

EMERGING IDEOLOGIES AND THE  
CONCEPT OF DIALECTIC: AN  
EXPLORATORY AND SPECULATIVE ESSAY

What I would like to explore in this short paper is the possibility of a theoretical interpretation of a social dialectic of emergence. I shall not be concerned to criticize or defend the dialectical method in social theory as such,<sup>1</sup> but rather to give one interesting interpretation of it. In so doing, I have chosen two applications which I shall use to show what is meant here by emergence. The first of these treats ideological development in American advanced capitalism, the second examines certain aspects of Soviet Russian development. Both applications are schematic and require further fleshing out. So I put my views forth here only in an exploratory way. Employing the categories used in this paper, I am now preparing a more detailed study of the ideological development

<sup>1</sup> I do, however, believe that dialectics is a valuable heuristic device. It is capable of providing rich and suggestive interpretations for many social phenomena, as I have tried to show in my forthcoming book, *Aesthetic Domains* (1971).

of Zionism, to be published subsequently. This latter study may provide more concrete answers to some of the issues raised in the present paper.

## I

Before entering into more substantive issues it is only reasonable to try to make clear what is meant here by dialectic(s) and emergence (emergent) phenomena. As for dialectic, I shall mean far more than interaction which is the ordinary epistemological use of the term as it has been employed in the traditions of pragmatic naturalism and Marxism. Nor is the allied concept of reciprocal causation sufficient to cover the meaning intended here, although certainly these uses are compatible with the present formulation.

Let us then construe dialectic under a more global formulation by means of which it is possible to superimpose it over social and intellectual movements. Thus we may characterize it as the internal growth and subsequent exhaustion of any cultural system be it techno-economic, scientific-intellectual, philosophical, juridical, religious, or artistic. Such a breakdown or exhaustion may be temporary or permanent depending upon the subsequent appearance (introduction) of new knowledge, new techniques, or other input not known to be present during the initial period of crisis. But the fullest development of any system ultimately results in a crisis which demands liquidation, revolution, or drastic reformation in prevailing and entrenched conceptual frameworks or economic-social arrangements. And to this there is equally inevitable resistance on the part of the old.

Examples of what is described here are numerous in each of the cultural domains cited above. But I shall take as a paradigm of this phenomenon the revolutionary transition between agrarian and urban social orders as presented in the studies of V. Gordon Childe.<sup>2</sup> This transition and reformation was more or less total.

It is a characteristic of the agrarian order, according to Childe, that for the first time it removes man from what David Hume characterized as "societies of necessity," i.e., material scarcity,

<sup>2</sup> "The Urban Revolution," *Town Planning Review* (21, 1950). See also Robert Redfield's illuminating discussion of this thesis in *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, 1953), chapter 1.

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and at the same time creates the conditions for a “moral” order and class domination of society. In this development the urban revolution was to have revolutionary repercussions that transformed every single phase of social life and expression. How did this come about?

The first obvious factor was that of population growth. The large increase in agrarian settlement populations made possible by substantially increased food production rendered obsolete the existing apparatus of human association and social control. There was indeed no apparatus for exchange and distribution of commodities. A new technical and economic order was forced into being, new tools, new means of exchange, new construction techniques and means of transportation were sought and invented to meet the new needs. And this new “economic” order of society was to proliferate in a vast range of technical, aesthetic, institutional and ideological forms. Childe cites the following emergent characteristics of the new urban order: taxation made possible by the central accumulation of capital, public building, writing, the invention of arithmetical systems of calculation, economic institutions for external trade, social classes caused by the increased division of labor, a ruling class, the transcendence of kinship associations by political associations and economic-class associations, and, curiously, a return to naturalistic representation in the arts (paleolithic-gathering representation is characterized as naturalistic, neolithic-agrarian representation as abstract-symbolic). Thus, the working-out or fulfillment of systems of thought, or perhaps, as in the case just cited of systems of social organization, takes place in historical development. The basic premises of a social, philosophic, or scientific mode of operation and organization are driven to their logical limits and thus lose the elasticity necessary for further growth, elaboration and explanation.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the very structures of societies often

