment to "works," necessarily disposes it toward society and against reflection and negativity. This suggests instead that the critical theory must now go beyond even Adorno's understanding of the social sciences and empirical method and take account in its critical posture of the fact that society now includes a specific knowledge-producing component with "radical" and "reflexive" pretensions alongside conventional social science. To be sure, eventually this alleged "difference" between an orthodox and a "critical" social science would be revealed for what it really is, because the latter's acquiescence in the concrete fact and abstract whole would compel it to opt for either one-dimensional intervention through empirical method or "smoothing" and false resolution through some form of "grand theory." 

A related aspect concerns an issue which constitutes what is perhaps the central rationale for a critical social science in its critique of Marxism: its alleged failure to "produce" revolutionary change out of its critique of political
CRITICAL THEORY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

economy which really transcends capitalism, coupled with its retreat into ontology, ideology, and rhetoric. While Adorno was wrong to construe negative dialectics pessimistically as necessary because Marxism had “failed,” the question of the ripeness of society from the standpoint of the relation between the means and the mode of production cannot be ignored.

The fact that this relationship has been reversed in significant ways by the increasing influence of the social sciences, and “social relations” generally, with technical progress and its rules now subordinate to social norms, hardly makes a case for scrapping “capitalism” as an analytic in favour of “science” on the grounds that we now have a critical social science as part of this enterprise which can “lead” economic and technical developments. Neither does it necessarily support disillusionment with an analysis from “objective conditions” where precisely their absence addresses simultaneously the incompleteness (untruth) of present practice as social reality and the need for the real need to be embodied in negativity because contradiction is present in the social reality itself.

A sincere commitment to the view that radical reformism is a distinctly different enterprise from both the social sciences and the critical theory fails first of all to appreciate its present status as an alternative which bears essentially the same relation to social reality now that conventional social science did for an earlier period in the development of advanced industrial societies. In addition, its repudiation of objective conditions puts it in the unenviable position of having to presume the very heightened consciousness in the absence of these conditions which it is the purpose of radical reformism to affect. Perhaps the most paradoxical feature of this support for a critical social science is the way its impatience leads it to recommend actions which are no less a repudiation of the idea that the distinction between thought and action is false than was the case for Marx and Engels when they endorsed revolutionary action in the absence of objective conditions. Only the conviction that universal intelligibility can be presumed for all or most as an inherent capacity and “interest” in this absence can overcome this paradox, and this, we would argue, is untenable given the level and character of individuation in the advanced societies at present.

The life of critique depends on its determination to hold fast to negativity in the absence of objective material and social conditions because this negativity, as recognition of the contradictory character of society, even in the face of ideology and rhetoric defending the truth of the present reality, is part of this unfinished reality, not something “outside” it. Negativity would only be inconceivable where the social contradictions which brought it into being had been overcome and the real need satisfied. Our point has been that a critical social science is far more likely to underwrite, perhaps even legitimate, these contradictions than it is to overcome them. To refuse to accord the socially
“correct” (but untrue) dichotomy between thought and action analytical validity is to speak to what collective life beyond social contradiction must mean. Commitment to negativity addresses the essential difference between reality and truth not in the hope of system collapse but in the expectation of transcendence. Because the possibility of such developments relates to practical realities, these developments are not to be construed as realizable by and through top-down interventionist strategies and techniques alone, whether of the reformist or the radical reformist variety. In the absence of objective conditions providing the impetus for mass, or concatenated individual, action, no social change can ever escape the reality of top-down direction, and will therefore miscarry and fail to realize true social progress.

Adorno’s demand that we reappraise the presently inverted relation between social theory and sociological data accumulation through empirical method, where theory can survive only if it accedes to its structural decomposition into testable, falsifiable hypotheses, speaks both to the reality of sociology as the first science of society as a false totality and to the real need. The fact that he endorsed pessimism by according “society” the status of a frozen construct whose monolithic character admitted of little if any dialectical movement in the direction of becoming in no way diminishes the perceptiveness of the following observation regarding reflection in contemporary society. It is one which those who support the displacement of the critical theory by a critical social science all too readily exemplify.

