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**Canada**

**Eurocommunism and the Marxist Classics**

**Constantinos Vracas**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Department**

**of**

**History**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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Concordia University  
Montréal, Quebec, Canada**

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## ABSTRACT

### EUROCOMMUNISM AND THE MARXIST CLASSICS

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Concordia University, 1984

Eurocommunists expect the arrival of socialism in the economically advanced societies of the "West" not as a result of the abolition and replacement of the state institutions of capitalism, but through the democratisation of these institutions and their utilisation by the forces of progress as the principal means for a peaceful and democratic transition. Democracy will not simply serve as the vehicle for the passage to socialism; it will equally become the fundamental ingredient in the construction of what the new tendency has envisioned as the society of "democratic socialism". This latter concept has been introduced as the antidote to the "dictatorship of the proletariat". The adaptation of Marxism to the basic norms of the democratic procedure constitutes the essence of eurocommunism.

Based on the experiences of four eurocommunist parties -- the Italian, the Spanish, the French, and the Greek "Interior" -- this study attempts to analyse the essential aspects of the eurocommunist doctrine and point to its major departures from the classical Marxist tradition.

### Acknowledgements

My first thanks go to professor John Laffey whose numerous comments and suggestions have rendered me great help in remaining, as much as possible, within the scope of my subject and in better organising this study. His patience, on the other hand, to maintain the supervision of a project which -- for a variety of reasons -- took quite some time to materialise, is deeply appreciated. The same applies to his warm co-operation and to his eagerness, whenever the request was made, to discuss my problems. Errors and shortcomings, however, are only to be blamed on me. Professor Laffey has, indeed, done a lot to eliminate many of them, and I am grateful to him. The particular outlook and the method applied in the analysis of my theme are also to be seen as my own exclusive responsibility.

I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all those friends and compatriots of mine (whose names are many and cannot be listed here) who helped me gather the necessary documents on the history of the KKE (Interior), and with whom I had the opportunity to discuss aspects of my thesis and benefit from their views.

And the last word on my immediate environment. Three young children in the family do not make up the best setting for intellectual concentration, especially after a full day's work. Yet, I cannot but thank them for their tolerance, and also thank their mother for her encouragement and her inestimable assistance given to me throughout this undertaking.

\* \* \* \* \*

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List of Abbreviations

ASDIS: Αδέσμευτη Συνδικαλιστική Συνεργασία (Independent Syndical Co-operation).

AKEL: Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού (Reconstruction Party of Working People).

CC: Central Committee.

CCC: Central Control Committee.

CP: Communist Party.

CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

EADE: Εθνική Αντιδικτατορική Δημοκρατική Ενότητα (National Anti-Dictatorial Democratic Unity).

EAM: Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο (National Liberation Front).

EDA: Ενιαία Δημοκρατική Αριστερά (Democratic Union of the Left).

EDES: Εθνικός Δημοκρατικός Ελληνικός Στρατός (National Democratic Greek Army).

EEC: European Economic Community.

ERE: Εθνική Ριζοσπαστική Ένωση (National Radical Union).

Interior or KKE (Interior): Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας (Εσωτερικό) (Communist Party of Greece (Interior)).

Madrid Joint Declaration: Déclaration commune des P.C. d' Espagne, de France et d' Italie (made by the above parties following their Madrid meeting, March 3, 1977).

M/E (in footnotes): Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick.

M/E/L (in footnotes): Marx-Engels-Lenin.

KKE: Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας (Communist Party of Greece).

PCE: Partido Comunista Español (Communist Party of Spain).

PGF: Parti Communiste de France.

PCI: Partito Comunista Italiano (Communist Party of Italy).

Rome Joint Declaration: Déclaration commune des P.C. Français et Italien (made by the two parties following their Rome meeting, September 29, 1975).

UP: Unidad Popular (Popular Unity).

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## INTRODUCTION

Eurocommunism has grown in the heart of the communist movement of capitalist Europe -- a movement that has been subjected to an intensive and unceasing attack by imperialism ever since the days of the Resistance and the Liberation. Its beginnings may be traced back to the announcement, in Nikita Khrushchev's report to the 20th Congress of the CPSU, of the "peaceful transition," but its features as a distinct trend did not crystallise until much later. Having gone through a series of evolutionary phases over a period of two decades, during which it successively dropped the most important aspects of Marxism, the tendency has gradually come to the point of totally accepting the democratic process as the only form of action and the only road open for the communist parties of the "West."

Having dispensed with the theoretical foundations of Marxism, eurocommunists have nevertheless retained the ideal that socialism is the ultimate objective of their parties. Under the actual circumstances of the western or westernized (i.e., economically developed) societies, they offer their theory as the only appropriate route to radical change. Such societies where eurocommunism appears to be applicable are not only economically advanced, but also have large communist parties and powerful labour movements. According to this doctrine, the revolutionary road is neither necessary in these societies, since the proletariat and its possible allies are capable of using the state for the purpose of progress, nor is it desirable or even acceptable to the masses. Violent social ruptures lead to dictatorial governmental institutions which are associated with the abolition of individual freedoms which the people of these societies are not prepared to sacrifice. Eurocommunism, however,



has spread -- and with equal claims to the possibility of the democratic road -- to countries where the advanced stage of economy is not matched with an equally powerful progressive movement. Disregarding this latter factor, some eurocommunists have spoken of the possibility of transforming the entire western Europe of monopolies into the "Europe of workers."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, their parties have developed amicable relations with eurocommunist movements in countries where the economic development may not be sufficient for the application of the democratic transition.

Be that as it may, the question of whether this new approach will allow the self-styled eurocommunist parties to remain in the direction of their original mission, or even to stay together under the pressure of the present crisis, will occupy us frequently from now on. What should be made clear from the outset, however, is that the writer of this study shares neither the optimism of eurocommunists as to the feasibility of their projects nor does he believe that their ideas will win the lasting support of the revolutionary sections of the working class in their countries. Despite their protests against accusations of social-democratisation, it has nevertheless become clear that their attitudes and activities have so far involved constant compromises and sincere efforts to help in the overcoming of the generalised crisis of the system. Eurocommunists do not need a crisis because they have renounced revolution; and the very

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1. "Western Europe sharply underlines the need to find a new democratic way towards a Europe of the peoples, a Europe of workers -- a socialist Europe. We eurocommunists consider ourselves part of this process, a part moreover, which can open a new horizon in the European plane, and perhaps even internationally". Manuel Azcarate, "What is Eurocommunism?", in G. R. Urban's (ed.) Eurocommunism: Its Roots and Future in Italy and Elsewhere (London, England: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd, 1978), p. 25.

fact that they have abandoned the militancy of the communist movement in the period of crisis will undoubtedly create enormous problems in regaining it in the period of recovery -- if there is one in store. The past history of the revolutionary movement has been more than eloquent in this subject. This is not, however, to be interpreted as meaning that these parties have lost all chances to return, under pressure from below, to a more "orthodox" position, retaining at the same time their recently acquired critical attitude which will definitely help them to revitalise their appeal to the masses. Despite the immense noise created by the protagonists of the new trend and the intense publicity offered to them by their "class enemies," the traditional clientele of the eurocommunist parties has not yet freed itself from its "former consciousness."

The above remarks oblige me to start off with a presentation of the fundamentals of the eurocommunist tenet as equitably as possible. This will be the objective of the first chapter of this study which, besides giving a resumé of the general theoretical framework of eurocommunism, will also provide some background information on the circumstances of its rise. The remainder of this study will deal primarily with two large areas of the eurocommunist trend which will then furnish the opportunity to place it in the context of a Marxist debate. The first area relates to the eurocommunist theory of the grand alliance in connection to the working class and, as Marx would have it, its "historic mission." It also relates to the proletarian party itself which is, by its very nature, the instrument that expresses and articulates the immediate but especially the long-term interests of the working class. What is of interest here is not only the role and the reason of existence of the party but also its character and its relations to other parties and social forces. The

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other area, a much larger one, deals more directly with the strategic objectives of eurocommunism: aspects of the transition which are intimately related to the concepts of the state and revolution. The eurocommunist assertion of the possibility of democratising the state apparatus, using it for the socialist transition, and maintaining it, along with the existing institutions of government and popular pressure, in a socialist society, are among the issues that require special attention -- even more so because they dominate the core of the eurocommunist approach.

There are certain important aspects of eurocommunism, however, which go beyond the scope of this effort and will not therefore be tackled seriously either in the general introductory chapter or the remaining ones for that matter, since these are designed to focus more attentively on the nature of the tendency. A case in point, the "break-away" of the eurocommunist parties from the CPSU, is indeed one undeniable feature of the movement, yet an extensive delineation of this aspect will not help us gain a better understanding of this doctrine. After all, the possibility of having a "eurocommunist" party which still prefers to have a philo-Soviet stance, is not out of the question. Furthermore -- and with all due respect to Jean Ellenstein's immense experience on the subject -- there is nothing to suggest that "independence" from Moscow will necessarily result in the creation of the good party. What has made the real difference for the eurocommunist parties was not their independence from the CPSU but their independence from Marxism and Leninism.

Eurocommunism in relation to NATO and the balance of power between East and West will also have to be left aside for similar reasons as mentioned above. Finally, to embark upon a profound analysis of such

historical events as the Popular Fronts, the Resistance movement, the Liberation and the Cold War -- where many eurocommunists have retroactively placed the origins of their present tactics -- would put the emphasis on the history rather than on the actual character of the doctrine which is the purpose here. The same situation will arise if we explain, as most eurocommunists do, the theoretical precepts of the movement in terms of Gramsci's ideas. Yet, some aspects of these themes will have to be dealt with occasionally, especially so since eurocommunists themselves insist on viewing them as important moments of their "past" history. The history, however, of eurocommunism or more specifically the history of its rise (i.e., factors, circumstances and so forth, that led certain communist parties to changing their traditional positions), is definitely not the focus of this undertaking.

The present analysis will be based on the theoretical propositions of eurocommunism as they have been variously presented by its principal protagonists: the Italian (PCI) and the Spanish (PCE) parties, and to a lesser extent by the French party (PCF). Although properly speaking it cannot be seen as an integral part of the eurocommunist camp, the last party has nevertheless to be included in this study. Despite the fact that its enthusiasm about the new doctrine has long ago lost its impetus, the French Communist party itself has never revised its earlier decisions on the democratic road. For special considerations, some elements of the experience of the Communist Party of Greece (Interior) and of the Communist Party of Chile will also have to be taken into account. The first, because it lived out a rather auspicious career in an amazingly short period of time; and the second, because it represents, in a variety of ways, the

first crushing defeat of the non-violent transition. The Greek party (Interior), however, will be looked at, to a certain extent, in the same manner as the other three parties. It thus becomes the fourth party under study throughout this analysis. The views of "eurocommunist" thinkers, whether committed to policies of particular parties or not, are also to be considered. Finally, even with the reservations expressed about the peculiarities of the PCF, there is no intention to lump all these parties together into the same "model." While efforts will be made to isolate the essential characteristics of the trend which are commonly shared by all these parties, attention will also be given to what makes up their individuality within the same movement.

In essence, this study is intended to be an academic exercise directed toward an underlining of the major departures of eurocommunism vis-à-vis the classical positions of the Marxist philosophy. The undertaking will, thus, require the examination of eurocommunism in the light of, primarily, the teachings of Marx and Engels, particularly so since the exponents of the new trend have frequently invoked the authority of those teachings in opposition to "Leninism" which they discard as inapplicable to Western societies. The works of other Marxist thinkers, particularly those of Lenin but also Stalin's and to a certain extent Gramsci's writings, will occasionally be brought into focus whenever they are considered to be relevant (and, indeed, they are) to the subject of this study. The latter thinkers will, obviously, be viewed as making part of the classical Marxist tradition in the sense that their efforts to explore and develop the Marxist philosophy, as well as to apply it to historical situations as leaders of the revolutionary movement, did not affect the

content of its main concepts as delineated by the founders of this philosophy<sup>1</sup>.

More specifically, the goal of this effort will be to prove that the intellectual distance of eurocommunism from the classical positions of the theory cannot be justified in the light of the historical distance that separates Marx's and Engels' world -- even more Lenin's world -- from our own. One essential factor which cannot be denied to eurocommunists is that the socio-economic realities of our time have enormously changed, and that the tactical attitudes of the communist parties have to adapt to present-day requirements. However, while tactics are constantly changing (as they ought to), they should be such as to serve the strategic aims of the party. The fundamental question, therefore, is the following: if eurocommunists are no longer Marxists in terms of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, are they Marxists of the late twentieth century? Have the realities of our time relegated the theoretical and practical tools of a consistent class struggle to the museum of the past history of the proletariat? Or has the ruling class, on account of its inability to rule or its self-enlightenment, resolved to surrender its socio-economic pre-eminence for the sake of humanity? The experience of Chile, the constantly intensified class struggle on an international scale, the savage confrontations and open interventions in Latin and Central America, the close supervision of the European democracies by the U.S. administration and its various services, are indications to the opposite. Naturally, we should not undervalue the importance of such factors which, coupled with the presence of NATO and the threat of a nu-

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1. Gramsci's peculiarities will be dealt with throughout this analysis.

clear holocaust, favour a climate of stalemate at the present time in Western and Southern Europe. On the other hand, to adopt defensive attitudes and fetishise the so-called democratic system at the expense of the proletarian philosophy<sup>2</sup> does not seem to be the proper response by a communist party either. It is true that the "European dictatorships" have long fallen, but is there any guarantee that such regimes will not reappear in Europe? Furthermore, if we suppose that they will not, should Marxists ever come to the conclusion that capitalism will not survive even under the most democratic forms and even with "popular" participation and "control" in the process of production and distribution?

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2. The expression philosophy will often be used from now on interchangeably with that of ideology (e.g., ideological struggle, ideological discipline), and sometimes with that of theory -- the latter being a much more specific term with limited scope (e.g., theory of the party, Gramsci's theory of hegemony, and so forth). It is true that the term ideology has been used by Marx in a pejorative sense to ridicule German philosophy, especially that of the Young Hegelians which he identified with idealism. The term itself, however, in its general usage cannot necessarily be identified with idealism. As a system of ideas explaining social reality, it can either be scientifically or idealistically founded -- it may as well be situated between a scientifically based conception of life and false consciousness. The same principles apply to philosophy in its general usage. Yet, this should not prevent us from seeing the specificity that Marx attaches to the "philosophy of the proletariat" as the understanding of the movement and its objectives on the basis of the existing conditions of a specific society at a specific time. On the other hand, the term ideology has always been in the vocabulary of the communist parties and used in place of the philosophy of the proletariat. It is in this sense that it is being used in this study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### EUROCOMMUNISM: A NEW DOCTRINE?

Through its history, eurocommunism has gradually subjected every aspect of Marxist theory and practice to the most brutal and meticulous re-examination. This has been a mixed blessing: apart from its destructive effects on the classical tradition, it has brought to surface issues of the communist movement which have never before been touched upon in any serious manner. Being in a certain respect a belated reaction to what its exponents have seen as the "Stalinist" interpretation of Marxism, in the sense that the main thrust of its critique is directed against this particular tradition, eurocommunism has placed on its agenda the entire history and theory of communism. And this is to a certain extent a justifiable rebellion. The parties that have played the most important role in the formulation of the new tendency - like almost any other communist party - were born and lived the most turbulent phases of their careers in a period when obedience and acceptance of the directives and interpretations of the international communist leadership was viewed as the most natural thing. The theory, therefore, that supposedly guided their actions and their march to the future, was largely composed of answers. This is not to say that the communist parties did not develop an initiative of their own to organise the struggle in their respective countries. The inquisitive, critical spirit, however, that had brought this theory to existence was pushed to the background for the sake of unity and the defense of the first proletarian revolution, beset from its birth by circumstances of a permanent state of siege that was further intensified by the advent of fascism. Eurocommunists (and communists in general), indeed may be justified in feeling a certain discomfort vis-à-vis the so-called



rise of the "Stalin phenomenon." However, it would not be un-Marxist to recall at this point the peculiarities of the socialist transformation: a transformation which, unlike earlier transformations, follows a radical political rupture rather than vice versa, and one which is drastically imposed rather than being the product of a long process in the womb of the old society; furthermore, it is a transformation that is likely to remain incomplete until global conditions are fulfilled.

Whether this phenomenon can be historically explicable -- some eurocommunists still maintain that they would do exactly the same thing if they had to relive their life-stories<sup>1</sup> -- is not a matter of our concern at this point. What is more relevant to our story is that eurocommunism has, to a certain extent, shaped itself as a distinctive current in the communist movement, on the basis of its critique against this "phenomenon". It goes, however, much beyond this critique. Eurocommunists did not formulate their positions by simply correcting what they have viewed as doctrinal deviations of the past, but by rejecting both the deviations and the doctrine itself; a doctrine which because of its imperfections (as they believe) and its inapplicability for our times, is bound to give rise to such deviations.

Any account of eurocommunism, any attempt to explain the genesis and the evolution of the idea, written either by its protagonists or sympathetic critics, is incomprehensible without referring back to the "Stalinist" practices, i.e., to the application of Marxism in the Soviet Union and

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1. Lucio Lombardo Radice, "Communism with an Italian Face," Urban, Eurocommunism, p. 35.

later on in other socialist countries whose system was influenced by the former. The use of unnecessary violence, the "suffocation of democracy," the exclusion of popular participation, the erection of a state-apparatus that breeds and reproduces a dictatorial bureaucracy and hinders the development of the economy, the intervention of the Comintern and of the Soviet party into the affairs of other communist parties, and the failure of both to understand the significance of democratic struggles in capitalist societies, provides us with only a cursory sample of the heritage denounced by the eurocommunists.<sup>2</sup> At the same time they reject basic concepts of classical Marxism as inapplicable to modern societies.

The denunciation of these practices in the societies of "existing socialism" is also, and naturally so, the denunciation, by many eurocommunists, of the total system that prevails in these societies. With the exception of Yugoslavia and China which are supposed to have taken roads of their own, all other socialist societies are viewed as having been constructed on the "soviet model," and it is precisely this model that they denounce and want to avoid in building socialism in their own countries. It is a "model" that some of them do not even consider as being socialist in light of their own perception of the Marxist teaching. Fernando Claudin, for example, an ex-(leading) member of the Spanish party does not even use the expression socialist per se to describe these societies but rather avails himself of quotation marks (e.g., "socialist" countries, etc.). What makes the system un-socialist, according to

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2. See for example, Santiago Carrillo's Eurocommunism and the State (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1978), pp. 141-172.

Claudin is, evidently, the absence and denial of democracy:

The historical experience of those CPs that have come to power shows that further industrialisation coupled with the elimination of private capital is quite insufficient for the creation of a socialist society. The result is as likely to be a new type of social régime, divided like its predecessor into rulers and ruled, in which cultural and national oppression, inequality and authoritarianism persist. It has been demonstrated that there can be no socialism without freedom and democracy (emphasis supplied). 3

Carrillo's conception of those "socialist" societies runs almost along the same lines, but it also has some fascinating aspects about it. They are neither capitalist nor socialist but a half-way situation resembling that of the "absolute monarchies" of the ancien régime. "The question is" -- he says -- "whether that state, which is no longer capitalist, is not an intermediate phase between the capitalist and the genuinely socialist state, in the same way as the absolute monarchies were an intermediate phase between feudalism and modern capitalist democracies."<sup>4</sup> One wonders why he did not place it somewhere between 1789 and, say, the Third Republic which could have given a more realistic and historically more sensible description.<sup>5</sup>

The state of the absolute monarchy was holding together an aging society and protecting a class (the landed aristocracy) which was about

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3. Fernando Claudin, Eurocommunism and Socialism (London: NLB, 1978), p. 98.

4. Carrillo, Eurocommunism and the State, p. 164.

5. A period of successive struggles by the French bourgeoisie to establish its rule. As Gramsci summarized it: "It was then (1871) that the new bourgeois class struggling for power defeated not only the representatives of the old society... but also the still newer groups who maintained that the new structure created by the 1789 revolution was itself already outdated." Prison Notebooks (New York: International Publishers, 1973), p. 179.

to make its historical exit. A socialist state has different functions and different goals to fulfil. What is to be noted here is that this critique of the "soviet" system, by individuals who are still considering themselves as belonging to the communist Left, has come to revise what has hitherto been viewed as the most important critique of this kind: Trotsky's evaluation of soviet society. Notwithstanding his objections to the "bureaucratisation" of the state, he has never denied the socialist nature of this society.<sup>6</sup>

The evolution of eurocommunism does not follow the same pattern for all parties in question. In terms of chronology, the PCI was the party that gave the new movement its substance and form, while the PCF was not only the last to adhere to it, albeit with certain reservations which we will discuss later in this chapter, but was also the last to renounce the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the PCI declared at its Eighth Congress (1956) that "democratic institutions can be developed as the

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6. "Through these conditions established by the proletarian revolution, the nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state is for us basically defined." And, further down: "The attempt to represent the Soviet bureaucracy as a class of "state capitalists" will obviously not withstand criticism." Leon Trotsky, "Is the Bureaucracy a Ruling Class?" in The Basic Writings of Trotsky, edited and introduced by Irvin Howe (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 216-217. Carrillo's and Claudin's conception of the "soviet model" is similar to the one presented by Marc Rakovsky: "Soviet-type society is neither socialist nor capitalist, nor is it a mixture of the two systems. It is a class society sui generis, a different kind of class society existing alongside capitalism." Towards an East European Marxism (London: Allison and Busby, 1978), p. 16. The problem with such Marxist critics is that they have not come up yet with a theoretical analysis explaining this new social formation (bureaucracy) in Marxist terms.

effective basis of a regime which may advance towards socialism ..., "7 the PCF -- apparently unaffected by the message of the "peaceful transition" -- was still denouncing deviations from orthodoxy in the old vigorous language: "Marxism is opposed to reformism, which preaches the imperceptible evolution of capitalism to socialism..." 8 It, more or less, preserved the same style up to the beginning of the 1970s by which time it had already accepted the peaceful road and the idea of party pluralism and joined the new trend basically within the framework of its "Common Programme." It dropped the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat at its 22nd Congress in 1976.

The PCE and the Greek Interior emerged on the eurocommunist scene in 1968. The Spanish party had arrived at this point in a gradual and rather discrete manner while building up its new policy of "national reconciliation" which required compromises with all anti-Francoist forces and consequently the acceptance of political pluralism. The Interior, on the other hand, was born out of a sudden split that was simmering internally in the party leadership with no public debate prior to the event. 9

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7. "Elements of Programmatic Declaration," approved by the Eighth Congress of the PCI, December 1956," in The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain, edited by Peter Lange and Maurizio Vannicelli and with a foreword by Stanley Hoffman (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 38.

8. Maurice Thorez, "Report to the Fourteenth Congress of the PCF, July 1956," Ibid, p. 55.

9. From those internal documents of the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) which were published after the split, it appears that no serious discussion had ever been attempted with regard to the new (eurocommunist) tendency. The only episode worthy of note was the rejection of an article by Stavros Karas (a CC member) by the editorial committee of KKE monthly political and ideological review Νέος Κόσμος. It was in this article that Karas refers to "radical" and "qualitative" changes as a means to socialist transition. The article was returned to him four times for "correction" but never published. Karas gave an account of this episode in his speech at the 10th Plenum of the CC of the KKE (1967). Η Διδασκαλία του ΚΚΕ, edited and with an introduction by Panos Dimitriou, Vol. A (Athens: Politika Provlimata, 1975), pp. 491-516.

The revelations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU (Khrushchev's revelations), the aftermath of the Hungarian revolt, and, much later, that of the "Spring of Prague," are among the most significant disenchanting moments for many western communists, who were gradually forced, for a variety of reasons, to question "existing socialism" and blame the post-Stalinist Soviet leadership for its failure to bring the process of "normalisation" (begun at the 20th Congress) to its logical conclusion. It seems, however, that it was after the intervention of the Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia that the leadership of the parties which later came to be styled as "eurocommunist" -- and especially of the Italian party -- began to gradually unfold the banner of the new outlook as a distinctive trend in the Marxist movement, counterposing it to the policies of Soviet Union and, of course, of the "soviet model" of communism. From 1968 on we have witnessed the emergence of "eurocommunist" parties in a number of European and other countries, though the term itself (eurocommunism) had not yet been discovered. It was after 1975 that this term, which, perhaps significantly, originated outside the communist literature, entered into the political vocabulary and was gradually adopted by these parties. The rise of eurocommunist parties occurred either by the transformation of the existing party into a eurocommunist one by decision of the leadership, without much resistance from below, or the bifurcation of the party into two sections, one supporting the old line, the other adhering to the "new wave."

Of the Western parties which are still today in the centre of the eurocommunist movement, the Italian party made the change without a major split. The change was made gradually, over a period of more than

twelve years, and the "new" ideas were incorporated into the party's platform without open resistance from the majority of the members and without confrontations in international communist forums -- at least during the formative period of the new current. Palmiro Togliatti had totally accepted Khrushchev's "peaceful transition" (see below in this chapter), and from this point on the elaboration of the "democratic road" came only as the logical and natural evolution of the Khrushchevite concept. Indeed, regardless of the original meaning of the "peaceful transition" (if there was anything concrete in this idea), the democratic transition has gradually emerged as its continuation and "expansion." For many communist parties, including the PCI, the abandonment or modification of the classical positions of the theory provided an opportunity to get out of the isolation imposed on them during the Cold War years. They could then return to previous policies -- the ones of the Popular Fronts and of the Resistance movement -- which had been adopted in periods of national emergency but had, nevertheless, given the CPs a larger audience and a greater role in national politics. From this perspective, which is very significant in terms of judging the nature and the prospects of the movement, eurocommunism represents a policy of retreat, a defensive policy and a desire for recognition of the CP as a national and democratic force -- hence, the slogans, "communism with an Italian face," "communism in the colours of France," etc. In fact, there is no eurocommunist party which has not spoken time and again of its patriotism and its contribution to the defense and protection of democracy -- which is the correct thing to do but obviously not for the wrong purpose. This mentality is more striking among parties which had been forced underground and into exile

for long periods of time (e.g., the Spanish and the Greek). Naturally, this new attitude required the abandonment of "doctrinaire" positions -- in this case the revolutionary transition and the proletarian dictatorship -- and acceptance of the democratic process. Hence, the party itself would also change its character and become more "democratic" in order to absorb the discontent of the new generations, and work together with other parties for the realisation of the desired changes. Concerning the democratisation of the party, the question had, for a time, become so important that Jean Ellenstein, one of the most enthusiastic exponents of the new current, had included it among what he considered as the three essential points of eurocommunism: "the new relationship between democracy and socialism; independence from the Soviet Union; and an internal democratic functioning of the communist parties" (the emphasized point pertains to the loosening of the strictures of democratic centralism)<sup>10</sup>. Yet, with the exception of the Greek eurocommunist party which has allowed the coexistence of contradictory tendencies, none of the other parties dealt with in this analysis has taken this principle very far. The PCI's decision to get rid of the Manifesto group is an indication that even the leading eurocommunist party cannot tolerate factions in its own ranks. Finally, another requirement of this new strategy would be the acceptance of the fact that other classes and the traditional bourgeois parties have, also, an important rôle to play in the socialist transformation of society.

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10. Jean Ellenstein, "Eurocommunism and the French Communist party," in Richard Kindersley's (ed.), In Search of Eurocommunism (London, England: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1981), p. 67.



During the years of the transformation of the PCI, whatever resistance was able to manifest itself in an articulate manner from within was headed by some rather isolated leading members (including party syndicalists) who tried to check the "liberalising" process and preserve some of the older positions of the party. What has appeared, however, in the recent history of the PCI as the Ingrao group\* -- supposedly the eurocommunist left in this country -- was not a very homogeneous group. Ingrao himself (and his small entourage of PCI dissentient leaders) is said to have represented the views of an alarmingly large minority (15 - 20%)<sup>11</sup> of members, but who were never given the chance to counter-pose their option to that of the leadership on equal terms. The best part of the Ingraiani, including Ingrao himself, succumbed to the Berlinguer line and stayed in the party. Another much smaller segment of dissidents, some of them former Ingraiani, but mainly Maoists, Trotskyites and other members who were situated on the Left of the party,<sup>12</sup> converged eventually into the Manifesto group which was expelled in 1969.<sup>13</sup> The opposition of this latter movement, however, may be traced back to the time of the inauguration of the peaceful transition. Ingrao's movement -- apart from the Manifesto episode -- was an internal eurocommunist affair and its difference with the party line concerned mainly questions pertaining to

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\* Pietro Ingrao, member of the CC and the Politburo.

11. Grant Amyot, The Italian Communist Party (London: Groom Helm, 1981), p. 157.

12. Ibid., p. 163.

13. On the Manifesto group and its "Theses," see L'Italie du Manifeste (Paris: Editions du Cercle, 1971).

the alliances of the party and to the political role of the institutions of civil society: trade unions, local governments etc. -- themes that will occupy us in the remaining part of this study. Ingrao's position on the question of the alliance was much closer to the traditional models of the left and favoured a large coalition at the base among the masses and their organisations, instead of between parties (which in this case would include the Christian Democracy as a party). Furthermore, in place of having only the parties monopolising political power, Ingrao's vision was that other, extra-parliamentary, institutions should be given an increased role in the affairs of the state. Thus the eurocommunist notion of "direct democracy" would acquire a certain reality. It seems, however, that the PCI, despite its violent condemnation of Stalinism, has not yet been able to reject its efficiency. Ingrao's opposition was suffocated and finally silenced through administrative measures which forced many influential Ingraianni out of key positions in the party machine<sup>14</sup>.

Of the other Mediterranean parties that went through the experience of eurocommunism, the ones that created most of the commotion, as a consequence of internal strife and factionalism, are the Spanish and the Greek -- the latter being more factious than the former. The process of change for the Spanish party goes back to 1954 and, in a very important sense, is associated with Santiago Carrillo and his rise to power. For the PCE, which suffered a crushing defeat in the civil war of 1936-39 but continued the confrontation with Francoism with sporadic episodes of violence up to 1949;

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14. See Amyot's The Italian Communist Party, last part of Chapter 3, "Left-wing Eurocommunism: The Ingrao Left."

the most urgent problem was to adapt its attitude to the new national and international conditions and create the appropriate policies. For Carrillo, then organisational secretary of the party, and a number of other leading members, including Fernando Claudin, the ideologue of the party, and Serge Semprun, a writer and Politburo member like Claudin and Carrillo, the party could not perform its work without changing its policy of class confrontation with Franco's regime, and without pressing forward its programme of national appeasement. This latter factor meant that the party should seek allies among all discontented segments of the Spanish society.<sup>15</sup> Democratising the party, on the other hand, and dropping some of the undemocratic practices imposed by the conditions of illegality and exile, was another request of Carrillo's group. It was with this mission that Carrillo went to Moscow in 1956 and met La Pasionaria (Dolores Ibarruri), the Secretary General of the party. His trip to the Soviet capital coincided with Krushchev's denunciation of Stalinism.

It was after this encounter with Ibarruri that Carrillo emerged as the most important man in the party. He became the secretary of the Paris centre of the party,<sup>16</sup> through the removal of Vincente Uribe, a "Stalinist," and from this post he dominated the party apparatus. Given the circumstances

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15. Basically, this policy meant a return to the spirit of fraternisation of all progressive, democratic forces as it was the case during the Civil War. A resumé of this new policy exists in the epilogue of the autobiography of Dolores Ibarruri, They Shall Not Pass (New York: International Publishers, 1966).

16. The Paris centre was the most important organisation of the party outside Spain. Another centre was in Mexico. On the background of Spanish eurocommunism, see also Wolfgang Leonhard, Eurocommunism: Challenge to the East and west (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1978), Chapter 13.

of the communist movement of the time, after the enunciation of the peaceful transition, it was natural that the solidification of Carrillo's authority would be associated with the removal of the hard-liners from the leadership and even from the party. In 1959, having absolute control of the party, he became Secretary General, while Ibarriuri was given the newly created post of party President. It was in this year that the PCE accepted the "democratic route" and the plurality of parties in a socialist Spain.<sup>17</sup> The following year Carrillo spoke of the possibility of replacing the dictatorship of the proletariat by a "parliamentary democracy" based on a (parliamentary) majority and the active support of the masses, which would be able to transform the instruments of the state into "faithful agencies of the socialist revolution."<sup>18</sup> Such positions were adopted rather tacitly, and, for some time to come, the PCE did not enunciate any other important innovations. Even in 1965, Carrillo's group got rid of their former colleagues, Claudin and Semprún, for rightist deviations. The latter had pressed for the adoption of the democratic road and an open critique on the situation in socialist countries, ideas that Carrillo himself subsequently undertook to carry to their logical extremes.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Santiago Carrillo, "Spain Twenty Years After the Civil War," in Peter Lange's The Communist Parties, p. 82.

18. Carrillo, "Speech at the Sixth Congress of the PCE," Ibid., p. 83.

19. For some details on the debate that led to the expulsion of Claudin and Semprún, see José Rodríguez-Ibañez's "Spanish Communism in Transition," in The Politics of Eurocommunism, edited by Carl Boggs and David Plotke (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980).

The eurocommunist orientation of the PCE began to take a definite shape from 1964 to 1969. The most significant episode during this period, which may be indicative of the party's determination to change its attitude, was its criticism of the Soviet authorities for bringing to trial the two dissident writers, Yuli Daniel and Andrei Sinyavsky. Yet, the great turn was to come -- as it happened with many other parties -- in 1968 with the intervention of the Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia, which became the catalytic factor for the latent ideological confusion that existed in these parties. It was mainly the question of either supporting or condemning the intervention that split the PCE. Santiago Carrillo, along with a considerable part of the leadership condemned the intervention, while another, smaller, section of the party, headed by two politburo members, Eduardo Garcia and Juan Gomez (the first organisational secretary of the party), came out openly in favour of it. The confrontation was soon resolved with Ibarri siding with Carrillo's faction, which also received the support of the great majority of the party's leadership. From this point on the PCE began to form its new philosophy which gradually evolved into the most ardent version of eurocommunism. Garcia's group, which was later joined by the hero of the Republican army, Enrique Lister, attempted to form its own party but was soon eclipsed as a result of factious strife.

The split in the Greek party broke out openly in February 1968, one year after the colonels' take-over and eight months before its fiftieth anniversary. The conclusion of a long and dramatic phase of its history took place at the city of Bucharest, by a leadership whose majority of members had been forced into exile ever since the end of the Civil War of 1946-49 and the defeat of the Democratic Army -- and naturally of the KKE itself. The defeat was followed not only by the forced exile of the

leadership of the party but of tens of thousands of soldiers of the Democratic Army and civilians from the northern parts of Greece, who fled a country then dominated by the dossiloghi (collaborators during the Resistance) who were heavily supported by the new masters of Greece, the United States. The party's new life in the countries of Eastern Europe was marred by an internal strife, mainly on issues related to the defeat of the Democratic Army, which often led to mass expulsions. This ugly state of affairs was resolved with the Sixth Extended Plenum of 1956, which followed the Congress of CPSU. With the intervention of an "International Committee" made up of representatives of the communist parties of Eastern Europe invited by (mainly) the expelled members, the then Secretary General of the party, Nikos Zachariadis, and his supposed Stalinist entourage were removed from the leadership and a new one was formed under Costas Koliyiannis.

Meanwhile, and given that the KKE had been banned since 1947, a new party, the EDA, was formed in 1952 which gathered around itself, apart from communists, a considerable part of those elements who had, in one way or another, participated in the Resistance and the Civil War. Despite the fact that the EDA's policies were, to a very considerable extent, being determined by the KKE, it had never announced any intention of going beyond its programme of "national democratic change". Considering the fact that the anti-communist frenzy had not yet subsided, the EDA's programme could not have gone further. This party, however, was able to survive and to play a very important role in carrying on the militant traditions of the Greek Left and once more regrouping the progressive forces of the country after their crushing defeat in 1949.

If we make our voyage backwards in time, as eurocommunists usually do to discover their origins, we will see that EDA with its programme of ral-

lying around itself all "progressive," "patriotic," "democratic" forces of change constitutes the first vivid example in Greece of a "new" party. A party of the Left which had gathered around itself a wide variety of elements, which was led by communists, and which had neither strictly adhered to Marxism nor had it ever denounced either Marxism or even Leninism. As time went by, the EDA gradually developed into a party which, to many KKE leaders, appeared as the model party for their struggles to come. Indeed, the internal fight in the KKE, which ended up in its split and the creation of the now almost defunct KKE Interior, was nothing but a battle about the character of the future party.

Things came to a climax at the Twelfth Plenum, in 1968, three years after the CC had resolved to reconstitute the party in Greece and press forward for its de jure or de facto recognition. By this time nothing had been done to implement this decision. Many of those who opposed this new policy wanted the transformation of the EDA into a Marxist party, others proposed the reorganisation of the KKE under a new name, and still another segment preferred nothing but the EDA as it had been before the fascists took over. By the end of the meeting, a few days later, the Greek communists found themselves with two KKE: the first was headed by Koliyiannis and half the members of the CC; and the other (unofficially) by Mitsos Partsalidis -- first "red mayor" of Greece and Secretary General of the EAM -- and two more polibureau members, Panos Dimitriou and Zisis Zographos, all three expelled at the Twelfth Plenum. Although it is difficult to assess it with precise statistics, the impression at the time was that the Partsalidis section, the Interior, received the support of the majority of members inside and outside Greece, and certainly that of the communist leaders of the EDA.

It was soon proved, however, that the Greek eurocommunist party could not keep its momentum for long.\* The confrontation between the two trends of the KKE was so persistent that it forced the two sections to exhaust everything they had in their respective ideological arsenals. The Interior having done away with all essential aspects of Marxism, capitalised on its option of the democratic road and its attachment to the national realities. It thus appended to its name the word Interior, baptised the other party as "Exterior," and, in order to show its determination to follow a "Greek road," changed the symbol of the party by adopting a combination of the hammer-sickle and the Christian cross of the Greek flag. With its adoption of the policy of the National Anti-Dictatorial Democratic Unity (EADE), which pushed aside all other aims of the party in favour of a large anti-fascist alliance which would include the governing party, the Interior estranged itself from a considerable part of the Greek left.

The purpose of making this excursus was obviously not to enlighten the reader on the pre-history of eurocommunism, something which needs a study of its own. The intention was only to emphasise at least two factors (certainly not the only ones) which must, I believe, have a relevance to the formulation of the democratic road. The first relates to the apparent defensiveness that characterises the general attitude of the eurocommunist

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\* I am referring here to the fact that by 1974, when the party was legalised, the Interior proved itself incapable to mobilise but a fraction of the communist left. The ambivalence of its leadership over whether to have a CP or a broader organisation like EDA also contributed to its decline.



movement, which is present in the Italian party but more strongly so in the other two parties. It has come as a result of an "exhausted patience," as the realisation of the fact that, even though these parties have made so many sacrifices to elevate the dignity of the people and to give the historical tragedies of this century a proper meaning through their participation on the side of progress, the old line (still tied to the precepts of the III International) could not promise any results in the conditions of the present conjuncture. We may not agree with this position; on the other hand, however, nobody has ever said that the socialist transformation of the West was destined to happen in Berlinguer's time. Berlinguer's right, as well as that of the other eurocommunists, to make history cannot be denied either. Our objection may only be that their efforts to telescope history in this way may well produce the opposite results as it has already happened with the parties of the Second International which, incidentally, were much more "Marxist" in tone and certainly much more articulated in their theory than present-day eurocommunism.

The other element that should be brought into relief is that any explanation of eurocommunism cannot be dissociated from the concept of the peaceful transition, both with regard to its substance but also in terms of time. Concerning the first, it has to be categorically emphasised that this invention of the "peaceful road" was as much clear at the time of its enunciation in 1956 as it is now in its eurocommunist formulation. Naturally, Khrushchev's peaceful transition was not meant to denounce violence at all costs and to replace the proletarian dictatorship by another

form of government.<sup>20</sup> It had, however, failed -- and naturally so, since it is theoretically impossible -- to establish the relationship between the beginning of this transition and its continuation. The very meaning of the socialist transition, in Marxist theory and naturally in the logic of the movement, is not a process which can be arrested at the moment of the Parliamentary victory; instead, it is a process that continues until the socialist transformation is complete. The question here is how one proceeds from a peaceful victory, brought about through the parliamentary road, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, without which there can be no thought of a transition to socialism. If the peaceful transition is identified with the democratic, parliamentary road which respects the rules of the bourgeois governmental system, then it is obvious that there can no longer be a question of a proletarian dictatorship. Without trying to explain the rise of eurocommunism as a result of a badly formulated concept, we could nevertheless remark that the confusing and inconsequential meaning of the peaceful transition opened an irreparable hole in Pandora's box and unleashed all kinds of reformist tendencies. What eurocommunists did was to carry some aspects of the logic of this idea to their natural conclusion.

Regarding the chronological significance of the peaceful transition, it has now become common knowledge that the purges which were effected at

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20. Obviously this may not be an accurate interpretation of the "peaceful transition," as perceived by some parties at the time. Reading Togliatti's article "Parliament and the Struggle for Socialism," written in 1956 (and first published in Pravda), one cannot make much difference between what he says on parliamentary struggle and socialism and what today's eurocommunists say about the same subject. Marxism Today, (September, 1977).

the time did not only hit Stalinists but also other members of these parties who simply opposed the novelty as inapplicable and un-Marxist. Thus, we may conclude at this point that the rise of eurocommunism would not have been so easy without the enunciation of the peaceful transition, or with a more critical evaluation of "Stalinism."

Despite all the above, however, the reforming tendencies in these parties and their internal confrontations and divisions could not have had much of an impact had not the larger parties of the West and especially that of the PCI taken, before or simultaneously with them, a similar stance which gave the movement its physiognomy and consequent publicity. The history of eurocommunism is thus far and to a very significant extent, the history of the PCI. It makes not much difference which ones of the western communists or which party, with the exception of course of the French, first conceived of the possibility of democratising the bourgeois state or of the creation of the great alliance. It is the ability of the large PCI to sanctify these ideas that counts most. Thus, what figures as the most impressive event in the eurocommunist calendar is not the concerted opposition of the majority of the western European parties against the intervention in Czechoslovakia -- something which could be done without changing in the least their adherence to the fundamentals of communism -- but rather Berlinguer's announcement of the "historic compromise." It was this action of the PCI that brought to completion the process of reformism and declared in the most concrete manner the abandonment of the traditional line of the communist movement, as far as both its immediate and ultimate aims are concerned. Identifying eurocommunism with the "historic compromise" may sound like a bit of an

overstatement, but the distinction between the two has also become a tricky affair. The first focuses on the concept of the transition to socialism by democratic means, accomplished by the broadest possible alliance. The second deals with the determination of the PCI to combat, in cooperation with the governing party and other democratic forces, the economic crisis and the revival of fascism in preparation for the socialist transition. The latter, as the Italian party has perceived it, requires the active participation of communists in the Christian Democratic government.<sup>21</sup> Yet, Italian eurocommunism also requires the inclusion of the DC in the alliance for socialism. It is obvious therefore that the two concepts have converged to the point that the distinction between the two has disappeared.

Eurocommunism began to appear more articulate after the middle of 1975 with the meeting of Berlinguer and Carrillo, in July in Livorno, and of Berlinguer and Georges Marchais, in Rome in November of the same year, and the joint declarations that came out of these meetings. It was in these declarations that the leaders of the most important parties, which had already accepted the new line (or aspects of it), stated jointly their intention to proceed to the socialist transition by way of "far-reaching democratic reforms", and that this objective "must be achieved within the framework of continuous democratisation of the economic, social and political life" of their respective countries. It was also in these

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21. See, for example, Berlinguer's address to the CC and CCC, 3-5 June, 1974, where he stresses the point that Italy cannot combat the crisis unless a government of "public salvation" is formed with the participation, together with the DC, of the PCI and the Socialist party, that is, the parties of the "constitutional arch." "L'Italia vuole e può andare verso il nuovo," in Berlinguer's La "Questione Comunista" (Roma: Editori Reuniti, 1975), pp. 771-777.

declarations that they reaffirmed their adherence to the principle of democratic pluralism.<sup>22</sup> In the beginning of 1976, the PCF, at its 22nd Congress, decided to drop the "notion" of the proletarian dictatorship by an overwhelming majority: out of 22,705 local delegates, only 113 voted against and 216 abstained.<sup>23</sup> No particular internal friction of any consequence was caused as a result of this modification which was adopted without much discussion in the pre-Congress meetings. Yet, some of the most important philosophes of the party, like Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, took an opposing stand and made their views widely known: the first, by publishing (among other things) his 22ème Congrès; and the second, his more extensive and analytical study Sur la Dictature du Proletariat. Both of them found the decision of the party quite un-Marxist. Althusser argues that neither the time of change nor the forms of action are to be determined by the party. Furthermore, once there is talk of a socialist state, he claims that the question of the dictatorship cannot be dismissed.<sup>24</sup> Balibar, in his turn, finds the doctrinal change completely unacceptable, for without the dictatorship of the proletariat there is, indeed no socialism either: "La dictature du prolétariat n'est pas une 'transition au socialisme', elle n'est pas une 'voie de passage du socialisme', mais elle est identique au socialisme lui-même."<sup>25</sup>

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22. See the Rome Joint Declaration, Appendix.

23. Bernard Brown, "French Communism," in George Schwab's (ed) Eurocommunism. The Ideological and Political-Theoretical Foundations (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 95.

24. Louis Althusser, 22ème Congrès (Paris: François Maspero, 1977), pp. 42 and after.

25. Etienne Balibar, Sur la Dictature du Proletariat (Paris: François Maspero, 1976), p. 44.

With the Berlin pan-European Conference of the Communist parties, where eurocommunists appeared equipped with their new ideas and their new vocabulary,<sup>26</sup> the break with the older tradition and with the CPSU was accomplished. Indeed, Ellenstein was right in saying that the Berlin Conference was the last of its kind (i.e., of international meetings).<sup>27</sup>

The most exciting event in the period following the joint declarations was the publication of Carrillo's book, Eurocommunism and the State, which appeared in 1977 while the PCE was still outlawed and its secretary general was living underground in Spain. The importance of the book lies not in the fact that Carrillo is the most articulate or the most consistent eurocommunist, because he is neither. He attempted, however, something which other exponents of the doctrine had not done: to formulate the principles of eurocommunism and, in doing so, to deal with almost all the important issues that the trend has raised. His undertaking is an interpretation of the new ideas whereby he attempts simultaneously to prove their feasibility of application in a concrete situation -- that of Spain. One may say that it was the first and perhaps the last all-rounded presentation of eurocommunism attempted by one of its protagonists for the purpose of disseminating the new doctrine. Like any other account of its kind, it is constructed mainly on the basis of what eurocommunists repudiate of the Stalinist era, and even of the Marxist tradition in general. Thus,

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26. "It is not a term of our invention, but the fact that it has become so widely used is evidence of the depth of the need felt in the countries of Western Europe to seek and discover new answers to the problem of transforming society in the direction of socialism." However, he did not reject the "term." Cited in Fernando Claudin's Eurocommunism and Socialism, (London: NLB, 1977), p. 77.

27. Jean Ellenstein, "The Skein of History Unrolled Backwards," in G. R. Urban (ed.) Eurocommunism, p. 73.

despite its hasty nature (Carrillo wrote it while in hiding and with limited access to documents) and the apparent theoretical deficiencies of its author, it is an informative book and, in its way, an articulate one. Being such, it is also revealing of the unsolved contradictions of the theory vis-à-vis the classical teaching, problems which will occupy us in this as well as in the following chapters.

What has been discussed up to this point ~~has~~ illuminated only one of the important aspects in the rise of eurocommunism. Ernest Mandel's observation that "eurocommunism is a product of the ~~crisis~~ crisis of Stalinism"<sup>28</sup> may not be an accurate one; but it is clear that most of the features of the doctrine have been shaped and honed during the process of its critique of the period of Stalin but also of the history of the communist movement after the October Revolution. The problem, however, is that this explains (if it explains anything at all) only part of the story. It does not tell us why eurocommunists, after having rejected what they perceived as rejectable in the Stalinist tradition of theory and practice, have also discarded what a communist party should still consider as essential and authentic elements of its character and title.

What appears most important in the explanations furnished by eurocommunists about their retreat from the classical positions is that the 1917 formula (that is, the soviet revolutionary "model") holds no validity for the developed democracies of the West. Other, more appropriate formulae should be worked out which will answer the needs, the peculiarities and

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28. Ernest Mandel, From Stalinism to Eurocommunism (London: NLB, 1978), p. 85.

the existing possibilities in these countries. In the case of these countries, where the economy has reached a developed stage and the working class is both organised and capable of creating a large progressive alliance, the revolutionary road is no longer necessary. Revolutionary violence and the imposition of a proletarian dictatorship, as was the case under the conditions of 1917 Russia, is still a valid approach but only for underdeveloped societies. If this is so, then the exponents of eurocommunism are not required to explain the rise of their theory in any other way. Critics, however, who are inclined to see in the new trend elements of theoretical compromise, a new version of the social-democratic experience, believe that other reasons, radically different from the above, might have conditioned the attitude of eurocommunists. Without minimising the importance of the frustration of some western communist leaders, over a number of internal problems in socialist countries, they also stress: the long period of prosperity, stabilisation and peace that followed the last world war; the presence of the organised forces of NATO and the menace it represents in the event of a sudden change in the social system of Western Europe; even the desire of these parties to augment their followers and voters, through the adoption of anti-sovietism, might have played a part in the abandonment of the traditional line of thought.<sup>29</sup> Annie Kriegel, a critic on the conservative side, includes among other reasons the creation of the European Economic Community which has "driven a wedge between its member-states and the countries of Eastern Europe" and, therefore, between

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29. Ajit Roy, "Eurocommunism": An Analytical Study (Sarani. Calcuta: Pearl Publishers, 1978), pp. 44-49.



the communist parties of the respective areas; the economic crisis which has induced western communist parties to assume national responsibilities and accept co-operation with the ruling parties for its overcoming; and something which -- if accurate -- might have more importance than many of the aforementioned factors: "The working class share in the leadership of the Italian party fell from 40 per cent to 6 per cent between 1946 and 1975."<sup>30</sup> This, however, may be a very debatable point. For large parties with a complex apparatus, such as the PCI, it is not only the composition of the CC that gives them their physiognomy but also the leadership at the intermediate level: unions, local organisations, party mass media, etc. Furthermore, a confusing element in evaluating such statistics emanates from the definition of the working class. To many Marxists and communist parties (Kriegel has taken her figures from PCI publications) the working class is composed mainly of blue-collar workers, while educated workers doing "intellectual" work are not, properly speaking, members of the proletariat (see further below the expression of the PCE, "forces of labour and culture").