<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the scientific sphere greater energy is expended in the refutation and falsification of theories and less on verification. This notion, drawn from the work of Sir Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London, 1959), has been historically expounded by Thomas Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1962), see especially chapters 6 through 10. In the scientific sphere Kuhn has argued that progress is irreversible (*op. cit.*, chapter 13) in proportion to its insulation as an enterprise from society, i.e., from socio-political pressures. In a certain sense, however, the contrary of this interpretation may well be true. At least this appears to be the claim of much

eventuate in crises, changes coming not as abruptly but all the same completely. These phenomena, e.g., in science and philosophy; Aristotelianism, empiricism, Newtonian mechanics, and in society, food gathering, agrarian, urban, the polis, mercantilism, classical capitalism, and now imperialism, have been studied by many scholars from just as many points of view.<sup>4</sup>

Logically speaking, this view of dialectic suggests that for any cultural system or subsystem, further internal development or elaboration is seen as fruitless, unrewarding, unproductive, or destructive, by an influential section of its cultural participants. The prevailing cultural subsystem has exhausted all of its options for further growth. In the case of social, as opposed to ideational, phenomena immediate social consciousness may or may not be a factor in wringing change from crisis. It is only necessary that certain forces be exacerbated to a level of conflict such that continued pursuance and perpetuation of prevailing objectives and conditions seems to be, or in fact is, an impossibility which portends catastrophe.

In the analysis of cultural systems, or more properly cultural subsystems, it is evident that dialectical developments are not restricted to the economic basis of society (as classical Marxism suggests), although crises often, if not always, arise at this level first.<sup>5</sup> But it is now necessary to offer a provisional hypothesis

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Marxist historical scholarship in this area, (particularly, for example, in the studies of J. D. Bernal). And it is from this movement and from the "sociology of knowledge," which is closely connected with Marxism, that very important, although limited, investigations of the social history and social function of science have been generated. Kuhn's "insulation" concept is readily equated with the doctrine of value neutrality in the sciences. It is this kind of "scientific neutrality" which leaves science (as a commodity) at the behest of any and all special interests. Hence, it may very well be the case that certain societies or social structures are more conducive to scientific progress than others. On this view scientific neutrality is a goal to be achieved primarily through the control of its (science's) social environment. That is to say, scientific neutrality is a goal, not a fact. Kuhn's lack of clarity on this issue may be the result of what I consider to be his inaccurate analysis of the relation between "science" and "technology."

<sup>4</sup> Very little has been done with similar transitions in aesthetic culture since Hegel. Three notable exceptions are to be found in the works of Arnold Hauser, P. Sorokin, and more recently, V. Kavolis.

<sup>5</sup> Following the thesis of cultural materialism we may argue, however, that techno-environmental factors are the "causally" primary conditioning agents for all other cultural sub-systems, influencing the allocation of material and

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to explain why crises in one cultural system, say in science, or art, do not always appear to be accompanied by breakdowns in the more basic sphere of socio-economic relations.<sup>6</sup> In order to formulate such an hypothesis I shall employ the concept of emergence.

Emergence, in the present context, is not to be confused with the doctrine of emergent evolution or with the problems of phenomenal uniqueness and predictability which this doctrine attempts to resolve. Emergent evolution argues that in the case of an historical, physical, or social event, our inability to foresee and predict its occurrence is the result of the emergence of a new or unique element(s) which was not present in the initial conditions known to the investigator. Often it has been claimed that this unique element constitutes a new realm of being moving from matter to mind and from mind to deity. But emergent evolution assumes, in such an argument, that *all initial conditions* have been specified. And on this assumption it falls into error. Following E. Zilsel, A. Schaff, and J. H. Randall, it can be effectively maintained that social science and history are no worse off inductively than meteorology (a branch of physics) in that it is simply not the case in any given prediction that *all* the initial conditions are known.<sup>7</sup> For the knowing of all such conditions for an historical or sociological event would be the knowing of its concrete history complete. Inductively speaking then, it is sufficient and legitimate to ask whether an emergent conception of dialectics is capable of providing a rich

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social resources in all domains of social life and behavior. The degree to which this view, expressed most clearly by Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968), is consistent with, or the same as, the Marxian concept of ideology (superstructure) is not clear, but certainly bears further investigation.