Thought is subjected to the subtlest censorship of the terminus ad quem: whenever it appears critically, it has to indicate the positive steps desired. If such positive goals turn out to be inaccessible to present thinking, why then thought itself ought to come across resigned and tired, as though such obstruction were its own fault and not the signature of the thing itself. That is the point at which society can be recognized as a universal block, both within men and outside them at the same time. Concrete and positive suggestions for change merely strengthen this hindrance, either as ways of administering the unadministratable, or by calling down repression from the monstrous totality itself.27
CRITICAL THEORY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Notes


2. Wilson, *op. cit.*, chapters 2 and 5.


10. Kosik, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22; Wilson, "'Science, Critique, and Criticism:....'"


20. For two instances of this effort at "reflexive sociology" see Alvin Gouldner *The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology*, N.Y.: Basic Books, 1970; and John O'Neill, *op. cit.*


23. Adorno, "'Society,'" *op. cit.*

24. Wilson, "'Towards a Political Theory of Technocracy,'" *op. cit.*


26. For a study supporting the view that the social sciences necessarily favour a top-down technocratic approach, see H. P. Dreitzel, "'Social Science and the Problem of Rationality: Notes on the Sociology of Technocrats,'" *Politics and Society*, Volume 2, No. 2 (Winter, 1972), pp. 165-182.

Le concept de la société fragmentaire de Louis Hartz son application à l'exemple canadien

K.D. McRae

Le présent exposé vise deux buts: tout d'abord, décrire brièvement la théorie de la formation idéologique des sociétés coloniales de Louis Hartz, ainsi que le milieu intellectuel où elle a pris jour au cours des années '50, et ensuite, exposer d'une manière détaillée les différentes applications de cette théorie au Canada, en particulier au Canada anglophone, par plusieurs auteurs qui l'ont fait de façons parfois fort diverses, en tirant des conclusions divergentes à la suite d'interprétations elles-mêmes fort différentes.

Une remarque liminaire s'impose à propos du Canada. Je pense en effet que l'on peut distinguer dans la tradition historiographique du Canada anglophone, trois modes d'interprétation de la société canadienne. En premier lieu, tant du point de vue de l'ancienneté que de l'érudition, on trouve les interprétations de type économique, notamment dans les travaux de Innis, Macintosh, Creighton et autres, fondées sur la tradition de l'école de Toronto, celle des années 1890, des historiens de l'économie, et notamment les travaux de Adam Shortt de l'Université Queen pendant cette même période. Un second groupe englobe diverses interprétations de type "environnemental", allant des théories de la supériorité des races du Nord et des effets salubres des climats nordiques qui ont eu cours au XIXe siècle à la théorie de la "frontière" de Turner qui a eu une influence considérable entre les deux guerres. La théorie de la métropole de Maurice Careless et les applications plus générales du concept centre-périphérie, peuvent être comprises d'une certaine manière comme une reaction à la théorie de la frontière. Le troisième groupe d'interprétations, que l'on pourrait en gros qualifier de culturelles, met l'accent sur l'héritage culturel importé au moment de la colonisation. Ce type d'argumentation a été moins souvent repris, bien que le discours présidentiel fait en 1943 par Arthur Lower devant la Société historique du Canada et intitulé "Two Ways of Life", en constitue un exemple remarquable. Je dirais que la conception hartziennne de la fragmentation vient se ranger très nettement

K.D. McRAE

dans cette troisième catégorie et que l'intérêt qu'elle a suscité au Canada pendant la dernière décennie est sans doute dû en partie à l'absence relative d'autres explications culturelles.

**Le concept de la fragmentation**

Pour faire l'historique de la théorie de la fragmentation, il faut remonter à l'un des premiers ouvrages de Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, publié en 1955. Ce brillant essai qui est rapidement devenu un classique de la pensée américaine, est né d'une question posée par l'ère McCarthy, à savoir: comment expliquer que l'Amérique puisse être à la fois "libérale" et intolérante? Hartz a trouvé une réponse à ce paradoxe (qui sans doute, aurait suscité beaucoup moins d'interrogations dans les années '60) dans l'universalité du libéralisme américain: dans le contexte des États-Unis, le libéralisme n'affronte aucune idéologie rivale; il n'a à livrer aucun combat idéologique. Les clivages politiques se situent dans les limites de la tradition libérale. Le climat idéologique est dominé par John Locke et ne pas être libéral reviendrait à être anti-américain. Même le Sud, soutenait Hartz, est caractérisé, bien qu'imparfaitement, par l'héritage libéral. Il essaie d'en faire la preuve en montrant combien les théories du "Sud féodal" développées pour justifier l'esclavage étaient artificielles et contradictoires. Ainsi il y a pour Hartz une uniformité de la tradition idéologique américaine, et ceci malgré toutes les différences accusées par l'héritage colonial et les conflits Nord-Sud du XIXe siècle.

LE CONCEPT DE LA SOCIETE FRAGMENTAIRE

l'Amérique se voyait transformée en thèorie générale applicable à toutes les sociétés issues des colonies de peuplement européennes.