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30. Annie Kriegel, Eurocommunism: A New Kind of Communism? (Stanford University, California: Hoover International Press, 1978), pp. 11-13. See also Franco Ferrarroti's article "The Italian Communist Party and Eurocommunism," in Morton A. Kaplan (ed.) The Many Faces of Communism, (New York: The Free Press, 1978), pp. 70-71; Year 1946: workers and peasants in the PCI Directorate: 39.13%; Year 1975: workers and peasants in the PCI Directorate: 5.71%. A better analysis of the conditions created for the CPs of Western and Southern Europe, as a result of the appearance of the EEC and the role in it of the multinationals, financial centres and the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in "Latino-americanising" Southern Europe, is to be found in Dianna Johnstone's article "Integrating Europe to Disintegrate the Left," in Carl Boggs and David Plotke (eds.), The Politics of Eurocommunism, Part III, Section 12.

Whether we agree or not with this (apparently confusing) definition, the question of whether these "intellectuals" tend, due to their elevated social position and perhaps their income, to support moderate positions, cannot be overlooked. Finally, to say whether these party members originate from the working class or the petty-bourgeoisie, or even the bourgeoisie itself, is an issue not clarified by these statistics. If they come from the working class, then -- considering the evolution of the organisation of production in the last decades and the revolution in the educational system -- we may assume that a similar situation may exist in many other western parties. It is true, however, that many of the most influential leaders of the PCI (Berlinguer, Amendoal, Napolitano) do not come from the working class, and a similar "adulteration" may exist in the lower levels of the party leadership.

Indeed, all of these reasons, delineated in the previous paragraphs, to explain the rise of eurocommunism, must have certainly played a part, besides the fact that at least two of these parties (the PCI and the PCF) had long ceased to pose themselves as the "opposition of the future." Whether the objective conditions of our time permit it or not, or whether these parties are prepared for it, they nevertheless have to elaborate ways to bid for power. Yet, since the present crisis has not yet produced a revolutionary situation in the classical sense and because these parties are not prepared to use the crisis for a revolutionary change, they have opted for the democratic road. One observation that has to be added here, which is also implicitly contained in the preceding part of this chapter, is that all these parties, together with those which maintain what we may call the orthodox stance, have for a few decades now acted within the framework of the democratic game. Under the pressures just mentioned and for the

purpose of protecting and expanding democracy, they have confined their actions to their minimum programmes without much fuss about the ultimate objective of their struggles. Naturally, this has never been announced as a departure from orthodoxy and has not been intended to be so. However, in a very narrow, yet important respect, we may say that the post-war history of many parties (for many of them one may trace the starting point to the creation of the popular fronts) is one of "eurocommunist" tendencies. And this fact tells us that eurocommunism cannot be explained simply in terms of the "crisis of Stalinism." The story of communist parties fighting, and sincerely so, for the protection of democracy, and within the limits prescribed by the democratic system, had begun long before the crisis of Stalinism. What finally made the difference for the real eurocommunist parties was that the latter formulated their present theory on the basis of their popular front and post-war practice. The struggle for democracy, which was essentially defensive, was gradually metamorphosed into the struggle for socialism by democratic means. And while that may be presented as an offensive stance, it still carries the marks of its initially defensive orientation. Indeed, as we will shortly see, the exponents of eurocommunism do believe that their present positions are nothing but the continuation of their policies during the popular front, the Resistance movement and their post-war position of temporization. Likewise, in terms of theory, the movement -- as many eurocommunists contend -- may trace its origins back to the Gramscian concept of the "war of position" which, according to their interpretation means the organisation of the struggle for socialism within the state apparatuses instead of against them. But this brings us to a very important problematic which will be dealt with separately later on.

What has to be emphasised at this point is that the concept of the democratic transition, despite the divergences that exist among its exponents in their interpretations of the trend, is a much more acutely formulated proposition with certain aims which go beyond the objectives of either the popular front policies or the minimum programmes of the CPs, or any other project ever proposed by them for the protection and advancement of democracy. It equally cannot be seen as the revival of the Resistance policies since this latter experience of the CPs has demonstrated a variety of forms, depending on the peculiarity of conditions in each of the occupied countries; and on certain occasions it has been associated with open and violent class warfare -- an element which has been exorcised from the eurocommunist universe.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, because eurocommunists have resolved to follow the democratic road for the entire process of the transition, it can no longer be identified with Khrushchev's formula, although the latter (as we have already seen) has left the question of the proletarian state in a condition of abeyance.

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31. An interesting discussion, on this issue, was initiated after the publication of Mitsos Partsalidis' book Δικλή Αποκατάσταση της Εθνικής Αντίστασης (Athens: Themelio, 1978), in which he claims that the "exploration of this new approach" -- i.e., of a broad democratic alliance capable of effecting democratic solutions to the social problem of Greece -- "takes shape in the period of the Occupation" with the creation of the National Resistance (p.209). This narrow interpretation of the Resistance movement as just the precursor of the Interior by Partsalidis (who incidentally served as the secretary General of the EAM) was criticised by Stavros Karas (also of the Interior) who believes that beyond its initial objective to liberate the country, the Resistance had gradually assumed the character of a social liberation movement, as well, aiming "at the overthrow of the bourgeois regime"; "Πως καταλαμβάνουμε το Δημοκρατικό Δρόμο", in Κομμουνιστική Θεωρία και Πολιτική (No 27, April-May 1979), p. 126-27. It should be noted that Karas' conception of the National Resistance in Greece is the correct one for it explains both the beginning of the Civil War in 1943 while the country was still under occupation and the British military intervention simultaneously with the retreat of the German army.

What eurocommunists have borrowed from all these experiences (with the exception of the "peaceful transition") is the idea of the broad democratic/progressive alliance which, in this instance, would not simply serve in the defense and enhancement of the democratic institutions but would also become the main vehicle for the realisation of a very concrete objective: the establishment of socialism. It is this latter addition which distinguishes this type of policy from the policies just referred to and which had been used on previous occasions. Eurocommunism has thus become a doctrine, sui generis, with its own strategic aim and its own tactical scenario. This scenario may be summarised as follows: The first task of the communist party is to create a large democratic alliance which would gather around itself all those elements which desire to overcome the present crisis of the system and work towards a fundamental change of society. This alliance, whose composition and breadth differs from one (eurocommunist) party to the other, would then inaugurate its programme by engaging in a global assault for the democratisation of all the institutions of capitalist society, and particularly those of the state. This, one might add, is also the task of the CP even before the creation of the alliance. The basic objective of this effort is to transform gradually the state -- hitherto believed by Marxists as an instrument of class rule -- into an instrument of progress and radical change. Hence, in terms of the eurocommunist theory, parliament would have to play a very important role in the transition to socialism, since the achievement of the latter is perceived as coming about as a result of legislative acts, while popular struggles would have to lose their classical importance and be relegated to a supplementary role.

The eurocommunist trend views the work of transition as being, out of necessity, organised in such a way as to avoid all possibilities of a

violent rupture which could potentially split society into two antagonistic movements engaging in an open class confrontation. Any change would have to be effected gradually and by democratic means, as the realisation of the expressed wishes of the large majority of the population. Some eurocommunists insist that all radical changes towards socialism would have to enjoy the approval and the open support of an overwhelming majority. The intensity of the socialisation of private property would be proportionate to the degree of democratisation, and would depend on the power of the alliance (in the form of an elected government) to impose its will on the country without resistance, with the exception of the monopolies and the extreme forces of reaction.

Since the socialist transition is no longer viewed as, primarily, the task of the working class and its party, but rather, of all classes and all parties, a eurocommunist government would certainly have to endorse and perpetuate "democratic pluralism" and allow the operation of all parties including those which oppose its strategic goals. Hence, this kind of government itself would also be a multi-party, multi-class government. The institutional character of the state/governmental apparatus of the bourgeois society therefore would not have to undergo radical alterations. The bourgeois state thus would not be "smashed" and replaced by a socialist one. At this point, needless to say, this conception of the state is absolutely consistent with the democratic road.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PARTY, THE CLASS AND THE ALLIANCES

When socialist writers ascribe this world historic role to the proletariat, it is not at all, as Critical Criticism pretends to believe, because they regard the proletarians as gods. Rather the contrary . . . . . It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its own life situation as well as in the whole organisation of the bourgeois society today. 1

This chapter will deal with the question of alliances for socialism in connection with the political independence of the working class and, especially its party -- the party that creates such alliances in the name of the class and determines its role and the scope of its actions. The kind of alliances which the eurocommunists seek out is based on their strategy of the democratic road and their assertion that the task of socialist transformation is as much the task of the working class and the proletarian party as it is of the other classes and parties, with the exception of the monopolistic oligarchy and the extreme sections of the Right. It is this strategic conception of eurocommunism that gives both the class and the party a new definition in terms of their role, a role that now has nothing special about it and which has no substantial difference from that of the other non-proletarian, "democratic," "non-monopolistic" forces of capital society.

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Understanding what Marx and Engels conceived of as the "historical role" of the working class is primarily a question of understanding

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1. The Holy Family, M/E, Collected Works, Vol. 4, (New York: International Publishers, 1975), pp. 36-37.

historical materialism in its application to the interpretation of modern proletarian revolutions, that is, in grasping their social character and the real significance of the socialist transformation of society. For as easy as it is to identify such revolutions by their end result, it by no means excludes the possibility of their misinterpretation by confusing their nature with the question of who makes them in terms of participants and leaders. It is a well-known fact that all successful revolutions of our century (as well as the failed ones) were neither led invariably by proletarians nor were they accomplished exclusively by the working class alone. Lenin, Mao, Castro, and many other revolutionary leaders, along with many of their ablest comrades, do not come from the proletariat. Equally true is the fact that the victory of the revolutions which they led would have been impossible without the valuable assistance of other classes or members of other classes, including that of the bourgeoisie. Yet, the question is not who "makes" the revolution, in terms of the social composition of its leadership, but rather why and for whom was the revolution made; in other words, what did it abolish and what did it construct, who lost and who benefited; whose rule was instituted and for what purpose? Such questions have a much broader significance and help us arrive at the essence of social revolutions in general, even of bourgeois ones which still occupy historians of our time\*

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\* Indeed, in the study of such revolutions, confusing appearances have, not infrequently, led to equally confusing interpretations. Michelet's naive and patriotic interpretation of the great French revolution, as one of the people, that is, of the great majority of the French people against a corrupt minority of drones and oppressors, has been far surpassed by Cobban's onslaught against the "orthodox" school (Lefebvre, Soboul and others). Judging by the mixed character of the revolutionary forces, the violent internal conflicts and contradictory



targets of the various partners, and the significant role of non-capitalist elements in the leadership of the revolution, he did not just conclude that the latter was led by "officers and professionals",<sup>2</sup> but -- more radical than that -- that it was "to an important extent one against and not for the rising forces of capitalism."<sup>3</sup> The composition of the "Committee of Thirty" (heavily dominated by wealthy landed-aristocrats and eminent parlementaires) has been the subject of another critique directed against Lefebvre's interpretation of the French revolution, on class lines.<sup>4</sup> Here, again, its social character is deduced from the social composition of its participants. Naturally, such examples are not isolated. They represent a whole school, a world outlook which refuses, as yet, to fully appreciate the element of class struggle in the workings of history. But is there a more eloquent testimony to the social character of the French Revolution than the work of the National Assembly and of the successive governments of France up to the fall of the First Empire? The "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen," the "Decree of August 4" (which was made possible through the timely intervention of the aristocratic members of the Committee of Thirty),<sup>5</sup> the Loi Chapelier the entire legislation of the revolution, including the Code Napoleon -- here is where the revolution betrays its secret: through the sanctification of private property, the suppression of the restrictive economic legislation of the ancien régime which liberated the productive forces of French society, the creation of a national market, the measures undertaken to discipline the working class, still in its infancy, the abolition of the feudal system and the creation of its own aristocracy; in short, through every single legislative act, including those of the convention despite their radical appearance.

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2. Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 80.

3. Ibid., p. 168

4. See Elizabeth Eistein's article, "Was the 'Bourgeois Revolt' Bourgeois?" in French Revolution: Conflicting Interpretations, edited by Kafker, F. and Laux, J., (New York: Random House, 1976).

5. Passed by the National Assembly in August 1879 to abolish the remnants of feudalism.

6. This law, passed in June 1791, was mainly directed against the compagnonnages of journeymen which impeded the free interplay of market forces, in developing capitalist society, but it was also used and effectively so for approximately one century against labour organizations.

Proletarian revolutions have not been spared misinterpretations. Despite the fact that the character of such revolutions reveals itself as soon as the struggle is over, through the abolition of private property, the mass participation of peasants in some of these revolutions has often forced analysts to miss the point. It is an indisputable fact that peasants have indeed played an important part in many of the revolutions of our century (the Russian and the Chinese are the two most outstanding examples), but does this mean that such revolutions were "peasant revolutions," or that peasants can make revolutions of their own, in the real sense of the word? To determine the character of these revolutions, one has to go beyond merely the relations between peasant and lord.<sup>7</sup> The disintegration of the peasants' life reflects more than the disintegration of the traditional mode of their production; it is the whole society that is on trial. In undeveloped parts of the world, where imperialistic intervention in the economy has caused further disorganisation, "peasant" revolutions become successful under proletarian leadership precisely because the peasants' problem is the problem of all the lower classes of society; it is the problem of the capitalist world in its imperialistic stage.

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7. Summarizing the causes of peasant revolutions in modern history Barrington Moore concludes that "the most important causes of peasant revolutions have been the absence of a commercial revolution in agriculture led by the landed upper classes and the concomitant survival of peasant social institutions into the modern era when they are subject to new stresses and strains." B. Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 447. See also Eric R. Wolf's Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper, 1973); where he treats the major socialist revolutions of our century from the standpoint of the conditions of life and objectives of the peasants.

A no less important reason for understanding the role of the working class as an historical agent, whose position in capitalist society is bound to determine the organisation of the socialist mode of production, concerns the kind of culture that a proletarian-revolutionary movement or party promotes as the antithesis to the existing one -- the values it propagates and the things it promises, not only to its own members but especially to its allies from the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie and other segments of society. Alliances in proletarian revolutions do not create societies in the image of the alliance, but, instead, on the basis of what reality commands once the social relations of production of the discarded mode have been abolished and new ones are established. Except in cases in which the party has degenerated into a brokerage agency, of the modern social-democratic version, depending on all sorts of clients for parliamentary victories, the true philosophy of the proletariat cannot promise more than the proletariat itself expects from its own emancipation. Anything more than that, or outside this philosophy, obliterates the differences between this philosophy and that of its natural opponents. The cultural and, consequently, the political, independence of the proletariat thus become more apparent than real. At best, it represents a utopian illusion, at worst, a political fraud. But even when the party has not denounced the historical role of the proletariat (i.e., in cases in which it has preserved its philosophical consistency, but has not clarified its position vis-à-vis the whole society and the leading position of the proletariat) it will still fail to establish its leadership over its allies -- or the hegemony of the working class, as eurocommunists insist on imposing on their kind of alliance. The problem of alliances, one of the less developed areas

of the revolutionary movement in the developed "western" countries, is a complex one and cannot be dismissed by simply adhering to the general principles of historical materialism. Likewise, it cannot be solved by discarding those principles in order to "adapt" tactics to present-day requirements.

It is true that communist parties have always treated the question of alliances in general, and especially alliances for socialism, with extreme caution and perhaps with a little "doctrinairism." It is the nature of the issue itself that requires caution. Further, it is not a question that the communist tradition lacks the fundamentals of an alliance theory that safeguards the hegemonic role of the working class under any circumstances. The general principles, however, of an alliance for socialism, as developed by Marx and Engels in their writings of 1848 as well as by Lenin in almost everyone of his major works, and summed up by Stalin in his Foundations of Leninism<sup>8</sup>, cannot possibly find their application in the context of eurocommunism or in similar experiments like the one of the Chilean Popular Unity. The latter case presents a totally different situation. For, even when alliances between communists and socialists are made at the level of leaderships, or are proposed to be made, for the purpose of preparing the road of transition, some important factors associated with such an undertaking have yet to be seriously examined: the danger for the CP of losing its identity and becoming just a submerger of the alliance by gradually accepting its philosophy as its

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8. Regarding Stalin's Foundations of Leninism (New York: International Publishers, 1970), see particularly sections: III. "Theory," IV. "The Dictatorship of the Proletaria," V. "The Peasant Problem."

own; the effects that a long-term alliance, specifically one marked by electoral victories, will have on the communist party particularly when the latter participates in a government which, on the one hand, becomes part of the established order of things and, on the other, continuously postpones the moment of "reckoning" for better times. Furthermore, how long can an alliance for socialism survive, and even preserve its character and mission, if it does not begin its career as a government with "despotic inroads on the right of property?" The fundamental question here is how strong a partner would the working class be in the alliance and to what extent would the proletarian party be capable of determining the direction of the alliance. A communist party cannot possibly expect much by entering into a situation in which the main political activity -- which may last for years and decades -- would be the preparation for the transition or the gradual transition, while little is done to effect it, either because the party itself would lose the leading position or, perhaps, because it has renounced it.

All these issues become more crucial in the context in which the proletarian party enters into, or proposes the creation of, a much broader alliance which, besides what has traditionally been viewed as the forces of the Left, includes all other elements which, objectively speaking, are not and cannot be content with certain aspects of present-day capitalism. We are talking here of an alliance which may be extended to rally around itself considerable portions of the "non-monopoly" bourgeoisie and even the main "democratic" parties of this class. An alliance, further, which is proposed to be concluded at the level of leaderships of the various participants, which by itself raises additio-

nal questions as to its viability. This has been the position of the eurocommunist parties dealt with in this analysis, with the sole exception of the Communist Party of France.

The intention here is not to counterpose to this idea any doctrinaire fabrication to the effect that all non-proletarian forces that "stand face to face" with the masters of monopoly capital are reactionary (a paraphrase of Marx's often misinterpreted statement on the character of the anti-bourgeois/anti-feudal forces of 1848), but to question the limits and the possibilities of the proposed broad alliance. The first remark that has to be made is that, while alliances still constitute an absolutely necessary precondition to a successful attempt at a socialist transformation of society, the age of bourgeois revolutions in the societies of eurocommunism has, for all intents and purposes, become a thing of the past. Those sections, therefore, of the capitalist class which might participate in such an alliance would no longer have to combat the remnants of a past age but, rather, the most advanced institutions of their class, namely, monopoly capital; in the last analysis, their own interests and the foundations of a system that makes them what they are. A situation of a permanent revolution, of some sort, as the prolonged process of transition envisioned by eurocommunists may suggest, has no objective reasons for existence as far as the non-monopoly bourgeoisie is concerned. The distinction between monopoly and non-monopoly sections of this class cannot be taken very seriously or very far for that matter. One cannot ignore the organic ties that exist between these sections, as parts of the same whole, in any modern capitalist society. To insist on such a distinction, may create important political

repercussions. No matter how seriously those segments of the bourgeoisie may take into consideration the dangers and the effects of the present crisis, their objectives would not transcend those of a "Social-Democratic" alternative and, indeed, would not dare to endanger their position -- one to which they have grown accustomed through previous and present-day experiences.

Another observation, which is as pertinent as the previous one, is that the communist party will no longer be in a position to count on the possibility of a radicalised situation which would permit it to proceed further with or without all its allies. By having renounced the possibility of a "dual power" situation -- a situation in which the party preserves its philosophical, political and organisational independence, as well as its independence of action in case part of the alliance stops short of the desired or declared goal -- it will have to subordinate itself to the fortunes of the alliance and pin all its expectations on the democratic road. Finally, it may face the eventuality of experiencing the dissolution of its identity in the clouds of an inconsequential confusion created by its own rhetoric and of a prolonged transition which may end up in the transformation of the party itself into a simple electoral apparatus.

That the working class has not yet been able to make its own revolution alone, is basically a correct observation and one cannot deny it to eurocommunists.<sup>9</sup> Marx had extensively dealt with this idea ever since the 1848 revolutions, and history itself has proven its correctness.

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9. Berlinguer, "Classe Operaia e Blocco Sociale," La "Questione Comunista," Vol. I, p. 264.

However, the area in which eurocommunist arguments are counterposed to the classical positions is the independent action of the working class and its party, the special mission of the class and the special role of the party in affirming the historical function of the class in the context of an alliance aiming at the socialist transformation of society. The most important innovation of the eurocommunist approach in this context is not just the breadth of the alliance, which by itself creates a theoretical impasse of its own, but also the assertion that neither the working class nor the proletarian party have a special role to play in the transition, but rather assume an equal function with other classes and other parties. The CP, in its new conception, will only be "a protagonist together with other protagonists."<sup>10</sup>

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10. Manuel Azcarate, "The Present State of Eurocommunism: Its Main Features, Political and Theoretical," in Richard Kindersley (ed.), In Search of Eurocommunism (England: The Macmillan Press, 1981), p. 32.



### 1. The Great Alliance and the Proletarian Hegemony: The Eurocommunist Conception

The work toward the transition to socialism, as the exponents of eurocommunism argue, is neither the task of the working class and the communist party alone (a correct assumption so far), nor, for that matter, of a United Left government which has just managed to obtain more than fifty per cent of the vote. Parliament would inevitably be the principal instrument of the fundamental changes but strictly on the condition that the forces of progress have been able to win over to their side, and against monopoly capitalism, the great majority of the population. There is a twofold meaning associated with this insistence on creating a grand alliance: first of all, an alliance of the kind that embraces the overwhelming majority of the people and unites them behind a common programme of change, guarantees the legitimacy of change; and second, by being such a great alliance which includes a considerable section of the forces of the centre and even of the democratic Right, there would be no possible opportunity for the consolidation of the reactionary bloc. It is evident here that the centrist and the "democratic" forces in general would be destined to play an important role in the socialist transition. Hence, the lessons that eurocommunists have learned from the suppression of the Chilean experiment have only reaffirmed their convictions: Chile's tragic denouement was not due to the fact that Allende's government ignored the basic classical teaching which demands the usurpation and direct control of the state apparatus, but rather was due to its failure, on the one hand, to enlarge

the alliance by keeping the petty-bourgeoisie within the Common Programme and, on the other, to come to terms with Frei's Christian Democracy.

"... It would be illusory" -- Berlinguer says -- "to think that, even if the left-wing parties and forces succeeded in gaining 51 per cent of the vote and seats in Parliament (something which could in itself mark a big step forward in the relationship of forces among the parties in Italy), this fact would guarantee the survival and work of a government representing this 51 per cent."<sup>11</sup>

For the Italian party, the inability of Christian Democracy to form viable governments opens the field for a reactionary resurgence manifested in a more overt and more permanent marriage between this party and the neo-fascist and other elements of the extreme Right, coupled with a new wave of anti-communism. Berlinguer's announcement of the "historic compromise" appeared after a series of violent events engineered by fascist groups: the explosion of a bomb in the Agricultural Bank of Italy in late 1969 which left numerous dead; the abortive coup d'état "led" by the "black Prince" (Valerio Borghese) and other fascist elements; numerous other bombing attacks directed against the police throughout 1973. This crisis of the state, which emanates from the economic crisis and manifests itself in, what the PCI considers to be the inability of the political forces of the centre to assure stable rule, constitutes the underlying theme and the ultimate rationale of Berlinguer's essentially defensive, theory of the grand alliance: to prevent the coalition between the conservative centre and the reactionary and oligarchic Right which has always been the plague of the

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11. Berlinguer, "Reflections After the Events in Chile," Marxism Today, (February 1974); p. 48. (Translated by the PCI). Eduardo Frei: leader of the Christian Democratic party of Chile.

forces of progress in times of crisis. Thus, the proposal for a broad alliance is put forward not simply to meet the present crisis but also to conduct the struggle for socialism. In addition, this proposal also takes into consideration the suppression of Popular Unity in Chile.

We have always been aware that the advance of the working people and democracy will be opposed with all possible means by the ruling social groups and their power apparatus. And we know, as the tragic Chilean experience has once more demonstrated, that this anti-democratic reaction tends to become all the more violent and fierce when the popular forces begin to get their hands on the fundamental levers of power in the state and in society. But what conclusions must we draw from this awareness? Perhaps that urged on us by some irresponsible people who would have us abandon the terrain of democracy and unity for a strategy that is nothing but smoke and of which the rapid and inevitable outcome would clearly be isolation of the vanguard and its defeat? On the contrary we are convinced that if the ruling social groups count on smashing the democratic framework, on splitting the country in two and unleashing reactionary violence, this must spur on ourselves to embrace ever more solidly the cause of defense of freedom and democratic progress, to avoid the vertical division of the country, and to work with even greater resolve, intelligence and patience to isolate the reactionary groups and seek every possible form of agreement and convergence among all the popular forces. 12

Berlinguer's conclusions pointedly reflect the position of the Italian party, adopted to a certain extent (as we will shortly see) by the PCE, as well as by many small parties including the Greek party of the "Interior" which pushed the logic of this approach to the extreme. The French party, on the other hand, whose rather ambiguous adoption of eurocommunism and its insistence on striking an alliance with the Socialist Party has kept it within the limits of a more realistic approach, could not possibly go that far. The Programme for which it fought in the elections of May 1978

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12. Berlinguer, "Reflections," p. 43 (Italics added by author).

together with the Socialists, and which it subsequently tried to impose on them as a common programme (until the latter emerged strong enough to have their own policies as a governing party), was but a programme destined to be realised by the United Left. As a matter of fact, the battle was fought to exceed fifty per cent of the vote. Furthermore, and most important, it was not a programme for the socialisation of France but only for the advancement of democracy.

This brings us to the extremely important question of the particular forces which would form (or be invited to form) this great alliance -- the alliance which would supposedly attack monopoly capital and which, at the same time, would pave the way for a socialist transformation. Here euro-communists, even considering the peculiarities of each individual country, are at some variance with each other as to the scope and character -- or, perhaps one should best say, the substance -- of the alliance. While the general idea (in fact the most publicised demand) is to converge the popular forces which oppose themselves to oligarchic, monopolistic circles -- in other words, to create an alliance among the various segments of the people which are presently divided along lines of political ideology, religion, etc., -- it seems that this line is not the same for all parties which have opted for the democratic transition. In fact, it is the two leading eurocommunist parties, the Italian and the Spanish, which have given it a form of its own, which has been consequently adopted by the Greek "Interior"; but even here the differences in conceptualising the scope of alliance are not completely absent. Having identified eurocommunism with the philosophy of the "historic compromise," it must be said that the leader of the Italian party has spent much of his energy in the last decade.

not for the purpose of extricating the Catholic proletarian masses from the Christian Democratic party, but rather for the achievement of some sort of an entente with the leadership of this party which would allow communists into a Christian Democratic government. What creates the confusion here is not the determination of the PCI to come to an agreement with another party at the level of leadership but the very precise truth that if there is a party in Italy which represents monopoly capital, it is Christian Democracy.

To be sure, Berlinguer's vision of an alliance does not include only the PCI and the Christian Democracy. All three parties of the so-called "constitutional arch" (the third is the Socialist Party of Italy), which have fought in the Resistance against fascism and brought about the new democratic, anti-fascist Constitution of Italy, should be part of the alliance, along with any other progressive group aspiring to the transformation of Italian society. To exclude Christian Democracy from the Alliance would be tantamount to splitting the country into two hostile camps and paving the way for a repetition of the Chilean tragedy. Thus, Berlinguer remarks:

What is more just, revolutionary, productive: to propose to ourselves this task, which is undoubtedly more difficult and which requires struggle, polemics, complex initiatives, and which needs all our intelligence, or to shout that slogan ("United yes, but against the Christian Democracy") of a more or less felicitous rhyme but certainly the expression of a sectarian renunciation of essential tasks? 13

Hence, the Christian Democracy, according to this kind of reasoning, cannot be ignored as a partner either for the task of rescuing Italy from the

13. "Che cosa è più giusto, rivoluzionario, produttivo: proporsi questo compito, indubbiamente arduo e che richiede lotte, polemiche, iniziative complesse, che hanno bisogno di tutta la nostra intelligenza, oppure gridare quello slogan ("Uniti sì, ma contro la DC") dalla rima più o meno felice, ma certamente espressione di una rinuncia settaria a compiti essenziali?" Berlinguer, "Per trasformare la scuola e l'istruzione per rinnovare l'Italia," La "Questione Comunista," Vol. 2, p. 648.

present crisis or for the purpose of the socialist transformation. And this is what makes the alliance philosophy of the PCI indeed paradoxical -- to say the least. The fact that the DC following is largely composed of Catholic masses does not change in the least its nature. Furthermore, it would be quite naive to believe that democracy in Italy, in Greece, or any other Western society of a similar background, is threatened by small, insignificant minorities of the extreme Right which normally operate under the shadow and the protection of more respectable bourgeois circles and parties. To be sure, such extremist groupings enjoy the support and often the confidence of other powers, such as NATO and CIA, which may use them at the appropriate moment in order to arrest the "normal" evolution of any of these societies as determined by the balance of its own forces. But the intention of eurocommunists is not to isolate these elements from their foreign supporters, something which is extremely difficult under the actual circumstances, but rather to keep them apart from the "democratic" conservative and centrist forces -- in other words, to persuade the latter forces to join their alliance against that minority, which numerically speaking constitutes an insignificant section of the capitalist class. The alliance, therefore, besides all its other problems, will also have to face the fact that it is destined to essentially remain an alliance without much of a real opponent in terms of class confrontation. As Claudin's sympathetic critique has it: "What we contest is the legalist, electoralist version of this road; the version which seeks to follow a line of class collaboration with the leading group of the bourgeoisie" (emphasis supplied -- Claudin's remark concerns mainly the PCI).<sup>14</sup>

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15. Claudin, Eurocommunism, p. 120.

The Spanish leadership, on the other hand, which is confronted with the situation of a party whose influence in the political arena is significantly less than that of the Italian, has stuck to its formula of the "forces of labour and culture" or what they consider to be the "new historic bloc." The alliance envisioned by the PCE is to be composed of communists, socialists and social democrats including the parties that represent them and "progressive Christian forces" and democratic groups which are not tied to monopoly capital.<sup>15</sup> Although the meaning of the expression "forces of labour and culture" (or even that of the "new historic bloc" which is used interchangeably with the former) does not come out clearly in his book, we may however assume that Carrillo's alliance includes the following social groups: the working class in its broad definition -- which encompasses intellectuals, professionals, white-collar workers of the private sector, clergymen, and the entire state personnel -- and those sections of the capitalist class which are not connected with monopoly.

In contradistinction to the Spanish and Italian communist parties, the alliance formula of the PCF has nothing really novel in it. It also struggles for a "large majority," but the creation of an alliance on the Italo-Spanish model, which only ostracizes the small groupings of the monopolists and fascists, is something totally foreign to the programme of the French party.<sup>16</sup>

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15. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 104. See also Ibid, pp. 44 and 56.

16. The way Carl Marzani, an enthusiastic supporter of the trend sees this particular difference among the various "eurocommunist" parties is that "...although all accept democratic pluralistic governments the Italian and the Spanish are opting for coalitions with capitalist parties, the French and the Portuguese look for alliances only on the left." The Promise of Eurocommunism (Westport, Connecticut: Laurence Hill and Company, 1980), p. XIX. See also p. 51.

Like any other communist party, it also appeals to other, non-working class elements, e.g., "small and middle farmers," artisans and shopkeepers," "small businessmen."<sup>17</sup> Yet, there is -- it should be noted -- in the programme of the PCF an element which does not appear so emphatically in the other two parties, that is, that the philosophy of this alliance must not be different from that which serves the interests of the working class and the ultimate purpose of its movement:

Union for us means union to increase the fighting capacity of the workers, to enlarge, mobilise and consolidate the struggle of the working-class, democratic and national forces against the big business regime. We want a union to defeat the power of the monopolies, to install an advanced democracy and eventually to take the road to Socialism. We want a union to ensure the success of a policy corresponding to the urgent needs and fundamental interests of the working class, of all workers by hand and brain, of the working people of the country-side of the great mass of the people. Any other conception of the union does not derive from a concern to serve the working class and the people, but can only lead to putting the working class at the mercy of the bourgeoisie, and stems, when all is said and done, from the most contemptible opportunism, indeed from electoral sharp practice.<sup>18</sup>

A much more significant point that further differentiates the policies of the PCF from those of the other eurocommunist parties is that its Common Programme does not aspire to establishing a socialist society but a more "advanced democracy."

An anti-monopolistic programme, a programme to democratise economic and social life, it is limited in the sense that it is not a programme for the establishment of socialism. When we say this, it is not at all a matter of giving "reassurances". We are simply concerned not to confuse people: to liken the Common Programme to socialism would be to diminish and dull the idea of socialism and its revolutionary content.

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17. Georges Marchais, "Report to the Twenty-First Congress of the French Communist Party," Part II, Marxism Today (February, 1975), p. 52. (Translation by Peter Avis).

18. Ibid., p. 48.



But because the democratisation provided for in this Common Programme will go beyond what our country has ever experienced, we have described this political change as being to an "advanced democracy." 19

Definitely, none of the eurocommunist parties harbours the illusion that socialism will arise on the morrow of the victory of the alliance; it is the French party, however, that has better formulated its position vis-à-vis this "transition to the transition" which will mark the democratic road to socialism.<sup>20</sup>

The problem that confronts us (and the eurocommunists) at this point has, first of all, its practical ramifications. A party formulates a programme of change and seeks allies for its realisation. Generally, and as the tradition of the communist movement has it, everybody is welcome as long as he accepts it. The nature, however, of the programme and especially of the party that proposes it, sets the limits of the alliance; this is precisely what poses an extremely important problem when this party addresses itself to other parties which have their own history, as well as their own programme and vision about the future of their country. It becomes even more complex particularly when the appeal is made to parties whose programme defends existing social relations.

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19. Georges Marchais, "Report to the Twenty First (Extraordinary) Congress of the Communist Party of France," Marxism Today (January, 1975), p. 9.

20. It was this point in the eurocommunist approach to the socialist transition (and especially that of the PCF) which drew Claudin's critique. In his view, what the PCF calls "advanced democracy," the PCI "a new stage in the democratic evolution" and the PCE "political and social democracy," is nothing but socialism. "But in the traditional Marxist conception -- which none of these parties has so far challenged -- it is precisely this long transitional period between capitalism and classless society (or communism) which is called socialism, and which is initiated when the working class and its allies win power and take their first measures towards the social appropriation of the principal means of production." Claudin, Eurocommunism, p. 101.

In the light of these remarks, we may say that the alliance sought by the French party is close to what is traditionally known as the formula of the "United Left." Evidently, the "Union du peuple de France" intends to go beyond the Left in order to put in motion the great popular masses and fulfil, in this manner, the requirement set by eurocommunism for the isolation of the reaction. The PCF, however, has neither proposed collaboration with the ruling parties nor has it perceived the opponents of change as an insignificant minority. And this is what differentiates its attitude vis-à-vis that of other eurocommunist parties.

The Italian party's schema -- either as a result of the "historic compromise" being transformed into a permanent policy of the party or the general compromising attitude of its leadership -- is, to a very significant extent, a repetition of the "Popular Front" or the anti-fascist front. Apparently, the only elements that are excluded from the alliance are the monopolists and reactionaries of the extreme Right. This is the programme that was copied to a certain extent by the Greek Communist party of the "Interior" in the EAOE (National Anti-Dictatorial Democratic Unity) which invited all forces and parties of the country with the exception of the fascist elements which had been implicated in the 1967 coup d'état, the "doctrinaire" Communist Party of Greece<sup>21</sup> and the reactionary wing of the

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21. The position of the Interior, as to whether the KKE should be part of the alliance, was quite ambivalent. Indeed, there were leading members of the party who held that the KKE is part of the "democratic forces" of the country. This position was attacked by other members and the ensuing debate lasted for months. In the monthly organ of the Interior, Κομμουνιστική θεωρία και πολιτική (No. 31-32, January-February 1980), Leonidas Kyrkos suggested in his article, "Σκέψεις γύρω από μερικά προβλήματα," that the KKE makes part of the democratic forces. The idea was immediately attacked, in the same issue, by another leading member of the Interior, Costas Filinis, in his article "Μία Απάντηση στις παραπάνω σκέψεις." The discussion continued in subsequent issues of the periodical with the participation of other leading cadres of the Interior.

New Democracy. As a matter of fact, one of the most important aspects of the critique directed against the "Interior" by the KKE was that the vision of this party could not go beyond helping Karamanlis' party consolidate its position against the fascist groups inside and outside the army (and even inside Karamanlis' own party).\* And perhaps the relevancy of this critique is found in the fact that the "Interior" consistently refused to wage an anti-monopoly struggle for the first three years after its legalisation.

The position of the PCE seems, at first sight, to be situated between that of the PCI and PCF but closer to the concept of the United Left. It is the misleading expression "forces of labour and culture" that gives the illusion. A closer look, however, shows that the inclusion of the non-monopolistic bourgeoisie (i.e., the crushing majority of the capitalist class) makes this position almost identical with that of the PCI. The problem, therefore, of how to get the capitalist class to abolish itself -- even in a gradualist fashion -- remains unsolved for both these parties.

Unsettled questions of this nature and divergences between the euro-communist parties do exist, but the principal exponents of the doctrine do not feel any discomfort with the idea of the great alliance. I am referring here to the protagonists of eurocommunism not to the leadership of these parties in general, and mainly to those of the Italian and the Spanish parties, because even within the leading bodies of these parties opposition

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\* Constantinos Karamanlis served, for many years, as the leader of the ERE. His party governed Greece from 1952 to 1963 at which time para-state fascist elements associated with the ERE murdered Gregorios Lambrakis, leader of the peace movement and member of Parliament. Karamanlis "fled" to France and returned in 1974 to head the revived ERE under its new name of "New Democracy" which took over after the fall of the colonels. After the presidential elections of 1980, he became President of the Greek Republic.

to the "new" ideas has not been eliminated.<sup>22</sup> The swiftness with which Carrillo was replaced in the leadership of the party after the surprising debacle of the last elections (October 1982) may also be an indication that eurocommunism has not imbued these parties as profoundly as it might have been thought. But even though we may speak of past events (if indeed eurocommunism is dead), the fact remains that the people who brought this theory to life and made news all over the world do not quite see themselves as its inventors. They found it, they maintain, in the recent history of their parties. The idea of the democratic approach and of the broad alliance is not new to many communist parties, according to this version. Despite the "monolithic," "disorienting" impositions of the Comintern (read CPSU), many CPs had adopted the idea ever since the creation of the popular fronts.<sup>23</sup> For Berlinguer "the origins of this strategy go back to the thought and action of Antonio Gramsci and the leadership group that gathered around him and continued to work along the path of his teaching"; the trend was reaffirmed

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22. See, for example, Claudin, Eurocommunism, pp. 170 and after, for internal conflicts in the PCI's leadership as a result of the excessively compromising positions supported mainly by Berlinguer, Amentola and other members of the CC who represent the Right of the party.

23. This point has been a bit overstressed by John Cammet in his Introduction to Carl Marzani's book The Promise of Eurocommunism: "Yet it seems undeniable that by the thirties all these "Latin" parties had arrived at one common decision: a resolve to move somehow or other beyond the conditions of "vanguard parties" - with their attendant "purity and doctrine and historical materialism toward the creation of mass national parties." p. XII. The formation, however, of the popular fronts under the immediate threat of fascism should not be taken as a conscious "decision" to change the "vanguard" position of the party. That developed slowly and it is only in the 1960s that we may say that such decisions are taken by some CPs of Europe or the "Latin" countries.

at the Lyon Congress (1926) which purged the party from "extremism and sectarianism" (evidently the expulsion of Bordiga's group); then, it was taken up by Togliatti and the comrades around him who adopted it in the popular front and the Resistance movement. This Togliatti line of democratic unity was followed in the postwar period but it was interrupted by the Cold War which brought the entente between Communists and Democrats to a close.<sup>24</sup> Lombardo Radice, another leading member of the PCI believes that the initiative for the creation of the popular fronts owes its inspiration to Togliatti and Dimitrov -- apparently against the intentions of the Soviet party.<sup>25</sup>

Carrillo, for his part, maintains that the large democratic/anti-fascist alliance created during the civil war years for the defense of the Spanish Republic was the work of the Spanish Communist party, not the idea of the Comintern.<sup>26</sup> This policy, which may now be seen as the application of the "war of position," and which made possible the popular fronts and the anti-fascist resistance in the occupied countries, was preserved by the great western Communist parties (the PCI and PCF) even during the period that followed the war as the only appropriate one for the prevailing conditions of socio-economic development. Both Carrillo and Berlinguer point with disapproval to the Greek Communist party's decision to engage in a confrontation with the reactionary forces (after the end of the occupation) as a case of

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24. Berlinguer, "Reflections," p. 42.

25. Lucio Lombardo Radice, "Communism with an Italian Face," in Urban (ed.), Eurocommunism, p. 34.

26. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 128.

fundamental mistake, an under-estimation of the political realities of the time as well as a rejection of the policy of democratic unity, which led this party to adventure and defeat.\*

Even the French party has reconstructed its own history with regard to past efforts to unify the democratic forces: "Toute l'histoire du parti" -- says Marchais -- "est ainsi jalonnée par les initiatives qu'il n'a cessé de prendre en faveur de l'union." This history of efforts of the PCF goes back to 1934 when the unity action pact was concluded between Communists and Socialists, which was soon afterwards followed by the creation of the Popular Front by Communists, Socialists and Radical Socialists. This same line of thought is also apparent in the Resistance movement and the post-liberation participation of Communists in the French government.<sup>27</sup>

What all these parties neglect to mention when speaking of those glorious moments of their past history -- which they indeed are -- are their unpleasant aspects. Neither the Popular Front in France nor that of the Republican

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27. See Georges Marchais, Introduction to Programme Commune du Gouvernement (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1972), p. 23.

\* This criticism refers to the violent confrontations, in the months of December 1944-January 1945, between the Attica units of the Greek People's Liberation Army, on the one hand, and the British army and the collaborationist squads on the other. It also refers to the renewal of the Civil War in Greece in the period 1946-1949 which ended in the defeat of the Democratic Army and the crushing of the Left in this country. It has to be said, however, that in their insistence to view the Resistance as a phase in the evolution of their trend, eurocommunists tend to minimise the social content of the Liberation Fronts of the Occupation period. Moreover, they neglect to consider the specific conditions under which the Civil War in Greece passed through its various stages. The December events, for example, were initiated by the unprovoked attack of the police against unarmed demonstrators (on the 3rd of December) which tolled many dead and wounded. The victory of the collaborators, with British and American aid, and the consequent nation-wide persecution of the Resistance members cannot be neglected, on the other hand, as one of the reasons that led to the second phase of the Civil War.

forces in Spain were, at any moment, capable of rallying around their banner "great" majorities or avoiding internal strife among the various participants which often led to overt treachery. The precarious co-existence of Socialists, Communists and Radical Socialists in France soon led to a situation in which the first, entangled in a charged class-war confrontation, lost their ability to act, while the second could not make up their mind as to what they were supposed to do with a radicalised labour movement and an ambivalent government which they supported. It was the third partner, who enjoyed the tolerance of French conservatism, that undertook with Edouard Daladier to act as the gravedigger of the Front by purging from the government both the Socialists of Léon Blum and the Communists, inaugurating at the same time severe and reactionary measures against organised labour.<sup>28</sup> As for the Spanish Communists it would be necessary to reread the history of their own Popular Front, especially that of its last phase and the events that led to the capitulation of Catalonia through the perfidy of a section of the "republican" forces. La Pasionaria has left us some revealing details of this matter.<sup>29</sup>

The Resistance movement, in this particular respect, did not fare better. The massive collaboration of the leadership of the "democratic" parties and their protégés in the state apparatus, and the deadly antagonisms among the various groups of the liberation movement despite the constant (and, on pa-

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28. For some details on the internal problems of the French Popular Front, see, among many other studies, La défaite du Front Populaire, by Guy Bourdè (Paris: François Maspero, 1977), and Louis Bodin's and Jean Touchard's (eds.), Front Populaire: 1936 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972).

29. They Shall Not Pass, especially from Section 42 on.

per, often successful) efforts to unify it, are but an eloquent reminder that grand alliances are not so easy to make, even more difficult to maintain. What unites the various elements of the alliance in their common struggle of action, is not always sufficient to suppress their real class differences even in moments of extreme national emergency -- especially during those moments. Under the pressures of the time -- and pressures are always present when large alliances become necessary -- the various groups of the alliance were forced to gravitate towards their own natural, class position rather than that of the common fight.<sup>30</sup> The unity of the Greek Resistance was destined to remain on paper; indeed, while still under occupation, the civil war in that country began between the Communist-led EAM (National Liberation Front) and the British-sponsored EDES (National Democratic Greek Army), the latter often in collaboration with the forces of occupation. What furnished stability and coherence in the Left-organised resistance of the occupied countries was not its co-operation with the democratic parties, but rather the masses which formerly belonged to these parties and which abandoned them for a more patriotic and certainly a more radical stance. Moreover, another element which has not been adequately emphasised in the accounts of the CPs: it was the masses of the countryside which made up the bulk of the faithful and disciplined Resistance armies.

What we are attempting to underline with these observations is not that alliances are not important or even necessary for such paramount tasks as the

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30. An interesting comment made by Eric Hobsbawm on the Chilean alliance -- an alliance which could be seen as quite "homogeneous" compared to what Berlinguer proposes -- is the following: "Every one of the divergent and particularistic interests of the single parties in the Coalition for Popular Unity remained in force after Allende's victory". Eric Hobsbawm/Giorgio Napolitano, The Italian Road to Socialism (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1977), p. 69.



liberation struggle or the socialist transition. On the contrary, it would be both naive and dangerous for a CP to formulate its tactics on such a sectarian assumption. What is objected to in the eurocommunist theory of alliance is the excessive glamorisation of their past efforts to unify the progressive forces which often ignores both the difficulties of bringing together such an alliance as well as its limitations. And those limitations, as far as the interests and the aims of the CP are concerned, cannot be drawn without consideration of the class situation (the actual "social formation," as Poulantzas would put it) of the particular country in question. The CP can only appeal to its natural allies for a viable and effective alliance: the working class in its broadest definition, including the proletarian "forces of culture," the oppressed sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, and those elements of the countryside which have traditionally lived with the "delusion of proprietorship."<sup>31</sup> The composition and importance of these groups vary from country to country. Parties of the Left which consistently favour radical changes, as well as working class organisations and all those movements which have come into existence in recent years to articulate the constantly rising opposition to nuclear war, pollution, crime, discrimination of many sorts, and so forth, are also to be viewed as natural allies of the communist movement. Going beyond these limits and including other forces which are normally identified as the class enemy is a question which can only be determined in moments of acute crisis when not only the hegemony of the ruling class is in abeyance but but the coherence of this class

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31. To borrow a phrase that Marx used for the French peasants: K. Marx and F. Engels, On the Paris Commune (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), p. 160.

is also lost through its dissolution into the components that make it and the struggle within society also finds its expression in the internal strife among these components. This brings us to a very significant phase in the revolutionary process which cannot be handled on the basis of pre-fabricated formulae. What would be required in such moments cannot be determined in advance. It is a question of being able to adjust to a constantly and swiftly changing situation. It is the art of insurrection, as Engels would put it<sup>32</sup>, that a CP requires in this stage of the struggle. But this has nothing to do with the eurocommunist perspective.

The fact that eurocommunists have created a delusional universe, as far as their dream of the grand alliance is concerned, is evident in their critique of the Chilean defeat: a critique which is not simply un-Marxist, but also unfair for such an impressive effort which ended up in an equally remarkable and apocalyptic catharsis. The Chileans failed -- eurocommunists contend -- because they estranged the petty-bourgeoisie and could not come to an entente with the Christian Democracy.<sup>33</sup> But is it not natural for a government marching towards socialism to have to face these problems and

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32. "Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution," in The German Revolutions, edited and with an introduction by Leonard Krieger; (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 227.