<sup>6</sup> To demonstrate causal relations among these cultural spheres has been the main task of historical materialism and considerable success has been achieved by Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Beard, Hilferding, Hauser, Lukács among others. Even so, all phenomena fail to fit the preconceived mold of strict historical materialism, i.e., the explanations remain partial and somewhat disconnected.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Edgar Zilsel's very instructive article "Physics and the Problems of Historico-Sociological Laws," *Philosophy of Science*, 8 (1941), also Adam Schaff, "Why History is Constantly Rewritten," *Diogenes*, 30 (1960), and J. H. Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience* (1958), especially chapter 3.

interpretation of social and historical experience. And in the case of history and sociology, we do not require laws but lawful tendencies in our phenomena.

What then are the characteristics of "emergence" as it is employed in the present discussion? First, the history of total cultures exhibits progressively higher and more complex patterns of social, economic, and environmental organization. As this process takes place within the limits placed upon the unit in question by environmental and productive factors, it will be noticed that dialectical conflict and confrontation are most frequently averted by technological modifications within the system itself.<sup>8</sup> Hence, what appears as a conflict and struggle for the material necessities of life at one stage of social development may be transformed into a conflict of indirect interests at yet a higher stage of organization. This is made possible by organizational and technological-productive breakthroughs which vastly improve the material conditions for life. And the process may be crudely oversimplified by presenting it as a displacement of conflict from the quantitative to the qualitative sphere. In anthropological categories we may say that the ethos of certain social forms outlives the actual necessity for these forms, the ethos outlives the usefulness of the form of society which gives rise to it, thus setting up conflicts among the ideological vestiges of previously abandoned structures, i.e., the phenomenon widely known as "cultural lag."<sup>9</sup> What I shall briefly examine here is the internal dialectic in examples in which conflict has moved progressively from concerns with the material and "factual" constituents of social life to questions about values, i.e., in which ethos has become predominant over technics and

<sup>8</sup> I do not want to suggest, however, that all changes are internally generated, i.e., I do not subscribe unequivocally to the principle which Sorokin terms "immanent generation of consequences." See his *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (Boston, 1957) p. 639f. Obviously many changes are externally introduced, as for example, changes in Pacific Island cultures in the post-World War II period. I shall, however, hold to the position that change is primarily the result of technological innovation, thus assigning "causal" priority to the technical order.

<sup>9</sup> John Dewey characterized this tendency as early as 1929 in his book, *Individualism, Old and New* (New York, 1958). His conclusions are well taken for an American experience which abides the mythology of "individualism" and "free enterprise" in a society which is organizationally the very antithesis of such values and modes of behavior.

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productivity.<sup>10</sup> And this I shall argue is precisely what we witness in American and Soviet developments in the second half of the twentieth century, although each exhibits rather different and peculiar characteristics as would be expected.

### II

It is not necessary to examine the exact contents of the value constellations which compete for ascendancy in advanced-capitalist and socialist industrial societies. Indeed, Herbert Marcuse has outlined the characteristics and contents of these systems both in the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>11</sup> The subtitle of his widely-read *One Dimensional Man* is, in fact, "Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society," suggesting that the ideological struggle in such societies is to be distinguished from those which took place in the earlier (classical capitalist) stage of social organization. What I would like to sketch here is the dialectical and emergent character of the contemporary ideological confrontation first in America and then in the Soviet Union. As I have indicated above, these will be undertaken only schematically.

The exhaustion of the frontier-agrarian cultural system and its values which dominated the North American continent until the latter fifth of the nineteenth century brought with it both new forms of social organization and a new dimension in social consciousness. But it is not the special problems generated by this transition that are of interest for the present discussion. These were indeed problems characteristic of all capitalist industrialization throughout the world and not unique in America: class exploitation, cyclical unemployment, poverty, scarcity, trade unionism, and social Darwinian as well as socialist ideologies, etc. Yet, the new organization of productive forces and the

<sup>10</sup> Needless to say, the histories of internal dialectical development in societies are for the most part histories of class struggle. But this is not necessary. Primitive, pre-literate societies, when organized along communal lines with limited division of labor, carry out their struggles against external forces which threaten their cohesion and existence. Only historical societies have been predominantly class societies. See especially the studies of V. G. Childe and Robert Redfield for further anthropological elucidation of this point.