L'argument fondamental de *The Founding of New Societies* peut se résumer ainsi: Hartz voit chaque cas de colonisation de peuplement comme un processus de fragmentation, de séparation d’une partie de l’ensemble européen, comme l’isolement d’une tranche ou d’une portion particulière de société européenne aux tendances et aux caractéristiques idéologiques propres. En ce qui concerne les États-Unis, l'Australie ou l'Amérique latine, il en est résulté une société coloniale représentant dans chaque cas une tradition idéologique unique, mais dans les cas du Canada et de l’Afrique du Sud, on arrive, en raison de la nature composite de leur tradition fondateuse, à des sociétés bifragmentaires.

Dans le cadre du Nouveau Monde, ces parties ou fragments de l’éventail idéologique d’origine européenne deviennent des totalités, des ensembles, des absolus, des univers indépendants. On voit alors s'instaurer la rigueur et le traditionnalisme ainsi qu'une forte tendance au durcissement et à la fixation de ces valeurs fragmentaires. Mais la situation est complexe, car l'idéologie acquiert une grande liberté de développement puisqu'elle n'est pas soumise à la concurrence d'autres idéologies.

Il en résulte que les sociétés fragmentaires se caractérisent par un monopole idéologique, par un dessèchement du processus dialectique qui était en Europe à l’origine de tensions et de débats politiques permanents. Dans les sociétés fragmentaires, la théorisation sociale fondamentale cesse, parce que les idéologies ennemies manquent et que les batailles sont gagnées par défaut. A l'examen des faits, Hartz discerne une absence de philosophie sociale réelle dans toutes les sociétés fragmentaires, et dans un passage tout à fait caractéristique, il en donne une explication:

Ce qui a étouffé toute philosophie dans les cultures fragmentaires, c'est la fausse certitude qu'elles se sont donnée. Tout le mécanisme de leur développement passé peut être conçu en fonction de leur aspiration à cette certitude: la destruction du passé, le rejet du futur, la découverte intérieure et avant tout, les métamorphoses psychiques qui accompagnent tout le processus.²

Mais la théorie de Hartz ne s'arrête pas à la formation et au durcissement du fragment. Au XXe siècle, en effet, le processus se modifie à nouveau. Au fur et à mesure de l'unification du monde grâce à la technologie, l'isolement du fragment ne peut plus durer. De plus en plus, les cultures fragmentaires sont contraintes de reprendre contact avec les cultures qu'elles ont laissées derrière
K.D. McRAE

elles et de réapprendre ce qu'est le pluralisme idéologique. Hartz affirme que ce processus est créateur de tensions, d'intolérance brutale, et qu'il entraîne des réajustements difficiles mais il ne pourra en aller autrement tant que se poursuivra le processus de réintégration des cultures fragmentaires dans la communauté mondiale. Ainsi l'expérience fragmentaire peut être comprise comme une phase limitée de l'évolution des nouvelles sociétés nées de l'expansion européenne, bien que Hartz ne soit pas particulièrement explicite à propos des conséquences qu'entraîne la redécouverte du pluralisme.

Avant d'appliquer ces idées au Canada, deux observations s'imposent. Il faut d'abord remarquer que Hartz lui-même classe ces fragments en trois grandes catégories, qu'il appelle féodales (Amérique latine, Canada francophone), libérales (États-Unis, Canada anglophone, Afrique du Sud hollandaise) et radicales (Australie et Afrique du Sud anglophone). Il n'y a d'ailleurs pas de différence très nette entre ces deux dernières catégories qui ont en commun des idéaux égalitaires. Hartz les réunit parfois sous le terme de fragments "éclairés", par opposition au type pré-moderne ou féodal. En outre, il ne refuse pas de discerner des nuances et des différences d'un continent à l'autre, bien que son souci principal reste de découvrir des parallèles entre les fragments d'une même famille idéologique, car c'est à ce propos-même que la théorie de la fragmentation peut être la plus explicative et la plus révélatrice.

Ensuite, Hartz fait remarquer que ces fragments représentent rarement des cas d'"idéologie pure". Le fragment libéral canadien anglophone, par exemple, est "marqué par un courant Tory issu de la Révolution américaine", mais il y a aussi, en Amérique du Sud et en Afrique du Sud, des éléments Tory similaires que l'on peut attribuer à d'autres causes, comme l'élitisme né des préjugés raciaux. Dans l'esprit de Hartz, cela ne change en rien ni la base, ni la portée idéologique de ces fragments; celle ne fait que contribuer à mieux préciser leurs coordonnées idéologiques. De telles variations d'un fragment à l'autre découlent apparemment de l'individualité des milieux dans lesquels ils évoluent, et ne modifient en rien la classification générale tripartite des fragments en féodal, libéral ou radical. ³

Les applications à l'exemple canadien

On pourrait s'étendre beaucoup plus longuement sur les conséquences de la théorie de Hartz, mais je proposerais plutôt que l'on examine certaines de ses applications au Canada. Plus précisément, j'essaierais de résumer cinq tentatives faites pour appliquer au Canada, la théorie générale de la fragmentation, afin d'en analyser les différences, et aussi pour aborder la question plus générale des grands courants idéologiques au Canada. La première en date de ces tentatives,
fut l'objet de mon propre essai, "The Structure of Canadian History", qui parut dans The Founding of New Societies.