33. Even after the coup d'état, it is not quite clear if the CP of Chile has changed its positions on alliances. See Luis Corvalán's interview with London Weekend Television, January, 1977, where he was directly asked whether there was a possibility for cooperation with the Christian Democratic party in future coalition. (The question was presented as "Berlinguer's question" - a question, that is, that comes out in Berlinguer's article "Reflection after the Events in Chile," where the latter finds it impossible for the PCI to govern without the participation of the DC of Italy). Corvalán recognises the need for cooperation with the Chilean Christian Democracy, but it is not clear whether this cooperation concerns only the anti-Pinochet struggle or a future coalition for Socialism. Marxism Today (April 1977), pp. 107-108.

pitfalls? Furthermore, is it logical for a CP to expect to rally the crushing majority of the population around a programme of socialist change? Finally, was not it an admirable feat for the Chilean Communists and Socialists to achieve that which, for decades now, Communists of the European Latin countries have fought and hoped for? Indeed, another point must be added here: why should eurocommunists not see in this experiment their own conception of socialism and, perhaps, their own fate. If the difference between it and eurocommunism is the fact that the Chilean Communists and Socialists failed to win the mythical great majority, then we are certainly getting into a frivolous argument. These kinds of majorities are not formed by decision of the CCs or even of the Congresses of the parties. The Chileans began with similar thoughts and plans as today's eurocommunists, and they clarified their positions as to the democratic road perhaps much earlier than many of the latter. One should observe this amazingly reassuring statement made at the Tenth Congress of the party in 1956, while still existing clandestinely.

Le triomphe du Front populaire en 1938 et celui de l'Alliance démocratique en 1946, ont démontré, précisément la possibilité pour la classe ouvrière et le peuple chilien de conquérir le gouvernement par une voie qui n'est pas celle de l'insurrection.  
(Italics supplied by author). 34

The Chileans also spoke of the need of a large alliance and of getting the Catholic masses into their movement for the socialist transformation of the country, but they never invited Christian Democracy, as a party, to join the alliance. That certainly makes a difference with the policy of the PCI and

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34. Luis Corvalán, Chili: Les Communistes dans la marche du Socialisme (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1972), p. 36.

that of the Greek "Interior," but it is also a difference that forces these latter parties to a position without consequence. But there is also another difference that should remind eurocommunists of their own problems. The Chilean alliance failed despite the fact that the Socialist party of Allende, with all its peculiarities, was a party which sincerely fought for genuine social changes.<sup>35</sup> Are the Italian and the French parties in a position to believe that Mitterand and Craxi\* would do better with their socialist parties?

This type of alliance for socialism -- while still a state of mind rather than the real thing -- has another ramification which, incidentally, has not taken much time to manifest itself. The larger the proposed alliance, the more general and moderate (one should say harmless) its objectives become and the less the insistence of the CP on carrying on a consistent struggle along class lines. The critical attitude of the party is gradually reduced to a vague and unspecified opposition to the evils of existing society, while the struggle against the political representatives of this society and of this system loses its sharpness and its class character. This new strategy has had no less impact on the internationalist stance of the eurocommunist parties. Whether their reasons for disagreeing with the CPSU's conception on this matter are valid or not, one should not fail to see that the attitude of eurocommunism on the question of proletarian internationalism has been affected by their determination to follow the

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35. An interesting note on the PS of Chile is that when Allende was nominated by his party as the Presidential candidate, many members of his party including those of the leadership had adapted an insurrectionist stance. Allende, being a moderate, received the chrisme of the Presidential candidate by a vote of 12 in favour and 13 abstentions, on a total of 31 members of the CC of the party (6 of them absent). Ibid., p. 158.

\* Bettino Craxi, leader of the Socialist Party of Italy.

democratic road. Most eloquent proof of this change was the concerted opposition of many eurocommunist parties to the (legitimate) insistence of the Portuguese CP on putting its stamp on the developments that followed the downfall of the Salazarist regime. The question of whether this mentality of the democratic road and of the grand alliance is destined to blunt the philosophy and the class stance of the CPs has already been answered in the affirmative, although the appeal of eurocommunism to mobilise possible allies from among the "democratic" forces has not yet materialised -- with the exception of France where the Common Programme (now defunct) between Communists and Socialists deserves a different kind of treatment.

This phenomenon of neglecting the significance of class struggle has already (I should say long ago) created problems in the PCI, among members of its leadership and also between the latter and the labour unions of the Left, for the support given to the government's "austerity programme" by the party itself.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting that even spokesmen of the British Communist party, which has also adopted the democratic road, see in the policies of the PCI a dangerous turn to the Right.

Nevertheless, the development of the strategy broadly defined as Eurocommunism does carry with it the danger of a swing to the right in style and policy which can weaken the connections of the Communist parties with the masses and especially the large mass of rejected and alienated people in the urban centres. This can be seen in Italy, amongst the youth especially. 37

The effects of this policy on the fortunes of the Spanish party require no comments considering the results of the last elections in which the landslide victory of the Socialist party of Spain encountered no resistance

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36. Claudin, Eurocommunism, from p. 107 on.

37. Sam Aaronovitch, "Eurocommunism: A Discussion of Carrillo's Eurocommunism and the State," Marxism Today (July 1978), p. 227.

from the vague policy of the PCE. It may seem inappropriate at this point to use a statement by a professional anti-communist, like Annie Kriegel, but I think its relevance to the debacle of the PCE is quite apposite:

Once the sickle is afraid of its own cutting edge, and once it desires to rival the softness of the rose, why not simply avoid the long detour and settle for the rose? Once the sickle considers itself a rose, why would not the rose say that it is by far the better model? 38

One may counterpose to this reasoning the thirst of the Spanish people for immediate changes, and the fact that the only party which could fulfil such a task was the Socialist. Consequently, that ambivalent layer of the Left which would otherwise support the PCE turned to the Socialists. This may be a plausible explanation for other parties, but for a communist party these losses, in comparison to the previous elections, create too much of a large margin to take it as the ambivalent section of the Left. In Greece the situation was not much different with Papandreou's own landslide. And yet the KKE was able not only to maintain its power but, surprisingly so, to increase its percentage of the vote by about one per cent. In short, the theory that the communist party may increase its clientele by turning to more moderate and democratic positions, does not seem to have much value. Even the French party's more consistent eurocommunist policy was not spared the effects of the new orientation -- if we accept Althusser's evaluation of the 1978 defeat of the Common Programme. It was not the result, he says, of the people's lack of understanding of the need for change -- as Georges Marchais had concluded -- but of the party's lack of understanding of the necessity of waging a consistent class struggle.<sup>39</sup>

38. Annie Kriegel, Eurocommunism, p. 78.

39. Louis Althusser, Ce qui ne peut plus durer dans le Parti Communiste (Paris: François Maspéro, 1976), p. 29.

As to the experience of the "Interior's" policy of uncritically and indiscriminately embracing the idea of the broad democratic alliance, it has demonstrated its catastrophic effects even before the party came out from underground. What had passed only as a rumour in 1973 about the "Interior's" intention to co-operate indirectly with the military junta by supporting the idea of elections held by a government headed by Spyros Markezinis -- an old courtier and "bridge-maker,"<sup>40</sup> projected at the time by the colonels as the appropriate person to head a would-be transition government -- was an episode in the history of this party which had created a lot of commotion and internal strife among the members of its leadership. It was only due to the massacre of the Polytechnic which took place in November of the same year, and consequently scrapped all these projects of "normalisation," that the "Interior" managed to postpone its fate for a while.<sup>41</sup> With the legalisation of the Communist party(ies) in Greece in 1974, the Interior formulated its policy of the National Democratic Anti-Dictatorial Unity which also became the policy of the labour and students' organisations which had been created by this party. The attitude of both organisations was one of co-operation with all other forces, including those of

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40. Bridge-maker, in Greek parlance, an unofficial collaborator of a hated regime who pretends to play the role of conciliator, supposedly trying to bridge the difference between the government and the opposition. Details on the Interior's decision to participate in the "bridge-making" of 1973. see in Antonis Brilakis, Το Ελληνικό Κομμουνιστικό Κίνημα (Athens: Exantas, 1980), p. 281-296.

41. The invasion by armoured tanks of the Polytechnic School of Athens, on 17/11/73, occupied at the time by students and other anti-fascist fighters, ended up in the massacre of more than 100 of the resisters. This episode arrested all efforts for the "normalisation" of the regime.

the Right, against the KKE-oriented formations in those fields. It took more than three years for the Interior, and only for some of their leaders, to finally realise that this policy was inappropriate for a communist party. The contribution of the "CC minority" to the Theses of the Second Congress of the Interior, held in 1978, saw it "as a policy above classes, which led to serious mistakes in the labour movement, such as that of the ASDIS" (the Interior's labour organisation). It further emphasised that "this practice was presenting the policy of the party in a fashion which is irrelevant to the analyses of its programme, as a policy of conciliation with the Right which holds back the mass movement." 42

Having exposed the fundamental aspects of the alliance philosophy of euro-communism, the more specific question that now remains to be dealt with -- and this is a very significant one given the ultimate aim of this philosophy -- is the following: what could possibly be the role of the working class or the Communist party, for that matter, in the context of such an alliance? Euro-communists have never renounced outright the leading (or historical) role of the working class in the process of democratic transition. What they have repeatedly declared -- and in principle, there is nothing wrong with it -- is that the working class will never be able to make the revolution by itself. As Berlinguer has argued even before the adoption of the historic compromise, no proletarian revolution has ever been won or made by the working class alone without the participation of other social forces. 43 Following this

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42. "Minority Views of the CC of the KKE Interior on the Theses," Κομμουνιστική θεωρία και Πολιτική (January-February 1978), p. 48.

43. Berlinguer, "Classe Operaia e Blocco Sociale," La "Questione Comunista", Vol. I, p. 264.



logic, it is held that the democratic transition to socialism likewise will not succeed if made by the working class alone. On the contrary, and because of its democratic character, it will require the mobilisation of much greater forces than those needed for a revolutionary transition. Hence the theory of the broad democratic alliance.

It is inside this alliance that the working class (through the efforts of its party) will struggle to achieve recognition of its leading role, its hegemony, by all participants and the broad masses of society. Its conception of the struggle in the particular circumstances of the particular country, its vision of the future, will gradually become the philosophy of the entire movement. Borrowing once more from Gramsci's writings, euro-communists believe that the working class will not be able to effect the transition to socialism without first proving itself as the hegemonic force in society.<sup>44</sup> It was along these lines that Berlinguer summed up this particular task of the working class in the article already referred to:

The second principle that inspires us is that the policy and the struggle of the working class, to the extent that this class wants to affirm a hegemony of its own vis-a-vis the other social strata and classes and the entire life of the country, must have the broadest popular and national aspiration, must have a positive content, a constructive character. If, as we believe, the working class is the force which historically is in a position

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<sup>44</sup> As a matter of fact, it is only in a footnote that Gramsci posed the problem in such a blunt fashion: "... a class is dominant in two ways, i.e., 'leading' and 'dominant'. It leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies. Therefore, even before attaining power a class can (and must) 'lead'; when it is in power it becomes dominant, but continues to 'lead' as well ... there can and must be a 'political hegemony' even before the attainment of government power, and one should not count solely on the power and material force which such a position gives in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony." *Notebooks*, p. 57. See also paragraph before footnote. The idea of hegemony permeates all Gramsci's writings and is often intertwined with that of the "war of position" and that of politics as an autonomous activity. E. J. Hobsbawm's article "Gramsci and Political Theory," *Marxism Today* (July 1979), contains some comments on the idea of hegemony before the transition to socialism.

more than any other (class) to indicate and, at the same time, advance the solutions most appropriate to the general interest of the country, it must prove from today this ability of its own ..." 45

In other words, the hegemony of the working class must be established before the socialist transformation. But what kind of hegemony would that be? Is it really the intention of the communist party to fight in order to inculcate into the attitude of the allied forces its own philosophy, the philosophy of the working class, or even to insist on the recognition of its leading role in the alliance? This is apparently the assumption, judging by the previous quotation, and should not have meant otherwise when speaking of the hegemony of the working class. Eurocommunists, however, would not quite agree with such an interpretation; their contention is that both the breadth of the alliance itself and the strategic aim of the movement (the democratic road) could not possibly permit the imposition of the idea that the working class is the guiding force of the alliance and of the fundamental changes to come. The proletarian philosophy, therefore, as defined by classical Marxism, assumes a peculiar definition in eurocommunism, and compromises itself with elements of the philosophy of the other progressive and democratic forces of society. Berlinguer himself gives us an indication of this innovation which also tells us something of the role of the working class in the context of the eurocommunist transition:

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45. Berlinguer, "Classe Operaia e Blocco Sociale," La "Questione Comunista," Vol. I., p. 266.

"Il secondo principio a cui noi ispiriamo è che la politica e la lotta della classe operaia, in quanto classe che vuole affermare una propria egemonia verso gli altri strati e ceti sociali e sull'intera vita del paese, devono avere il più ampio respiro popolare e nazionale, devono avere un contenuto positivo, un carattere costruttivo. Se, come noi crediamo, la classe operaia è la forza che storicamente è in grado più di ogni altra di indicare e, al tempo stesso, di far avanzare le soluzioni più corrispondenti agli interessi generali del paese, essa deve dare prova già oggi di questa sua capacità ..."

The first (problem) is to conquer the approval of the great masses, the majority of the people, to a political programme which follows the direction we indicate, and to an organisation of struggle which will put to effect such a programme and which will smash the resistance of the privileged classes. The second problem is to give to this programme and to our perspective the force of conquest and attraction of a great ideal, to make it in other words a "mass ideology."  
(Emphasis supplied). 46

Like all other eurocommunist parties, the PCI, in its own way, no longer insists on the specificity of the role of the working class in the socialist transformation. On the one hand, it insists on the hegemony of the working class and, on the other, it cannot see the transition to socialism without the participation of the parties of the "constitutional arch" and the forces they represent and which are viewed by the PCI as agents of radical change. That this definition of the role of the working class and its party is in absolute consistency with the style and the objectives of the movement has been summed up in the following lines by the Yugoslav professor, Branko Pribicevic:

The new strategy for socialist transformation entails certain changes in the structure, role and mode of action of eurocommunist parties. Parties which want existing society, and especially other democratic forces to become open towards them must themselves become much more open towards society and towards their present or potential partners. Parties which hold that socialism can be realised only by the stable support of a convincing majority must equip themselves to win such a majority. Parties which assert that the social transformation

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46. From Berlinguer's speech in the meeting of the CC and CCC, 14.01.1970, where he speaks of the new historical coalition. (Sorge a questo punto un duplice problema: il primo è quello della conquista dell'adesione delle grandi masse, della maggioranza del popolo, a un programma politico che vada nella direzione che noi indichiamo, e della organizzazione della lotta necessaria per attuare tale programma e per spezzare le resistenze dei ceti privilegiati. Il secondo problema è di dare a quel programma ed alla prospettiva che noi indichiamo la forza di conquista e di attrazione di un grande ideale, di farli divenire, cioè, una 'ideologia di massa'. From "Un partito comunista rinnovato e rafforzato per le esigenze nuove della società Italiana," in Berlinguer's La "Questione Comunista," Vol. I, p. 102.

presupposes broad and stable political alliances must adapt their policy and mode of action to the establishing of such alliances. 47

The French party has also made a more than slight alteration in the definition of its role during the years of the Common Programme. In 1972 the PCF was still the "revolutionary party of the working class" which, as a consequence of its doctrine and its methods of struggle and organisation, was destined to play the "rôle d'avant-garde de l'union populaire."<sup>48</sup>

But that was 1972. At its 22nd Congress, in 1976, while preparing for the elections of 1978 and as a consequence of the necessity to adapt itself to the exigencies of a broader alliance -- and probably also to appease the main partner of the Common Programme, the Socialist Party -- the PCF presented a new definition of its role. It was no longer the leading force of the alliance but the party that was going to exercise the "leading influence" (influence dirigeante)<sup>49</sup> on the alliance.

The idea is no less developed among Spanish eurocommunists, but the conception of the role of the party and the class in this case is, naturally, much closer to that of the PCI. For Azcarate, one of the ideologues of the PCE, the question of the party's leading role has been solved. Simply, such a role does not exist anymore: "We are trying" -- he says -- "to create a party of a new type, a mass party, a democratic party, able to convince and therefore be a protagonist in a democratic alliance to

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47. "Eurocommunism and the New Party," Kindersley (ed.) In Search of Eurocommunism, p. 163.

48. George Marchais, in the Introduction to Programme Commune du Gouvernement (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1972), p. 39.

49. George Marchais in his Report to the 22nd Congress, in Cahiers du Communisme (Fevrier-Mars, 1976), p. 60-61.

socialism: a protagonist together with other protagonists."<sup>50</sup> Carrillo's contribution is much more interesting, yet a bit complicated and to a certain extent confusing. The question here is whose hegemony are we concerned with, a problem which does not seem to be very clear in his writings, and if it is, then it is not the hegemony of the working class. Indeed, one gets the impression that Carrillo, supposedly a Gramscian on the question of hegemony, is somehow missing the point. It is not the working class that struggles for hegemonic recognition but the entire alliance -- all individual groups that compose it. "The problem" -- he says -- "that we must tackle is, in substance, the struggle to win positions ... in what are today the ideological apparatuses of society. This does not mean winning these positions for one party, but for all revolutionary and progressive forces ..."<sup>51</sup> And, on another occasion: "The idea of the new political formation is linked with that of the hegemony of the bloc of the forces of labour and culture in society."<sup>52</sup> (What would be the difference between these "forces" and the working class?). Still, this conception of his becomes more clear when he narrows the question down to the role of the communist party:

In this order of things, the role which we communists used to attribute to the party in other periods as the instrument of the hegemony of the working people in society would correspond today, in the theoretical sense, to what we have called the new political formation. 53

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50. Manuel Azcarate, "The Present State of Eurocommunism," Kindersley, In Search of Eurocommunism, p. 32.

51. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 44.

52: Ibid., p. 102.

53. Ibid., p. 101.

Even without these discrepancies, however, the problem of hegemony before the transition to socialism remains a complicated one and needs further discussion. There, indeed, are aspects of it which do not come out very clearly in the eurocommunist texts. In the first place, there must be some difference between hegemony before the revolution in the classical or even the Gramscian sense and hegemony before the democratic transition. In the second instance, and because of the broad character of the alliance, what will be accepted from the philosophy of the working class will be but whatever can be included in a programme of limited objectives based on the needs and interests of the entire coalition including the non-monopoly section of the capitalist class. In this case, it will be everyone's programme, everyone's philosophy, and the hegemonic position of the working class along with its historic mission and the leading position of the CP are somehow placed in doubt. And it must be presumed that Carrillo's failure to grasp the essence of the hegemony problematic, in classical Marxist terms, led him nonetheless (and perhaps without even being aware of the repercussions) to correct conclusions in the context of eurocommunism: it will be everyone's hegemony.

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The eurocommunist party has indeed been transformed into a "new" party in a variety of ways. The most conspicuous and undoubtedly the most important of its features which has been dropped, as a consequence of the new strategy, is its role as the avant-gard section of the working class, defined as far back as 1848 with the publication of The Communist Manifesto. This role of the CP is to be shared with other -- not necessarily working

class -- parties which for some eurocommunist leaders have the same protagonistic mission with regard to the emancipation of the proletariat as that of the CP itself. Remaining consistent with this change in the basic attributes of the party, its theoretical principles in a more general sense have also suffered an equally serious depreciation. Berlinguer's "mass ideology" and Carrillo's hegemony for the entire bloc of alliance, and even Marchais' restriction of the party's role to the "guiding influence," may sound appropriate for cementing together the various elements of a broad coalition (which is also doubtful), but the distance between these novelties and the real proletarian approach to the socialist transition is remarkable. The ideology and the practical policies of the eurocommunist party are based on the fundamental premise that the democratic, parliamentary road has become possible in the economically developed societies. In its turn, this has led to the broad alliance concept which, together with that fundamental premise, have conditioned the character, the style of action and even the organisational features of the party. The existence of identifiable minorities and even factions (in some of them) has undoubtedly affected the ideological discipline of the eurocommunist parties, although most of them, for reasons of survival, have managed to resist this tendency. Within the PCI, after the retreat of the Igraini, the overture to democracy was mainly confined to public "confrontations" (by way of articles) between mainly members of the higher echelons of the party, e.g. between Amendola and Berlinguer on trade union policies. The occasional rebellions of the PCF's philosophes did not produce any schism in the party, and their angry reactions to the abolition of the dictatorship of the proletariat did not affect its unity. Besides, the PCF has for some time now accorded this kind of members' special privileges with regard to freedom of expression

and as long as the unity of the party is not threatened. Jean Ellenstein's determination to go beyond these limits (with his insistence for more democratisation and more eurocommunism) ended up in his expulsion. Where the practice of democratic centralism was effectively dropped was in the Greek Interior, where the various tendencies that compose it retain their autonomy and majority decisions, if not taken unanimously, are not binding. The novelty assumed ludicrous proportions at the last Congress of that party (1982) which ended without taking any resolutions on important issues because none of the proposed resolutions received the unanimous support of the factions.

Generally speaking, the "liberalisation" process and the professed "openness" in the recruitment of members so far has not created serious problems for the internal functioning and discipline of, at least, the major eurocommunist parties. It did not take much time for their, otherwise experienced, leaderships to foresee the catastrophic consequences of this tendency. Even bourgeois parties are kept together by some sort of democratic centralism which is often more "authoritarian" than that of the CPs. But this does not mean that all the efforts so far made to democratise these parties and correct the abuses of democratic centralism has not affected their ideological discipline, especially if we consider the fact that, objectively speaking, this latter element can no longer exist after the acceptance of the democratic road. This type of transition -- if there is such a thing -- does not really require the traditional communist party, even one which respects the rules of democratic centralism. Eurocommunists do not insist very much on the specificity of the party. The latter has no special tasks to perform in the process of transition (i.e., creation of a



new state or economic reconstruction). It has no reasons, therefore, to have substantially different characteristics compared to other parties, which supposedly have similar aims.

Eurocommunist parties (with the exception of the Interior), however, still insist on maintaining the principle of democratic centralism, and despite all the debate on the subject there is nothing in their analyses to indicate the opposite. What they actually did was not to re-examine but to clarify the Leninist position. In the judgement of the PCI "the Leninist principle of democratic centralism is something different from monolithism."<sup>54</sup> In the Twelfth Congress of the PCI (1969), Luigi Longo declared that "there is absolutely no contradiction between full freedom of debate and decision, even by majority rule, on the one hand, and unity and discipline in action, which is essential for a fighting, mass revolutionary party such as ours, on the other." Yet, he continued: "we have no intention of reducing our party to the level of these parties where democracy has degenerated into power struggles between factions."<sup>55</sup> Some time later in the same year, the Manifesto group was expelled from the party. The PCF has also declared at its Sixteenth Congress that it "could not tolerate a double leadership without harming the party and the workers and democratic movement in general."<sup>56</sup> Finally, the PCE has made it clear, ever since its legalisation, that there could not be more than one line in its policies.<sup>57</sup> This did not

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54. "Order of the Day Approved by the CC of the PCI, 1965." Lange, The Communist Parties, p. 168.

55. "Luigi Longo's Report to the Twelfth Congress of the PCI, February 1969." Ibid., p. 169.

56. "Political Resolution to the Sixteenth Congress of the PCF, May 1961," Ibid., p. 177.

57. Carrillo, "Genuine Democratisation of Society and Its Institutions," Marxism Today (October 1977), p. 309.

prevent, however, leading members of the semi-autonomous Catalan party (section of the PCE) to air publically their disagreements on Carrillo's eurocommunism.<sup>58</sup>

Naturally, eurocommunist parties -- like all communist parties of our time -- are no longer organisations of professional revolutionaries in which the so-called military discipline required in the epoch of their illegality could constitute an obstacle to their "openess" in one sense or another. None of today's communist parties oppose the idea of becoming a "mass" party even with the inclusion of religious members in their ranks. The idea, therefore, of the "new," "mass" party that goes back to Togliatti in the last years of the War is no longer uniquely eurocommunist. And if -- due to their historical importance -- the PCI and the PCF have been known as the great communist parties of the West, one should not ignore the fact that the party of Cyprus (AKEL) can still claim the lead in terms of percentage of the popular vote (over 40%), without even being a "eurocommunist" one. Still, the question is whether the desire to create a mass party is to use it for electoral gains or for the purpose that this type of party had been conceived for.

What is most curious about this doctrine in its totality (which is behind the new definition of the party) is the fact that the actual state of social relations is not given a serious consideration. It is not that eurocommunists have ceased explaining the conditions of the class on the basis of the contradictions of the system, but their observations on the present

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58. For some details on how the process of democratisation manifested itself publically in the various eurocommunist parties, see Marzani's The Promise of Eurocommunism, pp. 45-58.

state of capitalism are not reflected in their theoretical conception of the struggle for socialism. Hence, the absence of a concrete and persuasive interpretation of the alliance policies and of the tasks of the party in terms of class relations and of the existing class antagonisms in those societies which eurocommunists want to change. This attitude permeates all aspects of the theory as we will have the opportunity to see in our analysis of the state and the various problems of transition. Whatever exists in the body of classical Marxism from the Manuscripts of 1844 down to Capital and the Theories of Surplus Value, where Marx's interpretation of the capitalist mode of production takes shape, and which provide the sub-structure to the theory of class struggle and of the socialist transition, seems not to have much relevance for the democratic road. Equally so, the theory of the party in relation to the working class as a historical agent and to the other classes, as concretized in the experience of the Communist League and the three Internationals, has also been discarded by eurocommunism.

As a result of new historical conditions, eurocommunists felt obliged to drop Lenin in favour of Marx.<sup>59</sup> We do not underestimate the differences that exist between the two thinkers. The first had to apply certain concepts of the Marxist doctrine, in a concrete revolutionary situation and in a non-western country, which had not been adequately developed by its

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59. In its 9th Congress, held in 1978 the PCE became a "Marxist, democratic and revolutionary party, inspired by these theories of social development elaborated by the founders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels." Lenin is mentioned later on in the text of the resolution but only to be used whenever his ideas are considered valid. José-Rodríguez Ibanéz, "Spanish Communism in Transition," in Carl Boggs and David Plotke (eds.), The Politics of Eurocommunism (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980), p. 87.

founder (or founders, if we include Engels) and which consequently assumed the stamp of his own personality. In fairness to historical truth, however, this distinction cannot be carried very far. It does not take a communist to see that Marx was not just a man of good intention and a great thinker who participated in failed revolutions only to be praised posthumously, by the class enemy, for his idealism. Neither can one blame Lenin for having directed a successful revolution where the place of the ideal was taken by the brutality of class struggle and organised violence and where an ideologically disciplined party insisted on playing the role of the protagonist. Certainly, we are not in a position to know precisely what Marx would have done in Lenin's situation; we do, however, know enough about his ideas on the proletarian party.

We are obviously dealing here with a very broad question which relates itself not only to working out tactics for preparing the road to socialism, but also, and above all, to the process of transition itself. At this point, therefore, we will concentrate exclusively on the party's specific functions as the organiser of the struggles of the working class and as articulator of its ideology vis-à-vis the other classes. This is the subject of the remaining part of this chapter which will elucidate the classical position on this matter. Other aspects of the problem will be dealt with in the succeeding two chapters of the present study.

## 2. The Party as an Instrument of Class Struggle: The Classical Position

In a letter sent by Engels to Gerson Trier, in 1889, we find the following general remarks on the character of the proletarian party, as well as of the history of the idea:

... The proletariat cannot conquer political power, the only door to the new society, without violent revolution. For the proletariat to be strong enough to win on the decisive day it must -- and Marx and I have advocated this ever since 1847 -- form a separate party distinct from all others and opposed to them, a conscious class party. 60

Engels dates here the origins of the party idea in 1847, at about the time he and Marx joined the League of the Just. Although both of them had been occupied with this subject a few years before this date\*, we may still agree with Engels that it was only with their adherence to the League that their basic understanding of the role and character of the proletarian party and its necessity for the emancipation of the working class was finally crystallized. It is an indisputable fact now that this short-lived organization (under its new name, the Communist League) was able, through Marx's and Engels' intervention, to turn itself into the first genuine class instrument of the proletariat in the history of the movement -- an organization which in more than one respect anticipated the basic features of the modern proletarian party. But what is significant in this letter, which embodies the experience not only of the Communist League but also of the First International, is not simply the recognition of the necessity for a proletarian party as the collective defender of the interests of the workers in capitalist society, but of a party which, besides this

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60. Engels to Gerson Trier, December 18, 1889, Correspondence, p. 386.

\* See a few pages later in this section.

function and apart from being independent of all others, is opposed to them in a very significant respect. While in one sense it resembles all others, since all parties represent class interests, its ultimate aim and the principal reason for its creation is the abolition of the existing class relations and the liberation of the working class from the wages-system.

Naturally, from 1847 to 1889 there is a lengthy stretch of time, and what Engels thought or wrote of the party at the close of this period does not necessarily (and cannot in fact) express what he and Marx knew of it in the former. In this period of more than forty years many things had changed in the steadily rising capitalist universe. The European and American proletariat had been formed, and the heroic age of its childhood was over. By the close of the century working class parties had appeared in many parts of the "civilized" world. The problems of the modern revolutionary movement, some of which are still extant, had already made their presence felt. Yet, as interesting as this phase of the history of the socialist movement may be, it is also remote from the time the party concept first took roots. For this we must look back to 1847, and in some respects much earlier.

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#### I. The Pre-history of the Idea

Parties, in their broad sense, as defensive and often offensive organisations representing specific interests in class societies appeared well before Marx's and Engels' time. Leaving aside the experience of antiquity, it was only with the breakdown of the feudal organisation of society and the emergence of private property (in the real sense of the term), that parties -- other than court parties, led by members of the royal family,

mistresses or courtesans, which had been in existence for some time -- began to play a part in the political developments of certain European countries: first, as "religious" partisan movements, and then, in the form of more articulate organisations with better defined and secularised aims. The most important events in the history of the rise of modern political parties were the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the great French revolution of 1789. The collapse of the "organic unity" of traditional society, a unity enforced by a social hierarchy based on privilege and superimposed by a variety of other circumstances, had called forth the creation of political organisations which fought for the defence and advancement of particular (class) interests. Though it was only the bourgeoisie and the land-owning classes that dominated the political scene during, and for a long time after, these revolutions, the lower classes had in no way been politically inactive. From the Levellers and the Diggers down to the Sans-Culottes, Babouvists and Blanquists, the political traditions of the underdog are both colourful in inventiveness of action and diversified in forms of organisation. While a distinction between parties and movements should always be kept in mind -- since the latter, lacking ideological coherence, are only fighting to influence the course of events, not to conquer political power, except when led by political parties\* -- it is in this tradition that we may find the origins of popular political action. Yet, even if we decide to look at some of these plebeian organisations of the past as having

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\* The expression "movement" will be used, however, throughout this study in a looser sense to indicate broader philosophical and political categories whenever reference is not made to specific organisations, e.g., the communist movement, to mean the communist parties in general or a certain kind of them (e.g., the eurocommunist movement).

a resemblance to parties, such parties both ideologically and in terms of organisation were still in a rudimentary state. It is equally pertinent in this context to recognise that very few of these "parties" could claim to have a direct relation to the working class. The situation was no better in this respect with regard to protest movements by even "lower sets of people," in which the social composition was still mixed and the issues of ideology, organisation and leadership were much less developed, as George Rudé has shown in his masterly studies of the "pre-industrial" crowd.<sup>61</sup> Still, this was the only available experience for the proletariat in 1848, besides what the bourgeoisie itself had bequeathed the revolutionary movement with its own models of organisation and political action.

As easy as it is today to speak of the character and the structural features of the proletarian party, to penetrate to the core of the subject, at a time when the working class was not even made yet, was extremely difficult. The problem did not simply center upon how to bring together a number of like-minded individuals and rally more of them under the banner of the new cause: the real dilemma was what one does with these people once they get together, and how their collective energy can be effectively used for the fulfilment of a purpose which was still unclear to the masses. The synthetic features of the proletarian party could not be discovered in the available experience of the political traditions of the bourgeoisie or of the plebeian movements of the past, much less so in the nascent working class economic organisations. Gramsci was correct in observing that Marx's "historical experiences" on this matter were restricted to these rather insufficient models produced by the European, and especially the French, radical tradition:

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61. See, among his numerous works and articles on this subject, Paris and London in the 18th Century (London: Collins, 1970), particularly Part One; and The Crowd in the French Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), particularly Part III, "The Anatomy of the Revolutionary Crowd."



Marx's concept of organization remains entangled amid the following elements: craft organisation, Jacobin clubs; secret conspiracies of small groups, journalistic organization. The French Revolution offered two prevalent types. There were the "clubs" -- loose organisations of the "popular assembly" type, centralized around individual political figures. Each had its newspaper, by means of which it kept alive the attention and interest of a particular clientele that had no fixed boundaries .... Certainly, among those who frequented the clubs, there must have existed tight, secret groupings of people who knew each other, who met separately and prepared the climate of the meeting, .... The secret conspiracies, which subsequently spread so widely in Italy prior to 1848, must have developed in France after the Thermidor among the second-rank followers of Jacobinism .... 62

This may be correct as far as the available experience is concerned; yet judging by the originality of the Communist League in working out new organisational structures and new forms of action -- elements that eventually evolved into basic features of the proletarian party -- it seems that neither Marx and Engels nor, to a certain extent, the other leading members of this organisation relied too much on this experience. On the other hand, it is clear that up to this time both Marx and Engels, while they were speaking of the "party," fighting for its protection from fake revolutionaries, and defending its ideological purity, had not yet developed the party concept. What we find in their early writings with regard to the "communist party" is only the idea of spreading the new doctrine and mobilizing as many believers as possible under the supposedly existing banner, but the idea itself lacks a clear content. Beyond the fact that parties are groups of like-minded individuals, supporting the workers' cause, the term is used quite flexibly and often fails to give a concrete meaning. While there is nothing ambiguous in their writings on the Chartist party, as far as their comments go, when we come across their references to continental "communist

parties," things are not too clear. "The correspondent of the Times," wrote Engels, "begins by describing the Communist party as very weak in France, and doubts whether the insurrection of 1839, in Paris, was got up by them ...."<sup>63</sup> This was an apparent reference to the 1839 revolt led by the Société des Saisons of Auguste Blanqui and Armand Barbès. No distinction was made, however, between Blanqui's brand of communism and the one propounded by Marx and Engels; likewise no mention was made of the former's conspiratorial tactics which were later renounced. The word "communist," says the German Ideology, "means the follower of a definite revolutionary party,"<sup>64</sup> but while there were communists at the time in Germany, no such party was in existence. In an article written by Engels in the beginning of 1847, he accused the "soi-disant communist writers" of being "in no way representative of the Party of the German communists. They are neither recognized by the party as its literary representatives nor do they represent its interests."<sup>65</sup> This may sound pretty modern in language and spirit, but the party Engels referred to was either the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee, founded by him and Marx in 1846 or (most probably) the German communists in general. In mid-1847 they joined the League, the only revolutionary organisation of the time which, under their guidance, was able to transcend its conspiratorial character and become a vehicle of international communism.

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63. Engels, "The Times on German Communism," letter to the New Moral World, January 20, 1844, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 410.

64. Marx/Engels, The Germany Ideology, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 5, p. 57.

65. Engels, "The Constitutional Question in Germany," Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 75.

And it was, evidently, with this in mind that Marx wrote in September of the same year that the proletariat in Germany "is more and more adhering to the Communist party."<sup>66</sup>

While both Marx and Engels spoke of "communist" and working class parties, which according to their writings of the period existed in many parts of Europe, but especially in Germany and France, this does not mean that they were not aware of the fact that these organisations or groups did not yet deserve this title. What is to be clarified here is that the term "party" was still used in a very loose context, and it had not yet acquired the meaning that eventually it did after their adherence to the Communist League. A party, in any sense acceptable to them, at the time, had not yet appeared, as the following statement written in the beginning of 1847 suggested: "A memorandum could only be effective if there existed in Germany a strong and organised Communist Party, but neither is the case."<sup>67</sup> The same message was conveyed in one of Engels' articles, written also in the same period: the Communist Party in Germany "must clarify for itself its position, its plan of campaign, its means of action, and the first step to do this is to disavow the reactionary socialists who try to insinuate themselves among the Communists."<sup>68</sup> And, as to the Chartists, he wrote in his Principles of Communism, that they "are incalculably nearer the Communists," i.e., not really a working class party with a definite stand

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66. Marx, "The Communism of the Reinischer Beobachter," Ibid., p. 225.

67. Marx/Engels, "Letter from the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee to G. A. Kottgen," M/E Collected Works, Vol. 6, pp. 55.

68. Engels, "The Constitutional Question in Germany," Ibid., p. 78.

on the class question as Marx and Engels expected it to be.<sup>69</sup> But what was still missing, as far as Marx and Engels were concerned, was not the philosophy of the movement, but the definite form of a class organisation capable of carrying out the aims of this movement.

With their adherence to the League, its subsequent reorganisation, and the writing of the Manifesto, the party theory began to take its shape, by first establishing the aims of the proletarian movement. As the preface of this classic document of communism reads,

It is high time that Communists should, in the face of the world, publish their views, their tendencies, and meet this nursery-tale of the spectre of communism with a Manifesto of the party itself. 70

It clearly is a declaration of principles which also emphasizes the necessity that communists should appear as an organised political force of its own. As a program of the "communist Party," and the document that publishes its ideological positions, it does not deal extensively with the character of the party itself. Undoubtedly, it contains many hints on the party's role, i.e., the role of communists, but beyond that the document itself is not particularly enlightening on the various aspects of the party as a fighting instrument of the class and a living organism in capitalist society. Since the Manifesto was written for a specific purpose, a great part of what we are looking for is not to be found in it but instead, in the other documents of the League that deal with problems of organisation side by side with the question of ideology. It is in these

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69. Engels, "The Constitutional Question in Germany," Ibid., p. 78.

70. Marx/Engels, The Communist Manifesto, Ibid., p. 481.

documents that we find out how the "party" was first organised. It is indeed important to start with the League since its experience as the first truly communist organisation (despite its internal problems, deviations, immaturity and idealism) left a tradition which first passed to the First International, and then to the proletarian parties.

## II. The Experience of the League

Any study of the history of this kind of party requires the consideration of a number of factors which have, in one way or another, come to determine its characteristic features in the period of its full development. Given the historical evolution of the proletarian party and the specific problems that communists have been confronted with ever since the Communist League, I believe that these factors, which will require our attention from now on and which also have a direct or indirect relevance to the eurocommunist experience, may be summed up in the following headings: 1) the norms related to the collective action of the party (which includes, among other issues, the membership rules and the theme of "democratic centralism"); 2) the specificity of its character as a proletarian party; 3) its principal function and objectives; 4) the problem of ideological uniformity; 5) the forms of its struggles; 6) the party and the class as a whole, and the party in relation to the economic organisations of the class (the distinction in both cases is essential); 7) the party and other parties and classes, mainly with regard to the question of alliances either for limited objectives or for the struggle for socialism; 8) nationalism and internationalism and the nationally-based working class party; 9) social composition of the party and the inclusion in it of non-proletarian elements; and, 10) the fundamental functions of the party as organiser and

articulator of the proletarian philosophy for the development of the consciousness of the class itself with regard to its conditions of existence and in contradistinction to the philosophy (and the interests) of other classes.

All of these concepts undoubtedly are not to be found in the experience of the League, some of them not even implicitly. Yet, many of them are, and with all others which surfaced in the subsequent history of the socialist movement, will constitute our subject in the remaining part of this chapter. They are associated with the formative period of the political organisation of labour and the rise of the first real working class parties. In a very significant respect, they make up the background of the Communist party, its most valuable source of experience. The party of the "new type" was not as new as it has, customarily, been seen. Its novelty, in the most basic sense, did not so much consist in new discoveries as it did in improving the old ones, literally raising them to the level of principles.

In dealing with the Communist League, it has to be emphasised from the outset that we are faced with an international organisation, not a nationally-based party. Connected to this, two other things have to be noted at this point: first, that Marx's and Engels' conception of the revolutionary movement was that it had to be one of international character, since this was seen as the only way of bringing about the downfall of capitalism; and second, despite their insistence on the international organisation of the movement (which stemmed from their firm belief that communism cannot be established without abolishing capitalism in the major "civilized" countries), they held that nationally-based parties were as

requisite as the organisation of the revolutionary proletarians and the working class in general were on an international scale. "This appropriation" (of the productive forces) "must have a universal character ... It can only be effected through a union, which by the character of the proletariat itself can again only be a universal one. ..." <sup>71</sup> This did not, however, prevent them from speaking, at the same time, of national communist parties. In the Communist Manifesto the necessity of the existence of such a party is emphasized side by side with internationalism. Nevertheless, at the time of the League, and for a long period afterwards, such a possibility was still remote. Neither the proletariat itself was mature enough, nor the communist revolutionaries of the other classes were prepared, to put forward such an idea. Even the League itself, as an international organisation, acquired its importance only after Marx and Engels joined it. Still, one should not overlook the fact that as a working class revolutionary organisation, it was only so in name. The great majority of its membership derived its strength from the ranks of craftsmen and artisans: tailors, carpenters, cabinet-makers, etc. As Engels himself stated: "The nucleus of the League was composed of tailors ... the members, insofar as they were workers at all, were almost exclusively artisans." <sup>72</sup> The League, as have been other political organisations, was "open" to all and not restricted to the working class alone. It was only much

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71. Marx/Engels, The German Ideology, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 5, pp. 87-88.

72. Engels' "Account of the Communist League," in Dirk Struik's The Birth of the Communist Manifesto, p. 153.

later that Marx and Engels insisted on strengthening the proletarian element in political organisations, without, however, rejecting the principle of openness.

In its surviving official literature we obtain an idea of the ideological principles and organisational structures of the League: the Draft Rules, drawn up in June 1847; the Rules in their final form, as adopted at its second Congress in autumn 1847; and the revised Rules of 1850. None of these three documents was prepared by Marx and Engels, but their influence is present in all of them, especially the last one whose language and content, particularly of the preamble in which the aims of the League are stated, is borrowed from the Manifesto. Besides these, there exist the addresses and circulars of the League, some of which were written by Marx and Engels. It is in these documents, and in the Manifesto, that we can find out how some of the basic principles of the proletarian party were presented in their original form. Ideology, still (and for a long time afterwards) the foremost question of the movement, had to be placed on the agenda from the outset. It is worth noting, however, that contrary to the experience of the First International and of the parties of the Second, the League took very little time to formulate the fundamentals of its outlook:

The League aims at the emancipation of humanity by spreading the theory of the community of property and its speediest possible practical introduction. 73

This is Article One of the Draft Rules, as prepared in its first Congress. In their approved version, the educational and quasi-humanistic tone is

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73. "Rules of the Communist League" (Draft), Marx/Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 585.



given less emphasis, and the aim of the League becomes more concrete and more class-oriented: "the overthrow of the bourgeois society, the rule of the proletariat .... and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property."<sup>74</sup> As well, in the new Rules of 1850, the whole article is further worked out and rewritten in line with The Communist Manifesto and the experience of the 1848 revolutions.

The aim of the League is to bring about the destruction of the old society -- and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie -- the spiritual, political and economic emancipation of the proletariat, the communist revolution, using all the resources of propaganda and political struggle towards this goal. In the various stages of development through which the struggle of the proletariat has to pass, the League shall represent at all times the interests of the movement as a whole, just as it shall seek at all times to unite and organise all the revolutionary forces of the proletariat within itself; as long as the proletarian revolution has not attained its final goal the League shall remain secret and indissoluble. 75

Here ideology seems to be cleared of the old and confused elements of continental "communism"; but one should not deceive oneself about the proliferation and acceptance of Marxism at the time. "Overthrow of the bourgeoisie," "emancipation of the proletariat," and "communist revolution" were notions whose content was not, for a long time to come, adequately clear in the minds of many nineteenth century revolutionaries -- including close associates of Marx and Engels.<sup>76</sup> Whatever the theoretical

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74. "Rules of the Communist League" (adopted version 1847), M/E Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 634.

75. "Rules of the Communist League" (revised, 1850), Ibid., Vol. 10, p. 634.

76. Perry Anderson's statement that "no contemporary of any nationality can be said to have fully understood or shared their "(Marx's and Engels') mature views" may be absolutely right. Considerations on Western Marxism, (London: NLB, 1976), p. 2.

abilities of the League members might have been, the fact is that Marxism had supplied the guiding principles to the only really socialist and revolutionary organisation of the time, and this was sufficient for this phase of the movement.

The League's aims also provide us with an idea of the original conception of the relations between party and class, and the functions of the former in the proletarian revolution. As in The Communist Manifesto, the party figures as the advanced guard of the class which represents the "interests of the movement as a whole," i.e., its long-term objectives, which must be pursued in all stages of the development of the struggle and apart from the specific problems of the movement in individual countries. This is the party's struggle for socialism; yet, it is not its only struggle. As the Manifesto had already declared, "The communists fight" (also) "for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class,"<sup>77</sup> This is their struggle for democracy, for the enhancement of political liberties, the vindication of the immediate demands of the workers, the liberation of the oppressed nationalities. Thus, the democratic struggles of the communists go hand-in-hand with their struggles for socialism, just as their national struggles are part of the international revolutionary movement.

The leading role of the communists in the proletarian movement raises the question of who should be admitted to the party. Although members are supposed to be more enlightened than the rest of the working class, the membership clauses of the Rules require that they only accept the

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77. Marx/Engels, The Communist Manifesto, Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 518.

principles of communism,<sup>78</sup> and, according to the revised Rules of 1850, "abide unconditionally by the decisions of the League."<sup>79</sup> It is, also, in the latter version of the Rules that admission becomes different and candidates for membership are required to "understand the conditions, the course of development and the ultimate goal of the proletarian movement."<sup>80</sup> The improvement seems to have been made by the Cologne Central Authority (the Executive of the League that revised the Rules -- Marx and Engels were in England at the time) in order to harmonize it with the spirit of the Manifesto. The latter states that communists "have the advantage over the great mass of the proletariat of clearly understanding the line of march,"<sup>81</sup> but the Central Authority, apparently, failed to distinguish between the communists which the Manifesto refers to (i.e., party communists) and those who might be invited to join it but had not yet developed this understanding. This stringency has never been taken seriously by communist parties. The Rules also had provided that members should belong to a League organisation (a "Community"), and work for the realisation of its aims and resolutions. Each member was further obliged to make regular contributions for the purpose of covering the financial needs of the movement. Despite its immaturity and the various problems it was bound to face as a pioneering organisation, it is obvious that the League had, more

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78. "Rules" (draft), Article 3, Ibid., p. 585; and adopted "Rules," Article 2, Ibid., p. 633.

79. "Rules" (revised), Ibid., Vol. 10, p. 634.

80. Ibid., p. 634.

81. Manifesto, Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 697.

or less, set the bases for the definition of membership. Needless to say, members refusing to comply with the above conditions were, according to the Rules, expelled from the League.

Questions concerning the League's philosophical principles, its tactics in the various countries, as well as the rules regarding membership obligations, were decided upon by its annual Congress, its highest body, and were binding on all members of all nationalities, including its Central Authority, and all of its inferior organs. The question, however, of democratic centralism as such, though part of its constituted organisational practices, had never seriously occupied the League. This was a concrete problem which arose later, in the period of the First International, when it became part of its debates after 1870.

The League has not left us an important tradition on the relations between party and the other working class organisations such as labour unions, although it did deal (especially in the Manifesto) with its relations to other proletarian and progressive parties. As a revolutionary organisation that had just recently emerged from secrecy, and given the state of the economic organisation of the proletariat at that time, it could not have developed this concept beyond what the Manifesto itself suggests with regard to the relationship between the party and the class as a whole, i.e., the former being responsible for the "formation of the proletariat into a class" -- a role that the League had already assumed in the various countries, particularly in Germany during the revolutions. It was taken for granted that communists should be leading the struggles of the class, both economic and political.

In the Communist Manifesto the relationship between the Communist party and other proletarian parties is defined as being more or less the same as

that between the Communist party and the class as a whole, the former being ideologically the most advanced and consciously the most determined section of the proletariat. "Other proletarian parties," however, are recognised as having the same basic objectives as that of the Communist party: "formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat."<sup>82</sup> The question here is whether the recognition of more than one proletarian party, genuinely representing the interests of the class, is to be seen as part of the Marxist tradition. It is apparent in what was said above that the Communist party is given a prominent position in the working class movement and a special mission in the transformation of capitalist society. It is the party that "pushes forward all others" -- i.e., all other working class parties, outside the Communist, which also represent the interests of the class. It is difficult to answer this question on the basis of what the Manifesto has to say on this matter. The Communist League proclaimed these principles at a time when nationally-based communist parties did not exist in the real sense of the word, or as Marx and Engels expected them to be. The League itself was not an international association of parties (but of communists), and its "leading circles" or "districts" (bodies representing the "communities" of a certain province or country)\* likewise cannot be seen as such. Despite its declared aim to overthrow bourgeois society, the League's mission as an international body was bound to be one of ideological guidance to the proletariat of each country. It was the latter that was burdened with the task to "settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."<sup>83</sup> As for how this was to be effected, i.e., what form or organisation was required to play the leading part, and what its relations would be to the

82. Manifesto, Ibid, p. 498

83. Ibid, p. 495. \* A "circle" comprised between two and ten "communities." A community was the basic organisational unit of the League.

various existing proletarian parties, there is no specific provision made by any of the documents published by the League. It is apparent that this task falls on the nationally-based parties; but the question of such parties, whether communist or simply working class (whatever the latter means), was still premature in 1848. In the German revolution (of 1848), it was the League members of German origin who, under the guidance of the Central Authority, became active and tried to organise and lead the struggle of the workers although, admittedly, without success. Most of their energy was spent with the Democratic and Workers' Associations, and especially the District Committee of the Rhenish Democratic Association. The German revolution had at the outset been seen by Marx and Engels as a broadly democratic one; and it was only in the Spring of 1849 that they saw that the proletariat could perhaps play a more decisive role in the events to come. It was also during this time that Marx and many other League members broke away from the Democratic Associations in order to create a more homogeneous organisation; an organisation which may be seen both as a nationally-based working party and a continued section of the League. This organisation, besides adopting a different ideological outlook, was to alter the composition of its membership, as one can surmise from the statement Marx and his associates issued on their withdrawal:

We consider that the present organisation of the Democratic Associations includes too many heterogeneous elements for any possibility of successful activity in furtherance of the cause.