<sup>11</sup> See his *Soviet Marxism* (New York, 1958) and *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964).

reorientation of population distribution in America was not to resolve itself along the lines followed in the West European bourgeois democracies. For the American continent was to give birth to the first fully developed "post-capitalistic" (but non-socialist) system of socio-cultural relations. The precise reasons for this are not yet entirely clear and await an intensive and comprehensive study of the recent social history of applied science in the West.

Nevertheless, the abundance of material resources coupled with a rapid application of technological innovations to the problems of industrial production, distribution, and sale of commodities seemed to resolve the problems of production and scarcity. "Seemed" is the correct understanding. For even as the abundance of goods grew to fantastic proportions, the profit structure of society re-enforced peripheral and pocket deprivation. But in an important sense "seeming" is "being" and so the traditional class struggle for the material basis of life which had defined earlier capitalist formations and their subsequent class struggles was now thought to be superseded. Thus the problem of production had been resolved in principle, and in mass social perception, but not in reality. Technological innovation had outstripped the social organization which had given it rise.

Now Marx had reacted only to an early stage of capitalist development. Especially in the early manuscripts,<sup>12</sup> he had been repelled by a degeneration of cultural values which began with the introduction of commercial market economics even in classical times. The market economy tends to transform all values from "use values" to "exchange values." Marx discovered the logic of this transition and attacked it. He saw that early industrial capitalism had markedly intensified the movement from use value to exchange value. Even men were now valued only as commodities. But advanced capitalism has today succeeded in even a greater transvaluation for it has redefined the environment (nature), art, entertainment, leisure and free time, education, recreation, health, i.e., every dimension of man's existence, in terms of profit and exchange.

The immediate outcome is a consumer culture with a

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York, 1964), especially the chapters on wages and labor and estranged labor.



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“consumer consciousness.”<sup>13</sup> In addition, human effort is systematically coordinated with the productive apparatus. Mechanization and manipulation are applied equally to things, machines, and men. The practices of self-sufficiency and self-reliance which were the basis for the traditional frontier ethos of America are eroded and become only the rationalizing ideology of special interests. The ethos of individual self-sufficiency and self-determination remained intact in a reified or ideological form.<sup>14</sup>

The new era of deceptive prosperity obliterated the earlier social struggle for *social* democracy with an avalanche of “repressive productivity” and an insidious building up of “false needs.” As Marcuse rather polemically points out:

It is repressive precisely to the degree to which it promotes the satisfaction of needs which require continuing the rat race of catching up with one’s peers and with planned obsolescence, enjoying freedom from using the brain, working with and for the means of destruction... the close interrelation between technical and political-manipulative know-how, between profitable productivity and domination, lend to the conquest of scarcity the weapons for containing liberation. To a great extent, it is the sheer quantity of goods, services, work and recreation... which effectuates this containment.<sup>15</sup>

Hence, the depersonalization and dehumanization of socio-cultural structures gives rise to affective deprivation<sup>16</sup> in human relations. And this in turn serves as the basis for the expression of new forms of criticism, confrontation, and negation. From

<sup>13</sup> Compare Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York, 1955), p. 348f.

<sup>14</sup> Apart from its conservative, political manifestation, it might be argued that the highest ideological expression of this disembodied ethos was the American Abstract-Expressionist movement in painting in which individuality and personal freedom became fetishized and stylized to a point of absurdity.

<sup>15</sup> *One Dimensional Man*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>16</sup> I use this term here in a general way to distinguish the affective from the material spheres of existence, to mark off contemporary forms of deprivation from the material impoverishment characteristic of classical capitalist society. This use will correspond roughly to what has come to be known as psychological estrangement and social alienation in interpersonal relations. For a fuller discussion of this phenomenon and its ramifications, see my forthcoming book, *op. cit.*, especially the chapter on the social origins of affective deprivation.

the new polarization emerges a new dialectical relation. How can its disparate components be elucidated? A provisional adumbration might be set forth in the following manner:

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| 1. Social and productive efficiency.  | vs. | Human involvement (Doing one's thing).  |
| 2. The standardization of thought, politics, and environment.   | vs. | The radicalization of thought, politics (both revolutionary and occult) and the psychedelic transfiguration of the environment. <sup>17</sup> |
| 3. The maximum utilization of human resources through industrial psychology.                          | vs. | The repudiation of all standardized tasks both in work and education.   |
| 4. Programmed waste.  | vs. | Aestetification and fetishization of waste and junk (in the arts).  |
| 5. The creation of false consumer needs.  | vs. | The return to basic necessities in the "pure food" and primitive (often agrarian) communal movements.   |
| 6. Fantasy preoccupation with sex and nudity in the form of "repressive desublimation." <sup>18</sup> | vs. | Open sensuousness, nudity and sexual acting out (in public).  |
| 7. Popularization of violence in mass entertainment media.  | vs. | Total rejection of violence for an ideology of 'love.'  |
| 8. The cult of masculinity.   | vs. | The reversability of masculine-feminine roles and the new women's rights activity.  |

<sup>17</sup> I have written at length on the aesthetification and ritualization of politics in my paper "Alternatives to An Aesthetic of Repression," presented at the 28th Annual Meeting of The American Society For Aesthetics, Boulder, Colorado, Oct., 1970. Copies may be obtained from the Society or the author.

<sup>18</sup> For an analysis of "repressive desublimation" see Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Chapter III.

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| 9. Emasculation of controversy in popular media by means of "neutral" presentation.   | vs. | The intensification of controversy by means of deneutralization of vocabulary and dialogue. <sup>19</sup> |
| 10. The morbid, standardized repressiveness and violence of computerized law enforcement, and the unnoticed violence of everyday existence. | vs. | Cultism, occultism and the ritualization of murder, violence, and destruction.                            |

Here we see that the dialectic has been "lifted up" to a higher level and so it emerges not as an immediate struggle for the economic means of production. In fact, the economic basis of the confrontation has been largely obscured in the advanced-capitalist stage. This situation invites casual, popular, and scholarly criticism of traditional Marxian social analysis (both from the right and the liberal left) and has had the effect of discrediting Marxist social philosophy until very recently. But if the economic basis is wholly or partially concealed from superficial analysis, this is not enough to reduce its fundamental importance.

### III

I should like now to sketch certain Soviet tendencies which may also become accessible through the category of dialectical emergence.

It is perfectly clear that certain periods of Soviet government and party domination have relied on a terroristic and coercitive political coordination of the Russian population. Such policies were for a long time justified by appeals to the international isolation and encirclement of the Soviet Union in a hostile capitalist environment, and by the contention that only thorough

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, this intensification needs to overcome the "defusing" or "co-option" of earlier revolutionary vocabulary by replacing or augmenting that vocabulary with words not likely to be usurped in the mass media, thus, e.g., "fuck," "pig," "mother," and other "obscenities" replace the hackneyed sloganry of earlier confrontations with established power. Thus, "free speech," "obscenity" and serious revolutionary political vocabulary merge. A recent article on revolution in *Leviathan* is titled, "Who Will Bring the Mother Down."

industrialization could serve as the basis for a viable socialist state (Lenin's initial equation was: Communism = Soviet power + electrification). Hence, all the early energies of the Soviet dictatorship were concerned with the two-fold problems of production and defense.<sup>20</sup> However, in the post-Stalinist period, the preoccupation with capital investment in heavy industry and rigidly enforced labor practices have given way to more flexible economic policies, a gradual reduction in working hours, increased production of consumer commodities, and allocation of vast resources into the areas of education and public health. Again there is official concern with the problem of the transition from quantity to quality; a problem that Lenin himself treated in *The State and Revolution*. This is not to suggest that post-Stalinist liberalization is reflected in Soviet foreign policy or in what is significant for the present discussion, in cultural policy. Neither can it be seriously maintained that the Soviet Union has resolved the problem of production-consumption to the degree that this problem has been overcome in the West, particularly in America.

Nevertheless, it is evident in recent developments that there has been a transition from physical coercion and regimentation to ideological coercion. This is particularly manifest in the arts and traditional philosophy; not so much in the technological-scientific sphere (or even in the philosophy of science) which are tightly coordinated with Soviet successes in the material and economic spheres of social life.<sup>21</sup> Thus, by a different route altogether there has emerged what can be called a "second phase" (a qualitative stage) of communism comparable to the post-capitalist organization of society in bourgeois democracies.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> This development has been traced in L. Gruliov, ed., *Current Soviet Policies* (New York, 1953).