En bref, cet essai expliquait que le Canada est un cas classique de société bifragmentaire fondée sur la double expérience colonisatrice de la France et de la Grande-Bretagne. Le fragment franco-canadien y était caractérisé, à mon avis, par l'autorité royale, la centralisation du contrôle, la tenure seigneuriale, l'homogénéité religieuse et la tendance gallicane au sein de l'Eglise. Tout ceci, cependant, se trouvait être tempéré par un environnement de type "frontière" qui aboutissait nécessairement à une certaine souplesse du contrôle, ainsi que par l'éloignement de la métropole. À mon avis, le Canada français n'était pas aussi "féodal" que Hartz se plait à le penser, mais davantage centralisé, autoritaire, rationnel, absolutiste (dans le sens que le dix-septième siècle donne à ces mots) et dans une certaine mesure mercantile. Cet essai suggère qu'il y avait de fortes tendances aux persistance idéologiques en dépit des différents défis extérieurs et comme cet ouvrage a été écrit en 1961, il n'essaie pas d'analyser sérieusement les changements qui sont survenus après la mort de Maurice Duplessis en 1959.

L'élément le plus important de la tradition canadienne anglaise est, selon ce texte, son rattachement au libéralisme lockien. En insistant sur ce point, je réagissais contre ce qui semblait être l'idée qui prévalait à l'époque en ce qui concerne les loyalistes américains que l'on considérait comme des conservateurs bornés. Au fond, en dépit des apparences qui pourraient faire penser le contraire, la majorité des Loyalistes en Amérique du Nord britannique étaient lockiens et libéraux, comme l'était d'ailleurs la société qu'ils avaient quittée et les contacts avec le Canada français n'avaient que ravivé la conscience de ce libéralisme. De plus, comme le suggère cet essai, la grande migration post-napoléonienne en provenance des îles britanniques à laquelle on avait fait miroiter de l'estime et l'égalité sociale, avait contribué à renforcer ces tendances libérales. Même si le système de valeurs du Canada anglais a sans doute pris assez de temps à se former, je considère que ce fragment était tout à fait stabilisé, au sens idéologique, approximativement vers 1850 lorsque la première vague d'immigrants britanniques toucha à sa fin.

Rétrospectivement, cet essai insiste peut-être de façon excessive sur la suprématie du libéralisme et sur l'influence de Locke, mais la question qui se posait à l'époque était de mettre en relief les tendances principales des traditions canadiennes-anglaises et non pas de les expliquer en détail ou de prendre position sur des questions qui ont été soulevées depuis. Je croyais, et je crois toujours, qu'on deformait beaucoup l'histoire du Canada en la plaçant exclusivement dans le cadre de référence nord-américain et en étant porté à montrer en épingler les distinctions idéologiques entre le Canada anglais et les États-Unis pour affirmer l'identité politique canadienne. Si ces différences idéologiques sont peu importantes, il n'est aucun besoin de les grossir ni d'en
K.D. McRAE

inventer d’autres, parce que l'identité politique peut trouver ses fondements autrement que dans des distinctions idéologiques.

La deuxième application de la théorie hartzienne est celle qu’en a faite Gad Horowitz. Dans une étude qu’il a publiée d’abord en 1966 et ensuite, dans le chapitre d’introduction de son ouvrage Canadian Labour in Politics, Horowitz passe soigneusement en revue les idées essentielles de The Founding of New Societies, auquel il propose des modifications importantes. En premier lieu, il suggère que “l’élément conservateur” relevé par Hartz et McRae dans le fragment canadien anglais, loin d’être négligeable, est significatif dans le contexte canadien. C’est cet “élément conservateur” qui ouvre la voie à un “élément socialiste” important qui lui correspond par le biais d’une dialectique de style européen qui, bien que muselée, n’en était pas moins apparente.

Deuxièmement, Horowitz pose la question de savoir à quelle date les fragments se sont fixés, congelés; l'idée à la base étant que si cette étape de formation a duré suffisamment de temps, d'autres influences socialistes auraient pu entrer directement au Canada par le biais des autres vagues d'immigration britannique. Horowitz en conclut que le fragment canadien anglais, contrairement à l'américain, comporte un élément socialiste important d'un type différent de celui qui n'est pas parvenu à s'enraciner aux États-Unis: "Au Canada, le socialisme est d'inspiration britannique, non-marxiste et pragmatique, alors qu'aux États-Unis, il s'agit d'un socialisme marxiste, allemand, et transcendental".