We are of the opinion, on the other hand, that a closer union of the Workers' Association is to be preferred since they consist of homogeneous elements, and therefore we hereby from today withdraw from the Rhenish District Committee of Democratic Associations. 84

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84. "Statement" by Fr. Anneke, K. Schapper, K. Marx, et al., made on the occasion of their withdrawal from the Democratic Associations, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 9, p. 282.

Outside of the conspiratorial political organisations of the Continent (such as the Blanquists), the Democratic movements and the Chartists in England, there was not much else of a specifically working-class nature in the Progressive movement of the time. The question of national working class parties emerged much later, in the last years of the First International, and to conclude on what Marx and Engels thought (or might have thought), in 1848, on the specificity of their role and on the question of which party really represents the working class, requires a great deal of caution. It is true that they had, always, displayed a certain leniency towards parties and working class, non-sectarian, organisations, even if their aims were limited and their outlook undeveloped (e.g., the Chartists). This may lead us to the conclusion that they would accept, on an equal footing, other proletarian parties, side by side with the Communist party, regardless of how advanced their ideology was or how many of them operated in the same country so long as their declared purpose was the emancipation of the workers. If this is correct, then, the following statement made by a modern analyst of Marxism is right:

The party as the single legitimate expression of the labour movement is an invention which postdates the Bolshevik Revolution. There is nothing in classical Marxism which stipulates such singularity. 85

The assertion of eurocommunists, therefore, that other parties have the same mission as that of the "proletarian," may also be correct in this sense, although, with the inclusion of non-proletarian parties, they have gone beyond this interpretation of the classical position. This may be true of working class organisations and national parties when such parties were still at a rudimentary form. The First International provides a good example of such

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85. Ralph Miliband, Marxism and Politics (Oxford: United Press, 1976), p. 125.

laxity displayed towards its member-organisations. But to assume from this that more than one party, i.e., more than one working class ideology, is really in accordance with Marx's and Engels' understanding of the movement would be a gross misinterpretation of the entire history of Marxism, and more specifically of the history of Marx's polemics against all "misleading" and "sectarian" trends from the Young Hegelians and "True Socialists" down to the Anarchists, Lassalleans and the "Zürichers." \* Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program, directed against a party whose conception of the movement was different from what it should have been, is a case in point. Parties have ideologies, and as long as this happens, the existence of more than one party claiming the complete emancipation of the working class in a given country is bound to lead to ideological clashes. The question of which one expresses the genuine interests of the class is unavoidable. And, apparently, the problem cannot be solved by simply postulating the heterogeneous composition of (especially) today's working class, thereby admitting plurality of representation at the political level. The pluralistic representation is a question that concerns the organisation of the class in the context of its economic struggles, not the political ones.

While the relation of the Communist party to other proletarian parties demonstrates a certain vagueness, its relation to other opposition parties is of a totally different nature. Here, it is clearly a matter of alliance with forces which are opposed to the existing order of things but are not aiming at fundamental social changes. It is a question mostly associated with the democratic struggles of the party. This is precisely the reason

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\* See later on in this Section.



why the Manifesto proposed that communists should support such parties on the Continent, as the "Social-Democrats" in France, the "Radicals" in Switzerland, and the agrarian revolutionaries in Poland. Here, also, the task of the communists is to push these parties forward:

... the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things. In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time. 86

Thus the struggle for the "immediate aims" of the proletariat or the "people" is connected with and becomes part of the "future" of the movement -- the final objectives of the communists.

It must be emphasized that a distinction should always be made between the various forms of alliances. There are alliances aiming at the solution of immediate concerns of the people (ranging from the passing of social and labour legislation to national liberation movements), and there are alliances for socialism. In the first instance, the ultimate goals of the party become relevant to the movement only in the general sense that the particular effort for the satisfaction of the immediate need may be seen as a moment in the on-going, multiform struggles of the party for the realisation of the ultimate aim. Indeed, there are cases (e.g., national liberation struggles) in which the connection between the two may become more intimate. Such alliances are normally based on a minimum programme of action and the party's stance, as a partner of the alliance, has to be adjusted accordingly. The preservation, however, of the distinct ideological character and of its autonomy of action requires that the party be able at all times to draw the distinction between the limited aims of the alliance and its own final aims. This becomes even more important when this

final aim has been placed on the agenda of the alliance. It was for this purpose that Marx and Engels sent the League members of Germany the following warning in view of what was thought at the time to be (early 1850) an imminent uprising in which the petty-bourgeoisie was expected to play an important role:

The relation of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty-bourgeois democrats is this: it marches together with them against the faction which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes them in everything whereby they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests. 87

In another message sent to the same League members three months later, Marx and Engels (again writing on behalf of the Central Authority of the League) repeated the same warning, only in this case in a more forceful manner, which also contained specific instructions as to who should be excluded from the alliance:

The workers' party can use other parties for its own purpose on occasions but must never subordinate itself to any other party. But those people who were in the government during the last movement and who used their position to betray the movement and to suppress the workers' party wherever it wanted to act independently must be kept at a distance under all circumstances. 88

Although Marx's warning must be placed in the context of a revolutionary situation and is restricted only to the petty-bourgeoisie, it still bears a certain relevance for today's alliances for socialism. One factor that should not evade our attention is that the petty-bourgeoisie about whom Marx and Engels were speaking was still a radical force at the time and,

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87. Marx/Engels, "Address of the Central Authority to the League," March, 1850, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 280.

88. Marx/Engels, "Address of the Central Authority to the League," June, 1850, Ibid., p. 373.

in a sense, a much more stable ally than today's non-monopolistic sections of the capitalist class with which Eurocommunism wants to ally itself. In any case the main element in the classical conception of alliances is that the party marches together with the other forces as long as all partners have the same objectives; it continues its own struggle (inevitably in a different and more restricted alliance) as soon as the goals of the other forces have been fulfilled. Any other schema which compromises the basic aims of the working class movement, in an ideological fraternisation, would automatically change the party's character and the position of the class in the alliance.

Coming back to our question of the Party's relation to "other proletarian parties," seen in the light of its politics of alliance, experience has shown that such parties may sometimes be seen by the Communist party as simply "opposition parties" -- in the sense that this expression is used in the Manifesto -- in which case co-operation with, and recognition by, the former becomes possible. This is often accomplished by the fact that these parties have officially accepted their limitations and have also dropped the competing title of the party (communist or working class, or whatever the name of the party is) as well. It is mostly the antagonistic duplication that externally causes the problem. In essence, the existence of two or more communist parties in the same country reveals that either one of them deserves the title or, possibly, none. Marx's and Engels' "Circular Letter" of 1879, addressed to the leaders of the German party, following the attempt of the "three Zürichers" to introduce petty-bourgeois ideas into the party's platform, is quite revealing in this respect. They did not suggest that the three should form another social-democratic party, but a petty-bourgeois one:

If these gentlemen constitute themselves into a Social-Democratic petty-bourgeois party they are quite entitled to do so; one could then negotiate with them, form a bloc according to the circumstances, etc. 89

Before closing this section, a word is in order on the participation of working class parties in bourgeois parliaments, a subject to which we shall occasionally return in this and the following chapters. We are dealing here with a period in which universal (manhood) suffrage was among the chief demands of almost all democratic and Left movements on the Continent. It was also among the "Demands of the Communist Party in Germany" (i.e., the League members in Germany), which proposed that "every German, having reached the age of 21, shall have the right to vote and to be elected, provided he has not been convicted of criminal offence."<sup>90</sup> Contrary to what anarchists stood for, communists fought consistently for the extension of suffrage and insisted that workers make use of the right to vote and elect their own representatives. Given the existence of a party to direct its parliamentary struggles, the working class would be able to protect itself from the influence of the bourgeois parties and develop its own independent political action. Furthermore, the independent participation of working class parties in bourgeois elections and parliaments is connected with their struggles for democracy, and provides them with a forum whereby they can air their views on any important social, political or national issue.

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89. Marx and Engels to August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Wilhelm Bracke and others ("Circular Letter"), September 17-18, 1879. M/E Correspondence, p. 307. The three Zurichers were Eduard Bernstein, Karl Hochberg and Karl Schramm. Their controversial article, "The Socialist Movement in Germany in Retrospect" was published in Hochberg's Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, in 1879, apparently shortly before Marx and Engels wrote the above "Circular."

90. Marx/Engels, "The Demands of the Communist Party in Germany," M/E Collected Works, Vol. 7, p. 3.

While this practice is both permissible and necessary for working class parties, the danger of adopting the established electoral tactics and giving in to the spirit and traditions of parliamentarism is not to be discounted. To reiterate, this form of struggle should not be allowed to overshadow the class principles of the party and its far-reaching aims.

As Engels warned on a later occasion:

The issue is purely one of principle: is the struggle to be conducted as a class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, or is it to be permitted that, in good opportunistic .... style, the class character of the movement, together with the programme, is to be dropped wherever more votes, more adherents, can thereby be won? 91

It was for the advancement of its programme and the propagation of its principles that the League desired to see working class candidates in the elections that took place in certain European countries after the 1848 revolutions. In France and Germany, the two countries that mostly occupied Marx's and Engels' attention at the time, universal manhood suffrage (with certain restrictions, especially in Germany) was granted momentarily and the working class was able to play a part in the developments of the time.

Even though, at that time, the proletariat could only pose itself as "the opposition of the future", its participation in the constitutionally-determined, bourgeois parliamentary system was not seen by the founders of communism as a needless waste of energy.

The 1848 revolutions did not produce a proletarian party, but they were significant in another sense: they were responsible for the first elements of a real working class consciousness which finally led, in the course of the second half of the 19th century, to the creation of such a party.

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91. Engels to August Bebel, October 28, 1882, Correspondence, p. 334

It was also during the events of 1848 that Marx and Engels turned their attention to another development in the outlook of the working class, something which they had expounded long before the outbreak of the revolution and which has since become part of the socialist ideology and an integral element of class consciousness in the Marxist sense: the emergence of proletarian internationalism. This new dimension in the consciousness of many European proletarians was emerging simultaneously with a retreat in their nationalistic feelings. The developments of 1848 had proved that the radical liberals who had led the February and Spring revolutions would not change the economic basis of nationalism as it had been established by the bourgeois revolutions of the two previous centuries. With the sanctification of private property, economic equality of any form was out of the question. The working class, therefore, had no vested interests in its country; its fatherland was no more than a geographical expression. "The working men" -- it had already been announced in the Communist Manifesto -- "have no country."<sup>92</sup>

It was basically the limitations of democracy -- of the capitalist democracy that eurocommunists have re-discovered and want to use as an instrument of emancipation of the working class -- that led to the rise of socialism and internationalism. Indisputably, eurocommunists do not speak of the same democracy but one that has gone through a tremendous evolution ever since 1789 and the 1848 revolutions. And to that evolution the Communist movement has made an immense contribution. One thing, however, which we are sure about, is that the "people" has never become the "nation" as the Jacobins thought possible in the first, indeed world historical, hours of their revolution.

### III. The Lessons of the First International

In our analysis of the political lessons of the First International

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92. Manifesto. p. 502.

the fact that this association was neither a party, in any acceptable sense of the word, nor an international co-ordinating agency of working class parties should not evade our attention. The only mass party that ever associated itself with it was the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany which, upon its formation in 1869, declared itself as one of its branches. But this in no way altered the character of the International as "a medium of communication and co-operation between Working Men's Societies existing in different countries, and aiming at the same end, viz., the protection, advancement, and complete emancipation of the working class,"<sup>93</sup> As such, it was made up of working class associations and progressive individuals, and its function consisted in both helping in the organisation of the economic struggle of the proletariat, and its political education in the spirit of class struggle and international solidarity. It lacked the characteristics of a political organisation in the proper sense, since it had developed no definite ideology and strategy commonly accepted by all its branches and members (including those of its leading body, the General Council); on the other hand, it cannot be viewed as merely a labour movement, for it never restricted its activities to economic struggles alone, and its composition was not exclusively proletarian. The most advanced sections of the European and the world proletariat, together with revolutionary elements from other classes, had been engaged in a struggle against capitalism in an organisation which bore the characteristics of both the party and the labour movement. It can best be seen as an internationally organised working

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93. Marx, "Provisional Rules of the Association," The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 288.

class movement which had surpassed, or attempted to surpass, the limitations of the "guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system" -- as Marx had expected from the British Trades Unions -- and aspired to abolishing the system itself without having yet worked out the necessary political instruments for the attainment of this aim.\*

For these reasons the First International, despite its importance as a veritable school of ideological and organisational training for the nineteenth century proletariat, had not much to offer in terms of party experience. However, since among its principal tasks was the guiding of the proletariat's struggles, its history, though not one of an exclusively political organisation, is no less valuable as a phase in the evolution of Marxist politics. The creation of working class parties was seriously taken up by the International only during its last years, but the idea for the political organisation of labour goes back to its founding and its Inaugural Address:

To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes. They seem to have comprehended this, for in England, Germany, Italy, and France there have taken place simultaneously revivals, and simultaneous efforts are being made at the political organization of the working men's party 94

Its deep involvement in the political struggles of the world proletariat often compelled the International to deal with, and make valuable contributions to, many themes of the proletarian movement which are intimately related to the party theory: the "real" proletarian philosophy as against

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94. Marx, "Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association," *Ibid.*, p. 286.

\* See note 114 where reference is made to Marx's Wages, Price and Profit.



sectarianism and other inconsequential tendencies; the role of the working class in the revolutionary transformation of society vis-à-vis the party; the question of "authority" which has a direct bearing on organisational and ideological discipline; the tasks of trade unions; the composition of the proletarian revolutionary organisation; and many others. It is of special interest to us that all important principles of the proletarian movement worked out by the First International bear Marx's stamp -- and to a certain extent that of Engels, though the latter became directly involved in the General Council only after 1870

The First International was not an ideologically homogeneous movement. Its leaders, including Marx who had prepared its Inaugural Address and the Provisional Rules, had allowed for a certain amount of flexibility on this important matter in order to mobilize as many working class societies as possible into the ranks of the new association. And this principle, with certain exceptions which will occupy us further on, was observed until the dissolution of the International. It was based on the recognition that since the working classes of the different countries -- as Marx wrote to the (Bakunist) Socialist Alliance in 1868 -- "are placed under different circumstances and have attained to different degrees of development, it seems almost necessary, that the theoretical notions, that reflect the real movement, should also differ." He did believe, however, that the work of the International would eventually "engender a common theoretical programme."<sup>95</sup> Thus we observe its most important difference with the League: the League was Communist, the First International was an

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95. Marx, "The General Council of the I.W.M.A. to the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy," The General Council of the First International, 1868-1870, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 310

association of "simple 'workers' societies,' all following the same programme, which presents a general outline of the proletarian movement, while leaving its theoretical elaboration to be guided by the needs of the practical struggle and the exchange of ideas in the sections, unrestrictedly admitting all shades of socialist convictions."<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that the only criterion of admission was that "societies and individuals adhering to it, will acknowledge truth, justice, and morality, as the basis of the conduct towards each other, and towards all men."<sup>97</sup>

The reaction that set in after the defeat of 1848, with the Prussian and Austrian autocracy still unbroken in the Germanies and the subordinated Slav territories, a police empire in France, and a relatively "bourgeois" trade union leadership in England, made it extremely difficult to pick up the threads of the militant tradition of the June days or of the Communist League. On the other hand, given the objectives, and the character of the composition of the First International (an association of workers' societies), to have imposed on it from the outset a communist ideology would not have worked. The movement had to start from the beginning, and very cautiously for that matter. As Marx wrote to Engels two months after the founding of the International:

It was very difficult to frame the thing so that our view should appear in a form acceptable from the present standpoint of the workers' movement .... It will take time before the reawakened movement allows the old boldness of speech. It will be necessary to be fortiter in re, suaviter in modo". 98

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96. Marx/Engels, "Fictitious Splits in the International," Ibid., 1870-1871, p. 389.

97. "Rules," Ibid., 1864-1866, p. 289.

98. Marx to Engels, November 4, 1864, Correspondence, p. 140.

Indeed, Marx's stand on this matter was to be, at all times, fortiter in re, for he never left ideology to be decided by time or the dubious contributions of his colleagues. Although Marx never tried to have his views imposed on the General Council (it was only in the last two-three years of the International that he often showed signs of impatience), he nevertheless was able to insert into the official literature of the Association almost every important aspect of scientific communism: his theory of exploitation, the notion of the socialist transformation of society, his interpretation of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the combination of economic and political struggle, and so forth. Since these concepts had passed into the founding documents of the International only in a half-developed and unannounced way, when the General Council tackled specific problems of the movement, Marx seized the opportunity to present his views in a stronger and more consistent form and have them accepted by his colleagues into the official literature of the Association.\* Thus, they gradually developed into its official ideological principles. This inevitably implied defence of these principles and often led to uncompromising critiques, by the Council and especially by Marx, of all "sectarian" trends which he considered as being opposed to the "real" movement of the working class and, therefore, unacceptable to the International. His stand on sectarianism which also reflects his convictions of what the International's ideology (and that of the working class movement in general) should be, is

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\* For example, the concept of the state and of the proletarian dictatorship were, among other occasions, developed in his polemics against anarchism, Lassalleism, and in his Address on the Paris Commune. John Weston's anti-union stand had provided the opportunity to discuss the necessity of the economic struggle of the class and the combination of trades unionism with political action. Weston had served in the General Council from 1864 to 1872.

revealed in his numerous polemics and articles against the "utopian" trends, including anarchism which, in his opinion, represented "the infancy of the proletarian movement":

The first phase of the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie is marked by a sectarian movement. That is logical at a time when the proletariat has not yet developed sufficiently to act as a class. Certain thinkers criticize social antagonism and suggest fantastic solutions .... The sects formed by these initiators are abstentionist by their very nature, i.e., alien to all real action, politics, strikes, coalitions, or, in a word, to any united movement .... Contrary to the sectarian organizations with their vagaries and rivalries, the International is a genuine and militant organization of the proletarian class of all countries united in the common struggle .... 99

This emphasis on the difference between the "real" (or "genuine") movement and the sectarian fantasies, between the historically developed and the immature, reappears in many of Marx's writings, especially against anarchism which more than any other sect plagued the First International.

In his now well-known letter to Friedrich Bolte, he wrote:

... the International was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a really militant organization of the working class .... The development of socialist sectarianism and that of the real working class movement always stand in inverse proportion to each other. Sects are historically justified so long as the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historical movement. As soon as this has attained its maturity all sects are essentially reactionary. 100

Sects represent the utopian, infantile conception of the movement. To put it in the language of the Communist League, they have not understood "the conditions, the course of development and the ultimate goal of the

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99. The General Council, 1871-1872, p. 388.

100. Marx to Friedrich Bolte, November 1871, Correspondence, p. 253.

proletarian movement."<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, with the eventual maturity of the working class they are not only misleading, but "essentially reactionary." What is important in these passages, which also tell us about the sort of ideology Marx had envisioned for the International, is that sects are wrong simply (and essentially) because their understanding of the movement is unscientific. Their theories are irrelevant to actual history, and their application in life ineffectual if not dangerous for the movement. Sectarianism, because of its erroneous conception of history, thus leads the struggle of the working class to failure and ruins its political independence.

It does not require much intelligence at this point to see that everything perceived as being unscientific, in this context, is perceived at the same time as being un-Marxist. But this is not to blame Marx for having violated the practice of the International to admit in its ranks--"all shades of socialist convictions." All of these "shades" were expected to converge into the "real" movement, and the Association's task was -- through its numerous publications in the various countries, its regular circulars to the sections, its congresses, conferences, and a variety of other means -- to work towards this goal. Experience in the struggle would certainly help, but the responsibility of working out and formulating the ideological principles of the movement was mostly placed on its leadership. Sects, as such, i.e., as organised movements of their own within the International, were not admitted and had always been under fire. Their frequent intrusions had, eventually, forced the International to resolve in

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101. See "Rules of the Communist League" (revised), M/E, Collected Works Vol. 10, p. 634.

its Second London Conference (1871), that they be formally excluded from its ranks.

All local branches, sections, groups and their committees are henceforth to designate and constitute themselves simply and exclusively as branches, sections, groups and committees of the International .... Consequently, no branches, sections, or groups will henceforth be allowed to designate themselves by sectarian names such as Positivists, Mutualists, Collectivists, Communists, etc. .... 102

It is apparent from the above that, despite the proclaimed laxity of admission, the right to decide on the principles of the movement was reserved to the International itself. It is also clear that Marx, who was responsible for the preparation of its most important resolutions, had set himself the task of making the theory of scientific communism the credo of the International. By the time of the Hague Congress, in 1872, (the last important Congress of the International and the one in which anarchism received its worst blow), Marxism had, more or less, ousted almost all sectarian notions from the platform of the Association -- at least in its resolutions and other official documents. This does not mean that the International ever became communist or that it changed its original objectives and character. It preserved its limited goals as an association of "simple workers' societies" until the end, but it did develop the theory of the movement and its contribution to working class politics was no less important. Given its limitations as an international association that lacked the organisational structures for more definite strategic aims, it

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102. "Resolutions of the Conference of the Delegates of the I.W.M.A.," The General Council, 1870-1871, pp. 440-441.

had adopted many of the Marxist positions while it had left out (or undeveloped) others.<sup>103</sup>

Specific tasks and limitations considered, Marx and Engels expected trade unions to gradually accept their own class-based conception of the labour movement. Collaborationist tendencies within the British labour movement, and anti-unionist views in the General Council (essentially utopianism in both cases) had caused Marx to write his Wages, Price and Profit in which the role of trade unions (in this case of the British) is summarized in the following manner:

Trade unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized force as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say the ultimate abolition of the wages system. 104

In effect, what Marx suggests in this pamphlet, written in 1865, is that the politicisation of the labour movement is the only way to a successful and independent struggle. Engels' articles on The Wages System, in which he urged the British working class, particularly its unionized section, to organize itself "as a body" and wage its struggles as a class, had no different purpose. It is only by engaging in political class struggle that the proletariat can safeguard its independence from the opposing parties and classes and guide itself to social liberation. Political

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103. The question, for example, of the socialisation of the means of production was only slightly touched upon in the third (Brussels) Congress. See The General Council, 1868-70, pp. 295-96.

104. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit, p. 55.

independence presupposes, first of all, ideological independence; but ideologies without a scientific basis, no matter how radical they may sound, are by their nature contrary to the proletariat's interests and ultimately bourgeois. They abandon the task of the workers' emancipation to their opponents which is indeed tantamount to an unconditional surrender, to a voluntary acceptance of their subordinate position. "The emancipation of the working classes," say the Rules of the International, "must be conquered by the working classes themselves," and this is a cardinal principle of the movement.<sup>105</sup>

This has never been seen, however, as meaning that the working class, even under the guidance of politicised economic organisations, is capable of attaining its emancipation. It would be wrong to seek in this, and other similar passages from the official documents of the International, explanations that go beyond the one of mere theoretical and (therefore) political independence: things that constitute the basic presupposition but are not sufficient for the transformation of capitalist society. The limited abilities of the class without a political organisation were known ever since the writing of the Manifesto, and even before its materialization. Without belittling the importance (including above all the political importance) of labour organisations, or of the class as a whole - without whose decisive intervention the prospects of social revolution are nil - the First International did not fail to see the shortcomings inherent in the economic struggles of the class. Real political

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<sup>105</sup>. Marx, "Provisional Rules of the Association," The General Council, 1864-1866, p. 288.



independence of the proletariat and its emancipation can only be ensured by its organisation in a political party of its own. Having dealt for about seven years with this question, by repeatedly laying stress on working class political action, it finally placed it on the agenda of the London Conference (1871), only a few months after the crushing of the Paris Commune, and resolved that:

... the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes.

That the constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end -- the abolition of classes.

Yet, since the political struggles of the class are inseparable from its economic struggles for immediate aims, the Resolution continues:

That the combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economic struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of the landlords and capitalists .... That in the militant state of the working class, its economical movement and its political action are indissolubly united. 106

Although Marx's and Engels' writings on the Paris Commune have occasional references to its various political factions (Blanquists, Proudhonists, Internationalists), and to their mistakes and weaknesses,\* they hardly touch the question of the proletarian party in the sense that it was brought up in both the London Conference and the Hague Congress. What

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106. "Resolutions of the London Conference" (adopted by the Hague Congress), The General Council, 1870-1871, p. 445.

\* The fact, for example, that they did not take advantage of the funds of the Bank of France.

attracted their interest most was the work of the Communards in constructing the workers' state, not the party. The omission may, perhaps, be attributed to the fact that Marx -- contrary to what Charles Longuet and some other delegates expressed at the Hague Congress<sup>107</sup> -- could not have expected a victorious outcome from a mere "rising of a city under exceptional conditions."<sup>108</sup> The Commune, however, had brought the political action of the working class to the forefront of the movement, and there is no doubt that its experience had provided the background for the subsequent debates of the International on this matter. Indeed, it was in the London Conference and the Hague Congress that the vague proposition of the involvement of the proletariat in independent politics was finally translated into the formation of political parties.

What this event in the history of the International achieved was the recognition of the fact that the struggle of the class in the forms developed till then was not adequate for the overthrow of the capitalist system. A different organisation and -- to return to our class consciousness problem -- a different conception of the struggle were required for the accomplishment of this objective. And this is precisely what brings into sharp relief the different functions between the class and the party in the revolutionary transformation of society. The abilities of the former are limited. Even when organised under trade unions, "the real class organisation of the proletariat, in which it wages its daily struggles with capital,"<sup>109</sup>

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107. See The Hague Congress of the First International, minutes of the Eleventh Meeting, pp. 84-5, and 162-3.

108. Marx to Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, February 22, 1881, Correspondence, p. 318.

109. Engels to August Bebel, March 18, 1875, Ibid., p. 275.

but which in no country has embraced the whole class, it is still incapable of effecting this change. Its ideological and organisational equipment is categorically insufficient. Still, it must be stressed that this distinction requires ~~extreme~~ extreme caution, not only because the economic and political struggles of the class are "indissolubly united", but, also, because the role of the party itself without a fighting proletariat is totally incomprehensible. While the party's functions are given particular emphasis, a real dichotomy between the "party" and the "movement" does not exist in the texts of classical Marxism. Besides the fact that the economic struggles of the class, even those of "pure and simple" trade unionism, are not without political significance, there exists the organic relation between the party and the class since the former by its nature is and should be proletarian. While open to all those accepting its membership conditions, proletarian members should remain the party's dominant element. Marx had insisted that even the International should strengthen its proletarian composition.<sup>110</sup> In this, rather restricted sense, the distinction between party and class, or party and movement (the second) including, besides trade unions, other organisations of particularistic interests), is more or less obliterated; the former is part of the latter. However, it is precisely the fact that the party is only a section of the working class that differentiates the two. And this distinction, which was made clear in the

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<sup>110</sup> See, for example, the minutes of the General Council of July 23, 1872, where Marx proposes that to Article 9 of the General Rules be added "that each branch be composed of at least two-thirds of wage-labourers." The General Council, 1871-72, p. 265. The idea was adopted by the Hague Congress.

Communist Manifesto, is not simply numerical but primarily qualitative. The party represents the most advanced theoretical section of the class, capable of understanding the movement and its consequences globally and of guiding the class as a whole in its daily and long-term struggles. It is the organiser and educator of the class, its political instrument par excellence, its collective power. Its ultimate aim is the conquest of political power by the proletariat; but this requires that the whole class be pushed forward, by the party itself, and combine its particular and immediate interests with the general interests of the movement. In this way, the party, if adequately developed and influential among the various sections of the class, becomes the party of the class, or the class itself is constituted "into a party." The two, however, cannot be confused. "The distinction between the vanguard and the main body of the working class, between Party members and non-Party people, cannot disappear until classes disappear."<sup>111</sup>

A question that is in order at this point is the following: Given the close relationship between party and class, what could possibly be the ramifications of this relationship with regard to the economic organisations of the class? There are two points that have emerged quite clearly in this discussion so far: the first is that unions must be politicised and combine their struggles for daily demands with those for the final emancipation of the class; and the second, that these two kinds of struggles are "indissolubly united." It is the latter element which has started a debate among eurocommunists and which has also been raised by dissident movements in socialist countries (e.g., Poland) where part of the syndical movement attempted to reaffirm some sort of political independence. The issue at stake in this instance is, obviously,

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111. Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 110

the independence of unions vis-à-vis the influence and the (direct or indirect) intervention of the CP in the formation of their policies. Put otherwise, the problem may be worded as follows: If classical Marxism provides for the politicisation of trade unions (which it does), this cannot be interpreted as meaning anything except the formation of Marxist-oriented (that is, CP-oriented) unions. Indeed, this is precisely what brings to the fore the issue of independence or autonomy of unions. Marxist-oriented unions are neither created nor maintained through abstract appeals of the party. It is the actual, continuous intervention and presence of party members that brings into existence this type of formation. And once this is done, the union autonomy is by necessity restricted. Classical Marxism does not give us definite answers to such questions. Given the organisational achievements of the time, the question of the relationship between party and union, in the context delineated, was still premature. But considering the "indissoluble" character of the two forms of struggle (economic and political) and the "vanguard" position of the party vis-à-vis the class -- two elements that appear clearly in the classical texts -- it is evident that a sort of subordination of the second to the first becomes inevitable. On the other hand, however, the distinction between the two, in terms of composition and functions, cannot be discarded. Unions are not and cannot become branches of the party. They represent a multitude of working class layers with a variety of particular interests which cannot always find their expression in the general party policy which may often sacrifice, for one reason or another, the interests of a particular group of the class for the sake of the collective ones. This latter element and the differences that exist among the various segments of the class, even among members of the same "Marxist-oriented" union, in the development of their class

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consciousness leads us to the conclusion that such a union cannot function and cannot survive as such under complete subordination to the party. Although in a socialist state the existence of a parallel power emanating from the organisations of the working class may sound contradictory in theory, one should assume nonetheless that the inequalities that still persist in the period of transition require that these organisations should have the freedom that assures them not only a sincere discourse between leadership and members, but also their direct participation in the formulation of national policies.

Another heritage of the First International, which is closely associated with the involvement of the working class in politics, and therefore the concept of the state, was the question of "authority," i.e., the principle of leadership and ideological discipline. Political action necessarily implies a conscious effort to take control of the state mechanism and the recognition of the necessity of preserving the latter -- it makes no difference if the proletarian state is assuming a different character and is, ultimately, "withering away."<sup>112</sup> Once this is upheld, the principle of authority should manifest itself in the political organisation as well. An undisciplined, disorganised, basically "anarchistic" movement cannot possibly aspire to the conquest of the state, the basic instrument of social discipline. Denial of the state as a coercive apparatus under any form reflects itself in political abstentionism and in a loosely organised movement.

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112. On Marx's ideas on the disappearance of the proletarian state, developed during the years of the First International, see especially his and Engels' "Fictitious Splits in the International," The General Council, 1871-1872, p. 407.

The question of authority in this double sense had been one of the most controversial issues in the International between Bakunists,\* on the one side, who rejected politics and viewed the idea of the state with positive hatred and, on the other, those who could not understand the liberation of the working class without the conquest of political power and the exercise of class rule. The latter group was led by Marx, Engels, Sorge, and other prominent leaders of the Association. The anarchists, often supported by the Proudhonists who opposed centralized authority, had consistently struggled to weaken the authority of the General Council and deprive it of all characteristics of leadership. Their intention was to allow each branch to develop and to follow its own principles, while the central organ of the International should act as a correspondence committee. The controversy was resolved at the Hague Congress with the expulsion of Bakunin and his Alliance from the Association. Marx "would rather vote for the abolition of the General Council than for a council which would be only a letter box."<sup>113</sup>

With the ousting of the anarchists, the principle of authority was confirmed. The adoption of Articles 2 and 6 of the modified General Rules made the General Council a real leading body of the International between congresses. Bound by the Rules and the Congress resolutions, it was empowered at the same time with the right to see that these rules, resolutions and the principles of the Association were "strictly observed"

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\* The Bakuninists had been able to place under their control certain sections of the International in Switzerland, France, Spain and Italy. Economic backwardness (as in Italy, especially in the South and Spain) and conditions of harsh repression and exploitation -- factors which induce proletarians and poor peasants to desperate ideas -- as well as heavy involvement of petty-bourgeois elements in the radical movement are among the most important reasons for the success of anarchism in these areas. It is basically the rural base of the movement that provides the ground for the rise of anarchism.

113. The Hague Congress, p. 72

by all inferior bodies. In the opposite case, it could suspend them "till the meeting of the next Congress."<sup>114</sup> By the adoption of these resolutions the International established the principle of ideological and organisational discipline, which later became one of the basic features of the proletarian party, known as the principle of "democratic centralism."

#### IV. The Rise of Proletarian Parties

With the dissolution of the First International (unofficially after the Hague Congress, officially at the Congress of Philadelphia, U.S. in 1876), a phase in the organisation and education of the working class, more or less, comes to an end. It had combined economic and political action in one movement which was neither expressed in real trade unions nor was it led by parties. A new movement began with the emergence of the nationally-based working class party ("Social-Democratic"). Although in Germany the founding of the party preceded the dissolution of the International, in general the parties of the Continent appeared in the period from the late 1870's to the last decade of the century. The teachings of the International and the spread of Marxism, the lessons of the Paris Commune, and the numerical development of the working class, side by side with the further industrialization of Europe and the intensification of class antagonism, may be seen as the most important factors that brought about this development. The Second International, formed in Paris, in 1889, on the centenary of the French Revolution, was one of parties, not of labour organisations. Among them, the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party and, to a much lesser extent, the French parties had the leading role in determining theoretical matters and shaping the physiognomy of the movement. The former, because

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114. See "Resolutions Relative to the General Rules," Ibid., p. 283. See also the original edition of the Rules in French in The General Council 1871-1872, pp. 430-431.



of its numerical strength, organisational discipline and theoretical superiority, and the latter because of a phenomenal revolutionary tradition, stretching from Babeuf's "Republic of Equals" down to the Paris Commune. No theoretical agreement existed among the parties that formed the Second International or those which joined it later. The German party, after a period of vacillations between Marxism and Lassallism, dropped its conciliatory policies and, in its 1891 Erfurt Congress, endorsed the Marxist viewpoint.<sup>115</sup> The French party (Parti Ouvrier Français) had done the same when its leader, Jules Guesde, went to London, in 1879, to have its programme drawn up by Marx.<sup>116</sup> Of the smaller parties, those closer (geographically) to the German (e.g. Austrian, Belgian) had adopted a line which, basically, did not differ from its own. In France, outside the Guesdists, the other socialist parties either clung to the older traditions of petty-bourgeois radicalism and anarchism, like Paul Brousse's Fédération des Travailleurs Socialistes de France, or to the Leftist trend of the Blanquist brand, as the Parti Socialiste Revolutionnaire, led by Edouard Vaillant. Further to the south, in Italy and Spain where industrial development was slow and anarchism had a stronger foothold, ideological confusion was more profound. It was only in 1892 that a socialist party was able to emerge in Italy freed from old sectarian tendencies.<sup>117</sup>

Although Marxism had, by the time of the founding of this International, been recognized by the most seriously thinking sections of the revolutionary

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<sup>115</sup>. Its new programme included many of Marx's ideas as expounded in his Critique of the Gotha Program.

<sup>116</sup>. See Marx's letter to Sorge, November 5, 1880, Correspondence, p. 312; and Engels' to Bernstein, October 25, 1881, Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>117</sup>. For basic information on the parties of the Second International see James Joll, The Second International, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

movement, the International itself was not to become a "directly communist" one, as Engels had predicted it would be.<sup>118</sup> However, for our purpose, what concerns us the most in the history of the rise of proletarian parties, is Marx's and Engels' contribution to the further development of party theory once these parties had made their appearance. Marx had died six years before the founding of the International, but such parties were in existence before his death. Yet, even while he was still alive, it was Engels who, after the dissolution of the First International, had assumed most of the responsibility for popularising the theory and keeping contacts with the movement. As he put it later on, "As a consequence of the division of labour that existed between Marx and myself, it fell to me to present our opinions in the periodical press, ... in order that Marx should have time for the elaboration of his great basic work"<sup>119</sup> (Capital). Such "opinions" were not only presented by Engels in the periodical press, but also in letters and books which he wrote in order to either clarify the doctrine in general, as he did in his Anti-Dühring, or to solve a variety of specific problems. Marx, for his part, despite his unusual work load and his constantly failing health, always intervened when the exigency of the situation demanded it. Indeed, it was during this period that one of the most informative documents of classical Marxism on the fundamental principles of the party and the proletarian revolution, namely his Critique of the Gotha Program, (1875) was written.

It is in this and many other writings of the time, by both Marx and Engels, particularly those directed to the German party, that we come across

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118. Engels, to Sorge, September 12-17, 1874, Correspondence, p. 271.

119. Cited in Frederic Engels, A Biography, by L. F. Ilyichov, et al., (Moscow: Progress, 1974), p. 314.

their most developed contribution to proletarian politics. The questions they dealt with cover a wide variety of subjects ranging from the participation of bourgeois elements in the party to the problem of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Their chief concern, however, was still the theoretical purity of the party, the correct understanding of the movement without which, as they had pointed out earlier, the movement itself would be ineffectual.<sup>120</sup> It is the same problem which had made their presence tremendously important both in the League and the First International. Now they were dealing with real political parties, well-defined organisations with specific functions in the movement and a purpose to fulfil. More than in any previous period, the question of ideology was of crucial importance. Hence, their continued and consistent war against all "adulterating elements" that were constantly making their way into the "real" movement of the workers.

The First International had won the battle over all sectarian trends (at least within its own ranks), and the Social-Democratic, or socialist parties, which were formed in the subsequent years were, to some extent, able to check again their advance in the organised political movement of the proletariat. But the traditions of pseudo-radicalism and sectarianism, which had educated many of the Leftist leaders who appeared on the scene in the second half of the century, could not be easily extirpated. On the other hand -- it has to be noted again -- even Marx's and Engels' own closest collaborators (Wilhelm Liebknecht, Eduard Bernstein, Johann Eccarius, Jules Guesde, Charles Longuet, and many others) were never liberated from their own petty-bourgeois conception of the movement. Hence, continuing the guidance of the movement in its new phase, was seen by them as a task of paramount importance.

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120. It was this grasp of the importance of theory that caused Lenin to make the following statement (1902): "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". What is to be Done?, Collected Works, Vol. 5, p. 369.

While keeping an eye on the movement as a whole, their attention was particularly focused on the German party. It had been the first real working class party, the largest of all existing ones, and the one that through their constant insistence had eventually emerged as the most theoretically consistent. With the creation of the Second International, it became its leading force.

There is not much strikingly new in Marx's and Engels' writings on the party during this period. As noted previously, they carried on an ideological struggle which had started long before the rise of parties. But this struggle had now acquired a new significance. With the creation of proletarian parties, the problems of the movements had become much more specific and immensely more real than before. The period of elementary education was over, the one of real political action had begun; but the misleading trends within the movement had not died off. Proudhonism, Bakuninism and Lassallism\*, the sects and tendencies that tormented the First International, were still alive and continued to be the main targets of their polemics. While officially exorcised by many of the leaders of Social-Democracy, their influence was not totally absent from the platform of their parties. Problems of this nature, occasionally appearing in the socialist movement, could not go by without Marx's and Engels' prompt interventions. Such interventions illustrate in an indubitable fashion the importance they assigned to ideological struggle not only vis-à-vis the class enemy but also against sectarian tendencies within the party itself. It is a vital aspect of the communist tradition which permeates Marx's and Engels' entire work and which was, later on,

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\* It was Lassalle's "iron law of wages" and his Hegelian conception of the state that drew Marx's most severe criticism.

pursued with renewed vigour in Lenin's polemics against anti-Marxist trends of his own time.<sup>121</sup>

Efforts to "improve" the doctrine were not infrequent in the German party, not only by party members but also by individuals irrelevant to the movement who, nevertheless, used the party as their audience. The writing of Anti-Dühring by Engels\* was not, as he admits in the Preface to the first edition, "the fruit of an inner urge," but of a conscious need to refute Dühring's misleading theories and preserve ideological order in the party. The same observation should be made of The Housing Question\*\* , in which he responded to Mühlberger's fantastic solutions to the housing problem in Germany. The ideas of both, Dühring and Mühlberger, had found their way into the party press and had been received by influential party members as a contribution to the Marxist theory and to the critique of the system from the proletarian standpoint.

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121. Lenin had not overlooked the fact that the tremendous growth of the German party had been "accompanied by a strenuous struggle, unique in the history of socialism, not only against erroneous theories (Mühlberger, Dühring, the Katheder-Socialists), but also against erroneous tactics (Lasalle), etc., etc." "What is to be Done?," p. 357-358. And he emphasises the importance of theoretical struggle in the following words: "Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognises, not two forms of the great struggle of Social-Democracy (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, but three, placing the theoretical struggle on a par with the first two." Ibid, p. 370. The reference here is to Engels' The Peasant War in Germany, where he speaks of the German workers belonging "to the most theoretical people of Europe" and where he also underlines the importance of theoretical struggle. Leonard Krieger (ed.), The German Revolutions, pp. 16-17.

\* Originally published in the form of articles in the central organ of the German party, Vorwärts, in 1877-78.

\*\* Also originally published in the form of articles in Volksstaat, the predecessor of Vorwärts, in 1872-73.

Lassallism and Prudhonism were brought up again and again by both Marx and Engels, in connection with the role of the state. The clarification of this crucial matter was all the more necessary since very few of the socialist leaders had grasped its full implications in the context of the class struggle. It was not just a question of understanding one of the many aspects of the Marxist philosophy, but one of particular importance directly related to the everyday struggles of the class and to the future of the socialist movement. It is curious that Liebknecht had neither understood the Marxist interpretation of the state nor had he sensed the shallowness and the inherent conservatism behind Lassalle's ideas on its role.<sup>122</sup> His Volksstaat (people's state) slogan, which passed into the party's literature and, eventually, in a slightly modified form (as "free state") -- from which the party expected assistance to establish producers' co-operatives -- into the Gotha Programme, had caused Marx and Engels great annoyance. Marx's "The Conspectus of Bakunin's Book State and Anarchy," a devastating critique of the anarchistic misconceptions on the state, ends up by attacking Liebknecht's "free state" notion, in which he (Marx) saw nothing but "a nonsense directed against the Communist Manifesto, etc."<sup>123</sup> The same severe

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122. The following remark on Lassalle by Liebknecht, in his "Report on Working Class Movement in Germany," prepared for the London Conference of the First International, may be an indication of his understanding of the state and the socialist transformation of society. "Bad, and a source of great mischief was what he said about the necessity of founding co-operative societies with the help of the state. He meant another state than the present one, but most of his hearers could not but think he talked of the state of Mr. V. Bismarck." (Marx had also thought so!) The General Council, 1864-1866, p. 257. Marx did not read this report aloud before the Conference.

123. Marx, "The Conspectus of Bakunin's Book State and Anarchy," M/E/ Lenin, Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism (Moscow: Progress, 1972), p. 152.

criticism is to be found in one of Engels' letters to Bebel, in which the entire draft of the programme is rejected,<sup>124</sup> as well as in many other letters written at the time by both Marx and Engels for the same purpose. However, where this and many other problems are summed up and hammered out, is in Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program.<sup>\*</sup> What he could not have said or cautiously stated in the Inaugural Address and the other documents of the First International drawn up by him, is set down in the Critique in the most plain and direct fashion. It is the text that defines the essence and the purpose of the political struggle of the proletariat. While attacking the Lassalleian ideas which abounded in the draft programme for the sake of unity -- a compromise on principles in no way acceptable to the founders of the theory -- he takes the opportunity to discuss his theory of wages and value, and the question of socialisation of the means of production: he did not cherish the hopes of the German party concerning producers' co-operatives, and he did not expect from them anything more than a mere education of the workers. He also touches upon the crucial subject of the transition to communism and exposes the complexities of this process as long as the forces of production have not reached a high degree of development. At the same time, he once again tackles the theme of the working class alliance which, according to the Gotha programme, had stumbled on the Lassalleian assertion that "all other classes are only a reactionary mass," and re-emphasized the revolutionary potentialities of the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the artisans.

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124. Engels to Bebel, Correspondence, March 18-28, p. 275.

\* Marx's critical marginal notes on the draft programme of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party was used as a basis for its unification with the Lassalleian faction in its 1875 Gotha Congress.

Speaking of the national struggles of the proletariat, he seizes the opportunity to remind the party leaders of Germany of the relation between these struggles and the international character of the revolution.

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organize itself at home as a class and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggles. In so far its struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the Communist Manifesto says, "in form". But the "framework of the present-day national state" .... is itself in its turn economically "within the framework" of the world market, politically "within the framework" of the system of states. 125

He blames the party leaders for their failure to consider the "international functions of the German working class", and finds in the programme's slogan for "international brotherhood of peoples" a poor substitute for the "international brotherhood of the working classes" and an empty bourgeois phrase.<sup>126</sup> The Critique is also directed against the "free state" idea of the programme -- a contradiction in terms since the very existence of the state cannot but imply the element of unfreedom -- which in Marx's opinion revealed that the "socialist ideas" of the party, at the time, were "not even skin-deep."

... instead of treating existing society .... as the basis of the existing state .... it treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own intellectual, ethical and libertarian basis. 127

It is ironic that so many years later this notion of Liebknecht's "free state" reappears in eurocommunism which also believes in the independence of the state and the possibility of its transformation into an instrument of democracy.

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125. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," Tucker, Reader, p. 390. Expressions in quotation marks are taken from the Gotha Programme.

126. Ibid., p. 390.

127. Ibid., p. 394.



It is not a secret that in Marx's and Engels' opinion, compromises on ideological matters originated from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois members of the party, especially those who had made their way to the top. As it was made clear in one of Marx's letters to Sorge, the situation of the party after the Gotha Congress was mostly to be blamed on these members.

... a rotten spirit is making itself felt in our party in Germany, not so much among the masses as among the leaders (upper class and "workers"). The compromise with the Lassalleans had led to a compromise with other half-way elements too. 128

They had always expected a section from the non-proletarian classes to join the revolutionary movement,<sup>129</sup> just as they were acutely aware that given the educational system and the conditions of life at the time, higher culture could not possibly originate from the uneducated or half-educated workers. On the other hand, this had never prevented them from insisting on the dominant role of the proletarian element in the movement, and from doing everything possible to protect the movement from untrustworthy, opportunistic, and fantasy-stricken intruders. Their experience, ever since the appearance of the "true socialists," had convinced them that non-proletarian revolutionaries are not, and cannot, always be helpful to the workers' cause. Had not all sectarian trends originated from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologues? The role of bourgeois members in the proletarian party was brought up, in a rather acute fashion, when a small group of non-proletarian intellectuals (the Zürichers) had discovered that the party's attitude, "one-sided" and class-oriented, as it had been, precluded the

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128. Marx to Sorge, October 19, 1877, Correspondence, p. 290.

129. See, for example, The German Ideology, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 5, p. 52; and Man Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 494.

recruitment of upper class members, and incited the hatred of the governmental and reactionary circles. Marx's and Engels' reaction to this rebellious backsliding was blunt:

It is an inevitable phenomenon, rooted in the course of the development, that people from what have hitherto been the ruling classes also join the militant proletariat and supply it with cultural elements. We have clearly stated this in the Manifesto. But in this context two points are to be made:

First, in order to be of use to the proletarian movement these people must bring real cultural elements into it .... Secondly, if people of this kind from other classes join the proletarian movement, the first condition must be that they should not bring any remnants of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., prejudices with them but should unreservedly adopt the proletarian outlook. 130

Party members of this kind who do not observe the above conditions represent no less than "an adulterating element" which should be washed off, as Marx and Engels had suggested for the three Zurichers.<sup>131</sup> All the more so, since their higher education and organisational abilities are often sufficient credentials for their promotion to key party positions which can always be used for undermining the party's character.

#### V. Some Concluding Remarks

This brief presentation of the party theory, as developed since the time of the Communist League, provides us with an idea of the Marxist conception of the organised political struggle of the proletariat. Where

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130. Marx and Engels to August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, William Bracke and others in Leipzig. September 17-18, 1879, Correspondence, pp. 306-307.

131. See Marx and Engels to August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Wilhelm Bracke and Others ("Circular Letter"), September 17-18, 1879, M/E Correspondence, p. 307.

Marx's and Engels' contribution is of special significance is in the founding of the theoretical principles of the party. The organisational aspect had mostly occupied their attention in the period of the League and, much less, in the time of the First International or during the rise of the parties. Although closer to the German party, their "special status" "as representatives of international socialism," and the fact that they lived in England where a socialist party of any consequence was never established, had prevented them from ever becoming party members in the new sense of the term.<sup>132</sup> They were not directly involved, therefore, in specific organisational problems, and their writings of the period do not often deal with this important matter. However, one should not overlook the relation between theory and organisation and the requirements the first imposes on the second. Theoretical discipline in a party is inconceivable without a substructure of well-defined organisational norms. Ostensibly, this is the reason why organisational problems acquired a renewed interest in Lenin's time when adherence to theoretical principles was in decline.