<sup>21</sup> Thus, the absence of an "official" repressive policy against the Soviet scientific establishment in recent years is illustrated by the recent, internal critique of Lysenkianism in genetics in *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko*, Z. A. Medvedev (New York, 1969). This document was widely circulated in manuscript form among the scientific establishment, was read by nearly all members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and unanimously recommended for publication, before its recent publication in the United States. It has not yet, however, been made available to people outside of the scientific community in the Soviet Union. And because of its unsettling impact, Medvedev has been accused of insanity and at least once committed to an asylum.

<sup>22</sup> This analysis of recent Soviet developments relies heavily on Marcuse's lucid preface to the 1961 edition of his *Soviet Marxism*, pp. v-xvi.

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This development, as I have stated above, entails on the one hand the abolition of unnecessary and enforced labor and the channeling of vast social resources into technical education, consumer production, and public services. On the other hand, and parallel to the repressive utilization of productivity in America as a means of ideological containment, Soviet policy enforces ideological conformity in artistic expression and humanistic studies by systematic suppression of all "revisionism."<sup>23</sup>

In sharing many of the characteristics of late industrial societies the Soviet state and the American state also share the capability of displacing and subduing significant criticism. The struggle for the material necessities of life is liquidated by increased production and distribution of goods coupled with massive indoctrinating and advertising campaigns. And radical activity and thought, once displaced, take issue with ethical and aesthetic inadequacies. But the computerized, machine society is all-embracing and through the control of information and needs, it indoctrinates as a means of enforcing and maintaining stability.

...this preconditioning is (a) in a strict sense rational, that is to say, it appears as the very manifestation of technological necessity and efficiency, and (b) it is accompanied by increasing comforts, a rising standard of living for an increasing part of the population. And to the degree that technical progress yields these tangible benefits, society can rely on the power of the economic apparatus and keep more violent means for the enforcement of compliance normally in the background. Up to this point, the two systems share the rationality of technical progress, the Soviet Union gradually "catching up" with the West in the capacity to substitute economic and ideological for military and police force.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The recurrent trials of Soviet writers and the scandalous treatment of East European intellectuals, especially philosophers, testifies to the repressive conditions which obtain. For example, the recent edition (1962) of the official document on aesthetics produced for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *Grundlagen der Marxistisch-Leninistischen Ästhetik* (Berlin), contains no reference whatever to the work of Europe's most highly respected Marxist aesthetician, G. Lukács, nor to the highly competent work of other Marxist scholars in the field, e.g., Caudwell, E. Fischer, Brecht, Marowski, nor to the remarkable increase in literature on the sociology of, and social history of, art since 1951 in the West.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. xii.

Given a certain level of technological capacity the revolutionary project now becomes one of securing a qualitative rather than a quantitative transformation of society. And it is gradually recognized on the left that increased freedom and a higher quality of life are not the automatic by-products of technological progress, even when ownership is made public, i.e., left wing fascism is as likely a possibility as liberation. In fact, the very engines of "progress" serve reaction and enforce the stability of the *status quo* in both Soviet socialist and class societies. And as I have suggested the confrontation is dialectically thrust up to a demand for the humanization of the existing apparatus of control.

Hence, in the Soviet Union the very technological means of liberation are employed in the perpetuation of a new ideology thus perverting the essence of Marxist theory, i.e., the exposition and critical destruction of all ideology. The struggle in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe no longer seeks public control of the means of production; now it demands freedom of expression, a humanistic Marxism (Marxist Humanism). In the West, the radical alternative to repression is inarticulate because of a crucial failure to recognize the economic pre-conditions of liberation and because of six decades of ideological obscurantism regarding the nature of social equality and the meaning of Marxist social criticism. I shall say more about this in the conclusion.

#### IV

Three tentative conclusions may be drawn from the material covered in this paper. These relate to questions concerning 1. the dialectical progression of social forms, 2. the relationship between nationalism and socialism, and 3. the historical significance of historical and dialectical materialism. I shall provisionally set out the implications of the present sketch for each of these issues.