Le principal point que soulève Horowitz sert à refuter le caractère exclusif, mais pas la suprêmatie du libéralisme au stade de la formation idéologique du Canada. Ce point de vue peut être clairement résumé par un extrait de son ouvrage:

Je prétends qu’à l’époque de la fondation, des éléments britanniques non-libéraux sont entrés dans la société anglaise en même temps que des éléments libéraux américains. Le fait est que le Canada a été largement influencé à la fois par les États-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne. Cet argument ne va pas à l’encontre du fait que le libéralisme est l’élément dominant dans la culture politique canadienne anglaise; il met simplement en relief qu’il n’est pas le seul élément et qu’il s’assortit d’importants courants de conservatisme et de socialisme aussi étroitement en rapport avec l’“essence” du Canada anglais ou ses “fondations” que ne l’est le libéralisme. L’“essence” du Canada anglais est à la fois libérale et non-libérale.
LE CONCEPT DE LA SOCIETE FRAGMENTAIRE

Horowitz introduit une autre idée nouvelle en ce sens qu’il déplace l’accent de la discussion: il passe en effet de sujets plutôt généraux et impressionistes, comme les attitudes des masses, au comportement et à la stratégie des partis politiques et des élites politiques. À ce niveau, il montre que les libéraux canadiens se sont comportés comme un parti européen centriste comptant des ennemis à droite et à gauche, alors que les démocrates américains étaient à vrai dire un parti de gauche. De plus, le Canada est le seul exemple où le centre libéral soit vainqueur des attaques de la gauche et de la droite. On ne peut nier le bien-fondé de cette façon de voir, mais Horowitz ne se penche pas sur le fait que les politiques fédérales touchaient à la fois le Canada français et le Canada anglais et que la stratégie du Parti libéral, en particulier, témoignait des impératifs imposés par les deux fragments.

En résumé, l’idée fondamentale de Horowitz est que la tradition politique canadienne au sens idéologique est quelque peu plus large que la contrepartie américaine, davantage pluraliste, même si avant tout elle est libérale. Alors qu’aux États-Unis ‘‘le monothéisme lockien regnait sans rival’’, dans l’Amérique du Nord britannique ‘‘Locke devait partager son pouvoir avec d’autres déités’’. Pour ma part, je serais porté à aller dans le sens de cette conclusion, mais en essayant d’expliquer cette situation, j’insisterais moins sur l’idiosyncrasie du fragment canadien anglais et mettrai davantage l’accent sur la présence simultanée des deux différents fragments et sur leurs rapports mutuels, question qui n’a pas été étudiée par les analystes hartziens.

Il existe un troisième exemple d’application de la théorie de Hartz au Canada dans les travaux de David Bell et de Louis Balthazar, notamment dans une étude commune qu’ils ont présentée en 1969 devant l’Association canadienne de science politique. Les deux auteurs ont utilisé le même cadre dans d’autres ouvrages, mais ce document en particulier permettra au premier chef de caractériser leurs idées de base. Dans cette étude, Bell pré tend que les conservateurs de la révolution américaine n’étaient pas moins lockiens que leurs compatriotes révolutionnaires et que l’existence d’un ‘‘élément conservateur’’ du côté des Loyalistes devait être écartée. D’autre part, Balthazar nous dépeint le fragment canadien français comme l’exemple-type d’une idéologie ancien régime fondée sur l’autorité, la hiérarchie et l’absence d’une bourgeoisie authentique.

Toutefois, à ce stade, ils introduisent une modification théorique importante. En effet, les auteurs prétendent que les fragments se développent en fonction de deux critères: (1) l’héritage culturel, qui joue le rôle de ‘‘code génétique’’ et qui détermine le contexte de tout développement culturel à venir et (2) l’incidence des ‘‘événements formateurs’’ dans l’histoire d’une société, qui déterminent et donnent forme à l’évolution d’un fragment, comme c’est le cas de l’environnement qui détermine le développement de l’individu. En conséquence, les auteurs font appel à une ‘‘nouvelle per-
K.D. McRAE


Pour bien caractériser l’importance de la Conquête britannique pour le Canada français, Balthazar brosse à grands traits la transformation de l’identité canadienne-française, sous la domination britannique, d’une société anticapitaliste en une société anti-anglaise et ensuite nationaliste. Le destin des Loyalistes américains, selon Bell, est encore plus bizarre car leur expulsion de la seule société qu’ils connaissaient contribua également à les couper des seules racines idéologiques qu’ils avaient, ce qui les plongea au plus vif d’une crise d’identité. Envisagée sous cet angle, la Révolution américaine a été le catalyseur qui devait précipiter l’émergence d’une nouvelle nation chez les vainqueurs, mais qui devait aussi engendrer pour les perdants une "nation sans identité", traumaïsée. Or parmi ces derniers se trouvaient les Loyalistes qui fondèrent le Canada anglais. Il est donc aisé de voir un rapport entre ces débuts angoissants et le débat continu qu’a suscité, au cours des dernières années, la question de l’identité canadienne.