A good part of the Marxist outlook had, in one way or another, been accepted by most of the parties of the Second International. Even those parties which (like the French) had adopted a more provincial attitude could not but accept the fundamental part of the doctrine, although in their own and often un-Marxist interpretation. Marx and Engels did their utmost, by way of teaching, criticizing and counselling to turn them into real

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132. " ... We belong to the German party scarcely more than to the French, American, or Russian Party and can consider ourselves as little bound by the German programme as by the minimum programme. We lay stress upon this special status of ours as representatives of international socialism. But it also forbids us to belong to any particular party until we return to Germany and take a direct part in the struggle there." Engels to Bernstein February 27 (March 1), 1883, Correspondence, p. 337.

instrument of political struggle. If these parties, enchanted by their electoral gains, their influence in the labour movement, and their illusory belief in the inevitable progress of humanity, eventually failed to grasp the importance of theory in their practical struggles, this is not to be blamed on Marx and Engels. Without their constant and persistent interventions, they could have been much worse. After Engels' death, adherence to fundamental principles became less and less insistent. It was chiefly the German party that brought about this relapse in the proletarian movement and finally led the International to its collapse. It had been the greatest and the most successful in Parliament. And this success, among other cause, led to its apostasy.

These parties, therefore, despite their auspicious beginnings, fell short of becoming models of proletarian political organisation. It was only through Lenin's intervention that the real Marxist party makes its appearance. By summing up the experience of the entire socialist tradition, and improving on it, he was able to construct the type of organisation necessary for the conquest of political power. The organisational discipline he introduced, from membership conditions to "democratic centralism," had no other purpose but to ensure uniformity of thought and action, strict adherence to the theory and the goals of the movement -- the most important characteristics of the proletarian party in its developed form, which safeguard its political and theoretical independence. An independence best depicted by Lenin in that most significant passage in his What is to be Done?, directed against "freedom of criticism" from the bourgeois point of view within the party itself:

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighbouring

marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. 133

Without diminishing the importance of the specific features that the Russian party acquired, due to a situation of chronic repression, and which it maintained for almost the entire pre-revolutionary period (e.g., excessive emphasis on secrecy, overloading of the responsibilities and the authority of the central party press as an organ of leadership -- i.e., elements that tend towards an over-centralism which may in the long run become detrimental to basic democratic procedures) and of the particular policies which it espoused for the historic realities of Russia, it would be erroneous, on the other hand, to interpret Lenin's improvements as a mere adaptation of the theory to the peculiar circumstances of autocratic and undeveloped Russia. The party of the "new type" was not simply the party that fitted the conditions of Russia but one that was capable of effecting the socialist change, provided that the conditions existed. The Second International had achieved a great step towards the creation of the real proletarian party, and Lenin owed a lot to its vast experience, but it never completed the task. Its unconditional surrender to the ruling classes during World War I and the subsequent revolutions is the most telling testimony of its failure, a failure that was due to its fragile theoretical foundations.

How could this experience, that covers the period from 1848 to the appearance of Lenin, be related to the eurocommunist thrust? The first observation that should be made pertains to the temporal distance that separates the classics from the communist movement of our times. It would

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133. Ibid, p. 355.

be extremely naive to maintain that today's CPs can take all their inspiration from those elements in classical Marxism which concern the definition of the proletarian party and its policies -- the latter still being an inadequately developed area of the movement. A constantly changing situation poses the need of constantly adopting the classical concepts to living conditions. A communist party is not to be blamed for doing this. The opposite would be equal to condemning itself to deadly political and cultural stagnation. There is, however, something in the classical arsenal of Marxism which does not seem to have lost its importance with the passing of time. The proletarian party, besides all its other tasks (defense of class interests in the framework of the present system), has an additional mission to perform: the emancipation of the working class. This mission is constantly reaffirmed by the party's insistence in having its own separate, distinct class philosophy regardless of its tactics. Does such a party, really exist in the eurocommunist movement? Is the hegemony of the working class really ensured in the politics of the grand alliance? To a very serious extent, many eurocommunist parties have confused working class interests with those of other classes in such a way as to restrict the proletarian hegemony only to their official rhetoric. Their entanglement in a national, supra-class policy, supposedly superimposed by the present crisis and the threat of a reactionary resurgence, had led them to serious ideological compromises. This "confusion" of interests cannot be explained by quoting the occasional reference in classical Marxism where the efforts for immediate, democratic demands and those for the final goal are presented as inextricably intertwined in the daily struggles of the party, essentially struggles for changes in the framework of democracy. This will not carry us very far in explaining eurocommunist attitudes. There is no reference in

the classical texts in which the party is allowed to make ideological compromises under any circumstances, except -- and this is to be found in some of the 1848 writings -- when the party has not yet come into existence, and then only in the context of immediate demands.

We have never flirted with a parliamentary party. The party we represent, the party of the people, exists in Germany as yet only in an elementary form. But when it is a matter of a struggle against the existing Government, we ally ourselves even with our enemies. We accept as fact that official Prussian opposition as it has arisen out of the hitherto pitiful conditions of German culture, and therefore, during the electoral struggle, we put our views into the background. Now, after the elections, we are again asserting our old ruthless point of view in relation not only to the Government, but also to official opposition. 134

Given, however, that the situation has tremendously changed ever since the time these lines were written, and that the changes that have taken place require a revision of the fundamental attributes of the party, can we then assume with any degree of certainty that their evaluation of the present conditions of capitalism in terms of class relations and of class struggle are correct? The eurocommunist critique of the Chilean experiment is not directed against the time or the place where this experiment took place, but the kind of forces that attempted it. We cannot go as far as to say that the lessons eurocommunists got from the crushing of the Popular Union were totally wrong; we can say, however, that they were incomplete. They grasped the importance of the grand alliance but failed to consider the possible contradictions of such an alliance, especially of the Chilean one which was neither grand nor seriously adulterated with bourgeois parties. And yet it failed in all important respects that give to this kind of alliance the necessary attributes of an alliance for socialism.

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134. "Stein" (unsigned article), Neue Rheinische Zeitung, February 19, 1849, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 390.

Self-criticism may not be as important after the tragedy as it could have been if made at the right time to prevent it, but it would not be inappropriate at this point to counter-pose the conclusion of a leading member of the Chilean CP to that of eurocommunists. A conclusion which is, I believe, very accurate as regards alliance tactics:

In fulfilling its fundamental mission, the Communist Party, the leading party responsible along with other allies, for the development of the revolutionary process, must solve a dialectical equation consisting of two elements: the quality of its unity with other forces of a popular movement not free of contradictions that can at times grow to dangerous proportions; and its independent role in this movement as a party which can under no circumstances, even amid discord, renounce its duty to present its policy to the people and country with a view to strengthening and not weakening unity. 135

Now a final point: Can we explain all or any of the "deviations" of the democratic road to the alleged intrusion into the party of members of petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois origin? Without having the intention to glorify the ideological faithfulness and stability of proletarian members, the question of the presence of non-proletarians in the high echelons of the party (to which they can easily climb due to their higher culture and other abilities), deserves particular attention. As we have had the occasion to observe, Marx had never considered it to be a negligible detail. Any attempt, however, to confront this development may turn into a quite tricky affair without sufficient statistics and without a clear examination of the attitude of each of these parties with regard to practices of recruitment and promotion. Yet, what may be said with certainty is that all modern parties, particularly the communist parties of our time, cannot avoid this kind of "intrusion." In their present state of organisation, which has

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135. Volodia Teitelboim, "Reflections on the 1,000 Days of Popular Unity Rule," World Marxist Review (1977, Vol. 20, No. 1), p.56.



created countless technocratic and other posts that require the appropriately trained personnel, CPs that want to keep in pace with current developments cannot rely solely on their proletarian members. In fact, they have never done so. Nevertheless, what indeed makes the difference for present-day CPs is the complexity of their party apparatuses which, in turn, is a reflection of the societies in which they operate.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE TRANSITION PROCESS: THE STATE

#### I. Socialism Through Democratisation of the State

The foundation of the eurocommunist trend, which also figures as its ultimate justification, resides in the premise that the Soviet revolutionary "model" can no longer apply to developed capitalist democracies. If violence and proletarian dictatorial rule were necessary in 1917 for both the survival of the revolution and socialist reconstruction, under the present economic and social conditions they constitute as much of an inapplicable formula in today's "West" as was the democratic road then. And here it is not merely the existence of developed democratic institutions that makes the difference, but also the tremendous growth of the working class which, as a result of the economic development of capitalism, is no longer a minority forced by its own weaknesses to resort to violence and dictatorial measures.<sup>1</sup> The 1917 formula, then, is left as the alternative appropriate only for underdeveloped countries where the conditions and the position of the working class are not much different from those prevailing in Russia in the first decades of the century. Hence, according to the eurocommunist vision, the Russian revolutionary experience has lost its validity in the context of western democracies.

To eurocommunists, the peoples of advanced democracies have been accustomed to certain fundamental freedoms and rights (apparently, freedoms and rights in the framework of bourgeois democracy), acquired as a result

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1. Azcarate, "What is Eurocommunism?", Urban (ed.), *Eurocommunism*, p. 20. Also, Lucio Lombardo Radice, "Communism with an Italian Face," *Ibid.*, p. 33.

of the democratic revolutions and the struggles of the working class, which cannot be easily relinquished for a dictatorial regime, even though this regime might be constructed in their name. Moreover, the entire capitalist society in its modern organisation, and after centuries of evolution, has built a series of institutions which cannot be razed to the ground without considerable reaction on behalf of those groups, sections of the proletariat included, which have traditionally used them to express, either individually or collectively, their ideas and demands and defend their interests. The inevitable conclusion of this conception is that the (euro)communist parties of these countries, unable -- as they believe -- to make use of what already exists in the communist revolutionary arsenal, should abandon the idea of a violent rupture\* and its logical concomitant, the dictatorship, and content themselves with the option of the democratic road. The latter has been conceived as a long-term effort aiming at the further democratisation of all existing institutions, the ultimate purpose being the socialist transformation of society according to the rules of the democratic procedure.

The proposition contains certain contradictory aspects. Firstly, neither the PCE nor the Greek Interior can (or, at least, could, at the time they accepted the new orientation) speak of deeply rooted democratic institutions in their respective countries. Incidentally, as we have already seen, both these parties abandoned the old line at a time when Spain and Greece were under fascist dictatorships. Undoubtedly,

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\* Violent in the sense that the forces of transition will be able to impose their will and effect the necessary changes even without overt violence and perhaps without a revolution in the classical sense.

both countries, and especially Greece, have a history of great democratic and progressive struggles; but in neither have those traditions been translated into democratic structures in their contemporary history.

A much more peculiar contradiction pertains to the determination of all eurocommunist parties to impose the hegemony of the working class on the existing capitalist society by first accepting the hegemony of the very class that rules this society economically, politically and even culturally, i.e., through the acceptance of the rules of democratic procedure and the democratic road to socialism. This is a notion that allegedly stems from Gramsci's "theory" of the "war of position" which, in its new, eurocommunist version, has been interpreted as the strategy of the democratic transition through the transformation, from within, of the state and the "ideological" institutions of capitalist society. It is a policy which implies that both the communist party and the organised radical section of the working class should cease viewing themselves as outsiders to the actual political and cultural realities which belong to capitalist society as a whole -- communists included. It is only in this way that the revolutionary camp will gradually appropriate the conquests of democratic progress and use them for the purpose of changing existing social relations.

As to the origins of this idea attributed to Antonio Gramsci, it would be proper at this point to see what might possibly exist in his writings in support of the democratic transition. To be sure, expressions like democratic transition and democratic road, in this form and in the context used by eurocommunists, do not exist in Gramsci. However, in his Prison Notebooks, one finds a host of similar concepts, some of

which have been used in the formulation of eurocommunist strategy. The concept, for example, of the "war of position" as opposed to the one of the "war of manoeuvres," is precisely what the new trend employs to denote the difference between the 1917 formula and the one of the democratic transition. Gramsci employs this idea on numerous occasions (in the Notebooks), but rarely in relation to the socialist transition. It is a rather complex and undeveloped concept which he frequently uses for the purpose of explaining certain evolutionary phases primarily with regard to the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism and in relation to the successive efforts of the bourgeoisie (or segments of it) to consolidate the political power of the class as a whole. It is an aspect of his wider theory of hegemony\* in which Gramsci discusses matters related to voluntary recognition, by civil society, of the moral and intellectual leadership of a class before and after its becoming the ruling class of society -- a recognition emanating from what this class is and what it does to represent the interests of society. The war of position, in the context of socialist transition, refers to the struggles for the attainment of this recognition through the conquest of society from within without force and without a frontal attack on the state. Thus, the concept itself (hegemony) is counterposed to those of domination, subordination, state, dictatorship, and clearly also to that of the "war of manoeuvres" (revolution). As far as Gramsci's writings go, however, there is no indication that he ever went beyond the exploration of the concept, even more so that he exclusively committed himself to the war of position as far as the socialist transition is concerned. With regard to the latter, he has only dedicated a few passages which seem to anticipate later eurocommunist claims. Most important in this context is what appears in the section "State and Civil Society" where, among many other things, he speaks of

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\* See, also, Note 40, Chapter Two of this study.

recent changes in state structures, particularly of the armies that were engaged in the First World War and their attrition tactics in relation to politics and political science in the West. At one point, Gramsci observes:

It seems to me that Ilitch understood that a change was necessary from the war of manoeuvre applied victoriously in the East in 1917, to the war of position which was the only form possible in the West - where as Krasnov observes, armies could rapidly accumulate endless quantities of munitions, and where the social structures were of themselves still capable of becoming heavily-armed fortifications. This is what the formula of the "United Front" seems to me to mean, and it corresponds to the conception of a single front for the Entente under the sole command of Foch.<sup>2</sup>

And further on:

The massive structures of the modern democracies both as state organisations, and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the "trenches" and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely "partial" the element of movement which before used to be "the whole" of war, etc.

This question is posed for the modern states, but not for the backward countries or for colonies, where forms which elsewhere have been superseded have become anachronistic are still in vigour...<sup>3</sup>

It appears that the spirit in both passages, particularly the part dealing with tactics, anticipates to a significant extent present eurocommunist positions. The "trenches" referred to by Gramsci, is exactly what eurocommunists propose to gradually conquer from within. Yet, it is worth noting that neither here nor anywhere else has Gramsci dispensed altogether with the war of manoeuvres (the violent rupture) which, under the new conditions,

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2. Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks p. 237.

3. Ibid., p. 241.

he sees as merely "partial" but not unnecessary. Furthermore, the rejection of the proletarian dictatorship is a eurocommunist addition which cannot be associated with Gramsci's "war of position" theory.

It was essentially Palmiro Togliatti who, more than any other communist leader of the West, contributed to the formulation of the fundamentals of the theory, supposedly through the appropriation of Gramsci's concepts and the experience of his own time. From his article, "Parliament and the Struggle for Socialism, of 1956, wherein he proposes the transformation of Parliament into an instrument of radical social change) and the 8th Congress of the PCI held the same year, down to the so-called "Testament of Yalta," written shortly before his death in 1964, the transformation of "peaceful transition" into the "democratic transition" had already been completed. Indeed, it is in this last writing of Togliatti where one finds some of the leading aspects of Italian eurocommunism and of the theory in general: his insistence on turning to the Catholic masses and stopping the "old atheistic propaganda" that serves no purpose any longer;<sup>4</sup> the penetration of the ideological apparatuses of the state, which later became eurocommunism's most important objective; and the transformation of the state into an instrument of democracy.<sup>5</sup> In this last concept, Togliatti clearly makes the jump from the peaceful to the democratic transition in light of his proposal to "deepen" and "develop" the positions adopted by the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in order to study the possibilities of a peaceful transition by re-examining

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4. Palmiro Togliatti, "Dal Promemoria di Yalta," in Gramsci/Togliatti/Longo/Berlinguer, II Compromesso Storico (Roma: Newton Compton Editori, 1972), p. 129.

5. Ibid., p. 130: "anche nel mondo della cultura (Letteratura, arte, ricerca scientifica, ecc.) oggi le porte sono largamente aperte alla penetrazione comunista."

the party's conception of democracy, the possibilities of extending it, and the forms of effective mass participation in economic and political affairs. And his conclusion was the following:

Thus arises the question of the possibility by the working classes of conquering positions of power within the framework of a State which has not changed its nature of a bourgeois State and hence the possibility of the struggle for the gradual transformation of this nature from within. In countries where the communist movement has become as strong as in ours (and in France), this is the central question that arises from the political struggle (emphasis supplied).<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of what we may think of Gramsci's remarks or Togliatti's contribution to the trend, the democratisation of bourgeois society by way of constantly winning positions without a "war" remains the most essential and immediate task of eurocommunism which is, at the same time, a necessary prerequisite for the transition to socialism. As the Rome Joint Declaration has it:

The Italian and French Communists hold that the march towards socialism and the building of a socialist society, which they propose as the prospect for their countries, must be achieved within the framework of a continuous democratisation of the economic, social and political life. Socialism will constitute a higher phase of democracy and freedom: democracy realised in the most complete manner.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Ibid., p. 130: " Sorge così la questione della possibilità di conquista di posizioni di potere, da parte delle classi lavoratrici, nell'ambito di uno Stato che non ha cambiato la sua natura di Stato borghese e quindi se sia possibile la lotta per una progressiva trasformazione, dall'interno di questa natura. In paesi dove il movimento comunista sia diventato forte come da noi (e in Francia), questa è la questione di fondo che oggi sorge nella lotta politica.

7. See the Rome Joint Declaration, Appendix. See also the Madrid Joint Declaration, where the three main eurocommunist parties deal again with the same issue.



Beginning with the coercive machine (army, police, judiciary, bureaucracy) and what eurocommunists, following Althusser's expanded definition of the state<sup>8</sup>, call "Ideological State Apparatuses" (i.e., educational and religious institutions, unions, information media; in short, whatever exists in an organised form), they propose to effect a radical change in the functioning of present-day democracy. The expansion and perfection of democracy is a task to be accomplished not only for the purpose just mentioned, but also (and this is an innovation worth noting) because democracy is perceived as being good in itself and has to be preserved in socialism.

In terms of democratisation (i.e., further democratisation of the present institutions of capitalist society for the purpose of paving the way to socialism) eurocommunists hold that it is only through the realisation of this task that the movement will be able to overcome the most important problem which has tormented Marxists ever since the appearance of their theory: the threatening existence of a state apparatus which operates as an instrument of class rule, defending the dominant interests and viewing with hostility all sorts of social change that may undermine existing property relations. The democratisation of the state, they believe, will change its class nature, turning it gradually into a neutral, impartial, above-class arbiter.

The eurocommunist perception of the state thus begs the question: is it possible to ignore the classical teaching and expect the transition to socialism to be effected without having to confront the hostility of the state? It is possible, in other words, to change its class nature? Carrillo,

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8. The idea, though in an undeveloped form, goes back to Gramsci. See, e.g., the following: "In politics the error occurs as a result of an inaccurate understanding of what the State (in its integral meaning: dictatorship hegemony) really is." Notebooks, p. 239.

who occupied himself with this problem at the time he was writing his book on eurocommunism, has come to the conclusion that the old teachers were right in insisting on the class character of the state. However, due to certain recent evolutions within its structures, he believes that the problem can be overcome:

The present-day state, which employs in its service not only the army, the police, the judiciary, the tax collector and the traditional bureaucracy, but also hundreds of thousands of teachers, administrators, technicians, journalists and other workers, is still the instrument of class domination defined by Marx, Engels and Lenin; but its structures are far more complex, more contradictory, than those known to three Marxist teachers, and its relations with society have quite different characteristics (author's italics).<sup>9</sup>

It is these newly acquired "different characteristics" which make Carrillo and many other eurocommunists optimistic that, despite the fact that the state has not essentially changed its role, the new formula will eventually trick the devil. As he remarks in the following paragraph - once again drawing on the Althusserian school - "this new political Leviathan" which "is today the centre of the countless contradictions affecting a society so tremendously" is "a colossus with feet of clay." And here is the explanation of why this, supposedly, handicapped monster, this instrument of centralised and autocratic authority, can be easily transformed to serve the interests of democracy and socialist progress. The foremost reason that justifies this optimism is the proletarianisation of the personnel of the modern state. As Poulantzas remarks, "today less than ever is the state an ivory tower isolated from the popular masses ..."<sup>10</sup>

9. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 22.

10. Nicos Poulantzas, "Towards a Democratic Socialism," New Left Review (May-June, 1978), p. 80.

Great numbers of working class members have manned its apparatus. These state workers, who live from hand to mouth, are gradually identifying themselves with the working class outside this state apparatus. Everywhere, including the Church\*, we find employees of the state who are no longer satisfied with the conditions of their existence and no longer consider themselves as the collective Hercules of the established order:

... a fact which he " (a Marxist) "must confront with the Marxist method of concrete analysis of the concrete situation is that the contradiction between society and the state, given the present dimensions and features of the state apparatus, can and must culminate in a crisis within that apparatus, the members of which mostly have their origins in the underprivileged classes and are really in a similar class situation, and who...cannot be separated off like the army and the police in barracks... 11.

What makes this proposition even more plausible is that the generalised crisis affects the functioning and the role of the state which gradually turns itself into an instrument of monopoly capital: it becomes, as Carrillo comments, "less and less a state for all and more and more a state for the few."<sup>12</sup> It is this "contradiction between the state and society" which eventually will bring the crisis within the apparatus of the state -- apparently between those of its members with proletarian leanings and those who still side with monopoly capital and the established order of things in general.

Whether we agree or not with the idea of the capitalist state becoming more and more the state of the few (which leaves us with the impression that it once had been one of the many), the fact is that a crisis does exist within its apparatus and it is this reality that provides

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\* We are still using the Althusserian definition of the state.

11. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 25.

12. Ibid, p. 25.

— eurocommunists with an additional argument<sup>13</sup>. It is from among the dissatisfied employees of both the "coercive" and the "ideological" apparatuses of the state that Carrillo expects new blood for the progressive movement. More so, it is these new elements which ostensibly will accelerate the democratisation of the state from within and will play an important role in the socialist transition by forcing the latter to adopt a neutral attitude.<sup>14</sup> This proposition cannot be wholly ignored; the process of transition, however, is a much more complicated one, and the questions of how one proceeds from a "proletarianised" state apparatus to the real changing of the nature of the state and of its relationships with society remain unanswered.

Contrary to the Spanish party, the PCI and, to a lesser extent, the PCF do not only count on the proletarianisation of the state personnel to engender the democratisation of the state. They also expect its "neutralisation" will be further achieved by the fact that these two European parties have already "conquered" (under their own banner) important segments of the state-apparatus: municipal and provincial governments, and important posts in the judiciary, the traditional bureaucracy, and even in the police. Furthermore, the intrusion of progressively thinking individuals into the institutions of culture and infor-

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13. On the subject of the crisis of the state, see Nicos Poulantzas' (ed). *La Crise de l'Etat*. (Press Universitaire de France, 1976); a collection of articles by different authors focusing on the various characteristics of the hegemonic crisis of the bourgeoisie, particularly in France. See also Goran Therborn's article "Eurocommunism - Can it Regain the Initiative?"; *Marxism Today*, April 1980. The author gives an outline on this crisis as manifested in some western democracies.

14. Carrillo has dedicated a whole chapter on actual developments inside the various apparatuses of the "state" and their importance for the "revolutionary" movement.

mation is not negligible. Naturally, the large communist-oriented labour unions, as well as the numerous associations and committees which promote the interests of particular groups, have existed in these countries long before the birth of the new trend and continue as such even though eurocommunism has repeatedly renounced the traditional close ties ("dependence") of these formations with the CPs. How could one expect the opposite when eurocommunists place such an important emphasis on the democratisation of the so-called ideological apparatuses of the state? If changing the nature of the state, to the extent required for the achievement of a democratic transition, has become a possibility as held by eurocommunists, then we may safely conclude that these two parties are in a rather advanced position compared to, for example, the Spanish party which only recently came out of hiding.

The whole notion of the democratisation of the state is based on the conviction that the state has an autonomous function of its own in the sense that its class character can not be seen as a predominant, inflexible attribute of its existence. As Carrillo has conceived it (more or less in Togliatti's spirit), it is possible to attain an "identification between the army and civilian society in the epoch of transition, an identification which supersedes the historic equation: oligarchy + armed forces = conservatism and reaction, and which assists the democratic advance of the progressive forces towards a just and equal society."<sup>15</sup>

This idea originates partly from Gramsci (his concept of the "independence of politics"), but was further elaborated by the Althusserian school, especially Nicos Poulantzas, who viewed the state as the focal point for the concentration of contradictions (particularly class contradictions) and whose class nature is more or less placed in doubt.

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15. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 64.

Put it in a different way, class war is being constantly waged within the various state apparatuses -- where power really resides -- and depending on the actual conditions of the particular historical conjuncture and the prevailing balance of power, within and without the state, it is possible to alter its class nature. It is the acceptance of this interpretation that led eurocommunists to the conviction that the theatre of class struggle be brought inside the state apparatus instead of, primarily, against it, a matter to which we shall return.

In the meantime it must be said that eurocommunists have no paid less attention to the importance of Parliament. Contrary to what they view as the Leninist conception which (according to their interpretation of it) considers Parliament "as nothing more than a place to denounce the evils of capitalism and the bourgeois governments and to make socialist propaganda," Berlinguer insists (reiterating in this case Palmiro Togliatti) that it should be "the mirror of the country."<sup>16</sup> An instrument whereby the representatives of the people could and should fight for the purpose of effecting (through decisions of the Legislature) social, political and economic changes and prepare the road to socialism. In Italy, as the leadership of the PCI has understood it, this possibility long ago has shed its rhetorical significance. The existence of an "anti-fascist constitution," the achievement of the forces of Resistance, have not only contributed to crowning with success the battles waged in the past to extend suffrage to women, to pass the law of proportional re-

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16. Togliatti, "Parliament and the Struggle for Socialism," Marxism Today (Sept. 1977), p. 285; cited by Berlinguer in his "Reflections," Marxism Today, p. 44.

presentation, and to curtail the anti-constitutional tendencies of the Executive in favour of the Chamber's prerogatives; the anti-fascist nature of this constitution has made it an instrument capable of assuring the socialist transformation of society.<sup>17</sup> The latter of course can only work as long as the progressive forces make it their task to protect the democratic functioning of the constitution and provide the necessary support to their representatives in Parliament.

One of the tangible results expected from the state-democratisation process, which runs parallel to the one just discussed, is to remove or at least diminish the hegemony of the ruling class by undermining its long-standing sway over the "Ideological Apparatuses of the State." Recalling the fact that eurocommunists, by rejecting any thought of making use of the coercive apparatuses of the state, have opted for the democratic alternative -- which is to be realised as a result of their gradual acceptance, i.e., the acceptance of the hegemonic role of the CP and its allies -- it is only natural that they should be placing so much importance on these apparatuses. Carrillo's quotation of an Althusserian statement lucidly illustrates this point: "so far as we know, no class can maintain state power in a lasting form without exercising at the same time its hegemony over and within the State Ideological Apparatus."<sup>18</sup>

If there is anything to be noted here, besides the obvious appeal to intellectuals to contribute to the cause of progress, it is not the extreme importance given to the democratisation of the state but, instead, the rather voluntaristic mentality which harbors the impression that the capitalist hegemony can be done away with, in an artificial fashion, even while this

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17. Berlinguer, "Reflections," Marxism Today, pp. 45-46

18. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 49

class is still capable of fulfilling its functions. And there are strong indications that Carrillo, again following Togliatti's path, may have carried this point excessively far, if we judge by the following:

From this point of view, the action of the revolutionary and progressive forces to carry their hegemony into the sphere of culture becomes essential. The precondition for this is the struggle for genuine freedom of culture. Only in conditions in which culture is free can these forces win hegemony.<sup>19</sup>

While scrutinizing the other aspect of this problematic, i.e., the expansion and preservation of democracy for its own sake, we observe that eurocommunism has indeed attempted a re-evaluation (of democracy) which defies almost everything in classical Marxism. Although what eurocommunists propose to expand and preserve is the democracy that we know, the one that emerged as a result of the bourgeois revolutions and was consequently strengthened by the struggles of the working class and its parties<sup>20</sup>, when they come to the point of evaluating its historical nature democracy assumes a transcendental character. It is not a form of bourgeois rule; it cannot be concretised to limit its historical existence to the capitalist system. Its values, the rights and freedoms of individuals

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19. Ibid., p. 43.

20. The eurocommunists have indeed made a case for the contribution of their parties to the development of democracy. See, for example, the following by an intellectual of the PCI: "Pour comprendre le rôle et l'importance des partis eurocommunistes de l'Europe occidentale actuelle, Je crois qu'il y a un fait qui doit être souligné: que les partis eurocommunistes, ou dits eurocommunistes, se sont développés dans ces pays ou les partis communistes ont joué un rôle positif dans la défense et dans l'élargissement, la construction des démocraties modernes." Giuliano Procacci, "Le rôle du parti," André Liebich (ed.), L'Avenir du Socialisme en Europe (Montréal: Centre interuniversitaire d'études Européennes, 1979), p. 106.



and groups which have been associated with it, its functions in general, are suprahistorical in nature and cannot possibly come to an end with the collapse of capitalism. After making a brief excursion into the classics, Carrillo takes exception with Lenin's blunt identification of democracy and the bourgeois state and concludes that, even according to Marx's and Engels' understanding of it, democracy dates back to the period of "primitive Communism."<sup>21</sup> The reference here is to Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, where -- in tracing the evolving characteristics of these institutions, and particularly those of the state -- the author "refers unequivocally to the democracy of the

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21. The passage, often quoted by eurocommunists to counteract to critiques from the Left, is the following from the Communist Manifesto: "We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class; to win the battle of democracy" (author's italics). It is primarily the underlined phrase that has attracted the interest of eurocommunists, not the fact that the proletariat should be raised "to the position of ruling class", or what follows in the next paragraph: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class ..." Marx/Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 504.

Engels' Introduction to Marx's Class Struggles in France 1848-1850, is also being used as a support document, since it is in this work of Engels where he speaks of the utilisation of universal suffrage and of "legal action" by the German party in its struggles for the preparation of the transition to socialism. However, Carrillo mentions neither the distortions of the Introduction by the German Social-Democratic Party nor Engels' violent reaction to them.

period of primitive communism."<sup>22</sup> The difference is, however, that Engels was not speaking of the same democracy as Carrillo; it is rather Carrillo and the other eurocommunists, who speak of the same democracy that Lenin said would disappear with the bourgeois state.

It is this notion of democracy that makes eurocommunists see it above history and perhaps only symptomatic of the capitalist mode of production. Without implying that the insistence of eurocommunists on preserving democracy for socialism is completely groundless, one cannot, on the other hand, resist the temptation to see in their own conception of democracy a notion that goes back to the innocence of the first years of the French Revolution. But idealism was crushed as soon as democracy began to concretise itself as capitalist democracy and as soon as freedoms and rights were defined on the basis of the dominant relations of production. They still are, and the most important of these rights, the most sacred of them,

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22. The passage from Lenin which Carrillo counter-poses to his conception of democracy is the following: "... it never enters the head of any of the opportunists, who shamelessly distort Marxism, that Engels is consequently speaking of democracy 'dying down of itself', or 'withering away'. This seems very strange at first sight. But is 'incomprehensible' only to those who have not thought about democracy also being a state and, consequently, also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution also can 'abolish' the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only 'wither away'". The State and Revolution, Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 25 (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 402.

And the passage from Engels; "And this gentile constitution is wonderful in all its childlike simplicity! Everything runs smoothly without soldiers, gendarmes or police; without nobles, kings, governors, prefects or judges; without prisons; without trials. All quarrels and disputes are settled by the whole body of the concerned -- the gens or the tribe or the individual gentes among themselves.... All are free and equal -- including the women". Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 96.

is the right to private property. It is the right that draws the most fundamental as well as the most conspicuous demarcation line between capitalism and socialism. Nevertheless, eurocommunists have chosen to ignore the reality of the historical limitations of democracy and retain only its ideal. Thus, on the basis of this conception, they conclude that if democracy means the affirmation of human rights and freedoms on the basis of equality and justice, why do we not let it be led in the direction where these rights and freedoms are fully realised? Abandoning democracy as the business of the capitalist class, as the conception of traditional Marxism has it -- they say - is tantamount to allowing it to preserve its degenerate state of existence. On the contrary, the eurocommunist perception is that if democracy is made the concern of the people, it will definitely reject its reactionary content and advance the cause of socialism. The transition to socialism will be its "logical conclusion." Here is how Claudin has conceived of this allegedly intrinsic relationship between democracy and socialism in a statement which gives us, at the same time, an indication of how eurocommunism makes the jump from political democracy to economic equality without giving much consideration either to the intricacies of the intermediate steps or even to the possibility of having the first without necessarily conquering the second:

If a substantial degree of democracy were ever introduced into the economy it would signify that the capitalist mode of production was coming to the end of its historical existence.<sup>23</sup>

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23. Claudin, Eurocommunism and Socialism, p. 62.

As we see in this statement from Claudin's book, what eurocommunism seeks through the full realisation of democracy is nothing less than the abolition of private property. This transcendental form of democracy is thus the kind of democracy that is proposed to be used both in the transition to socialism and, consequently, when the transition has been accomplished.

The democratisation of the state apparatus goes hand-in-hand with the unceasing efforts of the party and its allies to democratise and reform the economic institutions of the capitalist system for the purpose of effecting the proposed transition. This has been conceived as a long-term, evolutionary process marked by successive "breaks" (e.g., nationalisation of monopolies, reorganisation of forms of management) which will gradually change the nature of the economy and bring the entire system to an end:

A socialist transformation of society presupposes public control over the principal means of production and exchange, their progressive socialisation and implementation of democratic economic planning at the national level. The sector of small and medium - sized industrial and commercial enterprises can and must fulfill a specific, positive role in the building of socialism.<sup>24</sup>

These breaks constitute what eurocommunists have termed as "radical", "structural" changes which are reputed to assume a "qualitative" character, i.e., they effect such transformations in the base of capitalist society which make the emergence of socialist social relations possible. These qualitative changes as they have been conceived by the exponents of the doctrine may play the same function as did similar changes during the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

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24. Rome Joint Declaration, Appendix.

Carrillo's following statement gives us a generally-accepted eurocommunist position on this matter: "Just as bourgeois society was formed in the womb of the feudal regime, the socialist society has matured in the womb of developed capitalist society."<sup>25</sup> This statement could have been a perfectly good Marxist observation had Carrillo not qualified, like all true eurocommunists, his proposed "changes" and all other major changes brought about so far in the capitalist system, as changes which will eventually transform the system from within. Indeed, Carrillo believes that the transition to socialism will follow the same scenario as the one from feudalism to capitalism. The impetus of the first was the French Revolution; of the second, it was the Russian Revolution. From Russia, the revolution extended to many countries in all continents; the world order was completely transformed. As a result of this transformation, of these changes:

.... the historically dominant imperialist countries lost their hegemonic role; a process in which the new correlation of forces developing within these countries brings about advances, without mathematically repeating the historical models, through overall structural changes, which, at a certain level of accumulation, give rise to a qualitative leap from the bourgeois to the socialist order, on the basis of each country's indigenous political conditions (emphasis supplied).<sup>26</sup>

But if the socialist revolution progresses in such a simple, yet inexorable, fashion, why then the defensive attitude of eurocommunism? While basically correct as to the influence of the Russian Revolution and the gradual weakening of the dominant role of the imperialist countries, Carrillo,

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25. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 48.

26. Ibid., p. 83.

once more, confuses the dynamics of the socialist transition with those of the capitalist one -- only to get rid of the "soviet model." To discard this model, however, may perhaps require more than simply postulating a proposition disproved thus far by the history itself of socialist revolutions

This eurocommunist conception with regard to the transition problem is in the core of both the kind of struggle they have proposed as well as the governmental forms they have envisioned for socialist society. If socialist relations of production are to emerge gradually inside the capitalist structures -- and here we have to point to the fact that this proposition has absolutely no relevance to the classical version of the theory -- then, there is no reason to either fear a violent confrontation with the forces of the existing regime nor to resort to a dictatorial state in order to impose those relations, as Marx had thought. For, by the time the eurocommunists will be in a position to announce the creation of the socialist society, their class enemies would be an insignificant minority -- if not a thing of the past.

These successive ruptures within the capitalist mode of production are not, in any way, scheduled to begin when the working class and its allies take power. There certainly will be major changes as soon as that happens (nationalisation of the principal means of production, etc)<sup>27</sup>; as we have seen, however, the process may begin much earlier with less perceptible breaks, as long as the progressive forces are capable of enforcing them on the actual government. In a very important sense,

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27. See Rome and Madrid Joint Declarations for an idea of the proposed changes. For proposals of the PCF, see Marchais' "Report to the Twentieth First (Extraordinary) Congress of the French Communist Party," where he deals with the "Common Programme." Marxism Today (issues of March and February, 1975).

we may say that the revolution, as far as eurocommunists are concerned, has already begun. For reforms such as those proposed by them are not, in any way, foreign to the history of the evolution of the capitalist system. "Some of this" -- Ellenstein stated while still a member of the PCF -- "is already taking place, more or less spontaneously, under the technological and social pressures of the existing French social and economic system. It will accelerate within the framework of a free and democratic socialism."<sup>28</sup> More eloquently, this concept was stated by Togliatti himself in the X<sup>th</sup> Congress of the PCI: "We are introducing a concept of a gradual development in which it is quite difficult to say with precision when the qualitative change takes place."<sup>29</sup> That may seem bizarre in the light of traditional Marxism, but it is perfectly consistent with a doctrine that supposedly carries on a process begun long ago (since the period of popular fronts) and which has only recently become the programme of those CPs that turned eurocommunist.

Be that as it may, eurocommunism requires no major confrontation for the realisation of its vision, since there will be no specific moment at which a single great rupture (or successive, abrupt ruptures) will separate the past from the future. There is no battle to be waged for the purpose of defeating an enemy fortified in his own, separate trenches, or conquering a territory stretching beyond their own. The

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28. Jean Ellenstein, "The Skein of History Unrolled Backwards," Urban, Eurocommunism, p. 39.

29. Cited by Berlinguer in La "Questione Comunista," V.I., p. 100. "Noi introduciamo il concetto di uno sviluppo graduale, nel quale é assai difficile dire quando, precisamente, abbia luogo il mutamento di qualita."

conquest, a gradualist one, will be accomplished from within. Contrary to the traditional "models," there is no need to enter into a "dual power situation" which counter-poses the forces of change to those of the established order-- the latter being protected by the forces of the state apparatus.

The concept of democratic transition transfers the theatre of class conflict inside the terrain of the state apparatuses. The battle is to be fought between the various tendencies within the apparatuses of the state, not between the state and the people. This latter version (i.e., a confrontation between the state and the people), as Poulantzas explained it on behalf of the new doctrine, is the Third Internationalist model, according to which:

class contradictions are located between the state and the popular masses standing outside the State. This remains true right up to the crisis of dual power, when the state is effectively dismantled through the centralisation at national level of a parallel power, which becomes the real power (Soviets).<sup>30</sup>

Whether this is an idea of the Third International or goes back to Marx's writings of 1848, or whether the state was viewed by traditional Marxism as an "ivory tower" as Poulantzas says later on in the same article, is not our problem for the moment. It will suffice at this point to say that what the eurocommunists want to emphasise above everything else in this respect is that the conquest of the state apparatus and the approach of the democratic transition are two diametrically opposed concepts. This does not mean, however, that they discount the

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30. Poulantzas, "Towards a Democratic Socialism," New Left Review, (May-June, 1978), p. 78.



importance of popular power organised outside the state and counterposing itself to that of the state apparatus. On the contrary, without an organised, politicised, militant working class and without a strong party, neither the broad alliance nor the expected radical reforms would ever materialise. In his analysis of the two elements -- "consensus" and "force" -- which make the democratic road possible, Berlinguer states that "the element of force must find expression in unceasing vigilance, in the combativeness of the working masses, in our determination in quickly thwarting manoeuvres and attacks on freedom, democratic rights and constitutional legality."<sup>31</sup> Yet, given the general orientation of the eurocommunist trend and the excessive emphasis placed on the democratic transition, this extra-state, extra-parliamentary, organised force is only destined to have a moral effect on the general situation rather than be used to face the eventuality of a confrontation with state violence. One can see it as being part of the general defensive attitude of the movement. The opposite would be tantamount to returning to traditional Marxist revolutionary models which have been expressly condemned in the doctrine as far as developed societies of the West are concerned. We have already seen that Berlinguer's counter-measure to reactionary violence is the isolation of the instigators of such violence through seeking "every possible form of agreement and convergence among all the popular forces."<sup>32</sup>

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31. Berlinguer, "Reflections," p. 46. The other element, referred to above as "consensus," is the acceptance of the transition to socialism by the great majority of the people.

32. Ibid, p. 43.

In his Eurocommunism and the State Carrillo also comes to the sensitive problem of reactionary violence aimed at checking the advance of the progressive forces, and he, indeed, concludes that counter-force may be necessary -- a proposition that apparently contradicts the whole spirit of the democratic transition:

It may be that the transformation of the present state of monopoly capital into a state fit for the exercise of the hegemony of the antimonopolistic socialist forces and, specifically, of the new historic bloc, the alliance of the forces of labour and culture -- it may be that this cannot be won solely through political action and democratic government measures; it can happen that at a given moment it may be necessary to reduce by force resistance by force ... " (emphasis supplied).<sup>33</sup>

In any case, neither Carrillo nor any other eurocommunist has tackled this problem seriously, and Carrillo himself renounced counter-violence after the legalisation of his party. In a meeting of the Central Committee, held in mid-1977, immediately after the election, he had to clarify the party line in the following words:

It is necessary to win our party to a more homogeneous line on "Eurocommunism". In this electoral campaign there has been a comrade who at the same time as explaining our programme has used expressions like 'we have something up our sleeve'. I fear that it is not an isolated case. I fear that there are cadres and members of the party who, while accepting its political line on a formal level, have 'something up their sleeve', that is treat our politics lightly, as a simple conjunctural tactic.<sup>34</sup>

Without discarding essential differences that may exist in the conditions of the various societies where "eurocommunism" has, in one form or another, appeared in the last two decades, it would not be superfluous

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33. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 76

34. Carrillo, "Genuine Democratization of Society and its Institutions," Marxism Today (October, 1977), p. 309.

to be reminded once more of the absolute conviction of the Chilean CP on the possibility of the "peaceful road." The Chilean communists had allowed for some forms of "violence"; yet, like today's eurocommunists, they had excluded "civil war" and "armed insurrection" -- developments which no CP or any other political force can pre-determine. Once such a view is accepted, however, it castrates the programme of political action of the party and radically changes its approach to the very important question of the reorganisation of the socialist state:

En d'autres termes, il s'agit de développer la thèse de la voie pacifique dans toute son ampleur, et d'en étudier tous les aspects. Je veux dire les formes les plus variées de la lutte des masses, à l'exception de la guerre civile ou de l'insurrection armée, sans que l'on puisse préciser à l'avance laquelle d'entre elles s'imposera finalement comme décisive pour la conquête du pouvoir politique.<sup>35</sup>

It was after the defeat that this position was slightly revised, without however totally altering the essence of the "eurocommunist" version of the peaceful transition:

'Peaceful path' is a correct term only in so far as it rules out civil war. But because of the many vicissitudes, it cannot bypass the law which says that violence is the 'midwife' of history.<sup>36</sup>

Still, if violence is the midwife of history, how could one exclude civil war as one (perhaps the most extreme) of its possible forms? A revolutionary movement can only speak of the possibility of the peaceful road. It cannot plan in advance the forms of violence and cannot exclude civil war either. The latter may come about even without being on the agenda

35. Corvalan, "La voie pacifique et l'alternative de la violence," Chili: Les Communistes dans la Marche au Socialisme, p. 45

36. Teitelboim, "Reflections," World Marxist Review (1977, Vol. 20, No. 1), p. 52.

of that movement.

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Even those maverick eurocommunists, like Fernando Claudin, who are believed to advocate more radical positions, have not very much to say about this exceptionally tricky question of the process of socialist transition. Claudin criticises the PCI in particular, and the eurocommunist parties in general, for having misconceived the phase of transition - apparently a long one in terms of time, according to their proposals. The reference here is to what is to be done after the victory of the great alliance led by the CP, and whether the socialisation of the means of production must start immediately - Claudin believes that it must. A quick process of transition, however, might imply force, something which does not and cannot exist in the eurocommunist agenda. Claudin's critique, therefore, on this particular point (incidentally, one of the very few unclear points in his book) remains dangling in the air, since he has nothing to offer for the modification of the doctrine which he has generally accepted and which he identifies with "the only possible route open for the advanced capitalist countries."<sup>37</sup>

Despite its paramount significance from the Marxist point of view, the question of how eurocommunists will react in the event of reactionary violence, during what they have conceived of as being the most important period of transition (in all probability, after an electoral victory of the alliance), is not necessarily the most important one in the eurocommunist theory. Indeed, the formula of democratic transition was devised precisely to eliminate this particular problem. Naturally,

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37. Fernando Claudin, Eurocommunism and Socialism, p. 101-107.

it will be another story if dialectics takes its own course and dispenses with both the good intentions of the eurocommunist leadership and with the democratic traditions of the West.

## 2. The State in Classical Marxism

From the Marxist point of view, the state has always been perceived as an instrument of class domination. Its control, in one way or another, by the ruling class is a matter of survival; its conquest by the revolutionary movement is the first, most important step for the realisation of its "ultimate aim." In dealing so far with the eurocommunist view of the transition to socialism through the democratisation of the state, we have essentially focussed upon their conception of the modern capitalist state: a state that presents the possibility of its transformation into an instrument of progress. Let us examine now this proposition in the light of the classical definition of the state.

In the present section, apart from a basic outline of the subject, we will concentrate our attention on those aspects which, for diverse reasons, have increasingly acquired more relevance for the eurocommunist debate. The first theme to be addressed will be that of the state in general, as a weapon of class rule, followed by a more detailed discussion of the capitalist state. For reasons related exclusively to the thematic organisation of the study, the discussion of the various aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat, will comprise part of the following chapter.

Basically what will be dealt with in this section can be summed up in the following points: the state as a class instrument; its

component parts; the state vis-a-vis its personnel; the independence of the state and the possibility of its becoming, in modern capitalist societies, a neutral, "above classes," institution. This last aspect will include some observations on the evolution of the state in contemporary history, including the "proletarianised" modern capitalist state.

### I. The State in General and the State Under Capitalism

Historically, the state, seen by Marxists as a coercive instrument of the ruling class, appeared as a consequence of "the emancipation of private property from the community."<sup>38</sup> Developments in the process and organisation of production and, therefore, a rise in men's productive capacity, called forth a division in social labour. The increase of labour's productivity which led to the division of human activity into more or less separate departments (agriculture, cattle-raising, handicraft, commerce, but, above all, a division between physical and mental labour), had at the same time allowed the emergence of private property and, therefore, of social classes. The latter could not have arisen without man's ability to produce more than he needed for his maintenance. It was the existence of this possibility of surplus product that permitted the rise of classes and the exploitation of man by man. "The division of labour ... simultaneously implies the distribution, and indeed the unequal distribution, both qualitative and quantitative, of labour and its products, hence property."<sup>39</sup>

The appearance of classes and, thereby, the division of society into exploiters and exploited could not but gradually produce an anta-

38. Marx/Engels, The German Ideology, p. 90.

39. Ibid., p. 46.

gonistic relationship between these classes, which in turn required the creation of a medium or mechanism capable of keeping class conflict in check. This superimposed "reconciliation" among the antagonistic classes was achieved through the establishment of the state, a "public power", supposedly representing the interests of all the classes. Whatever existed before its erection -- says Engels -- for the protection of the community against outside intruders, i.e., the state in its rudimentary form which was the responsibility of the whole community and expressed itself as "the people in arms," was replaced by an "armed public power", seemingly above society but clearly divorced from the mass of the population.<sup>40</sup> It was a "special power" mainly composed of the army, police bodies, the judiciary and other public functionaries, as well as the "material adjuncts" of coercion, such as prisons. Engels has dated the origins of the state in the period of the passage from savagery to barbarism. The appearance of monogamy, the subjugation of the female sex to the male, and the rise of private property (actually, it was the last that brought about all other changes), preceded the creation of the state.

It is clear from the circumstances that led to its creation, that the state is the product of definite historical changes. As such, it is founded upon society and reflects its structure and the degree of its development. Contrary to the Hegelian view which sees it as "the reality of the ethical idea," i.e., basically a discovery, a triumph of rational thinking,<sup>41</sup> to Marx and Engels it is the product of society itself after the rise of private property. As Marx put it as early as his Critique

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40. Engels, Origins, p. 107. Marx uses the expression "commune - as state," Grundrisse, p. 474.

41. Engels, Origins, p. 166. Hegel uses various such expressions to define the nature of the state. See, for example, his Philosophy of Right especially sub-section III of Third Part, "The State."

of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, "the political constitution at its highest point is ... the constitution of private property."<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, while the state may in one sense play the role of the community's protector against the danger of mutual destruction of the conflicting classes, as well as against outside enemies, it is basically the state of the economically dominant class. Enforced class conciliation cannot but mean the defence of the privileges of this class and the preservation of the existing class relations.