First, in regard to the progression of social forms, there is a tendency in our analysis of American and Soviet developments to suggest that the transition from ideological facticity (a preoccupation with the material conditions of social life) to ideological value preoccupation is irreversible. But this interpretation is neither crucial nor necessary as I shall show in later papers on the ideological development of underdeveloped nations

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in recent decades and the growth of Zionist ideology.<sup>25</sup> What is crucial is contained in the dialectical formula of cultural and sub-cultural growth, i.e., the internally defined limitations of any cultural thesis or system of social relations which when fully worked-out and exhausted leads to radical transformations in thought and social life. This exhaustion-phenomenon can be construed as the foundation of all revolution. And it is interesting to note that a denial of irreversibility from quantity to quality sheds some light on the ideological schism within the contemporary American Black revolution. Whereas the sociological generalization that token melioration of the conditions of an oppressed group leads to intensified revolutionary activity (e.g., among the Black poor), it is the Black bourgeoisie and intelligentsia which has radicalized the movement toward facticity (ethnocentrism and turf-territorialism). Yet the inarticulate Black mass, preoccupied with economic survival, tend to espouse through their leadership an ideology more consistent with Christian humanism and the egalitarian tradition with objectives essentially like those of American labor. Hence, Afro-studies programs in American universities serve the function of facticity indoctrination and correspondingly cement the radical leadership of the revolutionary movement.<sup>26</sup>

Implicit in this interpretation of social transition is the refutation of the "utopian" elements of historical materialism (Marxism), i.e., those suppositions which suggest that a qualitatively superior community ethos, and one devoid of oppressive institutions, is the inevitable consequence of socialization of the means of production (the solution to the economic question). And as we have shown, successful revolutions (especially those in Russia and Eastern Europe) have too often subverted the very revolutionary objectives they espouse by appropriating without modification the repressive apparatus of industrial capitalism and settling into forms of left-wing fascism or state-monopoly capitalism.

Secondly, the relationship between nationalist and socialist movements can be seen to be functionally indistinguishable, even if ideologically antithetical. Both movements are fundamentally

<sup>25</sup> These studies will appear in 1972.

<sup>26</sup> This process is not fully understood in many sectors of the radical left.

revolutionary in the sense that they are attempts to “call forth” and reconstitute the pre-industrial (or pre-imperialist) community.<sup>27</sup> The nationalist phenomenon even in its earliest expressions, e.g., Machiavelli, Vico, Gobineau, calls for a return to those first principles which constitute the community: race, territory, myth, as acts of purification. And all nationalisms by their very nature are ethnocentric and landconscious. The ethno-territorial principles are precisely those by which national identification is to be achieved and the community reconstituted by nationalist or nationalist-socialist movements.

In communism there is also an explicit attempt to re-gather the fragmented community, but not on an ethnocentric basis, rather on an international basis. The major divergencies of these two movements (nationalism and socialism) are easy to see in their various objects of identification. Whereas in the more typical forms of nationalism the facts or objects of adoration, fascination, and unity are of the character of *Blut and Boden*,<sup>28</sup> in communism identification is to be achieved through the non-personal (non-ethnic) and, perhaps, exteriorized practice of communal ownership and communal participation in the machinery of production of goods, i.e., the objects of identification are highly abstract. And international communism has been stifled in its search for community by this internationalist tendency which when successful, paradoxically absorbs the international productive apparatus of industrial capitalism. Hence, the “sensuous” and communalist “humanism” of Marx’s early writings fails to be achieved and alienation is perpetuated, there being no possibility of individual and immediate identification with the non-human, abstract, and exteriorized structures of the society.

On this view, it is not surprising then that modern

<sup>27</sup> I am indebted to my friend and colleague, Professor Erazim Kohak, for initially calling this similarity to my attention. We differ, however, on at least one significant point. Whereas Kohak attributes the fragmentation of the community and the depersonalization of social life to dislocations in the ideological sphere, i.e., to the materio-reductionist and positivist tendencies in Western thought, I would argue that these very dislocations are the product of more fundamental changes in the processes of production, distribution, and exchange brought on by the emergence of the market economy and intensified by the advent of the capitalist industrial revolution. And this, of course, is the essential point of historical materialism.