Les travaux de Balthazar et de Bell soulèvent, à tout le moins, deux questions importantes qui donnent matière à penser. La première porte sur l’existence d’un "événement formateur". On ne parvient pas à voir clairement dans leur analyse la raison pour laquelle un événement revêtant des proportions catastrophiques ou traumatisantes est différent de l’effet continu de pressions graduelles exercées par l’environnement. Par exemple, la Conquête britannique est-elle en soi un "événement" plus significatif pour le Canada français que le contact prolongé d’une minorité avec un autre fragment d’idéologie distincte? Deuxièmement, quelles sont les implications du concept de "nation sans identité" pour le Canada anglais? Même si Bell fait valoir de façon convaincante le manque d’identité nationale du Canada anglais, sa analyse semble ne pas porter sur les implications de cette notion sur la théorie de la fragmentation en soi, ou sur le développement de la société canadienne anglaise en particulier. On pourrait prétendre que si, dès sa fondation, l’on avait refusé au Canada anglais son certificat de naissance lockienne, et si on l’avait forcé de se forger une identité non-américaine et de se lier par ses institutions avec la Grande-Bretagne pendant plusieurs décennies après sa fondation, ce serait un exemple imparfait d’une société fragmentaire au sens hartzien.

Le quatrième exemple caractérise moins une application de la théorie hartzienne qu’une critique ou sa réfutation. Je me reporte à l’ouvrage de l'historien
LE CONCEPT DE LA SOCIETE FRAGMENTAIRE

S.F. Wise qui a, au cours de la dernière décennie, publié une série de travaux allant dans le sens de la suprématie de la doctrine conservatrice dans l'histoire canadienne anglaise au XIXe siècle. Dans le discours présidentiel qu'il a prononcé en 1974 devant la Société historique du Canada, Wise s'est livré explicitement à une analyse et à une critique de la thèse hartzienne et ce faisant, il a révisé considérablement certaines des positions qu'il avait adoptées auparavant. Les idées de Wise sur le rôle et la contribution du conservatisme au Canada méritent d'être étudiées séparément, mais nous insisterons ici sur son analyse des idées de Hartz.

Les raisons que Wise allège contre l'application de la théorie de la fragmentation au Canada peuvent se résumer brièvement. En premier lieu, l'héritage culturel européen au Canada est extrêmement diversifié et la théorie de la fragmentation est trop générale et trop universelle pour prendre en considération les hauts niveaux de variations culturelle et ethnique, et au moment de la coupure de l'Europe aux niveaux régionaux ou locaux en Amérique du Nord britannique. En outre, contrairement à ce qui s'est passé aux États-Unis, l'Amérique du Nord britannique est tout au long du XIXe siècle, toujours restée en rapport avec l'Europe et ses métropoles, de sorte que le fragment - dans une perspective hartzienne - "n'a jamais pu complètement évoluer librement de l'intérieur". De plus, la survivance d'un pluralisme culturel au Canada s'explique mieux si l'on adopte l'hypothèse d'une idéologie conservatrice plutôt que libérale car les systèmes politiques conservateurs s'intègrent généralement au niveau des élites et imprègnent moins les masses d'une idéologie unificatrice.

Fait très important pour l'instant, Wise argumente en faveur d'un pluralisme idéologique permanent. L'idéologie des Loyalistes et celle, dans un sens plus large, de la société canadienne anglaise au XIXe siècle, prétend-t-il, renfermaient des éléments conservateurs et libéraux. L'Amérique du Nord britannique était donc en quelque sorte le lieu d'affrontement des idéologies, une sorte de champ de bataille dialectique. "Le style et le caractère canadien-anglais ne doivent pas être compris en fonction d'un consensus émanant d'un libéralisme triomphant, mais plutôt à la lumière de son héritage contradictoire, dans un contexte de conservatisme muselé et de libéralisme ambivalent, de contradiction, de paradoxe et de complexité".

Nous en arrivons maintenant à un paradoxe important dans la pensée de Wise. Si cette dernière hypothèse, l'affrontement entre les idéologies conservatrices et libérales, est difficile à concilier avec le concept de base de Hartz d'uniformité idéologique dans les sociétés fragmentaires, les ouvrages antérieurs de Wise consacrés à la suprématie du conservatisme dans l'histoire du Canada anglais concordent tout à fait avec les idées de Hartz. La seule divergence vient de ce que, dans ces études, le fragment canadien-anglais est appelé conservateur plutôt que libéral, et si nous interprétons "conservateur"
K.D. McRAE

comme synonyme d’un certain type de Whiggism, la différence entre les premiers travaux de Wise et ceux de Hartz est moins marquée qu’il n’y paraît de prime abord. En effet, lorsqu’il passe en revue les idées de Hartz, notamment dans son discours présidentiel de 1974, il réfute certains des principaux postulats de Hartz et renie par le fait même ses arguments antérieurs sur la suprématie de l’idéologie conservatrice dans la formation de la société canadienne-anglaise.