In each mode of production the state has always been under the control of the class that claims direct or indirect ownership of the means of production. But while, as a general rule, the state of each particular mode of production has been the state of the economically dominant class, that is, a class state, it does not mean on the other hand that the form of this state has been a stereotyped and universal one. Depending on the peculiar conditions existing in each society, the class state of each mode of production has manifested itself in a variety of particular forms. The latter concerns the question of how the ruling class rules in terms of exercising direct or indirect control of the state-machine, that is, of ruling a particular society. Side by side with this, the state in its general form has undergone a tremendous development throughout the centuries of its existence. It witnessed its most spectacular development in bourgeois societies. The revolutionary wars of the bourgeoisie, national and imperialistic antagonisms, the conflicts with the working class and international class conflicts,

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42. Marx/Engels; Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 39.



along with the technical revolution in the art and means of warfare, and the use of the state itself for purposes of patronage, are chiefly responsible for this development. In the light of this last remark, it is obvious that, apart from drawing some general observations on its nature, one cannot dwell extensively on the state in the abstract and independently from the particular mode of production, or even the particular society, that produced it.

If we see the state, however, as a class instrument, which in bourgeois society has turned itself into a "war-engine of capital against labour," then, in order to understand its functions in both its general form and in its particular one, it will first be necessary to circumscribe its physical dimensions.<sup>43</sup> This will enable us to understand how the dominant class rules through this specially organised medium, and apart from, or side by side with, its ideological hegemony.

Our first question, therefore, is what does this "machine for the oppression of one class by another" consist of, independent of the class that controls it, or the particular type of individuals that occupy its various departments. There are basically four elements which have been singled out in classical Marxist literature as the fundamental and more conspicuous components of the state-mechanism: the army, the police, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy -- the latter consisting of servants of the state in its various departments, such as taxation, or supervisors, inspectors, etc., in areas of civil society under state control. In its anthropomorphic reality, this mechanism appears as trained individuals who, by means of violence or the threat of it

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43. Marx, The Civil War in France, M/E On the Paris Commune. p. 70

(in both cases acting "legally"), compel others to conform with the existing laws. Even in cases of unconstitutionally established government, as has often happened with bourgeois rule, the role of the state (still) is to see that society as a whole complies with the general or particular interests of the dominant class, independent of whether or not this is provided for by specific legislation.

Essentially, these are the means by which this class -- apart from the voluntary recognition by society of its manifestly superior role -- exercises its sway over the subordinate classes; maintains conciliation, and reproduces existing economic relations and cultural values. There is no reason at this point to make any references to the pertinent literature in order to show how Marx and Engels defined the state in terms of its constituent elements. The examples are indeed abundant. Naturally, modern society has created a host of auxiliary and peripheral state institutions which either facilitate the work of the traditional state organs or answer the ever-increasing needs of the social and political fabric through the creation of new ones. Furthermore, what has been termed "bureaucracy" cannot be easily defined as a static category. The more the state intervenes in civil society and the more it develops its own internal structures, the more departments and the more public functionaries it creates.

What is presented here as the state-apparatus in terms of its component parts, can only be conceived of as being the legally established means of organized "public" violence whose intervention in society (whenever necessary) for the purpose of directing the conduct of its members, is expressed physically. Since we are talking in terms of coercion and coercive means, it must be said that it is their physical

reality that makes these means what they are; there is, however, a fifth element which occasionally appears in, especially, Marx's writings which seems to defy this definition: the Clergy. Its inclusion in the state of today is not only questionable, but also theoretically confusing. But let us first see what Marx says and to what extent he really considers the Clergy (or the organisation of the Church for that matter) as part of the state.

In The Civil War in France, Marx delineates the various elements of the bourgeois state (basically the same elements of which the state of the old regime was comprised) in the following way: "The centralised state power with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature ... originated from the days of absolute monarchy."<sup>44</sup> To what extent or in what way should the clergy be considered as part of the modern state, or the state of the Second French Empire with which Marx was concerned at this point, he does not explain in this particular instance.\* In the Middle Ages, and for a variety of good and bad reasons, the Church had been able to play this role. Besides being a state, apart from and within the existing secular states, with its own army, courts etc., it had also been invested with additional powers which it exercised over the entire Christendom. It controlled registers of births, marriages and deaths, collected taxes (the tithe), and even intervened in "correcting" religious delinquents. In these latter capacities, the Church was not only acting as a government with coercive power, it also exercised many other state functions as well. In

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44. Marx, The Civil War in France, M/E, Commune, p. 68.

\* By the Concordat of 1801, while recognising Catholicism as the official religion of France, Napoleon I transformed the clergy into salaried employees of the State. Bishops would be selected by the government. Religious instruction, however, was permitted in French schools and the Church itself could have its own teaching institutions. The latter came to an end in 1901 by the "Republican-Socialist" government of Waldeck - Rousseau. In 1905, the Concordat (of 1801) was totally repealed and the state ceased to pay the salaries of the clergy.

the modern period, however, when such powers were gradually appropriated by the state, the state functions of the Church, whether Roman or Reformed, began to wane but did not vanish altogether. Apart from the keeping of registers, wherever such practices were still left to the Church, its direct physical intervention -- a state-like intervention -- manifested itself in other departments of organised social life as well. Its control over education something which Marx mentions in the Civil War in France (and something which we will come to shortly), is one example. Nevertheless, its functioning as a state-organ may also express itself in more secular forms. In the Eighteenth Brumaire Marx mentions the use of priests in the French countryside as informers in the service of Napoleon III:

Another "idée napoléonienne," is the domination of the priests as a means of government .... The priest ... appears as only the anointed bloodhound of the earthly police ... whose mission under the second Bonaparte is to keep watch over, not the enemies of the peasant regime in the towns, as under Napoleon, but the enemies of Bonaparte in the country.<sup>45</sup>

Although what is happening in this case may be seen as a function performed by a para-state agency which, properly speaking, does not make up part of the officially defined and legally established apparatus of the bourgeois state -- even though such agencies have never been absent -- it is clear that, in this particular instance, the inclusion of the clergy in the state is justifiable.

Although we must acknowledge the role of the clergy in its capacity as "police informer," we must realize that in this context it does not act in its customary capacity as spiritual instructors. It is only in the former case that it can be identified as an instrument of state. This

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45. Marx, Eighteenth Brumaire, Tucker, Reader, p. 520.

distinction comes out much more clearly in the Civil War in France where-  
 in Marx speaks of both the destruction and replacement of the bourgeois  
 state, as well as that of the spiritual institutions of society ( the  
 latter being a different entity):

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police,  
 the physical force elements of the old government, the  
 Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of re-  
 pression, the "parson power," by the disestablishment  
 and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies  
 ... The whole of the educational institutions were  
 opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time  
 cleared of all interference of Church and State.<sup>46</sup>

The distinction between state organs and the Church as a spiritual  
 institution is made clear. The latter, no matter how "oppressive" it may  
 be in its spiritual functions, cannot be identified with the state. It  
 may, however, become an appendage of the state, as soon as it is given  
 the authority to act as a public power (e.g., to control education).  
 And yet, educational institutions, like the Church itself as a spiritual  
 establishment, cannot be seen as component parts of the state. It is  
 only the state- or Church-appointed officials, empowered with the au-  
 thority to see that the existing laws on education are observed by the  
 school system, who must be seen as organs of the state-machine.

In his Critique of the Gotha Program, Marx once again provides us  
 with commentary on the above subject, specifically within the section  
 which deals with the German party's perspective on elementary education:  
 Drawing the distinction between an educational system controlled by the  
 people vis-à-vis one controlled by the state or the Church, he makes the  
 following remarks:

Defining by a general law the expenditures on the elementary  
 schools, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the branches

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46. Marx, The Civil War in France, M/E, Commune, p. 72

of instruction, etc., and, as is done in the U.S., supervising the fulfilment of these legal specifications by state inspectors, is a very different thing from appointing the state as the educator of the people! Government and Church should rather be equally excluded from any influence on the school.<sup>47</sup>

In both cases, it is the influence and the presence (the physical presence) of officials of the state and the Church (the latter acting as state-organ) that matters. In the former case it is limited to inspectors; in the latter, the intervention is total. However, even in the latter cases -- as it happened in the past and still persists in some modern societies -- education is controlled by the state or the Church acting as a state appendage; the educational institutions themselves have not become elements of the state-apparatus. They should be considered as being controlled by it in the same sense as today's "nationalized" sectors (such as health, transport, mines, electricity, etc.) are .

What the state is and what it controls are two different things. Where particular caution is required is in the historical evolution of the state and its ever-increasing power over departments of civil society. By constantly adding other functions of a non-coercive nature to its usually coercive functions -- in any case, the state has never restricted itself to coercive functions alone -- it has also extended its influence and power of intervention. A case in point is the capitalist state of today with its immensely increased control over sectors of economy, social services, education and information, and the creation of close links between some of its organs and the industrial/financial interests. From the so-called non-interventionist and "free enterprise" state of capitalism to the one of state-monopoly capitalism, the non-coercive functions of the state have so tremendously increased that its role in

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47. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," Tucker, Reader, pp. 396-97.

general has also changed. And this change is manifested in its becoming a more powerful instrument in the hands of the ruling class. Yet, it should be emphasised that what is controlled by the state should not be considered as part of its mechanism.

Making the above distinction is indeed necessary, for if organised education or religion are to be viewed as elements of the state, simply by virtue of their being controlled by the state or influenced by established interests and values, then we undoubtedly will find ourselves trapped in an impossible maze. Religious and educational institutions are not the only organisations responsible for reforming (or deforming) the consciousness of the masses on the basis of prevailing values. Press, radio, television, and any other institution which contributes to the enrichment and organisation of the existing culture, even by only being an historically created product of a capitalist society, also should be taken into consideration. As long as such institutions do not oppose existing productive relations, they help in solidifying the position of the ruling class. But we cannot possibly see all these institutions as state-organs. Their inclusion, as is done by the Althusserians and eurocommunists in general, into the state-mechanism as "ideological State apparatuses," side by side with the "repressive State apparatuses" (army, police, courts), is leading us into total theoretical confusion.<sup>48</sup>

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48. See Louis Althusser's Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), "The State Ideological Apparatuses," from p. 141 on. Althusser is following in this instance Gramsci's line of thought as expressed in certain passages in his treatment of the "State and Civil Society," where the distinction between the two concepts, state and civil society, is more or less obliterated: "... But what does that signify if not that by 'State' should be understood not only the apparatus of government, but also the 'private' apparatus of 'hegemony' or civil society?" Notebooks, p. 261; or : "...one might say that State-political society-civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion," Ibid., p. 263.

We run the risk of translating every manifestation of organised, non-"subversive" culture into an aspect of the state -- in this case a ubiquitous Leviathan with very little left outside it. The entire "civil society" becomes part of it. And what is more confusing is that frequently such institutions which Althusser includes in the state apparatus (churches, parties, trade unions, schools, etc.), or at least many of them, are not only not controlled directly, but are not even indirectly regulated by the state.

## II. How the "Economically Dominant Class" Rules Society

The economically dominant class of a society does not become its ruler simply because of its higher intelligence or because it got to the state first, or even through corruption and the manipulation of public opinion. Undoubtedly, most of these factors and many others do play their part, especially when this class is beginning to lose its historical importance, but they cannot explain its political dominance. The latter can only be explained by the socio-economic functions (the "historical mission") of this class. Its economic activity, in its developed form, is the economic activity that embraces the totality of society. Each mode of production is the mode which, within its own limitations and until its term has expired, serves society as a whole. In this way the ruling class, in one sense, and despite the fact that its universalist claims allow for gross inequalities among classes represents the interests of the whole society. In fact, this is the motto upon which every revolutionary class before becoming the ruling class of society wages its struggles: "the class making a revolution



comes forward from the very start, if only because it is opposed to a class, not as a class but as the representative of the whole society, as the whole mass of society confronting the ruling class."<sup>49</sup>

With its elevation to the position of the ruling class in a given society, the laws, the morality, the entire philosophy and culture, and the institutions of this society are modified in order to express the prevailing economic relations and the interests of this class translated into the interests of society. In all revolutions of minorities, the general interests of society are bound to be more illusory than real. It does not take much intelligence to see that the real triumph of the French Revolution was the sanctification of private property and thereby the recognition of the bourgeoisie as the leading class of society. Liberty, equality and fraternity could not but express the social relations permitted by the material conditions of the time. What counts, however, when an economically dominant class becomes the ruling class of society (and we are only referring here to the revolutions of minorities) is not how many people are kept in subordination, but--given the degree of economic progress and the absence of an alternate solution -- what keeps society alive and active. This is insured by the economic activity of this class; and this is precisely what makes its political dominance and its hegemony in the broad sense both possible and historically justifiable. Its economy, is the economy of society as a whole; its interests, albeit in a narrow sense, are the interests of society; its culture, is the culture of society and finds its expression in all

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49. Marx/Engels, The German Ideology, p. 60.

its institution, though more clearly and directly in the political sphere.

Early in their writing careers, Marx and Engels summarised the extent to which the culture of the ruling class becomes the culture of society in The German ideology:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of an epoch. 50

This statement tells a great deal about the eurocommunist pretension of having a working class hegemony imposed before the transition, but, more specifically, of imposing it from within the existing "ideological state apparatuses." Until the historic mission of the ruling class has run out, and until a new revolutionary class has arisen to challenge it as the representative of the interests of society, the former will continue to dominate the state and cultural institutions by virtue of its economic functions. The state will continue executing laws that defend the existing property relations, and society itself, through its various institutions -- with the exception of those of the revolutionary movement -- will uphold and reproduce its culture. Both of them (state and civil institution) will express the hegemony of the ruling class:

the first through coercion or the threat of it (essentially the same thing), and the second through their acceptance of that class's hegemony. Even after this class has outrun its mission and has found itself in an ancien régime situation, both the state and many of the institutions of civil society will not denounce its hegemony. The apparatuses of the state, in the majority of their personnel will continue carrying on their duties as usual. Acculturation to what has been sanctified by time and practice and narrow interest will play their part. The state/hegemony relationship will undoubtedly change in favour of a more authoritarian rule, but we cannot possibly imagine a form of political power hanging in the air for a prolonged period of time without a modicum of support by society. Its hegemony will gradually decline, but the emergence of a new hegemony requires the appearance of a revolutionary movement. The establishment of a new hegemony, however, in a given society can only be possible through a social revolution and the overthrow of the old rule in its totality, accompanied with the reconstruction of state and social institutions whose content will reflect the newly-established productive relations.

On the other hand, one cannot deny the fact that before the transition, a revolutionary movement may impose on a section of the population, including members of the state apparatuses, a culture of its own side by side with the existing hegemonic culture: a phenomenon which is very significant in itself but which cannot go beyond the recognition of the future potentialities of the working class, expressed through the existence of a powerful movement whose influence has affected even sections of the state-machine. Still, moving from this to the point where the movement dominates the "ideological" and "coercive" apparatuses of a capitalist state, infusing into them the philosophy of the proletariat

while they are still functioning as capitalist institutions, seems to be a very unrealistic ambition -- to say the least.

Our specific question, however, is how the ruling class rules in terms of its actual participation in the affairs of the state. Basically -- and here we restrict ourselves to the case of the bourgeoisie and only to the state -- its sway over the other classes is insured through the control of the state-apparatus by a government formed by representatives of its socio-economic interests. This latter has never meant that such representatives should necessarily come from the ranks of the class alone. This has never been the case; no bourgeois party has ever appeared as such either in its leadership or in its following, but this kind of adulteration cannot have any serious effects on the social character of a bourgeois government that issues from such a party. Marx and Engels have summed up the bourgeois government's chief responsibility in two lines in the Communist Manifesto: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."<sup>51</sup> The protection and promotion of the interests of the dominant class require that the government take care of the better organisation of the state and see that appointments and promotions in at least key positions meet the criteria of loyalty, or at least conform to the definition of the tasks of the particular function.

The protection of the prevailing social relations also requires that the government, besides making use of the existing laws, creates new ones whenever necessary to defend the system and make its operation more efficient, thus ensuring that system's further development. The state sees

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51. Marx/Engels, Manifesto, p. 486.

that such laws and the government's policies are being observed. This requires, first of all, that the personnel of the state-apparatuses comply with governmental policies and the numerous directives that frequently arrive at the various departments to determine the practical implementation of existing laws. State bureaucrats, on the other side, issue -- with the approval of the appropriate political authority -- their own directives, make recommendations to the various ministries for the modification of existing laws and the creation of new ones, and contribute on a daily basis, to the maintenance, reproduction and development of the state-organism. In reality, it has been the state-bureaucracy that in modern societies has assumed the responsibility of directing and determining the on-going operation of the various apparatuses of the state and, thus has kept society in order by infusing into general and often abstract governmental policies a supposedly appropriate content. Hence, the creation of some sort of independence of the state vis-à-vis the government and society in general -- a theme which will occupy us from now on.

Government and state are, in a significant sense, two different things. However, one cannot completely separate these two entities, for a state in the abstract and apart from its governing agency, is unthinkable. Administratively speaking, the government is the executive of the state, which provides the latter with its direct link to the dominant class. The government's function is mainly directive, that of the state is practical and instrumental, although the latter plays also an important part in reproducing the ideology of the ruling class. Together, they constitute the main class implement by which the bourgeoisie exercises its dominance, its class "dictatorship." Strictly,

speaking, the personnel of the government is not part of that of the state, as it was the case in feudalism where the two agencies more or less coincided: the landowning aristocracy, which, in the absence of a real central authority, had assumed governmental functions, had been at the same time the "warrior" estate par excellence, on top of acting as a judiciary body as well. With the retreat of feudalism, however, and the gradual emergence of the modern state, a division of labour was called forth and in consequence of which, the government became a separate entity of its own, and its personnel gradually ceased to overlap with that of the state. It was mainly as a result of the rise of democracy that this separation materialised. With the further development of the bourgeois state, the tremendous increase of its manpower, and the further division of labour, both in the government and the state, the overlap of functions has been substantially curbed. This, of course, does not prevent the state from "unconstitutionally" interfering with the work of the government. With the immense importance the military and other state agencies have acquired in present-day capitalist society, and the close ties between the latter and industrial/financial circles, the government -- if not the Executive itself -- is often ignored not only in the elaboration but also, sometimes, in the implementation of important decisions ( e.g., "unauthorised" activities of the CIA against Nicaragua).

Be that as it may, the question of how the economically dominant class rules society has not been adequately clarified. So far we have only touched upon the elementary architectonics of political power, the bare structures that connect (in the most general sense) the ruling class with the state and its executive. A more specific question to be asked has to do with whether the ruling class rules directly through its actual presence and active participation in the state affairs.

And since both government and state express in their unity the political rule of the dominant class -- in our case the bourgeoisie -- our question may as well be put as follows: is bourgeois rule, or has it ever been, a purely or directly bourgeois one? The question cannot be answered in one stroke. An archtypical form of bourgeois political power, in terms of the incumbents in both the government and the state-apparatus, does not exist.

We shall focus on the state, for this is what primarily counts in political power. Without having control over the state-mechanism (and this control, as we will see, can be achieved in a variety of ways), no class of society can have claims to an indisputable rule over it. Getting control of the government does not necessarily make a class the ruling class, if the state is still in the hands of another class. Unless the latter has, more or less, identical interests with those represented by the governing class, a rupture between the state and its executive is inevitable. The overthrow of Allende's government in Chile by the organs of a state, which was neither created by the political forces that established the new regime nor willing to act as their instrument, may serve as an example. Yet the only lesson one can learn from this example is that it is inconceivable to imagine of a ruling class which does not master the state, and this is equally valid for both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But it still does not answer our more precise question of how the state is run by the ruling class, or, even less, that of how this is accomplished in a bourgeois state.

Generally speaking, the bourgeois state has never been -- and could have never been -- a purely bourgeois one in the composition of its membership. Given its spectacular development in terms of the number of

persons it employs and the agencies it has created, it has become impossible for the bourgeoisie to man the state apparatus with only members from its own ranks. Further, as Göran Therborn, has correctly observed, one should distinguish between "state power," which is used by the ruling class to protect its interests and safeguard its hegemony, and "state apparatus," whose social composition varies from society to society due to co-existence of more than one mode of production<sup>52</sup> -- a complexity to which we shall return in the remaining of the section. For the purpose of the argument made here, it will suffice to say that the bourgeois state has never been a "closed" sector of employment. On the other hand, it has never been so open as to alter its class character in terms of its basic function, as an expression of existing class relations, and with regard to the loyalty of its personnel. It is this openness which has traditionally permitted members of underprivileged classes to seek a career in the state. There have always been boys (and in recent decades, girls) of poor families, in both developed but especially undeveloped countries, who have aspired to a job in the various apparatuses of the state, including the army and the police where security and other benefits, along with a certain (yet often dubious) amount of prestige, are to be expected. Given that they possess the required "qualifications" and as long as there are positions to be filled, there are no serious obstacles to the fulfilment of such ambitions. As a matter of fact, recruitment of youths into the army in certain present-day capitalist countries has become part of the policy to combat unemployment.

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52. What Does the Ruling Class Do When it Rules? (London: NLB, 1980), pp. 148-150.



Regardless of this entry into the various state apparatuses of socially-underprivileged elements whose loyalty to the established order may fluctuate, the intrinsic nature of the bourgeois state will not change. The state will still be a capitalist one and it will still reflect the capitalist social relations which have not changed and are not going to change by themselves. The basic task of the state is to see that the existing system is maintained, and this is what primarily determines the mentality of its members. The profession of the most crucial section of it, i.e., the police and the army -- which eurocommunists hope to democratise -- is one of repression, a task that cuts off this part of working people from the rest of the working class and its struggles. Even in countries where police unions have been established and police strikes have become more than rare incidents, repression of the strikes of other workers or seeing that they are conducted to the least detriment of the employer class, has never ceased to be one of the basic duties of the police. And this is a perfectly normal behaviour. One cannot envision the police of a modern capitalist state, or any other of its instruments, apart from their fundamental functions. The bourgeois state has always included proletarians, but its stand in moments of crisis within the system (at least the most crucial moments so far) has not changed. The role of the army, police and the judiciary during the advent of fascism in Europe, is well known. In some of the countries that were subjected to fascist regimes, e.g., Greece, the democratic/progressive element was not absent in the army.

Still, taking a totally negative stand on the question of the "democratisation" of the state would not help us understand its nature, even

more than that of the value that communists should be attaching to the existence of a less repressive apparatus. The state is not an impregnable fortress. Its "infiltration" by progressive individuals, including communists, has long ceased to be a remote possibility. The existence in modern capitalist countries of legislation establishing the criteria of selection and promotion of public servants -- despite its numerous loopholes -- often allows into the state apparatuses (especially in its lower echelons) the intrusion of individuals who may not be as loyal to the officially-recognized order of things as they should be. Conformity, however, compensates for loyalty, and this is what essentially determines their attitude in the long term. Entire generations of radical students (to cite a well-known example) have buried their revolutionary impetus in the daily routine of their struggle for survival as employees of the state and of private institutions. And the situation will, definitely, deteriorate if encouraged by the notion of a long-drawn process of transition. Yet, aside from all these discrepancies, one should not fail to see that the idea itself of conquering the "Ideological State Apparatuses" from within bears a certain appeal to progressive intellectuals who are, thus, assigned a special role in the socialist transition. And this, perhaps, explains the enthusiastic response of many of them to the message of Eurocommunism.

Equally flexible should our attitude be towards the possibility of some sort of class-consciousness being acquired by members of the state ("coercive apparatuses" included) who had never been in the progressive movement -- a class-consciousness derived from their direct experience as working men (which they are) or derived through an understanding of the negative aspects of their social functions. And, finally,

one cannot deny the fact that the presence of progressive intellectuals in the "ideological apparatuses of the state" will affect the opinion-making process in a particular society. Denying this is tantamount to denying the very reason of the party's existence and its ideological struggles. It is not the first time in the history of the movement that revolutionary parties have paid serious attention to the need of democratising bourgeois society, meaning above all transforming the state into a less repressive instrument. It is superfluous to emphasise, once more, that the struggle of communists for strengthening and expanding democracy goes as far back as the Manifesto. But struggling for democracy and the acceptance of the proletarian ideology even by members of the state itself, is far from meaning that the bourgeois state can be democratised to such an extent as to permit the passing of society into socialism, as the eurocommunist leaders have concluded. Democratising the state in this sense means that it can either become proletarian in its mentality before the transition to socialism, which seems a rather childish trick to be played on the bourgeoisie, or that the state can be transformed into a neutral instrument both in the sense of being "above classes" and of remaining indifferent to the fundamental socio-political changes. Perceiving the state in this way, we are confronted with a profoundly confusing and dangerous proposition.

Turning the bourgeois state into an instrument of a fundamental revolution seems impossible. The democratisation of the state, i.e., its ideological infiltration by the forces of revolution or its transformation into an impartial arbiter in the, frequently violent, struggles of classes, has its limits. It is not only that the ruling class will not permit it, but the state itself, due to the mentality of its members, their

natural desire to adhere to what they have won as workers (above all their security), and the numerous connections that exist between its higher echelons and established interest groups, possesses its own power of resistance. The best that a revolutionary movement can expect from the bourgeois state at the decisive moment is to see that its cohesiveness and its ability to co-ordinate action in defense of the old order have been impaired. This has often happened spontaneously, but it can be organised by the creation of party organisations in the various organs of the state, particularly the army and the police. The state, and especially the army, had always been seen by Marx and Engels as an "instrument of repression" and "tool of reaction," but the possibility of creating allies of the proletariat even within the state had never been excluded.<sup>53</sup> But even so, the question of how one moves from this stage

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53. "For them (the 1848 revolutionaries) it was solely a question of making the troops yield to moral influences, which, in a fight between the armies of two warring countries, do not come into play at all, or do so to a much less degree. If they succeeded in this, then the troops fail to act, or the commanding officers lose their heads, and the insurrection wins." Engels, "Introduction" to Marx's Class Struggles in France, pp. 21-22. For suggestions by Marx and Engels and their involvement in efforts to affect the reactionary character of the army, see the "Address of the Central Authority to the League" (June, 1851): "Lastly, we report that in Schleswig-Holstein contacts had been established with the army; we are awaiting an account of what influence the League may hope to gain there." M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 376. See also Engels' letters to Bebel in which he proposes that the party should bring to the Parliament a resolution demanding that crown lands be given to rural labourers (in Prussia) for common cultivation. The aim of this idea (which was only "objectively practicable, not necessarily practicable for the present government") was "to show the rural proletariat of the eastern provinces the way to end Junker and tenant exploitations; to put the means to do this into their hands; to set in motion the very people whose enslavement and stultification produces the regiments which are the foundation of Prussia; in short, to destroy Prussia from within at the root" (my italics). Ernest Wangermann's Introduction to Engels' The Role of Force in History, pp. 23-24. (Engels' letters referred to here are dated December 11/12, 1884, and January 20, 1886. These letters do not exist in Marx/Engels Selected Correspondence-used in this study).

to socialism, and under the protection of what kind of state, is still to be decided.

The acceptance by the bourgeoisie of proletarians into the state and often into the government in no way represents sharing political power with a subordinate class. Unless representing a proletarian revolutionary movement and fighting for its objectives, proletarians cannot possibly represent the interests of their class in a society based on private property by simply giving their services to the state or the government of this society.

Where the bourgeoisie is compelled by circumstances to compromise its political dominance is in cases where it has to accept in both the government and the state representatives of the landed and money aristocracy\*, or sacrifice its representative institutions for a more secure rule by the state forces. The former concerns mainly the first period of its career; the latter is a characteristic of the entire history of capitalism but especially during critical periods in the life of its institutions. In the former case the bourgeoisie is an active and politically organized force; in the latter, it ceases to play this role and only influences developments by its patronizing of dictatorial regimes. From Napoleon III to modern fascist dictatorships, the basic external aspects of this type of bourgeois rule have not changed (the reference here is to the external features of this form of rule since the Bonapartist type of dictatorship and the one of fascism belong to different

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\* We are only concerned here with the heroic epoch of the bourgeoisie where the money aristocracy was in antagonistic terms with the industrial bourgeoisie. In the period of imperialism where these sections of the class have merged to the point of according the former a leading role, the contradiction has ceased to exist.

periods in the development of capitalism; they were established for different reasons and express different kinds of crises). In both cases, the compromise reveals an inability on the part of the bourgeoisie to rule by itself, although in the first case, which characterised the period of its advent, this inability was, more or less, a genuine one which sprang from its narrow economic basis and the existence of a still influential landowning class (the Tories in England, the Junkers in Germany, and the Legitimists and Orleanists in France, though the last group's power was derived mostly from its finance capital rather than its landed property). In both cases moreover, we are dealing with an essentially bourgeois rule, since neither the partnership with the modern landed-aristocracy nor the surrendering of political power to the state alter the existing fundamental property relations. This also remains valid in both situations when the state has -- as in the period of fascism -- the active support of the petty-bourgeoisie. What the aristocracy or the petty-bourgeoisie gains in such compromises which the bourgeoisie is forced into, is the satisfaction of its specific interests, basically interests of particular sections of the propertied class. This applies more to the landed aristocracy and finance oligarchy which, though capitalistically-oriented, had and continue to have interests of their own (e.g., with regard to the former, the arrangement of the tariff question, which had produced one of the classical quarrels between landowners and industrialists in England and, to a certain extent, in Germany) and less to the petty-bourgeoisie whose differentiation from the bourgeoisie proper is only a matter of degree. We should also add at this point that the active participation of the petty-bourgeoisie in the politics of reactionary radicalism, which is mostly a phenomenon of the fascist era,

did not produce much for the group as a whole. It was only individual members of the petty-bourgeoisie who benefited from their involvement in the organisation of fascist regimes. As to the rest of the group, their participation in the advent and consolidations of the fascist regime did not arrest the concentration of capital.

Historically speaking, it has only been in a few cases that the bourgeoisie was able -- both in the past and the present -- to maintain a direct rule of its own without the help of marginal sections of the propertied class (that is, sections outside the bourgeoisie proper), or without occasional military takeovers. The form of the bourgeois state, therefore, though always capitalist in its essence and functions, differs according to the peculiar conditions in each capitalist country particularly in the ability of the bourgeoisie to rule by itself. Marx was correct in suggesting particular caution in the use of such sweeping expressions as "the present-day state," as if it represented a standardised model of bourgeois political power:

"Present-day society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less developed. On the other hand, the present day state" changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, it is different in England from what it is in the United States. "The present-day state," is, therefore, a fiction.

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their manifold diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential features in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the "present-day state," in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off. 54

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54. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," Tucker's Reader, pp. 394-95.

In France, the bourgeoisie was only able to solidify its rule after 1871, when Napoleon's police - and army-empire came to an end, and the crushing of the Commune gave it the opportunity to pursue its organisation without pressures from below - at least for some time. In England, despite its long history of success and its international importance, the bourgeoisie took much longer to free itself from the partnership of aristocracy. The latter had secured its socio-economic position and therefore its political importance in land-ownership. "The British constitution," wrote Marx in 1855, "is, in fact, an ... obsolete compromise between the bourgeoisie, who are not officially but actually ruling in all decisive spheres of bourgeois society, and the landed aristocracy, who are governing officially."<sup>55</sup> The passing of the Reform Act, (1832), which brought about the admission of more members from the industrial and commercial class into the official political body of England and thereby broadened the political base of the bourgeoisie, did not change significantly the state of affairs:

In the 1830's the bourgeoisie preferred the renewal of the compromise with the landed aristocracy to a compromise with the mass of the English people. The aristocracy, subjected to certain principles laid down by the bourgeoisie, now ruled exclusively in the Cabinet, in Parliament, in the Administration, in the Army and the Navy; this one-half, and relatively the most important half of the British nation is now compelled to sign its own death sentence, and admit in the eyes of the whole world that it no longer has the ability to rule England. 56

Much more complicated, and for a fairly long period of time extending well beyond the creation of the empire, was the situation in Germany --

55. Marx, "The British Constitution," M/E, On Britain, p. 219.

56. Ibid., p. 220.



the third major European country whose peculiarities in the form of the state had attracted Marx's and Engels' attention. In Germany, the bourgeoisie, apart from its prolonged political disorganisation and its weakness, was in the company of a determined and politically experienced aristocracy which, backed by the state-mechanism that was traditionally under its absolute control, was not quite willing to recognise the bourgeoisie's abilities to govern. The German bourgeoisie, for its part, had never seriously tried to institute a rule of its own. Its cowardice, mainly associated with its fear of the masses, had made it an important tool in the hands of the Prussian landowners ever since the Liberal fiasco of 1848. As a result, says Engels, it had failed to win "either direct political domination, as in France, or more or less indirect political domination, as in England."<sup>57</sup> This, of course, in no way implied that Bismarck's empire had suppressed the basic interests of the bourgeoisie or that it was, in essence, the rule of the landowning class. On the contrary, it was with the creation of the empire that German capitalism accomplished its most spectacular strides.

What is of greater interest to us and to our times is not the aristocratic connection, which is mainly a thing of the past, but the occasional surrendering of bourgeois rule to overtly reactionary elements that either come from the armed forces or have their support. This occurrence has a history extending as far back as the regimes of the two Napoleons, especially that of Napoleon III, but it is a general fea-

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57. Engels, The Housing Question, p. 68.

ture of contemporary capitalist rule. Fundamentally, as already pointed out, it is the inability of the bourgeoisie to solidify its rule by forces of its own that accounts for such peculiarities. Needless to say, apart from periods of acute international crises of the system in which more or less all capitalist governments are compelled to tighten the reins of power, this phenomenon is mainly peculiar to the less advanced capitalist countries. The weak foundations of their economy and the extreme sensitivity of the latter to repeated crises lead to a situation of chronic social tension which cannot be confronted without occasional relapses of brutal force. In the past, this inability of the capitalist class to adhere to its representative institutions was mostly related to its organic weaknesses and the internecine struggles among its various factions, and not so much to the ability of the proletariat to strike for power. As Marx observed regarding the police regime of the Second French Empire, "in reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired the faculty of ruling the nation."<sup>58</sup> The bourgeoisie had lost because of its weakness, its internal divisions and, most important, the fact that a considerable part of it had opted for a Bonapartist dictatorship. With the further development of capitalism and the crisis of imperialism, this inability of the bourgeoisie to rule without resorting to unconstitutional methods, cannot be adequately explained apart from the ever-growing importance of the proletariat and the real threat it represents. The fascist regimes of our

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58. Marx, Civil War, M/E Commune, p. 70.

century are to be seen in the light of this kind of inability (of the bourgeoisie) in the face of a new kind of crisis, the crisis of imperialism. What averts the unpleasant consequences of such a crisis is the employment of overt, undisguised violence.

The form of state created by fascism, apart from its police and terroristic character, is as capitalist as any other form of capitalist state. Capitalist relations of production do not change and are not weakened by the institution of fascist rule. What changes when a fascist regime is established -- and this is precisely what developed capitalism reflects in its political superstructures -- is that the state, instead of being, ideally at least, the defender of the capitalist class as a whole, becomes more of an instrument of the great industrial, financial and commercial establishments. With or without fascism, this is actually the capitalist state in the epoch of imperialism, the state of monopoly capital. Wherever fascism prevails, however, its monopoly character becomes much more pronounced.

Speaking of such forms of capitalist rule in which the state acquires extraordinary powers and, by playing the role of the "people," appoints or "elects" its own executive, we cannot avoid the question of what happens to the state itself in relation to the ruling class and to society in general. Leaving aside the existence of "parties" and "movements" that provide these regimes with "popular" support -- since even with the existence of this type of support the state still performs extraordinary functions and still is not controlled by the bourgeoisie in the usual institutionalised ways -- the question is: to what extent does the state really become independent in such cases?

In some very specific respects, the state has always been an independent power. Once it superseded its rudimentary form as "people in arms," it somehow became a power apart, a "special power" which though controlled by, or being in the direct service of, the economically dominant class, had its various organs manned by a particular kind of individual charged with specific duties. Furthermore, being what it is, and as is the case with any other superstructural creation of human society, it went through its own internal evolution and constant reorganisation as if it had been a self growing entity. It, thus, becomes a "reified" entity which developed its own independent perception of itself, and created its own ideology and mystique. It is this independence of the state that obscures its relationship with society in general and the dominant class in particular, and makes it appear as a really independent creation. As Engels says:

... once the state has become an independent power vis-a-vis society, it produces forthwith a further ideology. It is indeed among professional politicians, theorists of public law and jurists of private law that the connection with economic facts gets lost for fair. 59

Still, no matter how fetishised the state may be, it still remains the instrument of the dominant class and reflects the class situation of the society upon which it is based. Whether we choose to see it as a means of aggrandizement, stability and prosperity, a "mortal god," a "work of art," or the "actuality of the ethical idea," it has not shed the basic characteristics of its barbaric origins.\* It still serves particular interests in particular types of societies, and whatever its form it

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59. Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 54.

\* Ideas belonging respectively to Macchiavelli, Hobbes, Burckhardt and Hegel.

never loses this kind of dependence on society and the class that determines its mode of production.

Yet, it is not so much in its mystified form but rather in the form of being an organised special power that the state, on certain occasions, acquires an independence which is much more real than simply its "independence vis-à-vis society" which is, after all, its birth characteristic. These are the cases, already referred to, in which the political rule of the bourgeoisie is exercised by the state itself. It is either surrendered by the bourgeoisie or (which is the most usual case) the state itself, in the form of military cliques, seizes political power with the connivance of the most reactionary sections of the same class. Representative institutions may be totally abolished or allowed to preserve a semblance of what they should be; the state will decide on their functions and authority.

What is self-evident at this point is that the economically ruling class neither governs nor rules society as a politically organised class, since it neither represents itself in the government through its party (or parties) nor directs the activities of the state. In this sense -- that is, in the sense that it directs itself by an executive of its own choice -- the state seems to become independent. Though it acts in the best interests of the bourgeoisie (at least in terms of intentions) -- and both Bonapartism\* and fascism have been the most eloquent proof of it -- it acquires the ability to behave as an independent

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\* We are mainly referring here to the Second Empire, since Napoleon I's economic policies had been strongly affected by state intervention ideas of the old regime type.

entity. It may even decide on the best protection and promotion of bourgeois interests without even consulting bourgeois circles -- though such a notion may sound exaggerated since both the Bonaparte-type "lumpen-proletariat"\* and that of the fascist "strong-arm man," as well as their immediate supporters, are there to defend existing social relations. What is good for them is also good for the capitalist class or the section of this class which at the time (e.g., in fascism the monopolies) plays the most decisive role in the economy. Naturally, certain individuals or groups will get the lion's share; but, there is hardly anything radically new in that case.

However, in the sense that the executive of this state and all its cadres and supporters are there to insure a more effective protection of the system, frequently against the wishes of a great part of the bourgeoisie itself, and to identify themselves with the best interests of this class, the independence of this state vis-à-vis the economically dominant class is no more real than the independence of an ordinary democratic government/state apparatus. Marx had come across this problem in his analysis of Napoleon III's dictatorship. Politically, it was based on the support of certain sections of the bourgeoisie and on the mass of the French peasantry, especially the latter. "Bonaparte," says Marx, "represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small peasants."<sup>60</sup> The fact, however, that the peasants gave their support to Napoleon III, as they had to his great uncle, does

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\* The reference here is to the Second Empire.

60. Marx, Eighteenth Brumaire, Tucker, Reader, p. 515.

not mean that they created a state of their own or that the Second Empire made them the economic ruling group. Although the state "made itself completely independent," the basic purpose of the Eighteenth Brumaire was to protect the existing bourgeois relations: "Only the chief of the society of December 10 can now save bourgeois society! Only theft can now save property; only prejury, religion; only bastardy, the family; only disorder, order."<sup>61</sup> That the independence and the very existence of the Bonapartist state depended, in Marx's opinion, on the economic power of the class whose political power Napoleon III had usurped, is evident in the following remark:

As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonaparte feels it to be his mission to safeguard "civil order." But the strength of this civil order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense. <sup>62</sup>

Naturally, Bonaparte looked upon himself as the representative of the whole society and especially of the peasants; all French classes, however, should strive for happiness only "within the frame of bourgeois society."<sup>63</sup>

Marx and Engels had also dealt with this problem in relation to other historical examples of state independence. The absolute monarchy of the ancien régime and Bismarck's Junkers' state, were the ones that occupied them most. In both cases the state had strengthened its position by playing one class against the other, but in none of them was it a state above classes. Such a state does not exist. On the contrary, it is precisely this kind of state that most overtly defends

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61. Ibid., p. 522.

62. Ibid., p. 522.

63. Ibid., p. 522.

existing property relations and the interests of the economically powerful class. Engels' characterisation of this type of state is appropriate at this point: the more independent the state is, "the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the supremacy of that class."<sup>64</sup> Fascism, a prime example, leaves no doubt as to the class nature of its state. Yet, having said this, we should understand that, as far as the fascist state is concerned (or, for that matter, the monopoly state), we are confronted with a different apparatus of class power which in both the political and economic sense is much more powerful than the "ordinary" capitalist state. For the revolutionary movement, the existence of such a state, besides anything else, should mean changing politics and tactics at every level of action.

In any case, however, it has to be remarked in conclusion that, despite the massive intrusion of petty-bourgeois elements into the Bonapartist and fascist state, the latter did not assume a petty-bourgeois character and it did not create a petty-bourgeois society.

Now let us return again to our fundamental question of the modern "proletarianised" capitalist state that figures so prominently in the calculations of eurocommunism. But first a distinction should be made. The aristocratically or petty-bourgeois-dominated state and the "proletarianised" state are, in many respects, two different phenomena with regard to the socio-political significance of the existence of those, supposedly, extraneous elements inside its various apparatuses. In the first place, the Junker or Tory connection, by its very nature, did not represent a great obstacle to the existence and, one should add, to the

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64. Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 54.



development of capitalism. Landed aristocrats, despite their aversion to social progress, once overtaken by it acted and thought as capitalists. Apart from some particular interests of their group (e.g., tariffs), it was only a question of adaptation to transitional imperatives that caused the conflict with the capitalist class proper. With the passing of time, and as the class conflict with the proletariat assumed larger proportions, they were totally absorbed by the system, for the system itself provided room for the survival of this social group side by side with the rest of the capitalist class. The pétty-bourgeoisie, on the other hand, could not have played a different role. More than the land-owning class or the financial aristocracy, it was and still remains an integral part of the capitalist class.

With regard to the proletariat in the various apparatuses of the capitalist state, the situation is radically different. Proletarians do not dominate the state; and, considering the fact that the capitalist state reflects non-proletarian social relations, they cannot dominate it either. Even if they come to the point of assuming governmental responsibilities, through the electoral process, they will not be able to rule society without effecting a radical rupture with the existing social relations. We may say, however, and this indeed is a debatable proposition, that "proletarians" (in the sense used by the likes of Carrillo) do not enter the apparatuses of the state in order to engage in a struggle of survival within the framework of the capitalist system, but to change it. In this sense, it is evident that while the aristocratic or pétty-bourgeois element played a stabilising role in the system, the role of this type of proletarians should have a destabilising effect.

The fact that the present history of the labour movement in many capitalist countries is being dominated by the confrontation between the state and its employees cannot be ignored. However, it is needless to repeat once more that the expectation of eurocommunism to have the capitalist state transformed from within into a socialist one, as a result of its proletarianisation, is mistaken. The proletarians (especially as this expression is used by eurocommunists to mean the proletarians in general) will not change the state simply by their presence in it. On the contrary -- and given the lengthy process of the eurocommunist transition -- it is possible that the "progressive" and even the revolutionary proletarians of the state will eventually assimilate and thus acquiesce in, rather than rebel against, the values, norms and inherent inequalities propagated by the system of the established order. In a remote sense, the modern "proletarianised" state resembles the one of the ancien régime where enlightened bureaucrats and politicians, in general the "progressive" elements of the time, were trying to "rationalise" it for the sake of justice and progress but could not change it. But while the enlighteners had on their side a relentlessly on-going process of transformation of feudal social relations into capitalist ones in the womb of the old regime, the proletariat of our time cannot claim a similar advantage. Socialist social relations do not develop inside the structures of capitalist society.

Naturally, this should not prevent the observer from seeing the fact that state servants, members of Parliament and even members of the government (in case of a coalition), who are of working class origin

and belong to a consistently radical movement, do not constitute a positive element in the cause of transition. Whatever form the transition may assume, the attitude of the state forces will be far from monolithic. But while appreciating the significance of this development, one should also see the limits of this potential. Furthermore, the distinction between the struggle for the enhancement of democracy and the struggle for socialism should always be kept in mind. Henri Weber's observation on this subject sums up correctly the distinction between these two kinds of struggle while pointing at the same time to the limits of the former:

The struggle to defend and enlarge democratic freedoms is certainly a key strategic axis of the struggle for socialism in the West. This is not the point in dispute with euro-communist theoreticians. ...The true question at issue is not the necessity of struggling for democratisation of the state, both within and outside its institutions, but the scope, modalities and limits of such struggle.<sup>64</sup>

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64. Henri Weber, "Eurocommunism, Socialism and Democracy," NLR (January, 1978), p. 9.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE TRANSITION PROCESS: THE RUPTURE AND WORKING CLASS RULE

#### I. The Transition State in Eurocommunism

In a very significant respect, this chapter may appear as a rather superfluous addition to a long argument. In previous chapters, we have encountered the eurocommunist views on the nature of the bourgeois state, the pluralistic, gradual vision of socialist transition and even the role of the masses in this vision. In essence, the main thrust of the movement has already been exposed. To terminate the account here, however, would leave it both unfair and incomplete. Unfair, because eurocommunists do have more things to say about their transition theory and the kind of transition state they propose; and incomplete, because it is only by examining the mechanics of the eurocommunist transition state that we inevitably come closer to the inherent theoretical impasse of the movement.

Carrillo's "Eurocommunism" and the State is not merely "the true 'eurocommunist' counterpoint" to Lenin's State and Revolution;<sup>1</sup> it is equally a denial of the interconnection and the dialectical unity between those two concepts -- state and revolution -- as they exist in no less developed form in the classical texts. Indeed, Lenin's presentation of the subject does not cover the full range of material that is found in Marx's and Engels' writings, particularly that which is dedicated to the 1848 revolutions. Therefore it ought to be remarked that the rejection of the proletarian dictatorship was not intended to rectify a Leninist deviation

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1. Goran Therborn, What Does the Ruling Class Do When it Rules? (London: NLB, 1980), p. 271.

or to rehabilitate Marx, but to put aside a key concept -- indeed, the most fundamental -- of the theory in its classical form.

The question that confronts us at this point, as it occasionally has in the previous chapters, is how and by which means is eurocommunism planning to tackle the specific political exigencies of the transition process: which type of state, that is, will serve as the instrument of the fundamental changes that figure, for decades now, in the long-term programmes of every communist party; and how is the hegemony of the working class to arise if not on the ruins of the economic backbone and the socio-political dominance of the capitalist class -- a process that obviously necessitates the erection of a distinctly proletarian state-apparatus. We have already seen that the idea of "smashing" the (bourgeois) state, a proposition that goes back to the writings of 1848 but is better enunciated in the Paris Commune, has in one way or another been abandoned by eurocommunist parties. This clearly leaves any form of proletarian dictatorship off the agenda, and logically so since no political regime of that nature will ever become necessary to a movement that has placed its expectations on an ever-expanding democratic process. Furthermore, and regardless of what we may think of eurocommunism being a theory founded on wishful thinking rather than on historical imperatives, a dictatorial regime even when circumstances require its presence is not expected to be a likeable choice to "Westerners" raised on democratic traditions. As Carrillo (who, in a paradoxical fashion for a communist, mixes dictatorships of both the Left and the Right) puts it:

The term of the dictatorship has in itself become hateful in the course of the present century, which has seen the most abominable fascist and reactionary dictatorships, among them that of Franco, and has known the crimes of Stalinism .... 2

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2. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, p. 141.

Georges Marchais, in his turn, treats the question in more or less identical terms as Carrillo. At the 20th Congress of his party, he declared that: "... la 'dictature' évoque automatiquement les régimes fascistes de Hitler, Mussolini, Salazar et Franco, c'est-à-dire la négation de la démocratie. Ce n'est pas ce que nous voulons."<sup>3</sup> There may be more rhetoric than substance in such declarations, and indeed the PCF has not created much commotion about the dropping of the proletarian dictatorship compared to other eurocommunist parties. The issue, however, has remained in abeyance for some time now and the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat has not been exercised by the PCF as violently as it has been by the other parties in question does not necessarily mean that it is still part of its philosophy. Furthermore, it is not a matter of what the expression evokes, but what it signifies in terms of class rule -- something which the French party, officially at least, has not made much of an effort to explain.

### I. The Pluralistic State

The question of what eurocommunism proposes as a substitute for the proletarian dictatorship now deserves our attention. Two important elements need to be noted in relation to the eurocommunist conception of the socialist state. The first concerns the system of government and state at its higher levels and the position of the party (or the CP and those forces which will commit themselves to this type of transition) vis-à-vis the state; and the second relates to the proposed relationship between the government and the masses. More specifically, the latter deals with the

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3. Cahiers du Communisme (Fevrier-Mars, 1976), p. 44.

modalities of mass participation in the overall administration of society and particularly the economy. It is precisely this aspect of the euro-communist tactics that will supposedly pave the way for the achievement of the ultimate objective: the democratisation of political and private institutions and their transformation into support-bases for the transition, accomplished by the active and conscientious participation of the masses. Together these two elements underline the substance of "democratic socialism."