<sup>28</sup> See my unpublished study, “On the Ideological and Dialectical Development of Zionism.”



## *Emerging Ideologies and the Concept of Dialectic*

revolutionary movements incorporating elements of both nationalist and socialist ideologies have proven to be most durable. Nor is it strange that one finds a strong drive for communalism within the internal revolutions of the advanced-capitalist countries. I do not wish to deny, however, that the emergence of the communal-oriented ethos is independent of capitalist economic development. In fact, I shall suggest that only the industrial capitalist fragmentation of the community is capable of generating ideologies and programs which seek communal reconstitution.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, it is necessary to re-examine the historical character of historical and dialectical materialism. And on this question much has already been written. For it is easy to see that only a certain level of techno-environmental development is capable of providing evidence which suggests the hypothesis of the materialist interpretation of history. Historical and cultural materialism must then be revised in accordance with hypotheses suggested by the further development of techno-environmental conditions. And these further developments show that social growth may not be unilinear, i.e., that development may appear to be progressive in quantity, and yet qualitatively retrogressive or reversed. This is because entrenched ideologies frequently have a longer life than the objective conditions from which they are generated. Hence, conflicts in values which are not resolved by the initial revolutionizing or modifying of objective conditions emerge later either as areas of vulnerability which can be manipulated by a new power structure, or as reified value confrontations stripped of their objective basis. In the second instance, recalcitrance and protestation take on bizarre aspects, as fetishes, occultism, withdrawal, and other peculiar forms of behavior which are opposed equally to prevailing domination

<sup>29</sup> The role of ritual and art is of crucial importance in the reconstitution of the community. Studies in this area are badly needed. Two highly suggestive recent studies of this phenomenon are Paul Honigsheim, "Die Ähnlichkeit von Musik und Drama in primitiven und totalitären Gesellschaften," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie-Sozialpsychologie* (3, 1964), and Lee Baxandall, "Spectacles and Scenarios: A Dramaturgy of Radical Activity," *The Drama Review* (4, 1969). The implications of the extraordinary collective power of art and ritual in the sense implied here and for the general theory of culture are treated in my forthcoming book, *op. cit.*, and in the extremely valuable work of H. D. Duncan, *Communication and the Social Order* (New York, 1962), especially part viii, but also other chapters.

and objective revolutionary *praxis*. Effective revolutionary struggle is correspondingly replaced by ritualized and dramatized confrontation. And the objective (historical) conditions of these new forms of revolt are obscured.<sup>30</sup> With the objective basis of revolution concealed, and the revolt itself equated with sheer deviance, the critical and revolutionary values of the working class are so perverted by manipulation and indoctrination that they become the very source of strength and the foundation for the social order which materially and mentally enslaves them. This new source of strength can then be pitted against all forms of deviation in the name of patriotism or, paradoxically, “in defense of the revolution.”<sup>31</sup>

It is suggested, then, that traditional Marxian theory cannot appreciate the complexity of this advanced ideological transformation. For the dialectical transition from an exhausted cultural system to a newer and more vital form does not inevitably generate qualitatively enhanced social-life forms. Degeneration can easily be correlated with external conditions such as war or encirclement. And when “counter-revolutionary,” retrogressive, degeneration is initiated in the name of progress there emerge new and often more efficient modes of repression which in their turn must become exhausted or destroyed before human freedom can be achieved.

<sup>30</sup> There has been at least one significant attempt to restate the objective conditions of student and black revolutionary movements in terms of Marxist analysis. It should be noted, however, that this formulation has not received wide acceptance, even on the radical left. The formulation here cited is by E. Mandel in *New Left Review* (54, 1969). Mandel argues that: 1) The rapid disappearance of employment for “unskilled labor” in industry since 1960 is the objective cause of radicalization of blacks, and 2) The transformation of higher education into programmed, technical training, resulting in the proletarianization of college graduates (reducing them to waged “intellectual” laborers), is the economic basis of the radicalization of students.

<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon is not, of course, analogous to the mercenary utilization of the *Lumpenproletariat* in 19th Century Capitalist society.