C’est dans un ouvrage récent du sociologue Martin Lipset que l’on trouve la cinquième application des idées de Hartz où il retrace en les comparant la pénétration de l’idéologie socialiste et des partis socialistes au Canada et aux États-Unis. Comme point de départ il pose la question suivante: pourquoi le socialisme n’existe-t-il pas aux États-Unis? et son corollaire: pourquoi un parti socialiste a-t-il pu voir le jour et grandir au Canada? une question qui, au demeurant, retient son attention depuis 1950. Dans son étude de 1976, Lipset aborde la question sous deux angles différents. Premièrement, il étudie les différences de société entre le Canada et les États-Unis en passant complètement en revue les plus récents ouvrages de sciences sociales, en comparant les auteurs qui trouvent des différences notoires avec ceux qui, à l’instar de Hartz, trouvent des similitudes fondamentales entre ces deux pays. Deuxièmement, il examine le rôle des différences au niveau des institutions, en particulier, celles qui ont trait aux élections et aux systèmes de partis, qu’il considère comme une des explications possibles aux fortunes respectives des mouvements socialistes et de la social-démocratie.

Lipset conclut que comparativement à d’autres sociétés industrielles occidentales, les deux démocraties nord-américaines se situent relativement bas sur l’échelle qui mesure la conscience de classe et les conflits de classe et que leurs partis de gauche souffrent d’une certaine faiblesse. A cet égard, les structures sociales du Canada anglais et des États-Unis se ressemblent fondamentalement. Les différences de systèmes, de partis et de comportement politique s’expliquent davantage par les différences des institutions politiques, que par celles des structures sociales fondamentales. Cette conclusion est intéressante parce qu’elle est à l’opposé des écrits antérieurs de Lipset et même des hypothèses de départ de son article de 1976.

Bref, Lipset conclut en admettant la similitude fondamentale qui existe dans les cultures fragmentaires canadienne-anglaise et américaine, décrites dans le livre The Founding of New Societies, du moins en ce qui a trait à son sujet de recherche, “les perspectives du socialisme et de la solidarité de classe”, dans les deux pays. En raison de la nature des sociétés elles-mêmes, ces perspectives sont limitées dans les deux pays par des impératifs fragmentaires analogues en substance:

Depuis que j’ai commencé ce travail, orienté dans une
autre direction, je puis enoncer ces conclusions avec la bénédiction de feu Max Weber. Il prétendait que les savants devaient se méfier de tout résultat de recherche qui serait en harmonie avec leurs allégeances politiques, ou avec des idées préconçues antérieures à leur recherche. Je suis parti de l'hypothèse que les cultures politiques du Canada et des États-Unis étaient différentes et que cette variation se traduisaient dans leurs systèmes de partis, plus particulièrement par la présence d'un parti socialiste fort dans un pays et non dans l'autre. Je conclus que les différences résident bien plus dans la forme que dans le contenu, et cette conclusion implique également que les divers critiques du Parti socialiste américain et du PSD/NPD avaient tort d'imputer l'échec de ces partis à des carences idéologique, stratégique et tactique. Ils ont échoué parce que le milieu nord-américain complexe n'a pas encouragé les politiques idéologiques axées sur les classes, plus étroites que celles qu'offrent les partis de coalition de courtiers.27

On se sera rendu compte que je me suis principalement penché, dans ce document, sur les applications des concepts de Hartz à la compréhension de la société canadienne, dans un sens large ou général, et que, jusqu'à présent, je me suis surtout arrêté au Canada anglais ou à l'ensemble du Canada anglais et du Canada français comme système politique. Les applications des concepts de Hartz au Canada français ont eu tendance, jusqu'ici, à s'intéresser moins à des interprétations d'ensemble qu'à des moments précis de l'histoire canadienne-française. Pour illustrer ces tendances, citons l'étude de Louis Balthazar sur les idées politiques de Louis-Joseph Papineau, déjà mentionnée plus haut,28 ou celle d'André Bélanger sur les idéologies du Québec des années '30.29 Bélanger trouve dans la théorie de la fragmentation une explication de l'apartitisme qu'il juge comme une caractéristique commune des idéologies de l'époque, mais il discerne également dans les années '30 le premier indice de petites fissures dans le fragment canadien-français, susceptibles d'être interprétés comme des signes avant-coureurs d'une ouverture sur le libéralisme et d'une renaissance de la dialectique dans les années '50, après deux siècles de quiétude.30