With regard to the first element, eurocommunism has no intention of abandoning the representative, multi-party, parliamentary system of western democracies, which evidently was the only available option after the dropping of the proletarian dictatorship. This will allow the legal existence and free operation on an equal footing, of all political parties and movements including those of the hostile opposition. To put it in the words of the Joint Declaration of Rome:

The French and Italian Communists declare themselves for the plurality of political parties, for the right to existence and activity of opposition parties, for the free formation of majorities and minorities and the possibility of their alternating democratically. 4

The idea, naturally, goes hand-in-hand with the preservation of "philosophical pluralism,"<sup>5</sup> i.e., the preservation of all individual and collective

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4. See Rome Joint Declaration, Appendix. With regard to democratic pluralism, it is worth noting, once again, the difference between the PCF and the other two major eurocommunist parties. Marchais' formulation of the proposition at the 20th Congress of the PCF contains the same (as above) elements but in a slightly different form: ".... in socialist France it will be possible to have several democratic parties sharing power. It will also be possible to have opposition parties," Marxism Today (January 1975), p.8 (my italics):

5. Carrillo's words: Eurocommunism, p. 105.

freedoms and rights which make up -- at least in theory but certainly in some western societies in practice as well -- the physiognomy of democracy. The state-apparatus, on the other hand, will continue its functions, but now as an independent organism, and no efforts will be undertaken (as would be the case with the proletarian dictatorship) to place it in the service of the alliance once the latter has achieved victory.

Considering what has been discussed so far in previous chapters, it is needless to repeat that the ultimate purpose of eurocommunism, as regards this issue of the state-apparatus, is to create a "democratic," "independent," impartial state. This is one of the dimensions of the eurocommunist conception of the socialist state. From another perspective, however, and here we come across certain contradictory aspects of this conception of the independent state, the primary intention of eurocommunism is to break down monopoly capital, that monopoly capital which has the unreserved support of the present-day capitalist state. The implementation of this policy will inevitably lead to substantial changes in the content of the existing state-apparatus. Definitely, the eurocommunist state will not play the role of the proletarian dictatorship. It will assume, however, certain important tasks not only in the process of nationalisation (i.e., participation in the administration, planning, and so forth of nationalised enterprises), but also -- in an all-inclusive manner -- in affirming the legislative prerogative of Parliament by implementing its policies on a continual basis. No matter how lightly eurocommunists treat this matter, the new elements, which are proposed to be introduced in the total organisation of society and especially in the sphere of economy, will inevitably externalise themselves at the level of politics not only in the



creation of new agencies, institutions, and bureaucratic structures of all kinds in the organisation of the state, but also in its principal role: the role that the state has always assumed in carrying out the policies of the government. Playing this role, the "new" democratic state will have to direct its energies towards both the reproduction of what eurocommunists have conceived of as socialist social relations (brought about through "radical," "qualitative" changes) and the reproduction of its own democratic ideology.

Here, again, we return to the fundamental question of whether the state can remain independent, or whether eurocommunists really intend to keep it so, particularly in the event of violent counter-action by the forces of the Right. This aspect is perhaps the most perplexing in the entire new theory: keeping the state independent, on the one hand, and trying to conquer it "from within," on the other, even for the purpose of democratising it are two concepts which are not easily reconcilable. In any case, the question has already been answered by the eurocommunist leaders through postulating the moral and political (non-violent) weight of the large majority. But naturally the problem is not going to be solved by counter-posing to actual violence the unarmed rights of the majority.

Basically, it may be correctly observed that eurocommunism is not confronted with the task of working out a theory of government or of the transition state for that matter. The problem of who is going to govern, and how, can be settled by leaving it to existing parliamentary practices. The idea of "democratic pluralism" put into practice means "rotation of power" according to who wins in each successive election. Whatever the consequences of this approach, eurocommunists are determined to preserve the

exercise of universal suffrage for the benefit of all parties in the same way as today's democracies. Still, one should perhaps add here, they would attempt to do this in a better manner than today's democracies, considering that the history of communist parties in western democracies has, with certain exemptions been a history of repression. The only essential change that is to be hoped for, and which will eventually make the difference between the present and the future as far as the forces of progress are concerned, is that the overall content of democracy will be greatly improved as a result of the thrust of the new trend. The expected successful performance of the "bloc," on the other hand, will (hopefully) assure continuity of government which, in its turn, will prevent disruptions in current policies and projected plans. It is possible, however, and euro-communists are fully aware of this, that a socialist government may lose the support of the masses and be replaced by another one whose programme could very well undo its work. In this case the experiment would have to start all over again.

To what extent a eurocommunist government, under the conditions of a gradualist process, will be able to accomplish its basic objectives -- having at the same time to keep reaction, foreign and domestic, at bay and its own allies together -- is a question which has been answered as adequately as any other important question in the new theory. Berlinguer's appeal to specialists to work out a programme of change as unprovocative as possible may be indicative of a still unresolved dilemma:

A big problem which occupies us on the political level, and to which the Marxists and advanced scholars of Italy and the other western countries must pay greater attention from the theoretical point of view, is how to implement a programme of far-reaching social transformations -- which necessarily sets

off reactions of all sorts by the reactionary groups -- in such a way that it does not drive broad strata of the middle classes into positions of hostility, and instead wins the consensus of the majority of the population in all its phases. 6

Obviously Claudin was correct in foreseeing difficulties associated with this kind of transition.<sup>7</sup> But once again, we have to be reminded (and Claudin as well) of the fact that it is the democratic transition we are dealing with. It is either this or it is not. A non-democratic transition may dispense with many of its inherent problems by the use of organised violence directed by the appropriate state-apparatuses. It may suppress hostile opposition, dismantle existing representative institutions which get in its way, silence opposition mass media, and, in short, resort to any "undemocratic" measures that revolutions hitherto have evoked in order to maintain power. A democratic transition, however, cannot rely on this "luxury" and therefore will have to face in a democratic manner all problems, including sabotage and black-mail by the opposition forces often encouraged in a variety of ways by hostile foreign powers -- practices which may be morally condemnable but are equally permissible under conditions of democracy.

What is primarily at stake here is the preservation of the unity of the alliance and its effectiveness to act in a situation of prolonged transition. Chile's example, where petty-bourgeois entrepreneurs (especially in the transport industry), in collaboration with other opposition elements, undermined without fear of punishment the existence of Popular Unity, may serve as a warning to eurocommunism. Berlinguer, who

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6. Berlinguer, "Reflections," p. 47.

7. Eurocommunism, p. 107.

wrote these lines against the background of the Chilean debacle, does not simply deal with a real problem but rather the major problem of the euro-communist approach; a problem which expresses itself in the form of very important, and yet dubious and contradictory, tactical requirements. In order to achieve its goals, it must, first of all, assure the impartiality of a state which does not belong to the alliance and therefore cannot be controlled by it. Furthermore, it has to proceed with non-provocative changes, and yet changes which are substantial enough to undermine the existing production relations -- a proposition that is contradicted by the fact that the CP/working class, being equal partners of the alliance, cannot have special claims of their own (the PCF may be seen as an exception to this restrictive condition). Moreover, it must maintain unity within the ranks of the alliance, even though some of the partners are bound to be directly affected by the proposed socio-economic measures. And, finally, it must render the reactionary camp politically impotent, which can only be partially achieved if the allies maintain their solidarity -- meaning in this case that the democratic centre will not succumb to objective pressures that are destined to arise in the process and join forces with the counter-revolution. A fifth variable, that every Communist party that gets into such alliances should consider for its own survival as a fighting instrument of a class, is the unity in its own ranks and the ranks of that part of organised labour that is politically led by it. By getting into a coalition government of that type, where the obligation of showing a certain understanding for the concerns of all partners becomes a condition for the preservation of unity, the CP is, sooner or later, bound to confront the dissatisfaction of the masses including part of its own membership.

All these conditions are so inter-related and inter-dependent that the non-fulfilment of any one of them will bring the entire schema to a dead end. No wonder Berlinguer saw in the democratic approach a task that is "more difficult" than what his opponents from the Left have opted for (i.e., the revolutionary road), and a real "challenge" for present-day western communists. It is certainly more than a challenge.

## II. Self-management Versus Proletarian Dictatorship

The other important question that enters into the terrain of the eurocommunist concept of the state is that of the degree of popular participation in the administration of public affairs and especially the planning and organisation of economy. The concern at this level is to allow the creation of viable forms of mass control capable of insuring the protection and development of present and future democratic popular institutions, both in the civil and public sector, thus giving the working class and the masses their proper place in the reconstruction and administration of their own society. In fact, it will be through these institutions that the proletariat will appropriate for itself the right of an on-going, direct participation not only in the affairs of its daily life but also in the activities of the central government.

Taken in such general terms, this genuine concern of eurocommunism to create the conditions for an active and decisive role for the masses does not only touch upon an important issue of existing socialism, it also reiterates a concern of classical Marxism as well. Marx had repeatedly stated, and included it in the opening lines of the Provisional Rules of the First International, "that the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves." On various other

occasions he had stated that the socialist (transition) state will be the state of the "associated producers." Naturally, such sweeping theoretical statements, mostly related to the dynamics of revolution, do not work out so ideally in their practical application, as we shall see later, but the general principle of the working class being the principal political force in the socialist transformation is the most essential concept in the Marxist interpretation of revolution -- although eurocommunists would rather speak of the masses than of the working class itself. Yet, they are no less correct to confront the issue.

The problem is, however, that their unequivocal insistence on addressing that question does not seem to match up to their rhetorical grasp of it. In one respect, one may conclude that the eurocommunist position is much more clear in what they dislike (i.e., the forms of participation of the so-called soviet model) than in what they propose. And the reason for this is that they have not been able to elaborate a clear-cut theory on that subject. In another respect, however, their position is as clear as the rest of their theory of the state. As they intend to do it at the highest level where Parliament, the existing state, parties and other political institutions are to be preserved, they will also preserve existing bodies of popular influence, control and pressure. Naturally, their content is expected to be altered in favour of more advanced democratic procedures. In areas where such institutions are either inadequately developed or have not yet been created, efforts will be made to rectify the situation. What is to be seen as an important task here is to allow democracy to acquire those features which will give it what eurocommunists believe to be its highest form: democracy in the service of

the masses. Emphasis is primarily placed on the creation of "self-administrative" bodies in the production units through which workers will be able to control the enterprises they work for and take care of the problems that confront them immediately. As the Rome Declaration has it: "They (French and Italian Communists) attribute essential importance to the development of democracy in the work-place, allowing the workers to participate in the running of their firms, with real rights and extensive decision-making powers" (author's italics).<sup>8</sup> This spirit of "participation" and "self-administration" will permeate all sectors of economy and naturally all public institutions and local government bodies (and to this subject, we must return).

It would be wrong to interpret the emphasis placed by eurocommunism on self-administration as a desire to succeed where the soviet model has failed. Posing the problem in this manner we are, somehow, misreading the intention of the trend. The question of working out the appropriate structures to assure genuine and massive participation from below is apparently most relevant to the case of a proletarian state which has arisen as a result of intensive class struggle and has brought about fundamental changes in the capitalist forms of popular participation. In the context of eurocommunism, where such forms are to be preserved, this argument cannot be carried to any great lengths, although both the eurocommunists themselves and intellectuals of various descriptions of the Left who see in "self-administration" the solution to the problem of democracy in socialism have shown an intense interest of the subject. The reason for this insistence is not merely because of the desire for the

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8. Rome Joint Declaration, Appendix.

preservation of democracy in the period of transition and after, but something much more crucial than that: it will be through these self-managed, democratised civil and political institutions that the hegemony of the working class will arise. This is precisely the essence of the eurocommunist conception of the democratic road.

The diversity of views that have been expressed on this rather nebulous issue by the various spokesmen of the trend does not permit us to come to any clear-cut observations leading to an identifiable formula common to all eurocommunists. Given the fact that none of the parties in question has yet succeeded in accomplishing even the most fundamental preparatory steps for the experiment (e.g., the alliance), the idea is still hanging in the air as a general theoretical concept counter-posed to the "soviet model" and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is only the Chilean Alliance (UP) that has left us two important documents on that subject: the first in the form of a law promulgated in June 1971, the other, a project of a law presented in Parliament in the Spring of 1972 and defeated by the overwhelming opposition of the Christian Democracy -- both designed to determine the norms of self-management. In the former, the presence of the state was rather dominant even at the local (enterprise) level and especially in the nationalised sector where the government representatives exceeded those of the workers; in the latter, the authority accorded to the workers was sensibly increased. In both cases, however, the government "plan" expressed in a variety of central and regional institutions was to be respected.<sup>9</sup>

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9. See "Basic Norms of Participation by the Working People in the National and Mixed Sectors," and "The Bill for a National System of Self-Management," in Michael Raptis, Revolution and Counter-revolution in Chile (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), pp. 119 and 134 respectively. On self-management in Chile in the period of the UP, see also Chile: Une lutte à finir (Montreal: Editions Québécoises, 1972).



In light of this, it must be said that -- and eurocommunists are quite correct in this respect -- the forms of participation or self-administration (as these expressions are often incorrectly used) will acquire their shape according to whatever exists in terms of popular organisation and the constitutional framework of each society.

Whatever the divergences prevalent within the eurocommunist movement and aside from the undeveloped state of this part of the theory, the basic elements of its thrust are easily discernible. In underlining the importance of self-administration, the attack is primarily focusing on the proletarian dictatorship and what eurocommunists (and various other critics) have conceived of as its inevitable concomitant, the bureaucratic structures of the socialist state. The attack is also directed against the authority of the communist party itself as it has developed in socialist countries both in relation to the state and vis-à-vis the mass organisations (and masses in general). To combat this tendency, eurocommunists counter-pose the "autonomy" of both unions and workers' councils as well as any other organised popular group. This practice fits perfectly into the pluralistic concept of eurocommunism which undermines the vanguard position of the party vis-à-vis the working class by pushing the latter (its various particularistic organisations) forward to the position of a political force with equal claims -- we should assume -- as those of the party at the level of political struggle: "... sur le terrain des grands choix politiques. Pas seulement en matière de politique économique, mais aussi en ce qui concerne l'organisation de l'Etat, du pouvoir ..."<sup>10</sup>

10. Bruno Trentin, "Eurocommunisme et mouvement syndical," in Henri Weber's Parti Communiste Italien: aux sources de l'eurocommunisme, (Paris: Christian Bourgeois éditeur, 1977), p. 105.

This type of rhetoric, however, has its limits when it comes to questions concerning the organs of real authority in the period of transition. Eurocommunists have no intention of creating a state within the state, a dual power antagonising the existing parliamentary institutions and the state and struggling for their eventual replacement by the mass organisations. Neither the Italian (CP) unionists nor the rest of the party leadership intend to create such a power. Unions will certainly retain the right to strike and participate in the political struggle; workers' committees will acquire an increased role in determining the conditions of work, the organisation of production and the forms of administration of the enterprise or institution which they represent, but none of them, not even all of them organised on a nation-wide basis, will obtain the right to assume direct responsibilities with regard to the political destiny of society. Constitutionally speaking, these bodies are not designed to substitute for the state ("Ils ne s'institutionnalisent pas comme organs de l'Etat"). "Aussi les décisions concernant le plan doivent être du domaine des assemblées élues qui expriment la volonté générale: le Parlement, les conseils régionaux et municipaux, etc." The councils formulate their propositions and synthesise them in the form of a programme, "mais la formalisation de la décision appartient à d'autres organismes, les institutions de l'Etat."<sup>11</sup>

Given its programme of grand alliance, it would have been rather awkward for the PCI to define self-administration in a fashion granting the working class a privileged position vis-à-vis the other participants.

11. "Eurocommunisme et question de l'Etat," in Henri Weber (ed.), Eurocommunism, p. 177.

But this is only a partial explanation of why the PCI, along with all other eurocommunist parties, insist, on the one hand, on the "autonomy" of popular organs, and, on the other, are only willing to accord them a limited political role. What they actually want to achieve in their schema of "new democracy" is to avoid the identification of popular and state/party organs, a situation that would inevitably lead to the subordination of the former to the latter and finally to the "soviet model".

What, then, are the powers and the functions of these mass organisms in the framework of the transition state? Apart from matters of immediate concern which make up the essence of self-management, these bodies are obviously expected to constitute the support-bases of the alliance government and apparently of the Communist party, retaining at the same time the right to play the role of critical opposition (pluralism) or opposition pure and simple (pluralism plus autonomy), depending on the circumstances. In another respect, they will constitute some new dimensions: in the further evolution of democracy, in the sense that these bodies will drag the masses closer to the decision-making organs of central authority (direct democracy) and thus transcend the present shortcomings of parliamentarianism. As Ingrao has visualised it, these new superstructures of democracy will bridge the gap between the masses and the state, between the civil and political society -- "la distance entre les élus et les masses" which prevails in bourgeois society<sup>12</sup>. In this respect, they will establish an immediate relationship between the struggles of the masses and the government (and Parliament), gradually transforming the latter into the true mirror of the

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12. Ingrao, Ibid, p. 161.

country (as Togliatti expected). This is not to affect, however, the powers of the institutions of general representation. Enchanted with the "democratic Constitution" of Italy, the PCI tends to emphasise political and administrative centralism, side by side with controlled "autonomy" and "self-management." The central plan is to remain in the hands of the state (which "represents" the entire society). Municipal and regional councils -- where worker's councils and other mass organisations of the area are expected to participate -- will get an increased role in contributing to the formulation of this plan while undertaking concrete responsibilities for its implementation in their own territory.

The PCF also attaches great importance to the role of masses in the process of transition, although in this case the word "participation" seems to prevail over that of "self-management." In the words of the XXII Congress of the PCF, "each worker ... will be able to participate directly or through a representative in the choices and decisions at all levels of the enterprise as well as outside it, in the relations which will be established between the units of production and the local collectives..."<sup>13</sup> Much in the same way as the PCI, the PCF will encourage the initiative of territorial, collective bodies which will be designed to express all particular interests of the area. "Counties, provinces and regions will be administered by councils elected by universal suffrage, direct and proportional..." Counties, as the most elementary unit of self-management, "will constitute a fundamental step

13. "What the Communists Want for France," XXII Congress of the PCF, February, 1976; in Peter Lange, The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain, p. 75.

in the democratic system" possessing in their sphere of activity "full administrative and financial authority" and "autonomy." In contrast to the PCI, the French party has no intention of preserving the over-centralised French state, whose origins go back to the ancien régime and to Napoleon I. "The State will no longer act as a guardian but will make an effort to help localities to achieve efficient management ... The state will be relieved of the unnecessary burdens that it carries today."<sup>14</sup>

A similar attitude towards the state's centralised power is adopted by the Spanish party. The existence of nationalities, traditionally subordinated to the whims of the central authority which has manifested its most oppressive character during Franco's years, has made the granting of a certain autonomy to some Spanish "provinces" an absolute necessity. Similarly, the general economic plan which, generally speaking, will remain in the hands of the government, will be based on local inspiration:

incorporating the initiative, needs and possibilities of each section of the population and of each enterprise or service, and also the fact that the general plan should take shape as the coordination, in a single whole, of many plans, at all levels, and not as something bureaucratically imposed from above. 15

The views of the Greek CP (Interior) on this subject have been summarised in its Draft Programme enunciated by the CC in October, 1975. In their most general form, they do not present any great difference from what has been said so far with regard to other eurocommunist

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14. Ibid.

15. Carrillo, Eurocommunism, pp. 77-78.

parties. Representative democracy (that is, the system of elected general assemblies) is emphasised side by side with direct democracy (self-management at the local level). Avoiding the transformation of working class organisations and other mass bodies into "transmission belts" of the party (and the state) is also a matter of prominence in the Programme of the "Interior." Moreover, an attempt is made to draw up the specific historical conditions which will shape the Greek road to socialism (the painfully slow economic, cultural and political development due to long periods of subordination to foreign rule, the strategic position of the country and its importance both for the present conjuncture and in a socialist Greece, and its dependence on foreign powers like the United States). These elements are emphasised side by side with those that Greece shares with western Europe which, combined, ostensibly allows it to follow the democratic road and the rejection of the proletarian dictatorship. 16

These are obviously excellent thoughts for the advancement and humanisation of bourgeois democracy. The workers will acquire the right to intervene effectively in the protection of their collective interests in the work place, in their locality, and even in the global policy of their society. Working conditions, quality of life in their immediate environment, promotions, and so forth, are to be decided by the workers themselves or, at least, with their direct participation. The organisation of production along lines that favour a normal intellectual, psychological and physical life is also included in this schema. Apart from other

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16. "Draft Programme of the CC of the KKE Interior," Κομμουνιστική θεωρία και Πολιτική, (No. 6, October, 1975), pp. 66-81.

aspects of the workers' existence, this is also designed to tackle conditions of alienation -- a theme that has resurfaced with a certain renewed vigour with the rise of eurocommunism.

But where does socialism come into this project? Eurocommunists contend (and naturally expect) that this complex structure of self-management, which will entrench the right of the masses to influence the social and political content of the institutions they work for and the localities they live in, will gradually result in the appropriation of those institutions and the state mechanism in particular in the name of the masses themselves. Taking over the "ideological" and coercive institutions of the state, will be the primary task of this effort. Parliament and the organised political forces of progress will, naturally, do their part in leading the masses forward to victory. Still, some aspects of the eurocommunist rhetoric have to be challenged at this point. To begin with, the term self-administration, or even self-management is a rather misleading one and does not convey a precise meaning in the context of the eurocommunist option. No eurocommunist party, not even the most "advanced" of them, the PCI, would ever permit itself to descend philosophically to a policy that would eventually lead to the fragmentation of the socio-economic and political fabric by transforming self-managed units into independent bodies. Particularly in the field of economics, modern societies -- where interdependence of producers and distributors has become a condition of survival, and where the central authority is constantly reaffirming its interventionist role in order to meet collective needs -- cannot possibly tolerate idyllic forms of communal organisation operating in isolation. Socialisation of production does not mean the appropriation

of the enterprise by the workers employed in it, but by the society as whole. Central planning, therefore, of one form or another, will have to retain its importance and will obviously manifest its presence through state intervention in the self-managed enterprise. The only conceivable exception which could escape this intervention, under conditions of capitalism, would be the workers' cooperative (totally owned by its workers); but even in this case problems related to supplying of raw material, marketing and so forth, may also require the assistance (a euphemistic substitute for intervention) of the state. Participation, therefore, of the workers in the administration of the production unit they work for, would have been a more precise term in place of "self-management." With or without the preponderance of state representatives in the administrative councils of those institutions of the "new democracy," it still must be seen as participation once the entire operation has become part of a larger whole and has to comply with certain concrete directives: the timing of implementation of the plan and the norms to be achieved to mention only a few of the elements of the soviet model that are tacitly creeping into the eurocommunist one. Naturally, the presence of officially placed state representatives in the councils cannot but influence both the workers' contribution to the formulation of the national plan and the type of administration at the local level. Unofficially, party members will have to perform their role in shaping policies at the two levels. Despite their pretensions about non-intervention in working class organisations, eurocommunists have never held that the masses should remain apolitical.

What has become clear so far is that councils of all levels are



not to be incorporated into the structures of the officially constituted state. However, by according them (and especially to regional, umbrella councils) an increased responsibility to implement their part of the plan, along with a certain autonomy, the possibility of their eventual gravitation into the state, i.e., of their becoming "transmission belts" of the latter for reasons of pure necessity (co-ordination of efforts, rationalisation, etc.), is not out of the question. Situated somewhere between the Soviet, in the sense that it tends to play with the affairs of the state, and the western, democratic, autonomous popular expression, the eurocommunist Council cannot as yet claim to have clearly defined its historic mission. Parenthetically, it should be added at this point that, despite claims to the contrary, this type of council and the one conceived by Gramsci in his L'Ordine Nuovo articles have very little in common.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, while, not planned as an appendage of the state, its autonomy -- whatever form it will eventually assume for each party -- will be secured as long as the balance of political forces permits it. Intense class conflict may very well lead to partial suppression of its freedom and "jurisdiction" and, equally to its statism, an eventuality that eurocommunist aversion to real history tends to preclude. Furthermore, autonomy and pluralistic tendencies within the ranks of the working class itself, if combined with the failure to provide this class with the appropriate machinery of expression in national politics, may degenerate into egocentrism, economism and finally corporatism -- trends of sectarianism which, for all intents and purposes,

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17. See "The Debate with Tasca," in Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Political Writings 1910-1920, pp. 239-298, where factory councils are presented as organs of dual power and finally as organs of the state.

belong to the prehistory of the communist movement.

Coming back to our question of where socialism fits into this context of "new democracy," it is obvious that eurocommunism has not yet worked out an answer to it. The only thing we can say with some certainty, based on what we have seen so far, is that self-management and the overall democratisation of society can only improve the conditions of the proletariat vis-à-vis its employers and the state (the latter in both its capacity as an employer and as an instrument of coercion). To paraphrase a French writer slightly, a successful self-management effort can only force the employer to pass from the regime of absolute monarchy to that of constitutional democracy.<sup>18</sup> Yet, self-management alone does not and cannot assure the passage to socialism. For the latter, there is no provision in the eurocommunist strategy. It arrests its élan at the point of democratisation. The entire energy of eurocommunism has been expended in the single task of obliterating the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat which they have not been able to transcend with a new, viable transition policy. The movement itself has not surpassed its initial phase of negation. Perhaps a bit overstressed, Dallemagne's observation on self-administration may also serve to epitomise the nature of eurocommunism with regard to its vision of transition: "Le discours auto-gestionnaire est idéologique. Il ne vise pas à instaurer un pouvoir mais à mettre en cause toute autorité."<sup>19</sup>

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18. Daniel Chauvey, Autogestion (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970), p. 233.

19. Jean-Luc Dallemagne, Autogestion ou Dictature du Proletariat (Paris: Union Générale d' Editions, 1976), p. 294.

This type of rhetoric, however, has its limits when it comes to questions concerning the organs of real authority in the period of transition. Eurocommunists have no intention of creating a state within the state, a dual power antagonising the existing parliamentary institutions and the state and struggling for their eventual replacement by the mass organisations. Neither the Italian (CP) unionists nor the rest of the party leadership intend to create such a power. Unions will certainly retain the right to strike and participate in the political struggle; workers' committees will acquire an increased role in determining the conditions of work, the organisation of production and the forms of administration of the enterprise or institution which they represent, but none of them, not even all of them organised on a nation-wide basis, will obtain the right to assume direct responsibilities with regard to the political destiny of society. Constitutionally speaking, these bodies are not designed to substitute for the state ("Ils ne s'institutionnalisent pas comme organes de l'Etat"). "Aussi les décisions concernant le plan doivent être du domaine des assemblées élues qui expriment la volonté générale: le Parlement, les conseils régionaux et municipaux, etc." The councils formulate their propositions and synthesise them in the form of a programme, "mais la formalisation de la décision appartient à d'autres organismes, les institutions de l'Etat."<sup>11</sup>

Given its programme of grand alliance, it would have been rather awkward for the PCI to define self-administration in a fashion granting the working class a privileged position vis-à-vis the other participants.

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11. "Eurocommunisme et question de l'Etat", in Henri Weber's Eurocommunism, Ibid, p. 177.

view, therefore, of how bourgeois society is transformed into a socialist one, does not envision such a fruition merely through the destruction of the state. This should have been the case if the capitalist state was an artificial device bolstering equally artificially constructed bourgeois relations. Being what it is, however, it is obvious that as long as society has not transcended its class divisions, the state will continue to have a role. Not only can it not be dispensed with after the downfall of the capitalist class, but it must serve as the necessary instrument for the revolutionary reconstruction of society. The Marxist conception, therefore, of this particular problem is that the first task of the proletariat upon its victory should be to create its own state, its own instrument of political dominion.

The idea of the proletarian state, like any other in classical Marxism, indeed has a history. The expression itself "dictatorship of the proletariat" was not used until early in 1850. Prior to this time, other expression, such as the "political supremacy" of the proletariat the "sway of the proletariat," "conquest of political power by the proletariat," its being raised to the position of ruling class, and other similar ones, were used instead\*. Even after 1850, these same expression were often used interchangeably with that of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The first time the latter was made use of is in the Class Struggles in France, when it first appeared in a series of articles in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue, under the

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\* Most of these expressions are to be found in the "Communist Manifesto," M/E Collected Works, Vol. VI: "political supremacy," p. 503; conquest of political power by the proletariat," p. 498; "ruling class," p. 504, "sway of the proletariat," p. 495.

general title 1848 - 1849.<sup>20</sup> The articles were written by Marx between January and October 1850. The same term also appears, in the same period (mid-April 1850), in the founding document of the "Universal Society of Revolutionary Communists," drawn up in London for the purpose of bringing together and coordinating the efforts of the Communist League, the Blanquists, and the revolutionary wing of the Chartist movement.<sup>21</sup> Leaving aside the Chartists whose theoretical conception of the movement had never been particularly clear, the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not seem to have been imposed on the third partner of the "Society," the Blanquists. Blanqui himself had espoused the idea of the proletarian dictatorship since, besides having made use of the term "revolutionary dictatorship" before Marx, he had also grasped some of its aspects in a manner similar to Marx.<sup>22</sup> Neither the Communist

20. See M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 69, as "dictatorship of the working class"; p. 122, as "dictatorship of their allies," i.e., dictatorship of the peasant's allies: the proletariat; and p. 127, as "the class dictatorship of the proletariat."

21. "The aim of the association," reads the preamble, "is the downfall of all privileged classes, the submission of these classes to the dictatorship of the proletariat...." Ibid, p. 614.

22. See his "Warning to the People," written in February 1851 while in prison, where among other things, he says the following:

Rulers would be traitors if, raised to power on the workers' shoulders, they did not at once put in practice:

1. The general disarming of the bourgeois guards;
2. The arming and military organisation of all workers.

No doubt there are many other measures, but they naturally follow from this first act which is the preliminary guarantee, the sole pledge of security for the people.

Not a single weapon must remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Without that there is no salvation.

Marx/Engels, "Introduction to the Leaflet of L.A. Blanqui's Toast sent to the Refugee Committee," M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 538

Manifesto, where its authors repeatedly touch upon the question of the conquest of political power by the proletariat, nor any of their works written for the First International, including the Civil War in France, make use of this expression. It is only in Marx's speech on the seventh anniversary of the International, at a celebration gathering in London (1871), that the words "proletarian dictature" were used (he was speaking on the Paris Commune).<sup>23</sup> Engels' "Introduction" to the Civil War in France, which also contains the expression "dictatorship of the proletariat," was written long after the dissolution of the International.<sup>24</sup> Whenever their writings were destined to represent the views of proletarian organisations, such as the International, Marx and Engels avoided expressions which might not have been generally accepted or whose meaning could be distorted by the authorities and the press of the bourgeoisie to damage the movement. But, even in writings representative of their own views, they do not use this expression as frequently as might be surmised from the noise that has been made about it.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Marx, "From the Speech on the Seventh Anniversary of the International," M/E Commune, p. 266.

24. Engels, Ibid., p. 34.

25. On the whole, out of the writings of both Marx and Engels that I have come across, it appears only in ten of them. These writings which exist in the bibliography used in this study are the following:

- Marx, Class Struggles in France, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, pp. 69, 122, 127.
- Marx/Engels, "Statement," Ibid., p. 387.
- Marx/Engels, Jules Vidié, August Willich, G. Julian Harnery, Adam, Universal Society of Revolutionary Communists, " Ibid., p. 614.
- Marx's letter to Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852, Correspondence, p. 64.
- Marx's speech "On the Seven Anniversary of the International," Marx/Engels, On the Paris Commune, p. 266.
- Engels, The Housing Question, p. 79.

The meaning of the proletariat's political dominance may, indubitably, be rendered by the use of many other words, as long as this meaning has been clearly defined. Where particular attention is required is not on the different meanings of such expressions, since such a problem does not exist, but on how this dictatorship, this political domination of the working class, is established once the battle has been decided, and what its specific content is as a class rule of the proletariat; i.e., what its functions are and how it is exercised by the proletariat.

### I. Revolution and Class Dictatorship

What has been said so far on the nature and functions of the state in general, or the bourgeois state in particular, is also valid for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The latter is also a state, essentially a class state like all previous ones and, given the kind of society it represents, does not differ from them in its fundamental functions. It may vary in terms of its general organisation and some of its specific functions, but so do all states in all pre-socialist societies. Marx has

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- Marx, "Indifference to Politics," Marx, Engels, Lenin, Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism, p. 95.
  - "Critique of the Gotha Program," Tucker (ed.), The Marx-Engels Reader, p. 395.
  - Engels' letter to Conrad Schmidt, October 27, 1880, Correspondence, p. 402.
  - Engels, "Introduction" to Marx's The Civil War in France, Marx/Engels, On the Paris Commune, p. 34.

Tetsuzo Huwa, in his "Scientific Socialism and the Question of Dictatorship," Marxism Today, June 1977, p. 173, completes the list by adding two more texts in which the expression appears:

- Engels, "The Programme of the Blanquist Commune Refugees" (1874), and,
- Engels, "Critique of the Draft Social Democratic Programme of 1891" (The Erfurt Programme).

not treated the dictatorship of the proletariat separately from the state in societies in which classes were (and still are) identifiable entities. If in this study the proletarian state is given a somewhat special consideration as a subject apart, it is only for the sake of concentrating on aspects of the proletarian revolution and the transition to socialism (essentially the same process) which are of particular importance for the purpose of this study.

#### The "Smashing of the State"

Marx's first major breakthrough in the complexities of the revolutionary class dictatorship (and this concerns both bourgeois and working class revolutions) dates back to his involvement, as an actual participant and observer, in the revolutions of 1848. It was during this time, and as a result of his first-hand experience, that he dealt with certain specific aspects of the process involved in the transfer of political power from one class to another. That class rule meant class dictatorship, and that some sort of class dictatorship was necessary for the proletariat to enable it to socialise the productive means and reconstruct society anew, was known to Marx before the 1848 revolutions. It is part of his general theory of the state which goes back to his early writings. As the Communist Manifesto had summed up this concept, "political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another."<sup>26</sup> What was not clear until 1848 was the process by which the proletariat, or any other revolutionary class for that matter, raises

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26. Marx/Engels, Manifesto, p. 505.



itself, in actual, practical terms, to the position of the ruling class upon the defeat of the old ruling class.

Marx began to elaborate upon this problem, and potential solutions thereto, while observing the daily developments of the German revolution which was condemned to failure, in part, through the inactivity of its leaders and their compromising attitude. What he concluded about the German revolution, essentially a bourgeois revolution, is equally applicable to a proletarian revolution: the transfer of political power cannot be effected by simply transferring the control of the existing state apparatus from the old ruling class to the new. A revolutionary class cannot become a ruling class without dismantling the old state and creating its own, without imposing its own dictatorship by means of an instrument of violence which obeys its commands. In fact, this is the only way for a really revolutionary class to inaugurate its rule. As Marx wrote in one of his articles criticising the ineffectual policies of the Prussian National Assembly: "Every provisional political set-up requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that. From the very beginning we blamed Camphausen for not having acted in a dictatorial manner, for not having immediately smashed up and removed the remains of the old institutions."<sup>27</sup> The same view is expressed in an article by Engels. Commenting on a speech made by Deputy Richter (of the Prussian Assembly), in which the latter had proposed the replacement of "the old organisation by a new one suited to the times and circumstances," Engels remarks that:

After a revolution, the first necessity is to replace all civil and military officials as well as part of the judiciary, and especially officials in the Public Prosecutor's

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27. Marx, "The Crisis and the Counter-revolution," Neue Rheinische Zeitung, September 14, 1848, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 7, p. 431

office. Otherwise the best measures of the Central Authority fail through the obstinacy of subordinates. 28

A real revolution cannot take place with compromises and "agreements" with the representatives of the old regime, as both the Frankfurt and the Prussian Assemblies tried to do. The fundamental task that confronts the revolutionary leadership of a class, if determined to transform this class into a ruling one, is to insure its ability to constitute. The government that has this ability or desires to have it recognizes no other power above it or equal to it, and no state other than the one it controls. The Prussian Assembly, wrote Marx,

is in the wrong because it should have had the Ministers arrested as traitors, traitors to the sovereignty of the people. It should have proscribed and outlawed all officials who obey orders other than those of the Assembly. 29

Removing or arresting government ministers and delinquent officials, however, was not sufficient to confirm the authority of the revolutionary Assemblies in Germany. What Marx and Engels proposed was a thorough dismantling of the state-machine and the abolition of all reactionary laws. The fact that this did not happen had a profound effect on the outcome of the revolution in Germany. In Prussia, wrote Marx, the Prime Minister, Ludolf Camphausen, had,

let the old ... laws dealing with political crimes and of the old courts continue to function. Under his government the old bureaucracy and the old army gained time to recover from their fight and to reconstitute themselves completely. All the leading personalities of the old regime were left untouched in their positions. 30

28. Engels, "The Agreement Session of July 4," N.R.Z., July 4, 1848, Ibid., p. 201-2.

29. Marx, "Counter-revolution in Berlin," N.R.Z., November 12, 1848, Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 15.

30. Marx, "The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-revolution," N.R.Z., December 10, 1848, Ibid., p. 157.

With the hesitancy and naiveté of the German revolutionary leaders of 1848, Marx contrasts the resolute stand of the French Convention of 1792-1793, "the beacon of all revolutionary epochs. It inaugurated the revolution by means of a decree dismissing all officials. Judges, too, are nothing but officials ...<sup>31</sup>

It is apparent from the above that, apart from the army which constitutes the most important element of the state and the most effective one as a means of physical violence, special attention is given by Marx and Engels to the judiciary. This is to be noticed in many articles of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, even those which, perhaps, were not written by either of them but undoubtedly reflect the spirit of their own dealings with this issue.\* In a situation in which the victor has yet to be decided, the judiciary -- side by side with the other forces of the state -- has a great role to perform. It can imprison individuals involved in the movement, decapitate the movement itself, close down revolutionary papers, dismantle organisations and parties, terrorise the people, and generally contribute to the cause of counter-revolution in a variety of ways. No attempt had been made by the democratic and conservative leadership of the German revolution to replace the old judiciary. Their fear of the masses had compelled them to avoid a radical rupture with the past. The judiciary, like the rest of the state-organs, was viewed by them as a less dangerous enemy than their inferior partners. In a real revolution, however, this dangerous weapon of the old

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31. Marx, "The Prussian Counter-revolution and the Prussian Judiciary," N.R.Z., December 24, 1848, Ibid, p.197.

\* I am referring here to certain anonymous articles of the N.R.Z.

class is, definitely, to be replaced. An article of the N.R.Z., after the defeat of the German revolution, reads:

It is to be hoped that at its next victory the people will not, as in March, be so simple-minded or forgetful as to allow all their executioners to remain in their lucrative posts. On the contrary, it is fairly safe to assume that it will hasten to subject the whole gang of reactionary officials, and among them first and foremost the blood-thirsty legal hypocrites also called "judges," to six months of detention under examination in Pennsylvanian prisons, and then for further reform will use them in railway and road construction. 32

The basic question that is involved in all these statements is that a provisional, i.e., "unconstitutional," state of affairs, such as the one created in a "dual power" situation -- which all revolutions, in one way or another go through -- a revolutionary class, even if recognised as the representative of the majority's interests, cannot affirm its victory without "breaking the teeth" of the old ruling class; it will not be able to legislate, and reconstruct society without backing its efforts with its own means of effective persuasion. It is, again, an article of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, which focuses on the legalistic and timid attitude of the Frankfurt Assembly, that brings this truth into sharp relief:

With the garrulity of washerwomen, they chattered about "fundamental rights" like scholastics of the Middle Ages, while the "fundamental power" of the Holy Alliance and its accomplices became ever more strongly organised and scoffed louder and louder at the chatter of the professors and philistines about fundamental rights. The former affirmed their "fundamental rights" to a scrap of paper, whereas the latter, the men of the counter-revolution, inscribed their "fundamental power" on keenly sharpened swords, guns and slav redcoats. 33

32. "Political Trial," (unsigned); N.R.Z., February 10, 1849, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, pp. 342-43. Pennsylvanian prisons: solitary confinement prisons first built in the state of Pennsylvania in late 18th century.

33. "Vienna and Frankfurt," (unsigned); N.R.Z., March 13, 1849, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 19, pp. 48-49.

Marx had repeatedly occupied himself with this problem. The "smashing" of the state and its transformation into an instrument of the proletariat was much more necessary than in previous revolutions. In his Eighteenth Brumaire, he surveys the evolution of the French state-machine since the times of the absolute monarchy, and documents its enormous growth as a parasitic organism used by the successive governments as a means of both suppression and manipulation -- above all manipulation of those who are employed in it. He concludes that "all the revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it."<sup>34</sup> And, a few pages afterwards: "The state centralisation that modern society requires arises only on the ruins of the military-bureaucratic governmental machinery which was forged in opposition to feudalism."<sup>35</sup> As Marx summed up the meaning of these passages from the Eighteenth Brumaire, in a letter to Kugelmann written in April 1871 while the Commune was still reigning in Paris, the "smashing" of this kind of state was to be the task of the proletarian revolution:

If you look at the last chapter of my Eighteenth Brumaire, you will find that I declare: the next French Revolution will no longer attempt to transfer the bureaucratic-military apparatus from one hand to another, but to smash it and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our comrades in Paris are attempting. 36

What concerned Marx, both in the Eighteenth Brumaire and after the establishment of the Commune, was not simply the destruction of the bourgeois state as a means of coercion but also as an organism of

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34. Marx, Eighteenth Brumaire, Tucker, Reader, p. 514.

35. Ibid., p. 521.

36. Marx to Kugelmann, April 12, 1871, Correspondence, p. 247.

military-bureaucratic parasitism. This was the kind of state that had been erected in Continental Europe from the age of absolutism and after. This is the reason why Marx draws a distinction between the revolutions of the Continent where the proletariat would be compelled to destroy this huge apparatus, and those outside it (e.g., in England or the U.S., as Marx had stated in his Amsterdam speech)<sup>37</sup> where the state was much less developed and the proletariat would not find so much to destroy. This distinction, of course, is no longer valid.

But in The Civil War in France the idea of "smashing" the state was presented forward far more clearly than on any previous occasion. In the beginning of the third chapter, where Marx describes the efforts of the Commune to create its own state on the ruins of the previous one, we find the statement that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes."<sup>38</sup> It is an incomplete statement which, as it is, says as much as it omits, and it has passed in this form in the 1872 Preface of the Manifesto. If one is anxious to see what the working class should do with this "ready-made machinery," he should either read a few pages afterwards, or see Marx's first outline of the Civil War in France where the proposition is presented in full:

But the working class cannot, as the ruling classes and their different radical factions have done in the successive hours of their triumph, simply laid hold of the existing state body and wield this ready-made agency for their purpose. The first condition for the holding of political power is to transform its traditional working machinery and destroy it as an instrument of class rule. 39

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37. Marx, Karl, The First International and After, edited and with an introduction by David Fernbach (New York: Vintage, 1974), p. 324.

38. Marx, Civil War in France, M/E Commune, p. 68.

39. Ibid., (First Outline), p. 202.

Shortly after this, Marx adds that "the political instrument of their (the workers') enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation."<sup>40</sup>

Marx made these observations drawing on the experience of past revolutions, but especially on the experience of the Paris Commune, the only important attempt of its kind that had ever succeeded in going as far as to create some sort of a proletarian state. What the Commune did to use the state "for its own purpose", may be summarised as follows: it formed its governmental agencies by "responsible and revocable" representatives of the people elected by universal suffrage; it did the same with regard to judicial officials and the rest of public servants; and also it abolished the standing army and the police and replaced them with the "armed people."

## II. Proletarian Dictatorship and Transition

Marx considered the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat as an integral part of his theory of proletarian revolution. As a form of class rule, it is precisely what enables the working class to refashion society on the basis of its interests. To Marx, without a class rule of the proletariat, the transition to socialism was impossible. As he pointed out in a letter, written in 1852, in which he made clear what he himself had discovered and which goes beyond the existence of classes and class struggle, the two concepts dictatorship of the proletariat and transition to socialism, are identical:

What I did (discover) that was new was to demonstrate:  
1/ that the existence of classes is merely linked to

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40. Ibid. p. 202.

particular historical phases in the development of production, 2/ that class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3/ that this dictatorship itself constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society. 41

As he had explained earlier, in the Class Struggles in France, the dictatorial rule of the proletariat expresses the continuation of the revolution after the proletariat has made itself the ruling class but still has to carry out the immensely important task of preparing society for Communism:

This socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all social relations of production that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations. 42

The function of the proletarian dictatorship was also made clear in the 1852 agreement between the League, the Blanquists and the Chartists: it is to keep "the revolution in continuous progress until the achievement of Communism."<sup>43</sup>

Subordination of the hitherto privileged classes seems to be the fundamental task of the working class state. The recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, stated Lenin, is tantamount to the recognition of the fact that the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is extended in "the period of transition from capitalism to communism."<sup>44</sup> Stalin's grasp of this particular aspect of

41. Marx to Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852, Correspondence, p. 64.

42. Marx, Class Struggles in France, M/E Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 127.

43. "Universal Society of Revolutionary Communists," Ibid., p. 614.

44. Lenin, "The State and Revolution," Collected Works, Vol. 25, p. 417.



the proletarian dictatorship is also based on the fact that the period of transition is one of class struggles:

... the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "super-revolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organisational work and economic reconstruction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats. 45

The creation of new, socialist relations of production is, obviously, another important task to be performed simultaneously with the former. Such relations are not merely to be liberated or allowed to develop under the dictatorship of the proletariat, but to be implanted, for the most part, to be imposed. What Marx termed "socialised production" under capitalism, as he very clearly explained, has nothing to do with it. The socialisation of labour, i.e., the mass proletarianisation of the population, or the abolition, in certain sectors of capitalist economy, of private property in its classical definition, in no way means the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production. The institution of private property has not been surpassed even by workers' cooperatives and nationalised industries. It will not be surpassed either by the eurocommunist self-managed or co-managed enterprises. What workers achieve in such experiments is to gain the necessary experience to safeguard their collective interests, now and in the future, and to become better administrators.

The implantation of socialist relations of production and socialist reconstruction in general requires the erection of a state that has the capacity to act, whenever necessary, as a coercive, indeed a dictatorial apparatus. How coercive a proletarian dictatorship is going to be is, obviously, a

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45. Foundations of Leninism, p. 50.

question which concerns each country separately. Experience has shown that it depends on how determined or prolonged the resistance of the old ruling class is going to be, the assistance it will receive from outside allies, certain objective factors pertinent to the conditions of the given country, and particularly on the new government's ability to advance the cause of revolution with as little unnecessary violence and dictatorial measures as possible. There is always room for things to be done in a better way than they are often done. Lukács observed on Stalin's excesses of the 1930's "... only thorough investigation by competent scholars can establish what part was played by objective difficulties and what part by Stalin's excessive reaction to them."<sup>46</sup> And this is mainly where the eurocommunist critique focuses its attention: on the excesses and the undemocratic nature of the "soviet model". But this argument, fruitful as it may be, cannot be carried to great lengths. Revolutions, as Lenin observed, go beyond the initiative of parties and social groups<sup>47</sup>, and surely (one should add) the biographies of individual leaders. Thus it would be quite naive for a historical analyst to say with any degree of certainty that the French revolution, for example, could have been less violent without Robespierre's and Saint-Just's obsessive hatred of counter-revolutionaries. Without them and the circumstances that produced these actors, we probably would not be able to speak of the "Great French Revolution" at all -- let alone its excesses. Given that these political forces and historical personalities existed, one can only study their shortcomings and errors in the light of the given circumstances and the

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46. George Lukács, "Reflections on the Cult of Personality," in Marxism and Human Liberation, edited and with an introduction by San Juan, Jr. (New York: Dell Publishers Co., 1973), p. 70.

47. Left-Wing Communism an Infantile Disorder, Collected Works, Vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 95.

necessities imposed by the logic of the revolution itself and conclude -- perhaps against Hegel's wisdom -- that what was real was not necessarily rational. The Eurocommunist critique, however, goes far beyond this. While, on the one hand, it accepts the violent nature of the Russian revolution, which they attribute to the specific conditions of the country at the time it happened, on the other, it blames it for not having established "democratic socialism" -- an argument that simply does not address itself to the excesses and irregularities of the given regime, but to its total character as a form of government. We will come back to this issue.

It has to be emphasised that the proletarian state, little or more coercive, has to affirm its character as a class state, a class dictatorship whose presence is universally felt by society. By its very nature, it does not restrict its functions to being only an instrument of class oppression. No state has ever restricted itself to politics alone; but more than any form of state, the proletarian dictatorship has to extend its authority to many aspects of social activity, including first and foremost the organisation of production. Since individual initiative in the capitalist sense plays (or should play) a minor role in the development of socialist economy, the proletarian state which assumes this responsibility acquires enormous extraordinary powers. It thus becomes, in a very important sense, an omnipotent and omnipresent reality. Even if one were to substitute a less coarse expression for the one of the dictatorship of the proletariat which (as Georges Marchais has suggested) has acquired a "bad connotation," it will still preserve its character. Unless we change both its name and its content, it will

still be a class dictatorship whose first task remains the expropriation of expropriators; and that implies oppression. If this task is renounced and, hence, the concomitant determination to carry it out is lost, the proletarian state will cease being a workers' state altogether. From the Marxist point of view, a proletarian state which is not identical with the political dominance of the proletariat and the absolute control of the latter over the means of production, and whose foremost objective is not the establishment of communism, is unthinkable.

It is clear from the above that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not an end in itself. Its only reason for existence is to serve the objectives of society's transition to communism and subdue its class opponents. As long as these objectives have not been achieved, society cannot afford to rid itself of the presence of the dictatorship:

... as long as other classes, and the capitalist class in particular exist, and as long as the proletariat fights against them (for its enemies and the old organisation of society do not vanish as a result of its coming to power), it might employ coercive measures, that is, government measures. 48

As soon as all these conditions which gave rise to the state and necessitate its continued existence disappear, the state also disappears and "the functions of government become simple administrative function."<sup>49</sup>

It casts off its coercive characteristics and, as Engels says, "the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things."<sup>50</sup>

This is how the proletarian dictatorship is expected to transform itself into the state of the whole society, i.e., to cease being a class state

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48. Marx, "The Conspectus on Bakunin's Book State and Anarchy," M/E/L Anarchism and Anarchosyndicalism, p. 147

49. Marx/Engels, "Fictitious Splits in the International," The General Council of the First International 1871-72, p. 407.

50. Engels, Anti-Dühring, p. 333.

and become the representative of the interests of the people as a whole -- in which case it ceases being a state altogether. Its coercive functions become useless to society, for there is nothing to be opposed. It is not abolished by society; "it withers away."<sup>51</sup>

Naturally, this general theoretical presentation of the subject is valid if indeed the given communist society has reached its higher stage of development, both materially and culturally, and has gotten rid of its class enemies. We now know, however, that in the age of imperialism this process is much more complex and more difficult. The creation of ideological blocs, and the waging of the class struggle on an international scale does not permit the natural evolution of the workers' state to the stage of its self-abolition.. Unless the "major capitalist countries" turn socialist, the dictatorship of the proletariat will continue to function as a class dictatorship. It will, perhaps, diminish its role as a coercive power in certain highly developed communist societies, but it will continue to exist as an organised means of violence. In the latter respect, i.e., in its capacity as an instrument of class oppression controlled by the forces committed to socialism, it will not lose its character as a "special power," one that does not belong to the whole society.

### III. How the Working Class Exercises its Rule

But what concerns us directly in this discussion is a much more specific issue; it deals with the question of how the proletariat exercises its own dictatorship. This is the theme which, after the rise of socialist states, has acquired an importance which is no longer to be treated as an academic exercise. It concerns the relationship

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51. Ibid., p. 333.

between party and class, class and state, and particularly the role of the party in the creation and direction of the working class state. The organisation and management of socialist economy is not at all irrelevant to this issue. Although this question has a strong bearing on the governmental structures that have evolved in the various socialist countries, the present study cannot possibly enlighten the reader, with details, in this particular area. As far as the eurocommunist critique is concerned, it will accept as a premise that the role of the party in these societies is both dominant and (often) monopolistic as far as political authority is concerned. The Western powers do not care much about who is going to be the next President of the Soviet Union, or, for that matter, if there is one; their interest rests with the question of who is going to be the next Secretary General of the Party. And this is not simply a matter of curiosity. It is precisely in the Party and its leadership that the authority lies. And, definitely, this authority is not exercised the way eurocommunists have presented it in their analyses of existing socialism, particularly of the so-called "soviet model." After all, we are not dealing with a uniform eurocommunist critique but a variety of them, ranging from the ones that point to the undemocratic nature of the soviet model to those that totally reject its being a socialist one.

We have already seen, in the previous chapter, how the ruling class rules in capitalist society. A proletarian dictatorship is still a class state, and in this particular respect it does not differ significantly from any previous class states. Where we get to the really complex aspects of the question -- and such aspects have been

complex in all pre-socialist state forms -- is in the way in which the working class, as a ruling class, can rule itself in terms of its own participation in the state organs of its society. (We have already attempted a similar analysis for the case of the bourgeoisie in the previous chapter).

The text that has often been used to present Marx's ideas on the organisation of the working class state, especially with regard to the issues that are focused upon in this chapter, is his Civil War in France. One could, as well, include in it the two outlines that Marx worked out before arriving at the final text. The first thing that should be remarked by the reader of these texts is that, in describing the Commune, Marx counter-poses it to the then extant French state-apparatus. The characteristic elements of the latter which he isolated in order to make the comparison, may be summarised as follows: Its overcentralisation that originated "from the days of absolute monarchy." It was a feature that was eclipsed momentarily under the storm of the Revolution to re-emerge again (though with a different content) under the First Empire and to further reassert itself during the years of Louis Bonaparte by which time the Executive became the source of all power; its irresponsibility, estrangement from civil society and its corruption, epitomised in its character as "a state power, apparently soaring high above society," which "was at the same time itself the greatest scandal of that society and the very hotbed of all its corruption"<sup>52</sup>; and its being a "Joint-stock Government" monopolised by the ruling cliques of

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52. Marx, Civil War in France, M/E Commune, pp. 68-70.

the Second Empire.<sup>53</sup> Naturally, Marx did not ignore the other social characteristics of the French state, its being, for example, "an engine of class despotism," "a regime of avowed class terrorism," but what attracted most of his attention was its overcentralised character and the absence of the appropriate structures that could make state servants and government representatives directly accountable to the people.

The juxtaposition of the Commune with this type of state creates an antipodal situation:

The true antithesis of the Empire itself -- that is, the state power, the centralised Executive, of which the Second Empire was only the exhaustive formula -- was the Commune. 54

But which were those characteristics of the Communal state that won Marx's praise, and that should apparently be part of the proletarian dictatorship? Here, we present what appears to be the most important of them in Marx's judgement: "The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors ... responsible and revocable at short terms." The same applied for all public officials, including the judiciary.<sup>55</sup> "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time."<sup>56</sup> Shortly after that, Marx says that the Commune of Paris was "to serve as model to all industrial centres of France":

The Communal regime once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralised government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to

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53. Ibid., p. 69.

54. Ibid., First Outline, p. 151.

55. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

56. Ibid., p. 71.



develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet. ... The rural Communes of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the mandate imperative (formal instructions) of his constituents. 57.

This National Delegation would in fact perform the functions of a central authority assuring "the unity of the nation" by way of a "Communal Constitution" binding together the entire country. In Marx's judgement, this form of representation would bring about a totally new type of state: a state stripped of all its traditional extraordinary and arbitrary powers, in fact stripped of many of the powers vested in the capitalist state, and still directly accountable to the population:

The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally misstated, but were to be discharged by Communal and therefore strictly responsible agents. 58.

At both the political and economic levels, the function of this central organisation was to co-ordinate the efforts of the Communes and regional representative bodies on the basis of a commonly accepted policy, a national plan, expressing the views and decisions of the organised producers: "If united cooperative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, ... what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism ..." 59

The Commune had no "ready-made utopias to introduce par décret du peuple," and therefore had "to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming the circumstances and men." 60

And yet Marx did not hesitate to declare it as "the political

57. Ibid., p. 72.

58. Ibid., p. 73.

59. Ibid., p. 76.

60. Ibid., p. 76.

form at last discovered under which to work for the economic emancipation of Labour.<sup>61</sup>

Well, if this is what the essence of the proletarian state is according to Marx, then, both eurocommunists and Leninists are on the wrong track; for, regardless of the role they assigned to the party vis-à-vis the state, the masses, and even to the management of enterprises, they both speak from the stand-point of the party (or parties, in the case of eurocommunism) which has a special role to perform in the transition to, and the building of, socialism. Curious as it may appear, Marx's account of the Paris Commune leaves this particular role of the party almost totally untouched.\* Clearly (and he returns to this point repeatedly), what was accomplished by the Commune, both its commissions and omissions, did not come about spontaneously. They were the outcome of the deliberate actions of a leadership composed of representatives of a variety of socialistically-oriented organisations: Blanquists, Proudhonists and Internationalists, as well as the heirs of the Jacobin tradition whose revolutionary romanticism had, once again, brought them to the front line of the battle. They were the leaders that dominated the Commune and the Central Committee of the National Guard and bore the responsibility for the organisation of the Communal state and the

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61. Ibid., p. 75.

\* That may not, in fact, be very strange, since both Marx and Engels in none of their major works have been very enlightening on the subject of the party/state relationship in the period of transition. Lenin's The State and Revolution, which is based on those works of Marx and Engels that deal with the question of the state, follows more or less the same pattern. In both cases, the party/state relationship is overwhelmed by that of the working class/state. In both cases the emphasis is given to the necessity of creating the working class state through the smashing of the existing one, and not to the role of the party in this important undertaking.

passing of the various social decrees. Marx likewise does not neglect to point to the fact that the proclamation of the Republic (September 4, 1870) found the "real leaders of the working class still shut up in Bonapartist prisons" (one of them August Blanqui himself).<sup>62</sup> But one searches in vain in his account of the insurrection to discover the role he assigned to the most enlightened and organised ones in the proletarian dictatorship. None of the political trends within the Commune, either in terms of a clear-cut organisation or a definite programme, constituted a party, and Marx could not have treated them differently. Furthermore, one could assume that it would have been impolitic and injurious to the movement had Marx elaborated on the importance of the party in the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship in a period in which the International was under fire by European reaction.

In light of the above, studying the Civil War in France is not going to give us the answer to the question of what the party's functions should be in the period of transition. However, this is not the only classical document to be consulted. A better way to get to the essence of this matter is to study those works of Marx and Engels which deal with the question of revolutions in connection with the proletarian party, where the relationship between the latter and the working class is clearly established. We have already come across this relationship in the section dealing with the party. Let us summarise what is evident in these writings, and one may go as far back as the birth of the party

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62. Ibid, p. 48. Regarding the presence of members of the International in the Commune, Marx made in July, 1871, the following statement: "The insurrection of Paris was made by the workmen of Paris. The ablest of the workmen must necessarily have been its leaders and administrators; but the ablest of the workmen happen to be members of the International Association." From a "Record of Marx's talk with The World Correspondent," Commune, p. 255.

idea.

Firstly, the working class is incapable of liberating itself without a political party composed of its most ideologically advanced and resolute members who constitute its "politically active" section which propels the whole class forward. In this sense -- and here we do not have to make another survey of the pertinent literature from the Manifesto to the political resolutions of the Hague Congress and, and on to the Gotha Program and to Marx's and Engels' correspondence with the various revolutionaries of the time -- it is the party that leads the struggles of the working class. And, despite the many links links that exist (and should exist) between the two, it is obvious that the former is assigned a special role in the revolutionary process: a role that allows it to act on behalf of the class. Secondly, as a logical consequence of the first, if the class struggle is prolonged into the period of transition, and here Marx leaves us with no doubt, then, the party's leading role, as the most politically active section of the class, will continue to be such during this period as well. The party does not shed its function as the vanguard of the class and the political expression of its collective power with the collapse of capitalism, as Gramsci might have believed temporarily simply because it is, like the trade unions, a creation of capitalist competition.<sup>63</sup> It is proper to be reminded here that the political resolution of the Hague has defined

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63. See, for example, his article "Proletarian Unity," L'Ordine Nuovo, 28 February - 6 March 1920, in Selections from Political Writings. This position was soon changed: "The existence of a cohesive and highly disciplined Communist party with factory, trade union and co-operative cells, that can coordinate and centralise in its central executive committee the whole of the proletariat's revolutionary action, is the fundamental and indispensable condition for attempting any experiment of the Soviets". "Towards a Renewal of the Socialist Party," Ibid, p. 195.

this role of the party in the period of transition in no unclear terms:

This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social revolution, and of its ultimate end, the abolition of classes (emphasis supplied). 64

The fact that Marx had always, and for good reasons, insisted that workers should be able to control the organisations and bodies (including governmental ones in a workers society) which have been created in order to defend their interests, should not be ignored. But here again, one should not fail to see the limits of this proposition and the impossibility of establishing a self-ruled society. Direct rule of the people is, of course, out of the question for any kind of society, and, therefore, irrelevant to a Marxist discourse. Marx himself had solved this problem in his polemics against anarchy, and in his "Conspectus of Bakunin's Book State and Anarchy" he left no doubt as to what he meant by his opposition to direct working class rule: "Does in a trade union... the whole union constitute the executive committee?"<sup>65</sup> One can imagine what his answer would be for a situation that embraced the whole society. The problem becomes even more intricate since the proletarian state, like any other state and particularly the modern one, is a "special power" made up of specially trained individuals and cannot possibly be identified with the people. But this is not quite our problem. The question is who should be responsible for the organisation of the proletarian state, and see that such specially trained individuals, particularly those in key positions, are there to serve the cause of the class.

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64. "Resolutions Relative to the General Rules," The Hague Congress of the First International, p. 282.

65. Marx, "The Conspectus," M/E/L, Anarchism, p. 149.

In capitalist society this is obviously the function of the capitalist parties.

Although Marx never came up with concrete answers to such complex (and extremely important) problems, one thing that is absolutely clear in all his writings is that he did not expect much from the working class economic organisations in the way of political action, and expected even less from its much larger unorganised section. Given the importance he assigned to the political organisation of the proletariat in the period of transition, one may safely assume that this task, i.e., the task of setting up and directing the proletarian state, falls on the party. It is the only instrument of the class that is trained to see things globally and to represent "the interests of the movement as a whole" (Manifesto). The proletariat by itself, either in its entirety, or through its various organisations which represent particular interests, cannot possibly establish the political instrument required to effect the abolition of its present relations.

On the other hand, the active participation of the working class and its allies (through their organisations) in the structures of the new state -- and here we come to the most thorny aspects of the problem -- is absolutely indispensable. A revolutionary party, in itself a minority, which operates apart from or against the majority of society cannot maintain its hegemonic position for long. The hegemony of the class itself simply becomes a misnomer if the latter is excluded from the political apparatuses. The party estranges itself from the masses, it becomes an "independent" force above society, and finally shrinks into the leadership and its bureaucratic appendages. And it is from this

point on that economic and intellectual stagnation, bureaucratic corruption and the fear of radical reforms begin to appear as characteristics of a profound malfunction of the system. But how this participation is to be assured is a question which cannot be confronted on the basis of a definite formula. It will have to take the form of a constantly evolving process depending on the specific conditions prevailing in each country: the degree of economic development and the way the working class is organised; the kind of allies the proletariat may have in any given situation; the types of organisations that will arise in the period of transition; and naturally, the accumulated experience of the communist movement. The ability of the party to keep its mission alive, within the limits imposed by the intensity of class struggle in the domestic and international scene, remains the most decisive factor.

The Commune presented the first "model" of popular participation at the city level. Marx's insistence, however, on emphasizing only the elements that existed in the Commune (and which he liked) rather than include in his account the ones that were missing, does not allow us to conclude with any degree of certainty that the -- otherwise short-lived -- Communal experiment had indeed created a complete national model. The Soviets produced a different one which concretised the mode of representation for both the working class and its allies on a national scale. Other socialist revolutions adopted different models. Given the variations in the case of the latter, it has to be admitted that the party has secured for itself a dominant role both in relation to the working class and to society as a whole. It is an absolutely normal development and, for Communists at least, there should hardly be

anything surprising about it. When Communists speak (and that goes as far back as the Manifesto) of the special role of the party as the vanguard of the class, its most class-conscious section and its guiding force, they automatically establish a definite relationship between the former and the latter that does not vanish on the morrow of the victory. The concept of leadership is not an abstraction. There are no leaders without led, and the distance between being led and being manipulated (or even subordinated) is not insurmountable. Hence, the question is: what general principles should the socialist regimes have established in order to ensure a genuinely active presence of the masses in the state apparatus and the decision-making bodies. If genuine participation means that the masses are capable of conveying their spontaneously formulated wishes to a leadership which is directly "responsible" and "accountable" to them in the sense of the Communal Constitution, then, one should argue that such principles which safeguard this relationship cannot be applicable. Neither the central organs of authority can be accountable to them in the above sense, nor are the wishes of the masses unguided. Not even the eurocommunists, who no longer envision the possibility of a revolutionary situation, have dared to question the prerogatives of the central organs or even the special role of the party. If we are dealing on the other hand with the option of "democratic socialism", we are surely confronted with a situation which, in Marxist terms, must be viewed as an absurd contradiction. The transition to socialism cannot come about as a result of normal development of bourgeois democracy. Implanting it into existing socialist regimes, on the other hand, will definitely constitute a regression, to say nothing of creating total havoc. The absence of "democracy" (opposition



parties, regular election, parliamentary practices, and other bourgeois freedoms) does not necessarily make a socialist regime un-Marxist. Was it not Engels who said that revolution is a "most authoritarian act?" What seems to depart, however, from the spirit of Marxism and its notion of permanent revolution is to have a party -- or better, a party/state apparatus -- which has lost its revolutionary fervor and has estranged itself from the masses; a party that monopolises all initiative to the extent of demobilising and depoliticising the masses; a party, finally, that does not sincerely value the actual needs and the aspirations of the population in the making of its policies both at the level of the immediate environment of the work-place and at the national level.

"Self-management" cannot possibly be taken as a significant contribution to the theory of the socialist state (the Soviets began their historical career with a similar role) if proper institutions ensuring a permanent relationship of co-operation and co-ordination between the masses and the government are not established, and if the party itself does not make it among its primary tasks to keep such institutions alive and functional. It is only in this way that the masses will be able to participate in the formulation of national policies. It is worth mentioning in this context that self-administration was not the main concern of the workers in the socialist countries either in their past anti-government risings in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, or more recently, again in Poland. Judging from the recent events in Poland, where the anti-government movement was much more articulate than on previous occasions, the aspirations of the workers had by far surpassed the concern of self-administration. The most significant objective of the

movement, which eventually brought confrontation with the government to the point where the latter felt obliged to dissolve "Solidarity," was to get access to the highest levels of political power. It is precisely at these levels that the decisions which are taken affect the workers not only at the work-place but generally, in the way of prices, salaries, and quality of life.

It can be argued, at this point, that eurocommunism should have focused its intellectual efforts and its critique to explore the objective limits, and also the possibilities that exist for a more direct and effective relationship between leaders and led in existing socialism, instead of offering the solution of using democracy for the passage to socialism or suggesting its implantation into socialist regimes. It is either democracy or socialism; putting them together does not give us socialism, much less a "democratic" one. One should conclude, however, that as far as existing socialism is concerned the problem does not reside in discovering a new theory of the state. If the party insists on its dominant presence, the blame is not to be placed exclusively on the party alone but on the actual objective circumstances that determine its attitude. The doctrine is as good as the conditions that surround the socialist world today. Without discarding the value and the reality of some aspects of the (often un-historical) eurocommunist critique, and regardless of what future developments may bring, it has to be said that as long as the international ideological conflict maintains its present tenacity, the prospects of radically "democratising" existing socialism are not very encouraging.

## CONCLUSION

The essence of eurocommunism resides in its rejection of the revolutionary process in the transition to socialism, and -- in logical consequence of this -- the abandonment of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Classical Marxist concepts are replaced by the general formula of the "democratic transition" which repudiates all forms of violent rupture with the existing state of things, particularly the state apparatus, and proposes instead the preservation of the present parliamentary, pluralistic regime of government, elevated by the persistent struggles of the progressive forces to a higher form of democratic institution. The underlying element of this proposition rests in the conviction that the working class and its party, in alliance with all democratic forces committed to profound social changes, will gradually bring about the socialist transformation by a combination of mass (non-violent) struggles and the use of the state machine turned into an instrument of social liberation. Naturally, the abandonment of essential Marxist concepts, especially that of the dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx considered as one of his most important discoveries and an indispensable tool for the transition to socialism, has not left the remaining body of Marxist theory unaffected. Indeed, the classical character of the doctrine has been stripped of all its fundamental features in the new version of eurocommunism. The conception of the state, the whole process of transition, even the role of the working class as an agent of historical change, have taken a totally new meaning.

There is a variety of reasons that might have played a part in the

emergence of the new trend, at least in regard to the four parties surveyed in this study: the fundamental need of all of them to recover from the onslaught of fascism; the long and tortuous efforts of the PGE and the Communist Party of Greece to regain a legal existence; the increased role of the PCI and the PCF in national politics; and more general currents like the prolonged post-war growth of capitalism. It was, undoubtedly, this experience that shaped that attitude of those communist leaders who dropped the old line and gradually converged on the democratic road, once the possibility of peaceful transition announced by the CPSU had become part of the program of their parties. It has led them not simply to the realisation that some sort of respectability, in the sense that bourgeois parties possess it, might be required for the communist parties as well, but also to the acceptance of a great deal of the accumulated capitalist critique of the theory and practice of the communist movement. Eurocommunist parties have tried hard in the last decade to be recognised as "responsible," "national" political forces by their class enemies and become part of the institutionalised order of capitalist society. The familiar vocabulary of the movement along with the essential content of the theory, have been sacrificed to that end. The unqualified defense of bourgeois democracy does not simply reveal eurocommunism's opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, it epitomises at the same time its philosophical poverty and its totally defensive attitude.

Eurocommunism does not articulate its views from the Marxist standpoint, but one that seeks an audience beyond the barriers of the forces of progress -- in other words, it covets a national audience. This

attitude, allegedly justified on account of the advanced stage of capitalism in western societies -- which has transformed the "democratic", non-monopolistic bourgeoisie into a potential ally of the proletariat -- is also based on the peculiar national characteristics of those countries where eurocommunism has appeared. In fact, it was basically in the name of these national peculiarities that eurocommunists condemned the Soviet model and broke away from the "tutelage of Moscow." Curiously enough, these peculiarities which supposedly relate to the unique politico-cultural traditions of each of these countries as well as to the degree of their economic growth, as far as transition tactics are concerned, proved to be more or less identical for all of them -- even those that have no Catholic workers to draw into the alliance. Eurocommunist analysis has led to the conclusion that the revolutionary road also is inapplicable for all these countries. It is this uncritical, unhistorical overtly defensive and often populist character of the eurocommunist reasoning that makes it necessary to contrast it with the class-based approach of the Marxist classics.

Eurocommunism has been constructed of a multitude of incomplete truths and contradictory perspectives. Its alliance policies have led to the rejection of the traditional conception of communist parties on that matter -- a conception that could not have imagined a society on the road to transition without its division into two, fundamentally, antagonistic camps. The new trend intends to avoid this type of confrontation and, with the exception of the French party which still relies heavily on the traditional forces on the Left, tries to expand the alliance for socialism to the point where all "democratic" forces could

be included in it. In essence, this proposition comes down to the most bizarre contradiction: the abolition of capitalism cannot be accomplished unless the bulk of the bourgeois class participates voluntarily in its own destruction. Apart from this inconsistency, the inclusion itself of the bourgeoisie among the forces of fundamental change requires the adjustment of the philosophical posture of the communist party to a situation of a broad coalition where even the party itself must demonstrate its "openness" and its democratic character to other parties and forces of the alliance. Thus, its role as well as that of the proletariat in the process of transition also have to be reconsidered with a consequent weakening of the traditional claim to play a special role in this process.

Indeed, the idea of leaving behind the early models of political alliances of the Third International was not the work of eurocommunism. The doctrinaire policies of communist parties in regard to potential allies for the protection of democracy and the socialist transition have not remained unchanged in the face of new structural developments in western societies. The gradual adaptation of their policies to changing realities can be traced back to the creation of the Popular Fronts, the organisation of the Resistance and the coalition governments of the Liberation. This flexibility in the policies of communist parties re-emerges again following the interruption of the Cold War. The call for a "workers' and peasants'" alliance is, to all intents and purposes, a thing of the past. Likewise, the equation of Social-Democracy to "social-fascism" is now simply an antiquated epigram found only in their past vocabulary. In fact, all communist parties, including non-eurocommunist ones, have already reconsidered such inter-war policies which not only

failed to arrest the march of fascism, but also proved ineffective in exploiting the revolutionary potentialities of the time.

What differentiates non-eurocommunist and eurocommunist parties and gives eurocommunism its characteristic style, is that the latter seems to have gone far beyond the permissible limits for a revolutionary party in its search for allies. For the PCI and the Interior, for example, and to a certain extent for the Spanish party, the entire affair of the grand alliance (which intends to include in it the main political representative of the capitalist class) appears as a confrontation with a shadow enemy. The mere breadth of the proposed alliance, moreover, will deprive it of any ambitious design beyond the social-democratic alternative. One wonders what type of hegemony eurocommunism wants to impose on capitalist society when the proletarian party itself is bowing to the hegemony and the entire constitutional order of the class which it intends to dismantle. The "mass ideology" of the PCI and the "hegemony of the historic bloc" of the PCE fail to attribute both to the working class and the communist party a special mission of their own above and beyond the other classes and parties. That the working class itself is incapable of effecting the transition alone is an incontestable assertion which lacks novelty and, hence, deserves no special commentary. What has to be emphasized here, however, is that while other classes are destined to have a part in the transition in alliance with the proletariat, it does not necessarily mean that the latter's role -- which derives "from its own life situation" and "the whole organisation of bourgeois society" -- should be diminished or that other classes will appropriate part of this role. With or without

an alliance, this role of the working class remains unchanged. In line with the same logic, the party's essential mission as the organiser and articulator of the proletarian revolutionary movement cannot and should not be affected by the requirements of the alliance. But this presupposes that the party itself has resolved to maintain its character as a "separate party, distinct from all others and opposed to them, a conscious class party\*" -- which is no longer the case with eurocommunism.

Equally dubious in the eurocommunist tenet is the theory of the democratisation of the bourgeois state for the purpose of its utilisation as the main instrument for the socialist transition. Here eurocommunism starts off with certain proposals which, at first sight, cannot be easily discarded as un-Marxist. Its insistence on "infiltrating" the various apparatuses of the capitalist state, especially the "Ideological" ones, with as many progressive elements as possible, appears as a quite positive approach. It should be noted here that the inclusion within the state machine in its classical definition of the so-called "Ideological State Apparatuses" may not necessarily be taken as a serious infraction as long as we know what we are dealing with in terms of their specific functions. Ideological brain-washing is definitely part of the functions of these institutions which affect our attitude on a daily basis; but so is the role, in a certain sense, of our immediate environment, the store salesperson, our supervisor at work, etc., and yet the latter are not necessarily to be suspected of being camouflaged tentacles of the Leviathan. Clearly, there is a difference between the former and the latter, just as there is one between the police and the Church (or the

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\* See note 1, in Chapter Two, Section 2.



labour union, for that matter). However, the real problem of the novelty does not lie here. It resides in the curious insistence of eurocommunism on trying to change society through the domination of the capitalist institutions of culture and information.

In any case, the emphasis given by eurocommunists to further democratising the capitalist state is in itself, and apart from the specific purposes for which they intend to use it, a plausible proposition. At least, it presents a renewed effort to reconsider the relationship between the unarmed revolutionary movement and the armed and highly organised state. Given the ever-growing dimensions of the latter in modern capitalist society, it would have been inconceivable for any communist party which is committed to class struggle, to aspire to conquering political power without having ensured its presence in its numerous institutions. Certainly, if the party intends to avoid a clear-cut confrontation with a monolithic state-power obedient to the commands of capital, being able to work within it is a clear advantage.

But in this point eurocommunism departs from Marxist tradition. Being in the state in order to make it less oppressive in regard to the forces of change or to impair its cohesion in the event of a showdown is one thing. Being there for the purpose of "conquering it from within" in the eurocommunist sense, i.e., democratising it and using it as an instrument of liberation for the working class, is a radically different proposition. It is this latter approach that makes the difference for eurocommunist strategy. Indeed, it is a radical revision of the classical conception of the state that constitutes the core of eurocommunism and on which the rest of the theory lies. It is based on a

rather peculiar understanding of the capitalist state which no longer refers to it as the principal tool of class subordination, but as the theater of class struggle, the concentration point of all contradictions of capitalist society and the terrain where this struggle will be resolved without even having to replace it.

The state, however, is not just the "condensation" of existing contradictions. It is also a social relation of bourgeois society which -- like capital itself -- reproduces and expands its existence on the basis of the mode of production and the particular social relations which give it, in each country, both its specific characteristics and its same basic functions. It thus becomes the expression of these social relations, the regulator and rationaliser of the class struggle and all other contradictions which objectively exist outside it and whose "condensation" it becomes. It perpetuates its existence through the perpetuation of the actual class situation in the given society. This means that as long as the social relations do not change in one way or another -- and there are not many ways of achieving it -- the state will continue its functions as a capitalist state, albeit a democratised or "self-managed" one. By rejecting outright the option of a dual-power confrontation, a struggle, that is, against the capitalist state for its eventual replacement, the transposition of class struggle inside the apparatuses of the state not only castrates the revolutionary movement in practical terms, it also leads to a theoretical dead end. For even if the battle is won in those apparatuses -- by way of a parliamentary majority or a presidential victory and the infiltration of the army, police and the ideological institutions by "proletarians" -- there still remains the question of changing society

to socialism. This does not come automatically and historical experience has shown that no social order has ever changed through enlightenment and legislative measures alone. The Chilean experiment came to an end at exactly this point, i.e., when the supposedly democratised institutions of organised (state) violence defected to the class enemy. The question, therefore, of what one does with the capitalist state is still unanswered in eurocommunism. And the very fact that this question no longer figures as a crucial dilemma in the eurocommunist problematic, inevitably reduces it to another form of Social-Democracy.

The option of the democratic road could only make some sense in the context of a Marxist discourse if the so-called democratisation of the state was not merely to be interpreted as taking control of the government and stuffing the state with proletarians, "self-managed" or otherwise, but as the ability to use this state, already sufficiently transformed and replaced, against the opponents of change. That would mean, however, that the state would no longer appear as an "independent," "democratic" power, but as a state in the service of the forces of change, the arm of a revolutionary government, which would be incompatible with the democratic transition.

The most significant contribution eurocommunism has made to previous versions of Social-Democracy, though it is not an entirely original one\*, is its formula of self-management. Besides being a vehicle of fundamental transformation in the process of gradualist transition (i.e., democratising state-apparatus and the private sector through the imposition of some sort of control by the masses), the idea has also been presented as the

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\* The Yugoslav experience has served as a source of inspiration for many eurocommunists and other autogestionnaires.

appropriate form of popular participation in the context of the socialist state. In its last version, self-management has been conceived as a "humanised" substitute for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the foundation of democratic and pluralistic socialism. As such it has been more developed to fit the schema of the democratic transition rather than that of a revolutionary dictatorship. In the first case, and whether we speak of a capitalist society, pure and simple, i.e., one which has not yet undergone the "radical" changes promised by eurocommunism, or one where democratic socialism of some form has been established, self-management in the economic sector as described in the last chapter of this study seems both feasible and beneficial to the working class. It will, apparently, increase its role in the organisation of production, in its dealings with the employing class and the state, and also in relation to numerous other aspects pertaining to the work-place environment. But this does not exclude, on the other hand, certain negative complications for the future of the working-class movement and the communist party. Participation in the running of the private sector presupposes a certain degree of co-operation with the capitalist class and the state. Self-management, therefore, may also contribute in the long-run not only to the better organisation of capitalist production and exploitation, but also to reducing social tension and probably the administrative costs of the capitalist. Indeed, if eurocommunism fails to transcend the fate of classical Social-Democracy, as has been the implicit assumption throughout this analysis, it is bound to end up as the new administrator of the capitalist system. It has already clearly displayed an impatient desire for the acquisition of responsibilities in the administration of its

crisis.

In itself, however, participation of the working class in the affairs of the economy and the government constitutes the most vital element in the organisation of the socialist state. But, in Marxist terms, the institution of participation should not and, indeed, cannot be seen in opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat or as substitute for it. The former is an important aspect of the latter; in fact, it is the most fundamental aspect and what makes the latter what it should be: the dictatorship of the working class, the state of the "associated producers". It is through the active, responsible and genuine participation of the proletariat in the overall running of society that the role of the party can be distinguished from that of the workers' councils and labour unions whose functions are not and cannot be identical with those of the party. It is also through this participation, institutionalised according to clear-cut norms, that the jurisdiction of the party interferes as little as possible with that of the state and a modicum of constitutional legality, with regard to individual freedoms and rights, is ensured even under the most adverse circumstances.

Yet, despite certain positive aspects of the eurocommunist critique of the state structures of existing socialism, the above remarks cannot possibly fit into the eurocommunist argument. In essence, what we are dealing with here are two radically different things. The "democratic socialist" state is not the dictatorship of the proletariat and cannot be seen as another form of working class rule. It is not a half-way development between the capitalist and the socialist state either. It has to be one or the other, for it is only on extremely rare occasions

and for very short periods of time (e.g., during the actual revolutionary confrontation) that the state can assume an indeterminate class character -- a dilemma that is quickly resolved by the defeat of one of the contenders. It is wrong, therefore, to speak of a eurocommunist transitional state with its own characteristics as a real possibility. It is the same capitalist state expected (in a way which has not been explained and which is not explainable either) to gradually transform itself, in a surreptitious manner, into a socialist one. Hence, this notion arrives at the same proposition that Social-Democracy had put forward in the beginning of the century and which, despite its repeated electoral triumphs ever since, has yet to materialise or even affect the capitalist nature of the state or that of the productive relations. Eurocommunism has made a long detour, through a maze of complicated and perplexing theories, in order to end up in the same perspective. Self-management in this context cannot be seen outside the scope and the limits of the theory itself. It is an aspect of the larger pluralistic schema of the trend which proposes to accord a certain political role to the various segments of the working class in order to voice their particularistic interests, in the same way as the fundamental interests of the various classes are to be defended and articulated by the political parties (including those opposing socialism) whose continued existence is also guaranteed. Self-management, therefore -- like the entire pluralistic concept itself -- does not simply become the direct counterpoint of the proletarian dictatorship, it also poses itself as the guarantor for the perpetuation of capitalist social relations -- indeed, a new formula for counter-revolution.

### Selected Bibliography

The bibliography will be divided into three parts. The first will comprise works of classical Marxism; the second, books, articles and reports by exponents of eurocommunism, as well as relevant party documents; and the third, other works consulted. To avoid undue confusion, writings that do not express the views of a definite (eurocommunist) party, together with selections of writings of differing viewpoints, will necessarily go to part three of the bibliography.

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AppendicesA. Déclaration commune des P.C. Français et Italien

A l' issue des entretiens qui sont eu lieu à Paris le 29 septembre et à Rome le 15 novembre 1975, entre les camarades Georges Marchais, secrétaire général du P.C.F., et Enrico Berlinguer, secrétaire général du P.C.I., entretiens auxquels ont participé aussi, pour le Parti communiste français, les camarades Gustave Ansart et Jean Kanapa, membres du Bureau politique, Charles Fiterman, membre du Comité central, et pour le Parti communiste italien Giancarlo Pajetta, membre de la direction et du secrétariat, Piero Pierali, membre du secrétariat, Lina Fibbi et Lucciano Gruppi, membres du Comité central, la déclaration suivante a été adopté.

La situation en Italie et en France se caractérise par l' aggravation de la crise qui touche tous les aspects de la vie économique, sociale, politique, morale et culturelle.

La crise

Dans son aspect économique, cette crise -- partie intégrante de la crise qui frappe le système capitaliste dans son ensemble et qui affecte tous les rapports économiques à l' échelle mondiale -- pèse lourdement sur les travailleurs et les masses populaires touchés par le chômage et la hausse des prix, en même temps que sur la paysannerie, l' artisanat, les petites et moyennes entreprises, atteints par de graves difficultés.

Les institutions de la vie civile se heurtent à des problèmes de plus en plus aigus, la crise politique s' approfondit tandis que des phénomènes de dégénérescence atteignent la vie sociale et morale.

Cette crise manifeste l' incapacité du système capitaliste à répondre, aux exigences du développement des forces productives, y compris de la science et de la technique, à la nécessité d' assurer le droit au travail, l' élévation du niveau de vie, l' épanouissement de la culture et de toutes les valeurs humaines. La menace d' un grave recul de la société dans son ensemble s' exprime dans les deux pays, tout comme dans d' autres pays d'

Europe occidentale sous différentes formes.

Les forces du grand capital et de l'impérialisme tentent de tirer profit de cette situation pour mettre en cause les conquêtes économiques, sociales et politiques des travailleurs et du peuple. Mais la classe ouvrière et les masses populaires peuvent, par la lutte, faire échec à ces tentatives, imposer de nouvelles conquêtes, ouvrir la voie à un nouveau progrès social et démocratique.

Dans ce but, le Parti communiste italien et le Parti communiste français -- qui mènent la lutte pour les intérêts immédiats des travailleurs et des masses populaires -- agissent en même temps pour une politique de réformes démocratiques profondes qui permettraient de résoudre les graves problèmes économiques, sociaux et politiques de leur pays.

De la crise actuelle se dégage plus que jamais, pour la France et l'Italie, la nécessité de développer la démocratie, de la faire avancer vers le socialisme.

Les deux partis développent leur action dans des conditions concrètes différentes et, de ce fait, chacun d'eux met en oeuvre une politique répondant aux besoins et aux caractéristiques du pays. Dans le même temps, luttant dans des pays capitalistes développés, ils constatent le caractère commun des problèmes essentiels qui leur sont posés, et la concordance des solutions qu'il convient de leur apporter.

#### Le socialisme, stade supérieur de la démocratie

Communistes italiens et français considèrent que la marche au socialisme et l'édification de la société socialiste, qu'ils proposent comme perspective dans leurs pays respectifs, doivent se réaliser dans le cadre d'une démocratisation continue de la vie économique, sociale et politique. Le socialisme constituera un stade supérieur de la démocratie et de la liberté, la démocratie poussée "jusqu'au bout".

Dans cet esprit, toutes les libertés, qui sont le résultat soit des grandes révolutions démocratiques bourgeoises, soit des grands luttes populaires de ce siècle dont la classe ouvrière a pris la tête, devront être garanties et développées. Il en est ainsi des libertés de pensée et d'expression, de publication, de réunion et d'association, de manifestation, de circulation des personnes à l'intérieur et à l'étranger, de l'inviolabilité



de la vie privée, des libertés religieuses, de la totale liberté d'expression des courants et des opinions philosophiques, culturelles et artistiques. Communistes français et italiens se prononcent pour la pluralité des partis politiques -- y compris le droit à l'existence et à l'activité des partis d'opposition -- la liberté de formation et la possibilité d'alternance démocratique des majorités et des minorités, la laïcité et le fonctionnement démocratique de l'Etat, l'indépendance de la justice. Ils se prononcent également pour la libre activité et l'indépendance des syndicats. Ils attachent une importance essentielle au développement de la démocratie dans l'entreprise, de telle sorte que les travailleurs puissent participer avec des droits réels à la gestion, disposer de pouvoirs étendus de décision. La décentralisation démocratique de l'Etat doit donner un rôle toujours plus important aux régions et aux collectivités locales, qui doivent disposer d'une large autonomie dans l'exercice de leurs pouvoirs.

Une transformation socialiste de la société suppose le contrôle public sur les principaux moyens de production et d'échange, leur socialisation progressive, la mise en oeuvre d'un plan démocratique au niveau national. Le secteur de la petite et moyenne propriété paysanne, de l'artisanat, de la petite et moyenne entreprise industrielle et commerciale, se verra assigner un rôle spécifique positif dans la construction du socialisme.

Cette transformation ne peut qu'être l'oeuvre de luttes de grande ampleur de puissants mouvements de masse entraînant autour de la classe ouvrière la majorité du peuple. Elle exige l'existence d'institutions démocratiques pleinement représentatives de la souveraineté populaire, la garantie et l'extension de leurs pouvoirs, le libre exercice du suffrage universel, direct et proportionnel. C'est dans ce cadre que les deux partis -- qui ont toujours respecté et respecteront le verdict du suffrage universel -- conçoivent l'accession des classes laborieuses à la direction d'Etat.

Le Parti communiste italien et le Parti communiste français accordent à toutes ces conditions de la vie démocratique une valeur de principes. Leur attitude n'est pas tactique mais découle de leur analyse des conditions matérielles et historiques spécifiques de leur réflexion sur l'ensemble de l'expérience internationale.

### Large alliances contre le capital monopoliste

Les deux partis considèrent que dans les rapports entre tous les Etats, qui doivent être marqués par une coopération toujours plus étroite dans le cadre d'une nouvelle division internationale du travail, doit être garanti le droit de chaque peuple à décider souverainement de son régime politique et social. C'est pourquoi ils soulignent la nécessité de lutter contre la prétention de l'impérialisme des Etats-Unis à s'insérer dans les affaires des peuples et se prononcent contre toute ingérence étrangère.

Les deux partis estiment que pour assurer le succès de la lutte contre l'ennemi principal de la classe ouvrière et des masses populaires, le capital monopoliste, il est indispensable que se réalise une libre entente des différentes forces sociales et politiques, dans laquelle la classe ouvrière unie doit affirmer son aptitude à exercer son rôle dirigeant. Ces larges alliances sont nécessaires aussi bien à l'étape actuelle que pour l'édification du socialisme.

Le développement d'une coopération solide et durable entre communistes et socialistes constitue le fondement de cette alliance.

Aujourd'hui de larges milieux catholiques prennent de plus en plus conscience de la contradiction qui existe entre, d'une part, la réalité de l'impérialisme et du capitalisme et, d'autre part, leurs aspirations profondes à la fraternité des hommes, à la justice sociale, à l'affirmation de valeurs morales plus élevées, au plein épanouissement de la personnalité. Cette évolution crée des possibilités grandissantes à la rencontre des communistes, de l'ensemble des forces ouvrières et des forces non-liaires d'inspiration chrétienne. Celles-ci peuvent et doivent jouer un rôle important dans la création d'une société nouvelle.

Dans cette situation de crise et au regard des grandes tâches qu'elle implique, les deux partis ont pleinement conscience de leur responsabilité croissante et de leur rôle irremplaçable.

### Pour une Europe démocratique, pacifique et indépendante

Conformément aux conclusions de la Conférence des Partis communistes de l'Europe capitaliste tenue à Bruxelles en janvier 1974, les deux partis réaffirment leur volonté de faire progresser l'action commune des Partis communistes et socialistes, de toutes les forces démocratiques et progres-

sistes d' Europe, contre le fascisme et toutes les atteintes à la liberté, pour la défense des intérêts de la classe ouvrière et des masses nonulaires, pour de profondes transformations démocratiques des structures économiques et sociales. Face à l' orientation profondément contraire aux intérêts populaires des groupes monopolistes multinationaux et des milieux dirigeants dont la politique provoque dans l' Europe du Marché commun le chômage et les déséquilibres sociaux, les deux partis accordent une grande importance au développement d' initiatives unitaires des masses populaires, des forces de gauche -- y compris dans le cadre du Parlement européen -- en faveur de la démocratisation des orientations et du fonctionnement de la Communauté économique européenne (C.E.E.), en faveur de la construction progressive d' une Europe démocratique, pacifique et indépendante.

Dans le même esprit, alors que l' Espagne vit une période cruciale, les deux partis -- certains d' exprimer à cet égard la conviction de tous les démocrates -- condamnent toutes les tentatives de perpétuer sous une forme ou une autre le régime franquiste. Ils réaffirment leur solidarité de combat avec la classe ouvrière et tous les antifascistes d' Espagne qui luttent pour la sauvegarde des prisonniers politiques et leur libération, pour l' établissement d' un régime de pleine liberté politique. Ils expriment en outre leurs préoccupations devant les difficultés auxquelles est confrontée la jeune démocratie portugaise et souhaitent que toutes les forces ouvrières et démocratiques retrouvent leur unité dans la lutte pour barrer la route à toute menace réactionnaire et assurer le progrès démocratique et social du pays.

#### Anrés Helsinki

La Conférence des Etats européens d' Helsinki -- à la tenue et au succès de laquelle l' Union Soviétique a apporté une contribution capitale -- a été une étape importante sur la voie de la détente internationale et de la construction d' un système de sécurité collective en Europe. La coexistence pacifique est la seule alternative à une guerre d' extermination. Elle est une condition de la solution des conflits entre les Etats, de l' essor de la plus ample coopération internationale dans tous les domaines. La coexistence pacifique -- qui ne constitue pas le statu quo social et poli-

tique -- offre un terrain plus favorable à la lutte contre l'imperialisme, pour la démocratie et le socialisme. Tout en poursuivant cette lutte, les deux partis développent leur action en faveur de nouveaux progrès de la paix, de la réduction réciproque et graduelle des armements jusqu'au désarmement général, du dépassement graduel et de la dissolution des blocs militaires. Ils expriment leur volonté de contribuer au rassemblement de toutes les forces intéressées en vue de freiner la course aux armements.

Réaffirmant leur attachement à l'indépendance de chaque parti, au respect de la non-ingérence et à l'internationalisme, le Parti communiste italien et le Parti communiste français entendent poursuivre et renforcer leur coopération fraternelle.

Le 15 novembre 1975

## B. Déclaration commune des P.C. d'Espagne, de France et d'Italie

Les 2 et 3 mars 1977, une rencontre a eu lieu à Madrid entre les camarades Santiago Carrillo, secrétaire général du P.C.E., Enrico Berlinguer, secrétaire général du P.C.I., et Georges Marchais, secrétaire général du P.C.F.

En répondant à l'initiative de Santiago Carrillo, Georges Marchais et Enrico Berlinguer ont voulu réaffirmer au P.C.E. et à toutes les formations démocratiques espagnoles la solidarité des communistes français et italiens dans leur action pour la démocratie et pour la construction d'une Espagne libre.

Dans cet esprit, le P.C.F. et le P.C.I. expriment leur conviction que le peuple espagnol parviendra au plein rétablissement de la démocratie, dont un critère essentiel est aujourd'hui la légalisation du Parti communiste et de toutes les forces démocratiques, indispensable pour la tenue d'élections véritablement libres. Ils expriment leur solidarité avec tous ceux qui agissent en Espagne pour obtenir la libération des prisonniers politiques, pour mettre en échec les provocations et les crimes fascistes qui veulent entraver la marche à la démocratie. La fin de la dictature franquiste après celle du fascisme au Portugal et en Grèce, représentent un changement important et positif dans la situation européenne.

Le progrès démocratique en Espagne est d'un intérêt particulier pour les peuples français et italien.

Les trois pays connaissent actuellement une crise qui est tout à la fois économique, politique, sociale et morale. Cette crise met en relief l'exigence de solutions nouvelles pour le développement de la société. Au-delà de la diversité des conditions qui existent dans chacun des trois pays, les communistes italiens, français et espagnols affirment la nécessité, pour assurer une alternative positive à la crise et battre les orientations réactionnaires, de réaliser le plus large accord des forces politiques et sociales prêtes à contribuer à une politique de progrès et de renouveau. Celle-ci exige la présence des travailleurs et de leurs partis à la direction de la vie politique. En même temps qu'ils défendent quotidiennement les intérêts immédiats des travailleurs, les communistes préconisent donc

des réformes démocratiques profondes.

La crise du système capitaliste appelle, avec plus de force que jamais, à développer la démocratie et à avancer vers le socialisme.

Les communistes d'Espagne, de France et d'Italie entendent agir pour la construction d'une société nouvelle, dans la pluralité des forces politiques et sociales, dans le respect, la garantie et le développement de toutes les libertés collectives et individuelles: liberté de pensée et d'expression, de presse, d'association et de réunion, de manifestation, de libre circulation des personnes à l'intérieur de leur pays comme à l'étranger, liberté syndicale, indépendance des syndicats et droit de grève, inviolabilité de la vie privée, respect du suffrage universel et possibilité d'alternance démocratique des majorités, libertés religieuses, liberté de la culture, liberté d'expression des différents courants et opinions philosophiques, culturelles et artistiques.

Cette volonté de réaliser le socialisme dans la démocratie et la liberté inspire les connections élaborées en toute indépendance par chacun des trois partis.

Les trois partis entendent développer également à l'avenir la solidarité internationaliste et l'amitié sur la base de l'indépendance de chaque parti, l'égalité de droit, la non-ingérence, le respect du libre choix de voies et de solutions originaires pour la construction de sociétés socialistes correspondantes aux conditions de chaque pays.

Cette rencontre de Madrid est aussi l'occasion pour les communistes espagnols, italiens et français, de réaffirmer l'importance essentielle qu'ils attribuent à de nouveaux pas en avant sur la voie de la détente et de la coexistence pacifique, à de progrès réels dans la réduction des armements, à l'application intégrale, par tous les Etats, de toutes les dispositions de l'Acte final de la conférence d'Helsinki et à une tenue positive de la rencontre de Belgrade, à l'action pour le dépassement de la division de l'Europe en blocs militaires antagonistes, à l'établissement de nouveaux rapports entre les pays développés et les pays en voie de développement et d'un nouvel ordre économique international.

C'est ainsi que les trois partis conçoivent la perspective d'une Europe pacifique, démocratique et indépendante, sans bases militaires ni course aux armements et d'une Méditerranée, mer de paix et de coopération entre les riverains.

L'Espagne libre pour laquelle luttent les communistes et toutes les forces démocratiques espagnoles sera pour l'Europe un facteur important de démocratie, de progrès et de paix.

Pour ces objectifs, il est nécessaire et il est possible que, par-delà la diversité des idées et des traditions, prévalent le dialogue et la recherche de convergences et d'ententes unitaires entre les communistes, les socialistes et les forces chrétiennes, entre toutes les forces démocratiques. Au cours de ces années, la cause de la liberté en Espagne a été le terrain d'action communs. De la capitale d'une Espagne qui entre dans la voie de la renaissance démocratique, les communistes des trois pays appellent aujourd'hui à l'union toutes les forces qui veulent la démocratie et le progrès.

Madrid, le 3 mars 1977