Quant au Canada anglais, la thèse hartzienne a soulevé un débat général suscité par notre souci de décrire la société canadienne-anglaise dans The Founding of New Societies comme une société surtout libérale et comparable à la société américaine dans ses grandes lignes idéologiques. Cette position a été remise en question par Gad Horowitz, qui, dans une thèse délicatement nuancée, a créé une position médiane par rapport à la dialectique européenne.
initiale, en situant le Canada anglais quelque part entre le modèle européen et le modèle fragmentaire. Le travail de Bell et de Balthazar, qui a paru en 1969, marque un retour à un classement plus simple des fragments, mais ces auteurs ont également placé une nouvelle emphase sur les événements formateurs étrangers qui ont, ils le reconnaissent, influé considérablement sur l'évolution des fragments. Ils établissent ainsi une synthèse entre les modes d'explication culturels (ou génétiques) et "environnementaux". S.F. Wise, dont les travaux antérieurs sont conformes à l'interprétation hartzienne, sous une étiquette légèrement différente, tend à rejeter ce point de vue lorsqu'il le considère explicitement, et il voit le Canada anglais comme le reflet d'une contradiction idéologique continue plutôt que comme un tout homogène. Enfin, Martin Lipset, en modifiant ses propres écrits antérieurs, en arrive à une réaffirmation des similitudes fragmentaires fondamentales entre le Canada anglais et les États-Unis, en localisant la source de leurs divergences au niveau des institutions principalement. L'article de Lipset publié en 1976 est peut-être le sujet le plus approprié pour terminer cette étude, parce qu'il referme la boucle des interprétations idéologiques du Canada anglais, en nous ramenant presque au point de départ de 1964.

Il convient toutefois d'ajouter un dernier mot. Le concept hartzien de la fragmentation atteindra son objectif s'il suscite non seulement un débat continu sur les idéologies fragmentaires, mais également une recherche originale destinée à vérifier ces hypothèses. La vérification des hypothèses de Hartz au moyen de méthodes empiriques est, de toute évidence, difficile, mais nullement impossible. On peut citer, à cet effet, un récent ouvrage des professeurs Soderlund, Nelson et Wagenberg de l'Université de Windsor, qui ont tenté de mesurer la valeur de certaines hypothèses hartziennes en effectuant une analyse du contenu des débats de la Confédération dans la province du Canada.31 Si les conclusions de cette expérience n'ont pas particulièrement appuyé les hypothèses de Hartz en matière d'évolution fragmentaire, c'est peut-être parce que les débats de la Confédération ne constituent pas nécessairement une très bonne source pour l'étude des orientations idéologiques générales. A titre d'exemples supplémentaires de travaux empiriques, on peut citer ceux du professeur Tom Truman, qui a cherché à inventer une échelle d'attitudes destinée à mesurer le degré de conservatisme-toryisme chez les étudiants canadiens-anglais et chez les étudiants américains.32 Même si les premiers résultats ne sont pas concluants, c'est dans un travail de ce genre que le débat conceptuel plus général peut s'alimenter, évoluer et déboucher éventuellement sur l'élaboration d'hypothèses plus exactes.

K.D. McRAE

Département de science politique
Université Carleton

80
LE CONCEPT DE LA SOCIETE FRAGMENTAIRE

Renvois


3. Ibid., 34.

4. Ibid., 219-274.


8. Ibid., 29-44.

9. Les hypothèses proposées par Horowitz pourraient, bien sûr, être vérifiées de plus près au niveau provincial, où l'influence du fragment canadien-français pourrait être contrôlée, mais il ne semble pas y avoir eu jusqu'à présent de tentative sérieuse à cet égard.

10. Canadian Labour in Politics, 44.


14. Ibid., 3-5.

15. Ibid., 39.

16. Ibid., 16.

17. Ibid., 24-25.

18. Bell traite toutefois ce point dans un document ultérieur, alors qu'il découvre dans l'expérience loyaliste une "anti-fragmentation" qui nous aide à saisir certaines "manifestations
paradoxalement" au Canada, y compris "le succès relatif du socialisme et d'autres idéologies" et "l'échec au Canada d'un nationalism ideologique et fragmentaire typique". Voir son document intitulé: "Methodological Problems in the Study of Canadian Political Culture" (communication présentée à la réunion annuelle de l'Association canadienne de science politique, Toronto, 1974), 10.


22. "Liberal Consensus or Ideological Battleground", 5-6.

23. Ibid., 10-11.

24. Ibid., 13.


27. Lipset, "Radicalism in North America", 54-55.


30. Ibid., 366-368.
